

Vol. 2, No. 1



PORT HARCOURT JOURNAL OF SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT

ISSN: 2992-2836
eISSN: 0189-6369

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
IGNATIUS AJURU
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION
RUMUOLUMENI, PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA

**PORT HARCOURT JOURNAL OF SOCIETY
AND ENVIRONMENT**

(ISSN: 2992-2836)

(e-ISSN: 0189-6369)

<https://iaue.edu.ng/open-educational-resources/>



Volume 2, No, 1 (2024)

<https://iaue.edu.ng/2024/09/port-harcourt-journal-of-society-and-environment-3>

A Publication of the Department of Sociology,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni,
P.M.B. 5047 Port Harcourt, Nigeria

EDITORIAL NOTE

Port Harcourt Journal of Society and Environment is a biannual peer reviewed publication of the Department of Sociology, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt. It aims at the advancement of the frontiers of knowledge, promotion of innovative research as well as providing a platform for the sharing and dissemination of information between and among the academic and professional world on society and environment.

It is our pleasure to welcome our valued readers to the maiden edition of the Port Harcourt Journal of Society and Environment even as we express our profound appreciation to the numerous contributors for the confidence shown by subscribing to this journal.

This edition features 23 articles on a wide range of issues on society and environment. We are confident that our valued readers will find this collection of articles a delight to read, while looking forward to more fruitful relationship.

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KIDNAPPING AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

This study examined kidnapping and socio-economic development in Rivers State. In carrying out this study, three research questions and three specific objectives were formulated to aid the study. The researcher looked at few theories as propounded by different theorists and adopted theoretical triangulation of structural functionalism and anomie theory. But the trust of the work was anchored on anomie theory. The study adopted a descriptive (survey). The population of the study is the 2020 projected population of Rivers State is 8,280,753. Taro Yamane Formula was used to determine a sample size of 400. With regards to sampling techniques, the study adopted simple random sampling technique to select one local government each from the three senatorial districts in the state. In Rivers East senatorial district, Etche was randomly selected; in Rivers South East District, Eleme was randomly selected and; in Rivers West senatorial district, Ahoada West was randomly selected. The purposive sampling technique was used to select one community from each local government area. The accidental sampling technique was used in reaching out to respondents during the process of primary data collection. The numerical data that was collected from the field and was analysed with the simple percentage of both bio data of respondents and also the research questions that will be retrieved from the questionnaire. In chapter four, analysis of the research questions showed that; Factors responsible for kidnapping in Rivers State are: high level of poverty, high increase rate of cultism, Youth unemployment etc. The study recommends that community policing be implemented in order to engage the youths in all local government areas and all communities as will help to reduce kidnapping in Rivers State.

Keywords: Kidnapping, Socio-Economic, Development, Anomie, Rivers and Crime.

Introduction

It is worth noting that kidnapping has been a security concern all over the world. A lot of countries have had to deal with it in different ways but it has undoubtedly become a growing lucrative and a preferable, alternative to other types of offences. In the Nigerian context, prior to 1990s the issue of abduction was rare, though the end of the civil war in January 1970 witnessed the emergence and spread of firearms (Igbo, 2007). The issue of kidnapping was not reported in the Eighth United Nations Survey on crime trends and Operation of Criminal Justice System conducted in 2002 by the United Nations office on drugs and crime (Obarisiagbon, et al., 2018). Today, Nigeria is ranked globally as the second highest in kidnapping as at 2022 (Punch, May 3rd 2023).

The safety of persons in Nigeria cannot be guaranteed. Since this menace affects everybody directly or indirectly form highways, schools, homes, markets, churches, mosques, hostels, hotels, night clubs, wedding receptions, farmlands etc. For instance, Chief Oluyemisi Samuel Falae, one-time secretary to the government of the federation and one-time presidential aspirant was abducted in his farmland at Ilado in Akure, Ondo State. The kidnapping industry in Nigeria spares no one whether poor or rich. Nigerians are living in fear and wondering who will be the next. This is a national problem that has eaten so deep into the fabrics of the nation. Between January to March, 2023, reports (Vanguard May 13, 2023) show that 1,230 persons were killed including 79 security personnel and about 700 abducted.

Kidnapping is a crime punishable by law in Nigeria. (Life imprisonment in July 2020 as against 10 years imprisonment). Apart from that some states Rivers State House of Assembly passed into law, the Rivers State Kidnap (Prohibition Law in 2015. Despite all these laws, kidnapping is still prevalent in Rivers State. Little, or no reported case has been successfully prosecuted to serve as a deterrent. Apart from the case of Chukwudumeme Onwuamadike (Evans) the billionaire kidnap kingpin who was

sentenced to 21 years in prison. Yet there are series of media reports of daily incidents of kidnapping because it is a daily occurrence (Ottuh, et al 2014).

Many would be investors have stayed away from fears of being kidnapped while some have closed their investments and taken to other countries. Also, Nigerians bid to develop tourism industry as visitors are regularly warned by this country to be wary of Nigeria. The situation is affront on positive development indicators in Nigeria generally and in Rivers State in particular. It has become a life-threatening ailment and a critical variable vitiating national development (Dodo, 2014). From the foregoing, it could be stated that the intention of this study is basically to examine and evaluate the origin, growth and proliferation of kidnapping as regards to the mechanisms in Rivers State (Nigeria). This probe is necessitated by the fact that in spite of the media hype and other measures put in place to curb kidnapping it still seem to be prevailing, availing and persisting in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Rivers State has witnessed various forms of militancy violence and crime including kidnapping which has assumed an alarming dimension in the state opening up avenues for dangerous socio-political degeneration. This has implications for the social and economic development for the state in particular and the country at large. It has also affected the economic activities as many would be investors decline doing business with the country while some investors move out of the state. This has adverse effect on the economic development of the country in general.

Investigations have shown that ordinary citizens participate in this atrocious crime in order to fill their pockets, usually the youths employed by rich men who conduct kidnapping as a modern business. For instance, Peter and Osaat (2021) examined the problem of kidnapping and its consequences in Nigeria and identified some challenges. They include: poverty, unemployment, politics and religion. The mode of kidnappers' operations has been identified and its prevalence, apart from the causes attributed to the laxity in the implementation process to prosecute the offenders. Similarly, Chibor (2022) examined how ethical theories could be used to reduce incidences of kidnapping in Ogba Land. The study employed a descriptive survey by using an interview guide in soliciting pieces of information from elites, traditional rulers, pastors, and victims of kidnap on the subject under investigation. The study revealed that kidnapping is on a high increase in Ogba Land and that no day passes without hearing that someone has been kidnapped. The youth are often the perpetrators of kidnapping.

However, to the limited knowledge of this study, there is no study that has specifically investigated kidnapping and socio-economic development of Rivers State. In the light of the above scenarios, this study intends to enquire into the nature roots causes and socio-economic implications of kidnapping on citizens in Rivers State. In addition, it will also investigate the motivational value of the proliferation of kidnapping with emphasis on its effects on the socio-economic development in Rivers State.

In order to satisfy the above interest, the following research questions were constructed to serve as guide.

- i. What could be responsible for the increase in the rate of kidnapping which has consequently affected socio-economic development in Rivers State?
- ii. How does kidnapping affect the socio-economic development in Rivers State?
- iii. What suggestions could be proffered to help moderate the impact of kidnapping on the socio-economic development in Rivers State?

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- i. Investigate the factors responsible for the increase in the rate of kidnapping in Rivers State.
- ii. Examine the consequences of kidnapping on the socio-economic development in Rivers State.
- iii. Proffer suggestions that could help moderate the impact of kidnapping on the socio-economic development in Rivers State.

Literature Review

Yusufu, Idrees, and Mamman (2023) investigated kidnapping as an emergent security challenge and its socio-economic effects in Nigeria's north-west region using Katsina State as a reference point between 2010 and 2022. Theoretically the paper deployed Routine Activity Theory (RAT) as its framework of analysis while methodologically the paper employed mixed methods approach with

quantitative dominance in data collection and analysis. Research hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance using non-parametric statistics (chi-square). Findings revealed that unemployment and poverty are the major factors responsible for the rising incidences of kidnapping in the state.

Chibor (2022) examined how ethical theories could be used to reduce incidences of kidnapping in Ogba Land. The study revealed that kidnapping is on a high increase in Ogba Land and that no day passes without hearing that someone has been kidnapped. The youth are often the perpetrators of kidnapping. The study further revealed that kidnapping is ethically wrong, no matter the motive behind it; furthermore, it was discovered that kidnapping has adverse effects on not only the victims but their family members and the land itself.

Onyejebu (2018) examined political amorality and kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria: understanding the intricacies. This paper evaluates the intricacies surrounding political amorality and its place in bringing about kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria. Functionalism theory was adopted. Indeed, it has often been reiterated that if Nigerians live by the ethics and doctrines of the political system, several societal problems would be averted and a holistic sustainable development would be a reality.

Bashir and Mustapha (2022) investigated the impact of armed banditry and kidnapping on socio-economic activities: case study of selected local government areas in Katsina State, Nigeria. The study found that armed banditry has significant negative consequences on poverty, unemployment, food security, education, health, income and the general standard of living of the people living in the state; it also affects other socio-economic activities in the region.

Adegebe (2022) studied factors influencing kidnapping and their socio-economic implications for Kogi State. The study finds that the drivers and social and economic implications of kidnapping in Kogi State are substance abuse, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, security lapses, and the complication of security personnel in ransom payment. It was determined that the socio-economic implications are these are discouragement of investors and expatriates, social effect/dearth of social life, adverse effects on budget planning, obstruction of business activities, work place insecurity among others.

Oketa (2018) examines the phenomenon of kidnapping and hostage taking in Southern Nigeria and its socio-economic implications. Amongst other factors the paper argues that; kidnapping is sustained by leadership failure, unemployment, poverty and corruption among security agencies. Based on the findings, the paper recommended the need to review the current strategy of dealing with the issue of kidnapping and hostage taking in Nigeria. In particular, there is the need to explore the extant laws and the extent to which they are being enforced with a view to establishing their efficacy. Also, Government at all levels should make policies that will attract both local and foreign investors which will create employment opportunities for the youths especially the vulnerable ones.

Theoretical Framework

The adopted theoretical anomie theory. Anomie theory which was introduced by the French sociologist Emile Durkheim in 1893 (Durkheim, 1893). Anomie or normlessness, is the breakdown and blurring of societal norms which regulate individual conduct (Schubert, 2021). Anomie theory explains reasons for breakdown of societal norms or why rate of normless is high in various societies when compared to different historical epoch (Jon, 2014). According to the theory, crime is usually driven by unequally distribution of resources in the society; this put pressure on individuals to jettison societal norms and use illegal means to acquire resources (Charlotte, 2022). Anomie can be seen as obstruction of stability in the society due to inequality in social structure or lack of individual or collective strategies for adapting to changing social circumstance.

This theory aptly described the situation of kidnapping in Rivers State where those engaged in it do not regard the societal norms that discourage negative behaviour. Norms are expectations that are socially enforced encouraging positive attitude but the kidnapers had jettisoned this social order for their inordinate pleasure. Generally, in 21st century Nigeria, our societal norms of contentment, do not cheat, do not steal has been abandoned by so many people; arms are proliferated and youths are into hard drugs, cultism, corrupt security agents among other because of lack of enforcement of societal norms.

Methodology

Research Design: This study adopted a descriptive (survey) design. The method was utilized because the researcher relied on opinions and insight of respondents.

Population of the Study: The 2020 projected population of Rivers State is 8,280,753 (NBS, 2020).

Sample Size and Sampling Technique: The sample size for this study is 400 that was determined by Taro Yamane formula. As regards to sampling techniques, the study adopted simple random sampling technique to select one local government each from the three senatorial districts in the state. In Rivers East senatorial district, Etche was randomly selected; In Rivers South East district, Eleme was randomly selected, in Rivers West senatorial district, Ahoada West was randomly selected. Again, the study adopted non probability (purposive) sampling technique to select one community from each local government. While the proportionate sampling technique was adopted to ascertain the number of respondents from each community. In Etche local government area, Chokocho was selected (130) respondents; In Eleme local government area, Agbonchia was selected (140) respondents; While in Ahoada West local government area, Ombor community was selected (130) respondents. The accidental sampling technique was used in reaching out to respondents during the process of primary data collection.

Method of Data Collection: The method of data collection involved administration of the instrument (the questionnaire) to the sample targeted for this study. The study used both primary and secondary data. The instrument has two parts; A and B. Part A deals with the respondents' demographic features, while the part B consist of structured questions in line with the three research questions of the study. The level of agreement or disagreement against any item will be graded using 4-point scoring scale in the following order: Strongly Agree for 4 points, Agree for 3 points, Disagree for 2 points and Strongly Disagree for 1 point.

Method of Data Analysis: The numerical data that was collected from the field was analysed with the simple percentage.

Data Presentation and Analysis: A total of four hundred (400) questionnaires were sent to the respondents, out of which three hundred and ninety-two copies which represents 98% of the study population was retrieved. Thus, the analysis of this study was based on the retrieved data.

Research Question 1: What could be responsible for the increase in the rate of kidnapping which has consequently affected socio-economic development in Rivers State?

Table 1: Factors responsible for the increase rate of kidnapping which has consequently affected socio-economic development in Rivers State

S/N	Items	SA	% of SA	A	% of A	D	% of D	SD	% of SD	Total	Total %	Remark
1	High level of poverty	98	25%	247	63.1%	27	6.8%	20	5.1%	392	100%	Agreed
2	High increase rate of cultism	96	24.5%	249	63.5%	22	5.6%	25	6.4%	392	100%	Agreed
3	Youth unemployment	95	24.2%	250	65.8%	18	4.6%	29	7.4%	392	100%	Agreed
4	Poor security architecture	110	28.2%	255	68.9%	28	7.1%	19	4.8%	392	100%	Agreed
5	Bad leadership	109	28%	256	69%	28	7.1%	19	4.8%	392	100%	Agreed
	Remark											Agreed

Source: Researcher's Field Data (2024).

From table 1 which presents data on factors responsible for the increase rate of kidnapping which has consequently affected socio-economic development in Rivers State, it was revealed that higher percentage of respondents agreed that the factors responsible kidnapping in Rivers State are: High level of poverty, High increase rate of cultism, Youth unemployment, Poor security architecture and Bad leadership.

Research Questions 2: How does kidnapping affect the socio-economic development in Rivers State?

Table 2: The effects of kidnapping on the socio-economic development in Rivers State

S/N	Item	SA	% of SA	A	% of A	D	% of D	SD	% of SD	Total	Total %	Remark
6	Kidnapping scares foreign investments	80	20.4%	262	66.8%	40	10.2	10	2.6	392	100%	Agreed
7	It reduces the level of infrastructural development	92	23.5%	250	63.8%	36	9.2	14	3.5	392	100%	Agreed
8	Kidnapping forces business owners to move to other states	94	23.9%	236	60.2%	45	11.5	17	4.4	392	100%	Agreed
9	It affects the internally generated revenue of the state	98	25%	116	29.6%	90	22.9	88	22.5	392	100%	Agreed
10	It promotes the level of insecurity in the state	80	20.4%	262	66.8%	40	10.2%	10	2.6%	392	100%	Agreed
	Remark											Agreed

Source: Researcher's Field Data (2024).

From the data presented above on the effects of kidnapping on the socio-economic development in Rivers State, it was revealed that higher percentage of the respondents agreed to the fact that kidnapping scares foreign investments, it reduces the level of infrastructural development, kidnapping forces business owners to move to other states, it affects the internally generated revenue of the state and also, kidnapping promotes the level of insecurity in the state.

Research Question 3: What measures could be proffered to help curb the impact of kidnapping on the socio-economic development in Rivers State?

Table 3: Possible measures that will help curb the impact of kidnapping on the socio-economic development in Rivers State

S/N	Item	SA	% of SA	A	% of A	D	% of D	SD	% of SD	Total	Total %	Remark
11	Provision of employment opportunities through industrialization and agriculture	90	22.9%	255	68.1%	24	6.2%	23	5.8%	392	100%	Agreed
12	Implementation of poverty reduction programs	112	28.5%	218	53.6%	42	10.7%	20	5.1%	392	100%	Agreed
13	Establishment of community-based policing	95	24.4%	200	51.1%	57	14.5%	40	10.2%	392	100%	Agreed
14	Good leadership	112	28.5%	218	53.6%	42	10.7%	20	5.1%	392	100%	Agreed
15	Strong security architecture	80	20.4%	262	66.8%	40	10.2	10	2.6	392	100%	Agreed
	Remark											Agreed

Source: Researcher's Field Data (2024).

From the table above which presents data on possible measures that will help curb the impact of kidnapping on the socio-economic development in Rivers State, it was revealed that majority of respondents agreed to the fact that kidnapping can be reduced by the provision of employment opportunities through industrialization and agriculture, implementation of poverty reduction programs, establishment of community-based policing, good leadership and strong security architecture.

Discussion of Findings

Factors responsible for the increase rate of kidnapping which has consequently affected socio-economic development in Rivers State: From the analysis above on the factors responsible for

the increase rate of kidnapping in Rivers State, it was revealed that higher percentage of respondents agreed that the factors responsible kidnapping in Rivers State are: High level of poverty, High increase rate of cultism, Youth unemployment, Poor security architecture and Bad leadership. These findings are related to the findings of Ibrahim and Ahmad, (2020) which examined the Causes of Kidnapping and its Implications on Nigeria.

The effects of kidnapping on the socio-economic development in Rivers State: Data presented above on the consequences of kidnapping on the socio-economic development in Rivers State, it was revealed that higher percentage of the respondents agreed to the fact that kidnaping scares foreign investments, it reduces the level of infrastructural development, kidnapping forces business owners to move to other states, it affects the internally generated revenue of the state and also, kidnapping promotes the level of insecurity in the state. These findings are in tandem with the work of Yusufu, Idrees, and Mamman, (2023) which investigated kidnapping as an emergent security challenge and its socio-economic effects in Nigeria's north-west region using Katsina state as a reference point between 2010 and 2022.

Communities in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State have called on the state government to intervene in the massive challenge of land grabbing and kidnapping incidents: Communities in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State have called on the state government to intervene in the massive challenge of land grabbing and kidnapping incidents being experienced in the area recently. The communities made the call yesterday while speaking with journalists through the Bishop of the Etche Diocese, Anglican Communion, Rt. Revd Okechukwu Nwala. Speaking on what he titled: 'Pertinent Issues Affecting the Security and Economy of the Etche Nation', the clergyman lamented that the area has suffered so much insecurity and high rate of kidnapping in the past months.

He said: "Abduction for ransom though not peculiar and/or new to Etche nation is another ugly incident that has remained unabated. "The sponsors have graduated from using fellow locals to now engaging some Fulani herdsmen with heavy rifles and charms to keep the victims in their hideouts."

Bishop Nwala said Etche people are predominantly agrarian in nature, and despite being blessed with large oil and gas deposits with contribute significantly to the economy of Nigeria, the area has remained largely underdeveloped. The clergy disclosed that following interactions and investigations with leading members of the affected communities, land grabbing was initially known as land recovering, but with the current experience, many individuals, organisations, religious bodies and even the government have recently lost their lands to grabbers. He traced the origin of the situation to "where a member or members of the family whose land had been on protracted litigation approach the land grabbers to take over the land on a 50:50 sharing ratio. "In which case the land grabbers will make logistics arrangements by procuring interim injunction from the court, get the police to execute the order, mobilise caterpillars and bulldozers to site, in addition to cult boys who act as foot soldiers."

Nwala added: "Today, the trend has changed as they now kidnap vacant farmlands, especially those not encumbered by any means whatsoever. As we speak, several individuals and corporate bodies are victims of the nefarious act and some have lost their lives as a result. "For instance, Scripture Union Nigeria has about 9.5 hectares of land in Igbo-Etche. Apart from the small area that has been built up, the rest of the land not less than nine hectares have been sold by the so-called land grabbers. "As we speak, they have gotten to Chokocho and Umuechem, and if nothing is done, it won't be long all parts of Etche will have their share of this unfortunate incidence." The clergy regretted that "as a result of the above and other criminal activities in Etche land, many businesses are relocating from Etche and genuine persons are losing interest in coming to buy or develop property in the area."

The cleric, therefore, appealed on "Governor Siminalayi Fubara for his urgent intervention to save the situation that is capable of degenerating to chaos if not checked. "Security agencies have been greatly accused of conniving with the criminal-minded individuals who carry out these acts, and however, we also draw the attention of the State Commissioner of Police, Olatunji Disu, to the matter." (Blessing, 2024).

Suspected Child Kidnappers Caught in Agbonchia Community in Eleme LGA, Rivers State: Two persons suspected to be child kidnappers have been apprehended by Nchia Security Council and handed over to the Eleme Police Division for further investigation and prosecution. Luck ran out of the suspects when they were seen assaulting a little girl selling garri at Pipeline close to Zina Motel and were immediately apprehended.

After series of questioning, they confessed to using rings discovered in their bags to hypnotize their victims. According to the girl, they requested her to sell garri to them after which they asked her to follow them to collect her money, on refusal to follow them, they started beating her up, this created public awareness and they were caught. It will be recalled that for some time now, there have been incidence of missing children which led to the LGA security team to put up modalities to put a stop to the menace. Meanwhile, the local government authority has warned all those involved in the above act or any form of kidnapping or illegality to desist forthwith or be ready to face the consequence (<https://www.rivnews.com/2023/07/suspected-child-kidnappers-caught-in.html>).

Possible measures that will help moderate the impact of kidnapping on the socio-economic development in Rivers State: The possible solutions that will help moderate the impact of kidnapping on the socio-economic development in Rivers State, it was revealed that majority of respondents agreed to the fact that kidnapping can be reduced by the provision of employment opportunities through industrialization and agriculture, implementation of poverty reduction programs, establishment of community-based policing, good leadership and strong security architecture. These findings are in tandem with studies of Bashir and Mustapha (2022) which investigated the impact of armed banditry and kidnapping on socio-economic activities: case study of selected local government areas in Katsina State, Nigeria. Armed banditry and kidnapping have recently upsurge in many North-West states of Nigeria, their activities have rain havoc on the life and properties of the people in the region. The study found that armed banditry has significant negative consequences on poverty, unemployment, food security, education, health, income and the general standard of living of the people living in the state; it also affects other socio-economic activities in the region.

Summary of Findings

Findings of the study summarized thus:

- Factors responsible kidnapping in Rivers State are: high level of poverty, high increase rate of cultism, Youth unemployment etc.
- Effects of kidnapping are: Kidnaping scares foreign investments, it reduces the level of infrastructural development, kidnapping forces business owners to move to other states.
- On the solutions to kidnapping, it was revealed that, kidnapping can be reduced by the provision of employment opportunities through industrialization and agriculture, implementation of poverty reduction programs, establishment of community-based policing etc.

Conclusion

The study investigated kidnapping and socio-economic development in Rivers State. The operators of armed robbery kidnap immediate family members and divulge all round information about their victim. In recent time, apart from the Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen terrorism, attention has been turned to the issue of kidnapping and stringent measures have been taken to tackle the menace. Both National and International bodies are coming together to see if the incidence can be curbed. Many engage in kidnapping business for different purposes and missions. Some are politically masterminded, especially among political opponents. Some do it for ritual sacrifice; that is, in situations where the kidnapped persons are never seen again even after huge ransoms are paid. Some engage in this heinous crime solely for the sake of money; in this case, the victims are released after the payment of the agreed ransom. In all, kidnapping can be grouped according to motives into: political kidnapping, kidnapping for marriage, ritual kidnapping and monetary kidnapping. Kidnapping is not new in Nigeria and is one of the challenges facing the country at present. Thus, the findings of the study revealed among others that Kidnaping scares foreign investments, it reduces the level of infrastructural development, kidnapping forces business owners to move to other states.

The study has revealed and contributed to scholarship by discovering that armed banditry and kidnapping has recently upsurge in many parts of Rivers States as reported in Etche, Omoku and other areas. These activities have wreaked havoc on the life and properties of the people in the region. The study found that armed banditry has significant negative consequences on poverty, unemployment, food security, education, health, income and the general standard of living of the people living in the state; it also affects other socio-economic activities in the region.

Recommendations

From the results of the study, the following recommendations are made.

- Community policing be implemented in order to engage the youths in all local government areas and all communities as will help to reduce kidnapping in Rivers State.
- Youth employment should be top priority of government so as reduce the level of kidnapping.
- Youths should shun kidnapping and other crimes and embrace good values for survival.

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RELIGIO-CULTURAL REVITALIZATION AS PANACEA FOR RAPE CULTURE IN NIGERIAN SOCIETY: AN ANTI-RAPE CAMPAIGN

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Abstract

Characteristically of the Nigerian society in contemporary times are various vices dominant both in urban and rural areas. The spread of these vices has led to challenges and difficulties for peaceful cohabitation of the citizens. Basically, some vices are more pronounced in some places than others but one of the dominant ones that cut across is rape. Rape, which is the carnal knowledge of an individual without mutual consent is an act that can cause lasting problem and trauma for the victim of such. Weighing this issue, it is discovered that, the operation of rape in Nigerian context kicks against both religious and cultural norms of the people and as such, should not be a pronounced vice in the Nigerian society. It is against this backdrop that this paper, using the evaluative approach, seeks to assess the current status of the act of rape in Nigeria and as such, present a reminder of the biblical position as well as the cultural stance as a way of life that can put an end to the spread of the act among Nigerians.

Keywords: Religious, biblical, cultural, rape, Nigeria, trauma

Introduction

The dominance of social vices is a bane of a society because, it breeds anarchy and breach of social order in the land. One of the social vices that could lead to serious catastrophe in a society is the act of rape. From the onset, rape appears to be a dominant factor among males in which the female gender appears to be victims of the act, but more recently, there are cases of sexual abuse for the male gender as well. This goes on to elaborate that, the spread of the virus of rape can be disastrous to a given community or society. As posited by Sande and Chirongoma (2021), rape culture could be perceived as a dominant practice in sub-Saharan Africa; in their opinion, culture, patriarchy, poverty and religion are utilised in a way to sustain rape culture in the society, and this does not exclude the Nigerian society as the practice is found to be well pronounced in the country.

The African heritage is the one which encourages humane act to fellow humans as every human being is seen as important. The typical cultural practice in Nigeria does not welcome any form of oppression for fellow humans, but it becomes a serious challenge that contemporary times, especially in the Nigeria society, issue of rape which is one of the highest form of cheating and stealing is a display of negation to the acceptable norms in the Nigerian cultural orientation (Onwuegbusi, 2021). This therefore poses a challenge of balance in the society because, most rape victim go through traumatic experiences from time to time and it can affect their general productivity as humans.

In the quest to make an alignment of the Nigerian cultural heritage with biblical heritage, this work strategically analyses the act of rape in Nigeria and provides the biblical and cultural heritage as a panacea to halt the spread of the act even as every citizen ensures that they move massively against the spread of the act of oppressing individuals through overpowering them and having carnal knowledge of them. This work will observe the impact on the individuals and the society as a whole and as such, contrasting the beauty of a rape-free society where mutual trust can be built intentionally by all the member of the society.

Assessing Rape Culture and Oppression of Female Gender in Nigeria

In presenting a discourse about the experiences of women as major victims of sexual abuse and escapades, Ajayi et al. (2021) were of the opinion that, women are at disadvantage when it comes to sexuality as they are mostly the victims in various situations, issues like forced marriages, child (young/early) marriages, female genital mutilation, rape among others are tough experiences that women usually undergo right from inception. Being weaker vessels, women are being made to experience some tough decisions of their life and they find themselves in helpless situations which serve as a major factor in promoting the male dominance over the female gender.

The term known as rape according to Onwuegbusi (2021) is an act initially committed against women but in recent times perpetrated to persons of any gender. Scholz (1998) further defined the act as a crime which involves forcefully making another person to submit himself or herself to act of sex, especially, intercourse. The rampant nature of the act in the society and a level of acceptance by the society is what qualifies it as rape culture.

Although, Nigeria in the societal standard does not literally accommodate rape as a welcome idea, the practice and spread of it, with justification by some quarters place Nigeria in the view of having rape culture and on this note is the paper addressing the rape culture in Nigeria. Nigeria is not exempt from the deplorable trend of rape crimes. The issue pertaining to rape records in Nigeria is the unreliability of the existing data on the prevalence of rape. Two million Nigerians are raped annually, according to Adebajo (2019), who cited Dame Pauline Tallen, the country's Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development. But he conceded that no trustworthy public data existed to substantiate or refute the assertion. He added that human rights attorney Caroline Ajie had estimated that "at least 2 million Nigerian girls experience sexual abuse annually and that just 28 per cent of rape cases are reported" earlier in 2011. In Nigeria, rape is a very common crime, particularly when it comes to the sexual exploitation and abuse of young girls and women.

Rape culture is a widespread occurrence that takes many different forms. Furthermore, rape culture is a difficult subject to define, thus it is important to do so. Rape culture is, by definition, the normalization of sexual assault. About 1970, a correct definition of rape culture came into being. Herman (1984) was the first academic to identify rape culture. He contended that rape will always be commonplace as long as society celebrates male supremacy. When a rape is as obvious as death, it is clearly part of rape culture (Buchwald, et al., 1994). In addition to affecting women, rape culture also affects men and the LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex) communities by exposing them to sexual violence (Ridgway, 2014). It is accurate to infer from Ridgway's claim that rape culture is an intersectionality phenomenon that raises questions related to gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, and other topics.

Qualitative research carried out in Nigeria also indicates that there may be cultural roots to the violence experienced by Nigerian women. According to some, violence against women is both a socially acceptable male behaviour in Nigeria and a means of preventing violations of the culturally accepted male superiority (Abayomi & Olabode, 2013). Other research on women's views toward violence (e.g., Odimegwu et al., 2010; Okenwa-Emegwa et al., 2016) discovered that women are occasionally receptive to men using violence against them. This may be a risk factor because research indicates that women's experiences of violence in intimate relationships are positively correlated with social norms that are lenient (Odimegwu et al., 2010).

Similarly, religious convictions that support the notion that, men should have more authority and control over their families and have been linked to violence against women in Nigeria (Abayomi & Olabode, 2013). This implies that the biblical injunction of the form of relationship that should exist between man and woman have been interpreted by some men to suit their selfish purpose of oppressing women in the family and they present it in a legitimate way. The sense of superiority over women could be a factor responsible for the spread of rape in the society where men force their ways through to have carnal knowledge of their female counterparts.

Progress is still slow, despite the fact that feminist activism, such as that carried out by Female in Nigeria (FIN) on social media platforms, to address cultural beliefs, norms, and practices that might contribute to violence against women (VAW) in Nigeria appears to have some influence in changing attitudes toward norms and practices like child marriage, rape has continued to exist (Olofinlade, 2017).

Effect of Rape

The effect of rape is adverse in the sense that it primarily has effect on the victim of such scenario but more adversely, it has effect on the society as a whole. Rape is a form of torture for an individual and this are most often individuals who have not committed a crime to deserve punishment. These individuals are victimised by the perpetrators of such act in the society. Ezeilo and Oriye (2020) reported that rape and sexual abuse are two types of torture that women endure, according to a national survey on torture in Nigeria conducted by Women's Aid Collective (WACOL). According to the poll, 65.4% of women experience sexual abuse and rape. Additionally, they stated that just 23% of rape crimes in Nigeria are reported to the police, according to the National Crime and Safety Survey, which was conducted in 2012 in all 36 States of the Federation by the CLEEN Foundation. As a result, over 77% of rape incidents remain unreported (Ezeilo & Oriye, 2020).

Rape can lead to traumatic effect on the victims of the act. The complications of the act of rape is that, many rape victims uphold a culture of silence and find it extremely difficult to talk about their experiences for fear of being attacked in retaliation. Many others suffer from shame and worry about being stigmatized if they talk about their unpleasant experiences. According to Crisp (2010), persons who experience shame are disempowered and suffer in silence. It keeps victims of rape from discussing their experience and, consequently, from receiving support. In addition, it shields the offenders from legal action. Many others harbour a fear of telling the authorities about their experience due to the possibility of being the target of needless investigation that is on par with actual rape. Many people are afraid of not being believed or of being held accountable for the offense against them, therefore they choose not to disclose their painful experience.

It could therefore be posited that, rape basically only have negative effect on the growth of the people that constitute a society. The effect primarily starts with the victim and spreads across to the society as a whole and it could discovered that, a society characterised by rape practice is seen as an unhealthy or unsafe society by deductions from this study.

Biblical Assessment of Rape Culture

St. Augustine's examination of rape as an awful sin demonstrates the moral depravity of the act. According to Ortiz (2019), St. Augustine made it very evident that rape is a serious crime for which the perpetrator alone is responsible. Rape is described by St. Augustine as a "crime," a "wicked (criminal) deed," and a "atrocious." He includes it in the list of the "godless," "utterly disgraceful," and "damnable" atrocities carried out by the barbarians (City of God, 1.9). St. Augustine went on to refer to rape as a "assault." In addition to performing a "corrupt," "filthy," and "turpitudinous" act on or in the victim's person, the rapist "suppresses" or "oppresses" the victim. According to St. Augustine, rape is an extremely serious and heinous act against the victim's person.

The bible is not silent about the act of rape and this implies that rape had been an ancient act to have been traceable in some Bible stories. Ranging from the experience of the daughter of Jacob, Dinah in Genesis 34, the case of Amnon and Tamar in 2 Samuel 13, among other scenarios contained in the bible, rape is seen to be greatly condemned in the society as it has only led to violence in the society or among people. Although, Scholz (1998) averred that, rape is not to be seen as a product of either peaceful or war time, but dependent on people. She expressed that it is a reality that can take place in either peace or times of war. But either there was an initial war at first or not, rape is enough to trigger war and to complicate matters for those involved.

From the biblical narratives, it is discovered that, victims of rape were withdrawn into their "shell" and but more ghastly is that fact that, it led to brutal ending for the perpetrators of the act. The action of rape is seen as an act of wickedness against humanity and although, rape in biblical narratives appears to have placed women in the victim positions, the act of rape in either way in contemporary time is not something to accommodate to flourish in any form it could take.

Klopper (2010) was of the opinion that some individuals interprets the scripture text of Genesis 34 by blaming the victim. Thereby expressing that she should have avoided such scenario or approach, but he advised that the situation should be observed with a keen attention and holistically in the sense that blaming the victim and exonerating the culprit is a means of sustaining rape culture and which is not healthy for the society. He condemned this act by expressing that any culture that obviously condemns rape, provides sympathy for the rapist and condemns the victim is a literal canvassing for the rape culture.

Summarizing the story of Dinah, Klopfer (2010) chronicled that, one day, Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Rachel, went out from her home to see the local women. Shechem, the Prince of the area and the son of Hamor, noticed her, grabbed her, and sexually assaulted her. But later on, Shechem became attracted to Dinah and declared his desire to wed her. Jacob and his sons agree to their sister's marriage to Hamor during the marriage negotiations, but only if Shechem's clan undergoes circumcision. A permanent alliance between the tribes was agreed upon during the discussions and was guaranteed by ongoing intermarriage. Taking advantage of the Shechemites' period of recuperation, Dinah's brothers slaughtered all the male tribe members, pillaged the city, and stole the women and children as spoils. They explained their actions, in response to Jacob's rebuke, by claiming that they did not want their sister to be treated like a prostitute. One aspect of this story that will be important in the future is that Dinah never says anything and has no say in decisions that impact her life.

Woodbridge and Joubert (2018) observed the severity and importance of the rape scene against Tamar that a campaign was raised in Kenya in the year 2005 which is called "Tamar Campaign", with the goal of encouraging those who have been victimised and seeking justice for them by punishing the perpetrators of the evil act. In narrating the ordeal of Tamar, Woodbridge and Joubert (2018) expressed that, Amnon 'love her' which indicates that the love was not a sincere one but a lustful one. His various attempt to move closer to her proved abortive because she was probably never alone according to the cultural practices for virgin daughters as they were to be protected. Amnon went ahead to do according to the advice of his friend, Jonadab and cunningly requested Tamar to feed him on his 'sick' bed. Being her half-brother, she could never have thought that he had such intentions against her and was willing to render help in her own way. He forcefully had his way with her, using his superior manly power despite pleas from her and afterwards hated her than he thought he loved her in the first place. This act led to revenge mission by her brother, Absalom who executed his well planned intention two years after the occurrence and which he was responsible for the shelter of his defiled sister.

Montgomery (2014) painted the scene in summary as, a lust-driven, self-centred brother horribly rapes his sister; an evil companion assists in the incestuous transgression's plot; a father allows a crime against his daughter to go unpunished; a brother takes justice into his own hands by killing his brother on his sister's behalf; and a girl, who was once lovely and pure, is now damaged and will be shunned for the rest of her life.

From the above narratives considered, which are only two out of many biblical narratives about rape acts, it is discovered that, Shechem raped Dinah and he was killed alongside his brothers; Amnon raped Tamar and was killed by his half brother, Absalom. The act of rape justified murder in the mind of readers of the narrative because, the "predators" were seen to have deeply harmed the victims of their acts. It implies that rape can lead to serious disaster, depending on who is the victim. But more importantly, every human should be treated with respect and as such, regardless of whoever is the victim, the aftermath could be ghastly for a society.

It could therefore be deduced from the foregoing that, rape culture in the biblical term is a catalyst for chaos, loss of order, hatred and violence in a community. It implies that rape culture will lead to violent culture as seen in all the various examples and scenarios in the scripture narratives especially as dominated in the Old Testament narratives. As such, rape should be jointly condemned and spoken against by every member of the Nigerian society.

Nigerian Cultural Perception of Man

Typically, Nigerian cultural perception of human places man as a being to be dignified and not to be abused. This is seen across various cultural orientation and as such, it could be deduced that, humans are not to be vilified or maligned in anyway. This section surveys the perception of man from the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria and it is believed that this could be a deductive for other subgroups that are classified as suburbs of these major ethnic groups;

Igbo Cultural Perception

Ezedike (2019) clearly opined in presenting the Igbo culture which is one of the prominent cultures in Nigeria, that within the context of Igbo traditional society, man (in its generic form) is a being seen and valued as an entity which is both material and immaterial and his personhood should be clearly understood in terms of his moral and metaphysical composition. He further expressed that, man

possesses dignity and any form of aberration to the existence of man or abuse of the sanctity of human life should be universally sanctioned.

The word MMA-DU, which should be pronounced MMA, DU, let there be goodness, order, beauty, and peace, is actually a sentence. MMA stands for goodness, order, beauty, and peace, depending on the context in which it is used. DU is the imperative of DE or DU meaning to be. As a result, the word is MMADU and should be pronounced MMA, DU, let there be goodness, order, beauty, and peace (Esomonu, 1982).

This interpretation of man, which is common to the Igbos, is heard of only in special cases, like when people are quarrelling. The elders who settle the disputes often recall to the litigants the meaning of their being as men, "let there be peace and goodness." Ezedike (2019) explained the expression of an old Igbo centenarian, who explained that, God created all things beautifully, and then at last he created what he called MMADU, let goodness be, as a synthesis of all that is good in visible creation. Man later spoke this name so quickly that it became one word, so many do not refer to its original meaning.

According to the Igbo worldview, man is capable of and desirous of the highest values—truth, goodness, peace, and beauty—because he possesses what may be considered spiritual inclinations. These ideals represent the entirety of hierarchical values that MMADU, the guy who lived in this world, loved, aspired, and attained. Man is the Igbo image of God, possessed of chi, which elevates and sets him above all outward creation (Ezedike, 2019).

Man must therefore be honoured not just for his kindness, beauty, and serenity, but also because he is a microcosm of the created cosmos and has been elevated to the top of the visible (created) world. He possesses the metaphysical capabilities of mind and will, along with a spiritual soul, making him capable of happiness and perfection. As such, an abuse of any human (man and woman inclusive) is equivalent to an aberration to the perception of human).

Yoruba Perception of Man

Kanu et al. (2021) clearly asserted that, the Yoruba cultural understanding of the view about man is embedded in the idea that human was specially created different from other creatures. The uniqueness of the human creation is discovered in the combine efforts of *Olodumare* to work with other gods in bringing about human.

Thinking back on what it means to be Eniyan (human) and how they came to be, Gbadegesin (1983) believed that *Eniyan* is the result of the joint efforts of several subordinates and the supreme deity *Olodumare*. The Yoruba notion of a human being includes all of the physical components, such as the brain, intestine, liver, and so forth, that go into making up an individual. The ethereal component known as *emi*, or the soul, is said to be the source of the energy needed for a person to be considered conscious or alive.

In their attempt to depict the relationship between the body, soul, and head, Falola (1998) cited the *Ifá* verse, which stated that the *Òrìṣà-Ìlá* molded the body (*ara*), *Àjàlá* provided the head (*orí*), and *èmí* was provided by *Ọlórún (Olódūmarè)*, God in Yoruba belief. Gbadegesin (1983) divided this relationship into two categories: physical-material and mental-spiritual. The first category includes the body, *èmi* –soul, belongs to the second, and the physical and mental aspects of the head and heart are represented by “*orí*” and “*okàn*” (heart).

Hausa Perception of Man

The third ethnic category in Nigeria to be discussed is the Hausa group. They are the occupants of the Northern part of the country and it is discovered that, the perception of the Hausa about humanity is slightly difficult to relate as a result of the dominance of the Islamic religion in the Northern part of the country. This implies that, most of their cultural orientations, practices and perceptions are shaped and influenced as a result of the practice of the Muslim ideologies that have permeated their identity ranging from their dress sense to their interpersonal relationship with people and way of life as a whole.

As noted by Pawlak (2015) that in language use, Hausa distinguishes between the roles and peculiarities of women from men and this goes to emphasis their social roles as well. She emphasised the place of man saddled with a dignified responsibility of making provisions for his family members to survive, which includes wife and children while the female is described with a primary role of bearing children. But in all this, the room for mutual respect is still encouraged in the sense that there is no

justification for abusing the female gender but rather to realise that they are saddled with responsibility and expectation from the society.

It could be said of the Hausa perception literally that, there is no accommodation for oppression of a fellow human or abuse of either gender as such, life of human could be viewed as sanctified in as much it cannot be created by a fellow man. The act of rape could be categorised under moral evil and Atoi (2022) in addressing the issue of extremism among Northern Nigeria, expressed that, involving in such is an act traced to misuse of the freewill given by God. Therefore, he viewed it as an act of evil against the moral philosophy of the Hausa people.

Engrafting Humane Consciousness into Nigeria Society

The absence of the respect or the acknowledgement of the sanctity and dignity of humanity is discovered to be a major factor that aids the objectification of fellow human to be a sexual object. Victims of rape are seen in the light of sexual object and this is why, the rapists aim at them and forcefully have their ways with them for a one-sided satisfaction.

Woodbridge and Joubert (2018) opined that, in similar way to killing of an innocent person, rape is a grievous offence to God who have created man in his image. This implies that, every man and woman must be seen as an image of God and as such, given essential and basic respect. An understanding of this will help in properly setting the approach to fellow human right and to understand the confines of which having sexual intimacy is appropriate.

From the biblical view and the Nigerian cultural heritage assessment, violation of man is not permitted or encouraged in either way, and this implies that, since Nigerians are either categorised as cultural beings or religious in nature, they are literally bounded by the rules which appreciate valuing fellow man in the society and community as such, the Nigerian mind is to come to an understanding and practical realization that, rape is a violation of man and should be desist from and unanimously condemned in the society. With this understanding among Nigerians, there will be clear push for regarding the lives of all men as valuable and important.

Every man and every woman is to come to a realization that, they are not made to have sex with just any or every person they come across or whom they are sexually attracted to, they are only to have consensual sex with they married spouse. The condition of 'consensual' is adopted in the statement because, rape is not uncommon even in marriage, some men rape their wives while some woman goes to the extent of also raping their husbands. Having the right approach to sexual relationship will help greatly in combating the inhumane act of rape in the Nigerian society as a whole.

Conclusion

Although, Klopper (2010) moved further to classify rape into various forms; stranger rape, acquaintance rape, marital rape and gang rape, in which he presented that some are not to be classified as a violent act, this paper views the fact that, rape in any form is a violent act regardless of how severe its effect is on the victim. As such, the act of rape in any form it can takes should be kicked against in the society and perpetrators of such act should be properly dealt with.

The condemnation of rape or the spread of it as opined in the course of this study does not in any way neglect the role of each individual to be decent in all means and not subjecting oneself to be victims of such scenario. Young ladies and young guys are to watch their company, mode of dressing, verbal utterances among other things that could place them to be victims of rape in contemporary time. Outfits that expose the body, movies that are suggestive of sex among other misnomer are to be discouraged in the society in order to conquer the act of rape in the society.

This work has uniquely adopted the combination of cultural orientation and religious emphasis as an approach to combat and condemn the ac of rape or any form of justification of the act. Even though it appears like some cultural practices or some scriptural compositions appear to justify the rape culture, it is deduced from this paper that, both are in the real sense never in support of the act of rape and as such, since Nigeria falls between the purview of both cultural teaching that encourages humane above barbaric acts and with a tangible number inclined to the religious teachings, it is essential to desist from justifying the act of rape but rather all and sundry are to largely condemn the act of rape in the society and to be intentional about curbing its spread in any way.

Recommendations

The focus of this study has been on curbing the menace and spread of rape as a culture in Nigeria, this paper therefore recommends the following:

- i. Religious leaders should embark on a-mind restructuring campaigns. This is because many act of rape are premeditated than spontaneous. Therefore the mind needs to be worked on to help with right thinking.
- ii. Obvious measures should be taken on rapists rather than only making the case obscured in the society, this will serve as deterrent and warning to potential rapist who is aware of the punishment involved
- iii. Parents and guardians are to ensure that their wards appear as modest as possible in order not to promote unnecessary temptation for themselves.

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DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL IDENTITY AND ITS CHALLENGES IN THE NIGER DELTA

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Abstract

Cultural diversity is one term that seems normal in Nigeria, as it is seen more as strength. But this not always correct. Cultural diversity has subtle and silent pins that pierces unity and creates Thus, the Niger Delta, a region of cultures in southern Nigeria, is home to a multitude of ethnic groups. Each ethnic group possesses a distinct language, belief system, and social structure, contributing to the region's rich cultural tapestry. This very richness, however, presents a unique set of challenges. Examining these complexities is fundamental to fostering social harmony and achieving sustainable development in the Niger Delta. It explains how the region's rich set of cultures contributes to its resilience and vibrancy, while also uncovering the tensions and conflicts arising from competing identities. This discourse focuses on the challenges faced by communities in navigating their identities amidst globalization, resource exploitation, and socio-political upheavals. Thus, the research method utilized for gathering data in this work is predominantly secondary sources of historical study research methods through mainly online channels and websites. This study concludes that if the richness in the potentials of cultural diversity could be utilized, it would be a strength in making the Niger Delta a centre of tourist and foreign direct investment attraction.

Keywords: Culture, identity, challenges, Niger Delta, diversity.

Introduction

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is a mosaic of diverse cultures, each with its own unique traditions, languages, and customs. This diversity is a source of richness and strength, but it also presents challenges in terms of interethnic tensions, resource management, and socio-economic disparities. Understanding and navigating these complexities are crucial for fostering harmony and sustainable development in the region.

Conceptual Clarifications

The paper incorporates and addresses three principal concepts, which should provide clearer insight into cultural identity amidst diversity in Niger Delta. Namely, culture, cultural identity and diversity.

Culture

Culture is a broad concept that encompasses the shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artifacts of a particular group of people. It is like a roadmap that shapes how people in a society interact with the world and with each other. It includes everything from language, religion, art, music and food. Culture is dynamic, meaning it is constantly evolving and adapting over time. It encompasses the shared beliefs, values, norms, behaviours, and symbols that characterize a particular group of people. It encompasses both tangible elements such as language, religion, art, and cuisine, as well as intangible aspects like customs, rituals, and social norms. Culture is transmitted from one generation to another through socialization processes, shaping individual's identities and guiding their interactions within the society. It provides a framework for understanding the world, interpreting experiences, and guiding behaviour. Moreover, culture is not static but rather dynamic and constantly evolving, influenced by historical events, environmental factors, globalization, and interactions with other cultures. This fluidity underscores the complexity and richness of human societies, as well as the importance of cultural diversity in fostering creativity, resilience, and mutual understanding (Leslie, 2022).

Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is a part of who you are and how you see yourself. It is shaped by the cultures you are a part of, such as, your nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, or any other group that has

its own distinct cultural practices. Your cultural identity is influenced by your family, friends, community, and the broader society you live in. It is an ongoing process that can change throughout your life as you learn and experience new things. It refers to the sense of belonging and attachment that individuals feel towards a particular cultural group or community. It encompasses the unique combination of cultural practices, beliefs, values, language, customs, and traditions that shape an individual's self-concept and perception of their place in society. Cultural identity is often formed through socialization processes within families, communities, and institutions, as individuals learn and internalize the norms and values of their cultural heritage. It can be influenced by various factors including ethnicity, nationality, religion, language, socioeconomic status, and geographical location. Cultural identity is dynamic and can evolve over time as individuals navigate interactions with other cultures, adapt to changing environments, and negotiate their multiple identities. It plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' worldview, shaping their relationships with others, and influencing their behaviours, attitudes, and aspirations. Embracing and affirming cultural identity can foster a sense of pride, belonging, and solidarity within communities, while also promoting diversity, tolerance, and mutual respect across different cultural groups (Krischa, et al., 2018).

Diversity

Diversity refers to the variety of human experiences, backgrounds, and characteristics. It goes beyond just race and ethnicity to encompass aspects like gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, ability, religion, and even personality types. In essence, diversity celebrates the richness of the human experience in all its forms. Diversity refers to the presence of a variety of different elements within a group, organization, community, or society. These elements can include but are not limited to differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, socioeconomic status, education, physical abilities, and cultural backgrounds. Diversity encompasses both visible and invisible dimensions of human identity and experience. Embracing diversity involves recognizing, valuing, and respecting the unique perspectives, experiences, and contributions of individuals from different backgrounds. It entails creating inclusive environments where all members feel welcomed, appreciated, and empowered to fully participate and contribute. Diversity fosters creativity, innovation, and resilience by bringing together a range of viewpoints, skills, and talents. It also promotes equity and social justice by addressing systemic barriers and inequalities that limit opportunities for certain groups. Managing diversity involves implementing policies, practices, and initiatives that promote equity, inclusion, and belonging. It requires addressing biases, stereotypes, and prejudices that can hinder collaboration and cooperation among diverse individuals. By fostering an environment of mutual respect, understanding, and collaboration, organizations and communities can leverage on the richness of diversity to achieve their goals and create positive social change (Vedantu, 2024).

Overview of Niger Delta in Nigeria

The Niger Delta region in Nigeria is one of the most culturally diverse and ecologically rich region in Africa. Home to numerous ethnic groups, languages, and cultural practices, the region has a complex history shaped by centuries of interactions with various indigenous communities, European colonial powers, and Nigerian governments. The Niger Delta region has been inhabited for thousands of years by various indigenous peoples, including the Ijaw, Ogoni, Itsekiri, Urhobo, Efik, Ibibio, and many others. These communities traditionally engaged in fishing, farming, and trading, forming distinct cultural identities and socio-political structures. Before European colonization, the Niger Delta was characterized by decentralized societies with complex systems of governance. Trade networks flourished along the region's numerous waterways, connecting local communities with neighbouring regions and beyond. These societies had their own religious beliefs, oral traditions, and artistic expressions. The arrival of European traders and explorers in the 15th century marked a significant turning point in the history of the Niger Delta. European powers, particularly the Portuguese, British, and Dutch, established trading posts along the coast, introducing firearms, alcohol, and manufactured goods into the region. The slave trade became a lucrative business, with millions of Africans forcibly taken from the Niger Delta and sold into slavery in the Americas. In the late 19th century, the British Empire expanded its control over the Niger Delta, annexing the region as part of its colonial territory. The area became known as the Niger Coast Protectorate and later merged with the Northern Nigeria Protectorate to form the colony and protectorate of Nigeria in 1914. Colonial rule brought significant

changes to the region, including the imposition of British law, the introduction of cash crops such as palm oil and rubber, and the exploitation of natural resources (Charles et al., 2023).



Fig 1: Location of Niger Delta Region (source: researchgate.net)

The discovery of oil in commercial quantities in the Niger Delta in the 1950s transformed the region's economy and landscape. Multinational oil companies, including Shell, ExxonMobil, and Chevron, began extracting oil from the region, leading to rapid industrialization and urbanization. However, oil exploration and exploitation have also resulted in environmental degradation, pollution, and social unrest, as local communities have often been marginalized and excluded from the benefits of oil wealth. The Niger Delta has faced numerous environmental and social challenges due to oil pollution, deforestation, land degradation, and climate change. Oil spills, gas flaring, and pipeline vandalism have devastated ecosystems, disrupted livelihoods, and contributed to health problems among local communities. In addition, socio-economic inequalities, political marginalization, and ethnic tensions have fueled conflicts and violence in the region. Frustrations over environmental degradation caused by oil spills and lack of development led to the rise of militant groups in the late 20th century. These groups aimed to disrupt oil production and pressure the government for a fairer share of oil revenue.

Over the years, the people of the Niger Delta have organized themselves into various grassroots movements, advocacy groups, and civil society organizations to demand justice, environmental protection, and socio-economic development. Organizations such as the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), and the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) have campaigned for the rights of local communities and called for greater accountability from the government and oil companies. The Nigerian government has implemented various policies and programmes aimed at addressing the challenges facing the Niger Delta, including the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Presidential Amnesty Program (PAP). These initiatives seek to promote infrastructure development, poverty alleviation, youth empowerment, and conflict resolution in the region. However, their effectiveness has been limited by corruption, mismanagement, and inadequate implementation. Overall, the history and overview of the Niger Delta people in Nigeria reflect a complex interplay of cultural diversity, colonial legacies, economic exploitation, environmental degradation, and social activism. Despite the challenges they face, the people of the Niger Delta continue to demonstrate resilience, resourcefulness, and determination in their struggle for a better future (Charles et al., 2023).

Geographical and Economical/Cultural Background of the Niger Delta Region in Nigeria.



Fig 2: Map of Niger Delta (source: researchgate.net).

The cultural background of the Niger Delta region in Nigeria is deeply intertwined with its geographical and economic context, shaping the identity and experiences of its diverse population.

Geographical Context

Terrain: The Niger Delta is located in the southern part of Nigeria, characterized by a network of rivers, creeks, swamps, and mangrove forests. This unique geographical landscape is formed by the delta of the Niger River, Africa's third-longest river, and covers an area of approximately 70,000 square kilometres.

Biodiversity: The Niger Delta is one of the most ecologically diverse regions in Africa, with rich biodiversity including mangrove forests, freshwater and saltwater ecosystems, and diverse wildlife. The region's natural resources support various economic activities and cultural practices, while also serving as sources of inspiration and spiritual significance for local communities (Asanebi, 2016).

Table 1. Rivers and Estuaries (From West to East) of Niger Delta.

S/N	ESTUARIES	PERCENT OF NIGER DISCHARGE	CONTRIBUTING RIVERS
1.	Benin	0	Ossiomo, Ethiopia-Jamiesoi
2.	Escravos	0	
3.	Forcados	15	Benin
4.	Ramo	24	Ase, Warri, Okpari
5.	Dodo	6	Forcados
6.	Pennington	0	Forcados
7.	Digatoro	<1	—
8.	Engatoro	0	Nun, Forcados
9.	Koluama	3	Nun, Forcados
10.	Fishtown	<1	Nun, Forcados
11.	Sangana	15	Nun, Forcados
12.	Nun	24	Nun, Forcados
13.	Brass	9	Nun, Forcados
14.	St. Nicholas	<1	Orashi

S/N	ESTUARIES	PERCENT OF NIGER DISCHARGE	CONTRIBUTING RIVERS
15.	St. Barbara	0	—
16.	St. Bartholomeo	<1	Orashi
17.	Sombreiro	1	Sombreiro, Orashi
18.	New Calabar	0	New Calabar
19.	Bonny	0	New Calabar
20.	Andoni	0	—
21.	Imo	0	Imo

Source: Asanebi, A concise view of Niger Delta region of Nigeria: An Interpretation of a Nigerian Historian, 2016.

Economic Context

Oil and Gas Industry: The Niger Delta is Nigeria's primary oil-producing region, accounting for the majority of the country's oil and gas reserves. The discovery of oil in commercial quantities in the 1950s transformed the region's economy and landscape, attracting multinational oil companies and government investments in extraction, refining, and exportation.

Agriculture and Fishing: Despite the dominance of the oil industry, agriculture and fishing remain important economic activities in the Niger Delta. The region's fertile soils and abundant water resources support the cultivation of crops such as cassava, plantain, yam, and palm oil, while fishing communities thrive along the region's extensive network of waterways.

Informal Economy: In addition to formal economic sectors, the Niger Delta is also characterized by a vibrant informal economy, including small-scale trading, artisanal activities, and household enterprises. Informal economic activities provide livelihoods for many residents, especially in rural and peri-urban areas, and contribute to the region's socio-economic dynamics (Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group, 2021).

Cultural Implications

Cultural Diversity: The geographical and economic diversity of the Niger Delta region is reflected in its cultural landscape, with numerous ethnic groups, languages, and cultural practices coexisting within the area. The region's cultural diversity is a source of strength and resilience, fostering creativity, innovation, and mutual understanding among communities.

Environmental Awareness: The Niger Delta's natural environment plays a central role in shaping cultural practices and worldviews, with local communities maintaining deep connections to the land, water, and wildlife. Environmental degradation, pollution, and resource exploitation have heightened awareness of ecological issues and inspired grassroots activism and advocacy for environmental justice and sustainable development.

Social Inequality and Conflict: Despite its natural wealth, the Niger Delta grapples with socio-economic inequalities, political marginalization, and conflicts arising from competition over resources, land rights, and political power. Economic disparities and social injustices have fueled tensions and grievances within communities, contributing to social unrest, militancy, and interethnic conflicts in the region. Understanding the relationship between geography, economy, and culture is essential for comprehending the complexities of the region and addressing its challenges while harnessing its potentials for sustainable development and cultural resilience (Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group, 2021).

Nature of Niger Delta Culture

The Niger Delta boasts a vibrant cultural tapestry woven from the traditions of various ethnicities.

Deep Connection to the Environment: The Delta's intricate network of rivers, creeks, and swamps has shaped a unique lifestyle. Fishing, farming, and navigating waterways are central to the cultural identity of many communities.

Rich Artistic Heritage: The Niger Delta has a longstanding tradition of artistic expression. Sculptures, masks, and beadwork depicting their gods, spirits, and the natural world are hallmarks of their artistic heritage.

Vibrant Music and Dance: Music and dance are deeply ingrained in Niger Delta culture. Traditional instruments like drums, flutes, and rattles accompany lively music and energetic dances performed during festivals and celebrations.

Strong Emphasis on Community: Communal living and social cohesion are fundamental aspects of Niger Delta culture. Extended families and age groups play a vital role in social support and resolving conflicts.

Ancestral Veneration and Spirituality: Ancestral spirits and various deities are believed to hold influence over daily life. Traditional belief systems co-exist with Christianity, which has also incorporated some indigenous practices.

Ethnic Diversity: The Niger Delta is home to a multitude of ethnic groups, each with its own distinct language, customs, and traditions. Prominent ethnicities include the Ijaw, Urhobo, Itsekiri, Ogoni, Efik, Ibibio, and Isoko, among others. This diversity contributes to the region's cultural richness and complexity, with each group contributing unique elements to the broader tapestry of Niger Delta culture.

Language and Communication: Linguistic diversity is a hallmark of Niger Delta culture, with hundreds of languages spoken across the region. While English serves as the lingua franca and official language of Nigeria, many Niger Delta communities also speak their indigenous languages. These languages are not just tools for communication but are integral to preserving cultural heritage, passing down oral traditions, and fostering a sense of identity among community members.

Cultural Practices and Traditions: The Niger Delta is renowned for its rich array of cultural practices and traditions, including music, dance, folklore, storytelling, and festivals. Traditional music is often accompanied by indigenous instruments such as the talking drum, ogene, ekwe, and various percussion instruments. Dance forms like the Ekombi, Ekpe, Owu, and Odezi are deeply rooted in local history and serve as expressions of cultural identity and community cohesion.

Religion and Belief Systems: Religion plays a significant role in Niger Delta culture, with a blend of indigenous African religions, Christianity, Islam, and syncretic faiths coexisting in the region. Traditional belief systems often revolve around reverence for nature, ancestral worship, and spiritual rituals aimed at maintaining harmony with the natural world. Christianity and Islam, introduced during colonial and pre-colonial eras respectively, have also left indelible marks on Niger Delta culture, influencing religious practices, beliefs, and social norms.

Economic Activities and Livelihoods: The culture of the Niger Delta is closely intertwined with its natural environment, with fishing, farming, and trading being traditional livelihoods for many communities. Fishing communities thrive along the region's intricate network of rivers, creeks, and estuaries, while farming activities focus on crops such as cassava, plantain, yam, and palm oil. Trade has historically been vital, with communities engaged in local and regional exchange networks, contributing to cultural exchange and economic vitality.

Social Organization and Governance: Traditional social structures in the Niger Delta are often based on kinship ties, communal solidarity, and hierarchical arrangements. Extended families, clans, and age-grade systems play central roles in social organization, governance, and conflict resolution. Chiefs, traditional rulers, and community leaders hold authority and influence within their respective domains, overseeing communal affairs and representing their people in external relations.

Environmental and Cultural Sustainability: The Niger Delta's cultural heritage is deeply intertwined with its natural environment, and efforts to preserve cultural traditions often intersect with initiatives to protect the region's biodiversity and ecosystems. Indigenous knowledge systems, practices, and values related to sustainable resource management, conservation, and adaptation to environmental changes play crucial roles in ensuring the resilience and survival of Niger Delta communities amidst ecological challenges (Oronto & Ike, 2018).

Examples of Cultural Practices in Niger Delta

Cultural practices in the Niger Delta region encompass a wide range of traditions, rituals, and customs that are deeply rooted in the history, beliefs, and values of the diverse ethnic groups that inhabit the area.

Festivals and Celebrations: Iria Festival (Ijaw): The Iria festival is a rite of passage ceremony among the Ijaw people, marking the transition of young girls into womanhood. During the festival, girls undergo purification rituals, receive blessings from elders, and participate in dances and cultural performances. Owu Festival (Urhobo): The Owu festival is celebrated by the Urhobo people to honour the deity of agriculture and fertility. It involves rituals, prayers, and sacrifices to ensure bountiful harvests and prosperity for the community.

Music and Dance: Ekombi Dance (Efik): The Ekombi dance is a traditional dance performed by the Efik people during cultural events and ceremonies. It involves rhythmic movements, colourful costumes, and live music played on indigenous instruments such as drums, flutes, and rattles. Odi Dance (Ijaw): The Odi dance is a lively and energetic dance performed by the Ijaw people during social gatherings and festivals. It features acrobatic movements, footwork, and synchronized gestures to the beat of traditional music.

Rituals and Ceremonies: New Yam Festival (Igbo): Though predominantly celebrated by the Igbo people, variations of the New Yam Festival are also observed by some ethnic groups in the Niger Delta region. It involves giving thanks to the gods for a successful harvest, offering prayers for the coming year, and sharing yam dishes with family and community members.

Water Spirits Festival (Ijaw): The Water Spirits festival is held annually by the Ijaw people to honour the spirits believed to inhabit rivers and water bodies. Participants engage in rituals, prayers, and offerings to appease the spirits and seek their protection and blessings.

Craftsmanship and Artistry: Pottery Making (Urhobo): The Urhobo people are known for their pottery-making tradition, producing intricately designed clay pots, bowls, and sculptures using traditional techniques passed down through generations. These pottery items serve both practical and ceremonial purposes within Urhobo culture. Beadwork (Ijaw): Beadwork is a significant aspect of Ijaw culture, with artisans creating intricate bead designs to adorn clothing, jewellery, and ceremonial regalia. Beadwork often carries symbolic meanings related to status, spirituality, and cultural identity.

Healing and Spiritual Practices: Egbesu Worship (Ijaw): Egbesu worship is a spiritual practice among the Ijaw people. It is centred on the veneration of Egbesu, the god of war and protection. Practitioners perform rituals, prayers, and sacrifices to invoke Egbesu's blessings and seek divine intervention in times of crisis or conflict.

Divination (Urhobo): Divination is a traditional practice among the Urhobo people, involving the consultation of oracles and diviners to seek guidance, insight, and solutions to personal or communal problems. Divination rituals often involve the use of symbolic objects, such as cowrie shells or kola nuts, and are conducted with utmost reverence and respect for spiritual forces.

Masquerades: Masquerades are a prominent feature in Niger Delta cultures. They are often associated with ancestral spirits and secret societies. During festivals and ceremonies, masquerades perform elaborate dances and dramas, often conveying moral lessons or historical narratives.

Traditional Institutions: Traditional institutions, such as chieftaincies and councils of elders, play a significant role in governance and social order within Niger Delta communities. These institutions help to maintain peace, mediate disputes, and ensure adherence to customary laws.

Food Culture: The cuisine of the Niger Delta is known for its use of seafood, spices, and starchy staples like yams and plantains. Popular dishes include jollof rice, a tomato-based rice dish with meat or fish, and egusi soup, a thick soup made with melon seeds. These cultural practices are not merely symbolic; they are deeply embedded in the everyday lives of the people of the Niger Delta. They serve to strengthen social bonds, transmit knowledge from generation to generation, and provide a sense of identity and belonging (George & Rowland, 2015).

Major Cultural Ethnicities and Identities in Niger Delta.

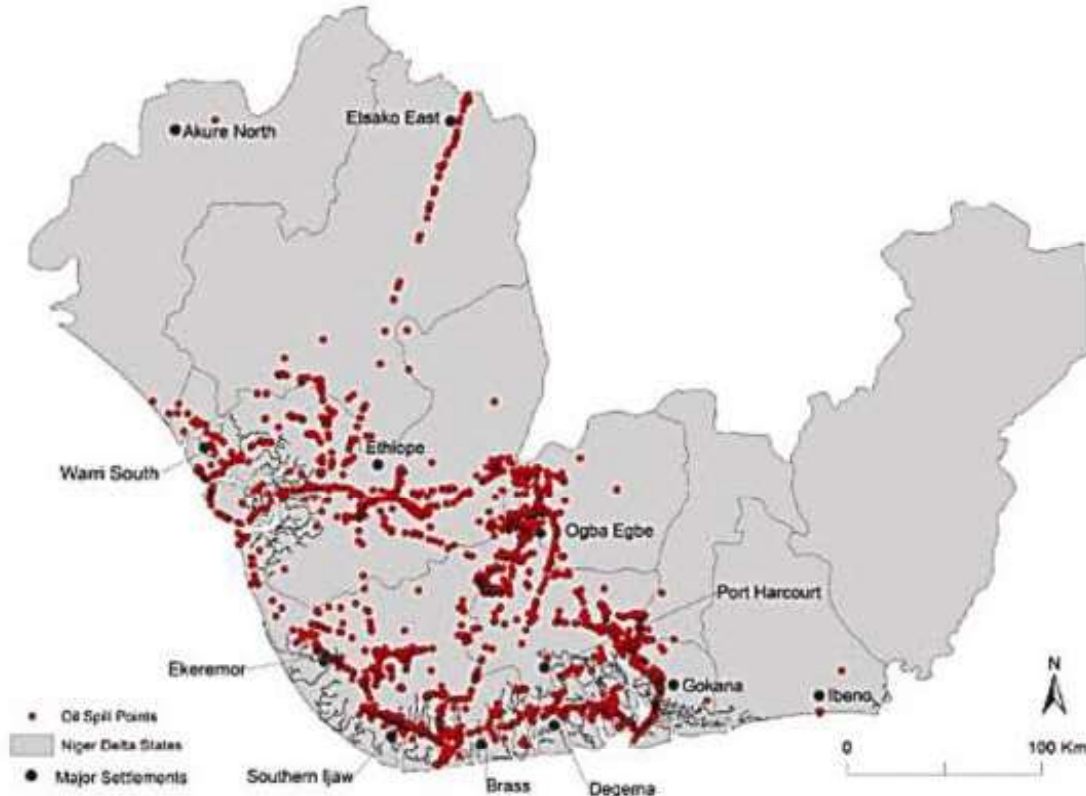


Fig 3: Map of Niger Delta Showing Ethnicities (source: Kingsley, 2021, sciencedirect.com).

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is incredibly diverse, with numerous ethnicities and cultural identities. Some of the prominent ethnic groups in the region include:

Ijaw: The Ijaw people are one of the largest ethnic groups in the Niger Delta. They are known for their rich cultural heritage, which includes festivals, dances, and a deep connection to the waterways. Predominantly in Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States. They are known for, Fishing, farming, vibrant festivals (e.g., the Ijaw Boat Regatta), traditional architecture, and the preservation of indigenous traditions and beliefs.

Itsekiri: The Itsekiri people are primarily found in Warri and its environs. They have a unique language, culture, and history, with significant contributions to the region's commerce and trade. Concentrated around Warri in Delta State, they are known for, maritime heritage, fishing, trading, the annual Olu of Warri Coronation Ceremony, and their distinct language.

Urhobo: The Urhobo people are another major ethnic group in the Niger Delta. They are known for their agricultural practices, traditional religion, and colourful festivals. agriculture (farming of crops like cassava, yam, and plantain), traditional wrestling (Otor-Udu), colourful festivals (e.g., the Urhobo Cultural Festival), and their unique linguistic and cultural practices.

Isoko: The Isoko people, closely related to the Urhobo, inhabit parts of Delta State. They have a distinct language and cultural practices, including masquerade festivals and communal celebrations. Majorly in Delta State, predominantly in Isoko land. They are known for Farming (cultivation of crops like cassava, yam, and maize), masquerade festivals (e.g., the Ema festival), traditional wrestling, and their distinct language and cultural heritage.

Ogoni: The Ogoni people reside mainly in Rivers State. They have a rich cultural heritage, including traditional religious practices and colorful festivals. Mainly in Rivers State, particularly in Ogoni land. They are also known for agriculture, fishing, traditional crafts (such as pottery and weaving), colorful festivals (e.g., the Ogoni Day Celebration), and activism for environmental and social justice.

Efik: The Efik people are primarily found in Cross River State. They have a unique language and cultural practices, including the famous Calabar Carnival, known for its elaborate costumes and vibrant performances. In Cross River State, notably in Calabar. Notably known for rich culinary traditions (including delicacies like Afang soup and Edikang Ikong), the annual Calabar Carnival (Africa's biggest street party), traditional architecture (e.g., the Ekpe masquerade houses), and their vibrant cultural festivals.

Ibibio: Also from Cross River State, the Ibibio people have a rich cultural heritage, including traditional dances, festivals, and cuisine.

Anang: Another ethnic group from Cross River State, the Anang people have their own language and cultural practices, including traditional music and dance forms. In Cross River State, primarily in the Akwa Ibom area. Known for, agriculture, craftsmanship (such as woodcarving and pottery), traditional music and dance forms (e.g., Ekombi and Obodom), and their contributions to the cultural heritage of the region.

Ibibio: In Cross River State, particularly in the Akwa Ibom area. Notably known for, agriculture (farming of crops like cassava, cocoyam, and plantain), traditional dance forms (e.g., Ekombi and Abang), colourful festivals (e.g., the Ibibio New Yam Festival), and their unique language and cultural practices.

These are just a few examples, as there are many more ethnic groups and sub-groups within the Niger Delta, each of these ethnicities contributes to the vibrant cultural tapestry of the region, Nigeria, with distinct traditions, languages, and practices that reflect their rich history, identity and heritage (George & Rowland, 2015).

Challenges of Cultural Diversity in Niger Delta

Cultural diversity in the Niger Delta presents various challenges, some of which are exemplified by real-life instances:

Ethnic Tensions: The region's diverse ethnicities can sometimes lead to tensions and conflicts, such as the historic conflicts between the Ijaw and Itsekiri communities over land and resource ownership, as seen in the Warri crisis of the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Resource Control: Control over the region's rich oil and gas resources has been a contentious issue, leading to conflicts between ethnic groups and the Nigerian government. For example, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) emerged as a response to perceived marginalization and environmental degradation caused by oil exploration.

Environmental Degradation: The Niger Delta has suffered significant environmental degradation due to oil spills, gas flaring, and other industrial activities, affecting the livelihoods and cultural practices of indigenous communities. Instances such as the Bodo oil spills in Ogoni land highlight the ongoing environmental challenges faced by local communities.

Marginalization and Displacement: Indigenous communities in the Niger Delta often face marginalization and displacement due to large-scale development projects and infrastructural developments. For example, the construction of dams and oil pipelines has led to the displacement of communities like the Ogoni and Ijaw people, disrupting their cultural practices and traditional way of life.

Loss of Cultural Heritage: Rapid urbanization and globalization pose threat to the preservation of traditional cultural practices and languages in the Niger Delta. For instance, younger generations may be more inclined to adopt Western lifestyles, leading to a decline in the transmission of indigenous knowledge and cultural traditions.

Political Instability: Political instability in the region, exacerbated by factors such as corruption and electoral violence, hampers efforts to address cultural diversity challenges effectively. Instances of political violence, such as the electoral violence witnessed during elections in states like Rivers and Delta, undermine peace and stability in the region.

Language Barrier: The region's linguistic diversity can hinder communication and integration, particularly in education and governance. For example, in some communities, the lack of educational materials in local languages hampers access to quality education, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and marginalization.

Religious Differences: Religious diversity, with a mix of Christianity, Islam, and indigenous beliefs, can sometimes lead to tensions and conflicts. Instances include inter-religious violence, such as

clashes between Christian and Muslim communities in areas like Jos, which could spill over into the Niger Delta region.

Gender Inequality: Traditional gender roles and practices in some ethnic groups can perpetuate gender inequality, limiting women's access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Instances include the prevalence of harmful cultural practices like female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage, which continue to affect women and girls in the region.

Health Disparities: Health disparities exist among different ethnic groups in the Niger Delta, exacerbated by factors such as poverty, limited access to healthcare facilities, and cultural beliefs about illness and treatment. For example, the prevalence of diseases like malaria and cholera is higher in rural communities with limited healthcare infrastructure.

Youth Unemployment: High levels of youth unemployment, exacerbated by limited job opportunities and skills mismatch, pose a significant challenge in the Niger Delta. Instances include youth involvement in militancy and criminal activities as a result of frustration and lack of economic prospects, as seen in the activities of groups like the Niger Delta Avengers.

Cultural Appropriation: The commercialization and commodification of indigenous cultures can lead to cultural appropriation and exploitation. For example, the use of traditional symbols and artifacts in mainstream media and fashion without proper acknowledgment or respect for their cultural significance can erode the authenticity and integrity of indigenous cultures.

Cultural Erosion: Rapid modernization and globalization have led to the erosion of traditional cultural practices and values in the Niger Delta. For example, the introduction of Western education and media has contributed to the decline of indigenous languages, customs, and belief systems among younger generations, leading to cultural homogenization and identity crises.

Inter-generational Conflict: Differences in values and perceptions between older and younger generations within ethnic communities can lead to inter-generational conflict and tension. Instances include disagreements over traditional versus modern lifestyles, educational choices, and career aspirations, which may strain family and community relationships.

Corruption and Governance Challenges: Corruption and ineffective governance exacerbate cultural diversity challenges in the Niger Delta by perpetuating inequality, injustice, and impunity. Real-life instances include embezzlement of funds meant for community development projects, favoritism in resource allocation, and manipulation of ethnic identities for political gain, which undermine trust and social cohesion.

Environmental Injustice: Indigenous communities in the Niger Delta often bear the brunt of environmental degradation and pollution caused by oil and gas activities, without adequate compensation or redress. Real-life instances include cases of oil spills, gas flaring, and deforestation, which contaminate water sources, degrade farmlands, and threaten livelihoods, disproportionately affecting marginalized ethnic groups.

Cultural Stereotypes and Stigmatization: Ethnic stereotypes and stigmatization can lead to discrimination and social exclusion within the Niger Delta region. Real-life instances include negative portrayals of certain ethnic groups in the media, stereotypes about criminality or backwardness based on cultural practices, and discrimination in employment or educational opportunities, which perpetuate social divisions and prejudice.

Land Disputes: Land ownership and usage are sources of contention among various ethnic groups in the Niger Delta, leading to conflicts over resource control and territorial boundaries. Real-life instances include disputes between farming communities and oil companies over land acquisition and compensation for environmental damage caused by oil exploration and exploitation.

Inadequate Infrastructure Development: Many communities in the Niger Delta lack basic infrastructure such as roads, schools, and healthcare facilities, which disproportionately affects marginalized ethnic groups. Real-life instances include instances where certain communities are neglected in terms of infrastructure development, leading to social and economic disparities based on ethnicity.

Limited Access to Education: Educational opportunities are often limited in the Niger Delta, particularly in rural areas, which can perpetuate cycles of poverty and marginalization among certain ethnic groups. Real-life instances include instances where children from minority ethnic groups have limited access to quality education due to factors such as lack of schools, trained teachers, and educational materials.

Cultural Misunderstandings in Governance: Cultural diversity can sometimes lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations in governance and decision-making processes. Real-life instances include instances where government policies and programs fail to consider the cultural practices and preferences of minority ethnic groups, leading to tensions and resistance from affected communities.

External Influences and Cultural Hegemony: External influences such as globalization and mass media can lead to the dominance of certain cultural norms and values over others, which can marginalize minority ethnic groups and erode their cultural identity. Real-life instances include instances where Western cultural norms and values are promoted at the expense of indigenous cultural practices, leading to cultural homogenization and loss of diversity.

Economic Exploitation and Dependency: Economic exploitation by external actors such as multinational corporations can exacerbate cultural diversity challenges in the Niger Delta. Real-life instances include instances where indigenous communities are exploited for their natural resources without adequate compensation or benefit-sharing, leading to economic dependency and social dislocation.

Lack of Cultural Preservation Initiative: There is often a lack of initiatives to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of minority ethnic groups in the Niger Delta, which can lead to the loss of traditional knowledge and practices. Real-life instances include instances where traditional cultural festivals and rituals are neglected or forgotten due to lack of support and recognition from government authorities and civil society organizations.

Erosion of Social Cohesion: Rapid urbanization and migration within the Niger Delta can erode traditional social structures and community cohesion, leading to social fragmentation and alienation among ethnic groups. Real-life instances include instances where urbanization and migration lead to the breakdown of extended family networks and communal solidarity, resulting in social isolation and vulnerability among marginalized communities.

Lack of Representation in Decision-Making: Minority ethnic groups in the Niger Delta often lack adequate representation in decision-making bodies and governance structures, which can marginalize their interests and concerns. Real-life instances include instances where decisions about resource allocation and development priorities are made without consulting or involving minority ethnic groups, leading to feelings of exclusion and disenfranchisement.

Cultural Appropriation in Tourism: The promotion of tourism in the Niger Delta can sometimes lead to the appropriation of indigenous cultures for commercial gain, without proper acknowledgment or respect for the cultural rights of local communities. Real-life instances include instances where tourist attractions and cultural sites are marketed using indigenous cultural symbols and practices, but local communities do not receive equitable benefits or control over tourism revenues.

Threats to Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Traditional knowledge systems and practices in the Niger Delta are increasingly threatened by external influences and modernization, leading to the loss of valuable cultural heritage and ecological wisdom. Real-life instances include instances where traditional ecological knowledge about medicinal plants and sustainable resource management is marginalized in favour of Western scientific approaches, leading to biodiversity loss and environmental degradation.

Inequality in Access to Justice: Ethnic minorities in the Niger Delta often face barriers to accessing justice and legal redress for human rights violations and environmental injustices. Real-life instances include instances where indigenous communities affected by oil spills and land grabs struggle to seek legal recourse due to lack of legal representation, intimidation, and corruption within the judicial system.

Psychosocial Impacts of Conflict: Ethnic conflicts and violence in the Niger Delta can have profound psychosocial impacts on affected communities, including trauma, fear, and intergenerational cycles of violence. Real-life instances include instances where communities traumatized by armed conflicts and communal clashes struggle to rebuild social trust and cohesion, leading to cycles of revenge and retaliation.

Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from government authorities, civil society organizations, and local communities to promote cultural diversity, protect the rights of minority ethnic groups, and ensure inclusive development that respects and celebrates the region's rich cultural heritage (Charles, 2000).

Benefits and Advantages of Cultural Identity in Niger Delta

Cultural Heritage Preservation: The diverse cultural identities in the Niger Delta contribute to a vibrant tapestry of traditions, languages, and customs, enriching the region's cultural landscape. The Eyo Festival in Lagos State showcases the cultural diversity of the Yoruba people through colourful masquerades, music, and dance. Embracing cultural identity helps preserve and promote the rich heritage of the Niger Delta's diverse ethnic groups. For example; The annual Argungu Fishing Festival in Kebbi State celebrates the cultural heritage of the Hausa people, showcasing traditional fishing techniques, music, and dance.

Social Cohesion and Unity: Cultural identity fosters a sense of belonging and solidarity among community members, promoting social cohesion and unity. For example; the Durbar festival in Kano State brings together people from diverse ethnic backgrounds to celebrate Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha with colourful parades and horse-riding displays.

Cultural Exchange and Understanding: Cultural identity encourages dialogue and exchange between different ethnic groups, fostering mutual understanding and respect. Real-life instance: The Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove in Osun State is a UNESCO World Heritage Site where people of various backgrounds gather to celebrate the Yoruba deity Osun, promoting intercultural dialogue and exchange. The New Yam Festival celebrated by various ethnic groups in southeastern Nigeria, such as the Igbo and Ibibio, promotes intercultural dialogue and mutual respect for diverse traditions and beliefs.

Economic Opportunities: Cultural identity can be a source of economic opportunities through tourism, cultural industries, and artisanal crafts. For example; The Calabar Carnival in Cross River State attracts thousands of tourists annually, boosting the local economy and creating employment opportunities in hospitality, entertainment, and tourism-related businesses.

Identity Empowerment: Cultural identity empowers individuals and communities to assert their rights, preserve their traditions, and resist marginalization. Real-life instance: The Ogoni people's campaign against environmental degradation and oil exploitation in the Niger Delta, led by activists like Ken Saro-Wiwa, illustrates how cultural identity can mobilize communities for social and environmental justice.

Innovation and Creativity: Cultural identity inspires innovation and creativity, as individuals draw on traditional knowledge and practices to address contemporary challenges. The use of traditional building techniques and materials in the construction of eco-friendly homes in rural communities demonstrates how cultural identity can drive sustainable development and innovation. The use of traditional Igbo motifs in contemporary fashion designs by Nigerian designers such as Lisa Folawiyo and Maki Oh demonstrates how cultural diversity inspires creativity and innovation.

Cultural Diplomacy: Cultural identity serves as a tool for diplomacy and international relations, fostering goodwill and cooperation between nations. The annual African Drums Festival in Ogun State promotes cultural exchange and collaboration between African countries, strengthening diplomatic ties and cultural diplomacy efforts on the continent. Nigeria's hosting of the World Festival of Black Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in 1977 strengthened diplomatic ties and cultural exchange between African countries and the global community.

Resilience and Adaptation: Cultural identity equips communities with resilience and adaptive capacities to withstand environmental, social, and economic changes. The resilience of the Fulani nomads in the face of climate change and land degradation demonstrates how cultural identity can help communities adapt to environmental challenges and maintain sustainable livelihoods. The Ogoni people's advocacy for environmental justice and sustainable development in the Niger Delta, led by activists like Ken Saro-Wiwa, illustrates how cultural diversity can mobilize communities for positive change and resilience-building efforts.

Tourism and Cultural Exchange: Cultural diversity attracts tourists and promotes cultural exchange, boosting the economy and creating opportunities for cultural tourism and heritage preservation. Real-life instance: The Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) held in Lagos in 1977 brought together artists, musicians, and performers from across Africa and the diaspora, showcasing the region's cultural diversity to a global audience.

Inclusive Development: Embracing cultural diversity promotes inclusive development by ensuring that all ethnic groups have a voice in decision-making processes and equitable access to resources and opportunities. For example; Community-driven development initiatives in the Niger

Delta, such as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), aim to empower marginalized communities and promote inclusive development through participatory decision-making and resource allocation (Kolawole & Abel, 2018).

These benefits highlight the importance of preserving and promoting cultural identity in the Niger Delta and beyond, as a source of strength, resilience, and enrichment for individuals, communities, and societies.

Disadvantages of Cultural Identity in Niger Delta

- **Ethnic Tensions:** Differences in cultural identity can sometimes lead to inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts over resources, power, and representation. These tensions can hinder social cohesion and economic development in the region.
- **Marginalization of Minority Groups:** Certain ethnic groups may feel marginalized or excluded from decision-making processes, economic opportunities, and social services, leading to feelings of inequality and resentment.
- **Stereotyping and Prejudice:** Cultural identity can be a basis for stereotypes and prejudice, both within and outside the region. Stereotypes may lead to discrimination and stigmatization of certain ethnic groups, limiting their opportunities and social mobility.
- **Resistance to Change:** Strong attachment to cultural identity may hinder adaptation to modernization and development initiatives, leading to resistance to change and reluctance to adopt new practices or technologies.
- **Limited Social Mobility:** In some cases, rigid adherence to cultural norms and traditions may limit social mobility, particularly for marginalized groups such as women and minority ethnicities, who may face barriers to education, employment, and leadership roles.
- **Divisiveness in Politics:** Politicians sometimes exploit ethnic identities for political gain, exacerbating divisions and conflicts within communities. Identity-based politics can undermine democratic processes and perpetuate cycles of violence and instability.
- **Cultural Stagnation:** Excessive focus on preserving cultural identity may hinder cultural evolution and innovation, preventing communities from adapting to changing social, economic, and environmental conditions.
- **Lack of Unity and Resistance to Change:** Diversity in cultural identities can sometimes lead to fragmentation and lack of unity within the region, making it challenging to address common issues and pursue collective goals.
- **Impediment to National Integration:** Overemphasis on cultural identity may undermine efforts towards national integration and unity, as it reinforces differences rather than promoting a sense of shared citizenship and belonging.
- **Vulnerability to External Influence:** Cultural identity may be vulnerable to external influences such as globalization, which can lead to the erosion of traditional practices and values, weakening the fabric of cultural identity in the Niger Delta.
- **Difficulty in Governance and Policy-making:** Governing a region with diverse cultural identities can be challenging, as policies and decisions may need to accommodate the interests, values, and preferences of multiple ethnic groups, making consensus-building and effective governance more difficult (Olayinka, 2016).

Addressing these disadvantages requires efforts to promote dialogue, reconciliation, and mutual respect among different cultural groups, as well as policies that promote social justice, equal opportunities, and inclusive development for all inhabitants of the Niger Delta.

Impacts of the Challenges of Diverse Cultural Identity in Niger Delta

The challenges associated with diverse cultural identity in the Niger Delta have significant impacts on various aspects of life in the region:

Social Cohesion: Inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts resulting from diverse cultural identities can erode social cohesion, trust, and solidarity among communities, leading to divisions and polarization within society.

Economic Development: Ethnic tensions and marginalization of minority groups hinder economic development in the Niger Delta by creating barriers to investment, entrepreneurship, and

cooperation. Lack of social cohesion and stability also discourage long-term investments and economic activities.

Governance and Political Stability: Identity-based politics and ethnic tensions pose challenges to governance and political stability in the Niger Delta. Politicians may exploit ethnic divisions for electoral gains, leading to polarization, violence, and instability.

Infrastructure and Service Delivery: Ethnic tensions and conflicts can disrupt infrastructure development and service delivery in the Niger Delta, as resources may be diverted towards addressing security challenges rather than improving infrastructure, healthcare, education, and other essential services.

Environmental Degradation: Inadequate governance and ethnic conflicts exacerbate environmental degradation in the Niger Delta, as disputes over land and resources lead to unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, deforestation, pollution, and ecological damage.

Human Rights Violations: Ethnic tensions and conflicts often result in human rights violations, including displacement, discrimination, violence, and abuses against minority groups. This undermines the rights and dignity of individuals and communities in the region.

Wealth and Well-being: Social tensions and conflicts negatively impact the health and well-being of people in the Niger Delta, as insecurity, displacement, and lack of access to healthcare services exacerbate health challenges, including disease outbreaks and mental health issues.

Educational Opportunities: Ethnic tensions and discrimination can affect access to education and educational quality in the Niger Delta, as marginalized groups may face barriers such as discrimination, lack of resources, and insecurity, limiting their educational opportunities and outcomes.

Cultural Preservation: Ethnic tensions and conflicts may threaten the preservation of cultural heritage and diversity in the Niger Delta, as communities prioritize survival and security over cultural practices, traditions, and languages.

International Perception and Investment: Ethnic tensions and conflicts in the Niger Delta negatively impact the region's international reputation and attractiveness for investment, tourism, and development assistance, further exacerbating economic and social challenges (Wilson, 2008).

Way Forward

To move forward in the Niger Delta region while embracing its diverse cultural identity facilitate inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation processes, address grievances and build trust among communities a number of things can be done. These involve creating platforms for constructive engagement, fostering mutual understanding, and resolving conflicts peacefully; ensure inclusive governance structures that represent the diverse cultural identities of the Niger Delta; empower minority ethnic groups and marginalized communities by involving them in decision-making processes, policy formulation, and resource allocation; implement sustainable development initiatives that take into account the cultural values, traditions, and aspirations of different ethnic groups in the Niger Delta; foster community-led development projects that promote social equity, environmental sustainability, and economic empowerment; support efforts to preserve, celebrate, and promote the cultural heritage of the Niger Delta's diverse ethnicities; invest in cultural education, heritage preservation programs, and cultural tourism initiatives that showcase the region's rich cultural diversity to both local and international audiences; promote economic empowerment and social inclusion initiatives that benefit all ethnic groups in the Niger Delta; prioritize investments in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and livelihood opportunities that address the needs of marginalized communities and promote shared prosperity; strengthen conflict resolution mechanisms at the community, local, and regional levels to address inter-ethnic tensions and disputes; build capacity for mediation, arbitration, and peace building efforts to prevent and manage conflicts effectively; address environmental degradation and promote sustainable resource management practices that respect cultural values and indigenous knowledge systems; involve local communities in environmental conservation efforts and ensure that development projects prioritize environmental sustainability; promote intercultural understanding, tolerance, and respect among different ethnic groups in the Niger Delta; foster cultural exchange programs, educational initiatives, and community events that celebrate diversity and promote cross-cultural dialogue; address social inequities, including poverty, inequality, and discrimination, that perpetuate ethnic tensions and marginalization in the Niger Delta; implement policies and programs that promote social justice, human rights, and inclusive development for all residents of the region; foster resilience and unity among the diverse cultural identities of the Niger Delta by emphasizing shared values, aspirations, and common goals; encourage collaboration, solidarity, and collective action towards building a more prosperous, peaceful, and inclusive future for the region. By adopting and implementing these, the Niger Delta region can harness the strength of its diverse

cultural identity to overcome challenges, promote sustainable development, and build a more cohesive and prosperous society for all its inhabitants.

Conclusion

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is characterized by its rich and diverse cultural identity, encompassing numerous ethnicities, languages, traditions, and customs. This cultural diversity is a source of strength, resilience, and vibrancy, reflecting the region's rich historical, cultural heritage contributing to Nigeria's image internationally. However, alongside its benefits, the diversity of cultural identity in the Niger Delta also presents significant challenges that must be addressed to foster social cohesion, economic development, and peace in the region. The challenges stemming from cultural diversity include inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts, marginalization of minority groups, language barriers, stereotypes and prejudice. These challenges undermine social cohesion, economic prosperity, and political stability, hindering the region's progress and development. Additionally, external influences, identity-based politics, and environmental degradation exacerbate the complexities of managing cultural diversity in the Niger Delta. To address these challenges, concerted efforts are needed to promote dialogue, reconciliation, and inclusive governance, while also prioritizing sustainable development, social justice, and environmental sustainability. Embracing cultural diversity and identity as a source of strength and resilience, the Niger Delta can foster intercultural understanding, promote equitable development, and build a more inclusive and cohesive society for all its inhabitants. Thus, by recognizing and addressing the challenges of cultural diversity while harnessing its benefits, the Niger Delta can unlock its full potential as a vibrant and prosperous region that celebrates its rich cultural heritage and embraces its diverse identities. Only through collaborative efforts and a commitment to inclusivity and social justice can the Niger Delta overcome its challenges and chart a path towards a more peaceful, united, and sustainable future.

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INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS-EAST SENATORIAL DISTRICT, RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated influence of principals' management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State. Descriptive research design was used for the study. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study comprised 2,444 teachers in public senior secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select a target figure of 343 teachers which was determined using Taro-Yamane formula. The research instrument was titled: "Management of Strategies and Organisational Resilience Questionnaire" (MSORQ) which was used for data collection. The reliability coefficient for (MSORQ) was $r=0.79$ and was established using the test-retest method. Mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (SD) were used to answer the research questions while Independent sample t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study concluded that there was positive influence of principals' financial, personnel, school facility management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District. The study further revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the influence of principals' financial, personnel, school facility management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District. It was recommended among others that; Ministry of Education should be more concerned about principals training and re-training on cutting edge management strategies such as financial, personnel, school facility management strategies in order to enhance organisational resilience in public secondary schools.

Keywords: Management, strategies, financial, personnel, school facility, organisational, resilience

Introduction

The number and complexity of organizations, establishments, parastatals, and educational institutions, such as secondary schools, are growing in today's modern societies. To fill leadership positions, these entities typically need a large number of individuals with advanced technical, managerial, and administrative skills. It goes without saying that Nigeria's educational system has made significant contributions to the country's economy by producing skilled labor and fostering the development of values, knowledge, and skills. Due to the economic downturn and accompanying

increase in costs, there has been a significant increase in the number of students and the spread of schools across the nation in the twenty-first century, but there hasn't been a commensurate increase in the number of facilities. The principal's leadership is essential to the functioning of the school as an organizational unit and to the management of secondary schools during these difficult times. This implies that the degree to which the principal or other school administrator successfully and efficiently combines conceptual knowledge, interpersonal skills, and management techniques to achieve the highest possible educational outcomes will determine how effective the school system is. As a result, Nwagwu (2018) stressed the crucial role a principle plays in the teaching and learning process. Put another way, he is the change agent that uses other resources for the production function and organisational resilience in his capacity as a manager.

Organizational resilience, as defined by Westmil (2019), is the capacity of a school or other educational institution to foresee, address, adapt to, and recover from a variety of difficulties, crises, and disruptions while carrying out its essential duties and giving students a high-quality education. According to Uhser (2021), organizational resilience in the educational system is demonstrated by having emergency plans in place, having efficient communication methods in place, cultivating strong bonds with stakeholders, and putting in place procedures and policies that promote the achievement and well-being of every member of the school community. Using the development of organizational resilience, school leadership may better handle changes and uncertainties, preserve stability, and deal with potential problems using state-of-the-art management techniques (Yusufu, 2019).

According to Onuko (2021), a principal's responsibilities in the United Kingdom (UK) include managing and leading a school with professionalism. This helps the school establish a stable base from which to raise standards across the board. In order to achieve this success, Onuko continued, a principal must create a high-quality learning environment by managing teaching and learning resources well. As the head of the school, he must also provide vision, leadership, and direction, as well as make sure that the institution is set up and run to achieve its goals.

According to Obim (2013), a principal's management strategy consists of organizing the curriculum, procedures, style, and resources; setting up the workspace to optimize efficiency; keeping an eye on the professional development of teachers and pupils; and foreseeing any issues. The way a principal is managed might affect how instructors feel about their kids. Given this, Obim underlined the need of having an effective management strategy in place to coordinate all of the resources of educational institutions by organizing, planning, directing, and regulating the human and material resources in order to achieve predetermined goals. Muthinji (2019) found that improved organizational resilience and students' academic achievement are dependent on effective management. The effective and efficient use of an organization's resources when needed is what Muthinji said, adding that management methods are essential to the expansion of organizations. According to Hanso (2017), these tactics comprise the judgments, analysis, and activities a school head takes to establish and maintain competitive advantages.

In order to achieve the aims of the educational system and meet the physical and emotional requirements of both staff and students, Burke (2021) stated that the management of school facilities is essential to the purchase and oversight of available property. Her view is that emotional needs are satisfied by establishing a welcoming environment, a friendly atmosphere, and an inspiring setting, whereas physical needs are satisfied by providing safe structures, sufficient shelter space for work and play, a balanced visual and thermal environment, and adequate sanitary facilities.

Human resource management is essential in addition to facility management for schools. According to Bozeman (2020), the principle, who serves as the school's management, has the difficult responsibility of allocating all available human resources, including teaching and non-teaching staff, to guarantee the smooth operation of the institution. Bozeman demonstrated that better student achievement depended on the welfare and workload management of instructors.

However, as pointed out by Crouch (2018), managing school finances entails knowing where to get money, how to raise money, how to spend it, and how to keep track of the money spent on improving a school's initiatives and programmes. In a company, obtaining funds and making sure they are used effectively and efficiently are the primary goals of finance management. Due to the limited availability of resources, this is crucial for making the most use of them. The quest to investigate the influence of principals' management strategies on organisational resilience is timely and essential in as

most pundits are of the opinion that organisational resilience is in connection to teachers' productivity and students' academic performance.

Statement of the Problem

From their early, basic beginnings, educational institutions have grown into sophisticated, useful fields of study. This evolution has been greatly aided by changes in the political, social, economic, and technological domains. As a result, educational institutions need to adjust to the new problems in the educational field if they are to stay current in this quickly changing environment. In order to achieve academic excellence, secondary school managers must plan, organize, direct, control, and command the learning environment. This is because it is assumed that the manager's ability to effectively manage human, financial, and material resources may have a bearing on the organization's resilience. The researcher's astute observation shows that instructors are observed carrying out their responsibilities with lightness while kids are seen lingering around during school hours, which is a result of bad administration of public secondary schools. The majority of them arrive late to school, a few skip courses, and a few have converted the classroom into a fun fair where they engage in private conversations and gossip, all of which have an impact on the secondary students' overall academic performance. The study therefore sought to determine the relationship between principals' management strategies and organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study is to investigate influence of principals' management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State. Specifically, the study intended to:

1. determine the influence of principals' financial management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District
2. ascertain the influence of principals' personnel management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District
3. examine the influence of principals' school facilities management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the influence of principals' financial management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District?
2. What is the influence of principals' personnel management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District?
3. What is the influence of principals' school facilities management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the influence of principals' financial management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the influence of principals' personnel management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District
3. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the influence of principals' school facilities management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District

Theoretical Review

The Open Systems Theory

In 2004, Luhmann was the primary proponent of the open systems theory. Luhmann claims that an organization functions like a living thing made up of interconnected pieces, each of which carries out a distinct task while having obligations that are tied to one another. In other words, each component of the organization is linked and dependent on the others. As an institution, the school is an open system that engages with its surroundings and is always evolving. Real systems are always evolving because they are responsive to their surroundings, engage with them, and accept change in order to remain relevant and survive. An interruption in one area of the organization impacts other areas as well, thereby affecting the entire organization.

This suggests that although pupils from different social backgrounds arrive to school with different aspirations, convictions, and attitudes, teachers, students, and support staff all undergo personal transformation as a result of interactions with the principal or the school administration. As interactions progress, behaviour moderation takes place, and learners are expected to follow both the rules and regulations of the school and broader society standards. This changes them into informed people who can have a positive impact on the society. Therefore, in order for a school to be successful in maintaining organizational growth, its managers must be aware of both internal and external environments, including policy changes, communication channels, legal requirements, personnel and financial management, as well as management of school facilities. The study revealed that the open systems theory was applicable because, as an open system, schools allow principals to use a variety of tactics for managing organizational resilience as a necessary component of ongoing evolution that is vital to the survival of the system. These tactics or management approaches consist of human management, financial management, and school facility management. Thus, the environment in which the organization (school) functions will both impact and be influenced by it.

Conceptual Framework

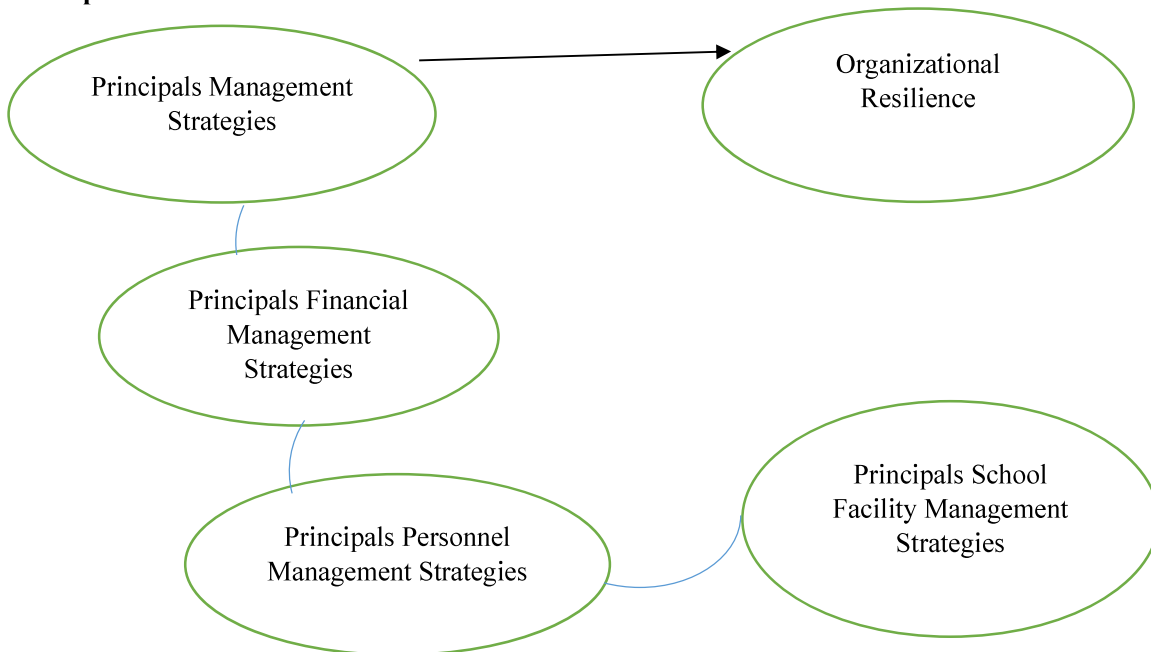


Fig. 1. Relationship between Organisational Resilience and other variables (Researchers Field Survey, 2024)

The conceptual framework to the study showed the relationship that exists between the independent variables of the study and the dependent variable. The diagram above showed how the various factors such as financial management strategies, personnel management strategies, school

facility management strategies relate to organisational resilience which is the dependent variable of the study.

Management Strategies

The process by which managers use coordinated and cooperative human efforts to establish, oversee, maintain, and run purposeful organizations is known as management. Sen (2022) described management as the process of combining limited resources to accomplish certain goals, which entails coordinating the actions of people to reach objectives that cannot be attained by a person working alone. Planning, organizing, communicating, and coordinating all school activities with the goal of achieving the school's objectives is what Nwankwo (2017) characterized as educational management. Planning, organizing, supervising, leading, directing, managing, and coordinating people's activities to achieve the aims and objectives of the organization are all part of the social process that Osakwe (2019) characterized as management. As the head of administration for a secondary school, the principal depends on other staff members, both teaching and non-teaching, to maintain smooth operations. For principals, running a secondary school is a demanding job. To help school administrators create a productive work environment, management tactics are ways to guarantee that the school is properly administered. Because every circumstance is different, there is no one management approach that works in the field of management. This assertion is the basis for the notion that school administrators need to become proficient in a variety of management techniques in order to make decisions and plans that work. Several of these management techniques can improve the efficacy and efficiency of the school when used effectively, according to prior research. The capacity of the principal of a secondary school to accomplish the goals of secondary education using a variety of techniques, including personnel, financial, and school facility management strategies, is known as management strategies.

Financial Management Strategies

It is well acknowledged that money is a crucial resource for the advancement of any educational institution. Purchasing, financing, and managing assets with a few overarching objectives in mind are all aspects of financial management. Financial management is the process of controlling a company's cash flow so that its owners can benefit. However, according to Edem (2018), financial management in education refers to the allocation and utilization of funds with the intention of delivering educational services and fostering student success. Therefore, estimating the demands for educational training, obtaining funding in line with those needs, and managing funds are the goals of financial management in modern education management. Therefore, effective financial management is crucial to the administration of a learning institution.

Personnel Management Strategies

The administration of instructors and non-teaching personnel is a part of the human resources management in the Nigerian educational system. In order to achieve educational goals, the activities entail motivating both teaching and non-teaching personnel to work together. The objectives are to draw in, train, inspire, and hold onto employees in order to fulfill the educational mission. Using people to get the desired outcome is the primary role of management. By applying policies and practices that focus on finding, hiring, and training qualified teachers as well as encouraging them to collaborate within the school's resource bundle. Human resource managers can build schools that are more intelligent, adaptable, and competent than their competitors (Afolabi, 2016). Because effective human resource management is a crucial component of teachers' job performance, this could potentially increase teachers' productivity and give them a competitive advantage due to the social complex of policies and practices and the historical sensitivity of those practices. Rivals might not be able to replicate the depth and diversity of these practices.

School Facility Management Strategies

School buildings, playgrounds, equipment, and other physical resources that are given for efficient teaching and learning operations are all considered to be part of the school's facilities. Play areas, cafeteria, library, weather, lighting, ventilation, floor, and space allocated to each student are all considered aspects of a school's facilities. School facilities, as defined by Yusufu (2019), are the same as educational facilities, which include structures like classrooms, assembly halls, libraries, labs,

workshops, and educational resources. The term "school facilities" refers to the location, the building, and other infrastructures. Permanent and semi-permanent buildings are included, along with office supplies like brooms and cleaning supplies, machinery, and lab equipment. All of the physical resources utilized by the students and faculty within the school are referred to as school facilities. This group includes every physical structure in the school. Similar to this, facilities are crucial components of educational institutions as they foster a positive learning environment, encourage interaction, and improve the attainment of learning goals (Okumbe, 2021). Essentially, without the principal's administrative skill, the necessary facilities would not be supplied in sufficient quantity and quality at the proper times, making the school curriculum meaningless and non-functional.

Organisational Resilience in Secondary Schools

Sen (2022) pointed out that organizational resilience is the capacity of an organization to foresee challenges in advance and create a strategy for resolving them. The following is a summary of the organizational resilience methodology: Vision (foreseeing issues) insight (the ability to read a situation and react appropriately). An organization's capacity to foresee, plan for, react to, and adjust to both gradual changes and unexpected disturbances in order to endure and thrive.

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised 2,444 teachers in public senior secondary schools in Rives East Senatorial District, Rivers State. The sample size was determined using Taro-Yamane formula. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select a target figure of 343 teachers for the study. The research instrument was a designed instrument titled: "Management of Strategies and Organisational Resilience Questionnaire" (MSORQ). The instrument was made up of four sections. Section A, contained socio-demographic information's of the teachers while section B, consisted of item statements on how financial management strategies influences organisational resilience; Section C, consisted of item statements on how personnel management strategies influences organisational resilience; Section D, consisted of item statements on how school facility management strategies influences organisational resilience. Items in Section B, C, D, were structured on a 4-point modified Likert Scale of be structured on a four point modified Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The reliability coefficient was $r=0.79$ (79%) and was determined using the test-retest method. The data were analyzed using mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (SD) to answer the research questions while Independent sample t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question One

What is the influence of principals' financial management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Showing the Influence of Principals' Financial Management Strategies on Organisational Resilience in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District

S/N	Principals' Financial Management Strategies	\bar{X}	SD	DECISION
1	The principal ensuring that the school budget covers both financial and non-financial plan of the school can be linked to organisational resilience	3.36	0.46	Agreed
2	Private donations from NGOs assists in financing projects and programmes in the school which in turn promotes schools resilience	3.03	0.50	Agreed
3	Principals carrying out financial accounting helps administrative and teaching staff to get motivated to work	3.19	0.49	Agreed
4	The school receive budgetary allocation from the state government which aids in enhancing organisational resilience	3.08	0.48	Agreed
Grand Mean/SD		3.23	0.54	

(Survey Data, 2024)

Table 1 shows that items 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively were all agreed as the influence of principals' financial management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District. The table showed that the mean ratings of items 1-4 were 3.36, 3.03, 3.19 and 3.08 respectively with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.46, 0.50, 0.49, and 0.48. All the mean ratings were above the cut-off point of 2.50. The table indicated a grand mean of 3.23 and standard deviation 0.54 which reveal that there is positive influence of principals' financial management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District.

Research Question Two

What is the influence of principals' personnel management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Showing the Influence of Principals' Personnel Management Strategies on Organisational Resilience in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District

S/N	Personnel Management Strategies	\bar{X}	SD	DECISION
5	Principals motivate teaching and non-teaching staff in the school which enhances organisational resilience	2.56	0.50	Agreed
6	Principals organize in-house training to boost teachers pedagogical knowledge which enhances organisational resilience	2.75	0.25	Agreed
7	Staff are sponsored to attend seminars, workshops and conferences in the school which enhances organisational resilience	2.58	0.33	Agreed
8	Principals ensure that staff welfare schemes are available in the school which promotes organisational resilience	2.95	0.91	Agreed
Grand Mean/SD		2.66	0.68	

(Survey Data, 2024)

Table 2 shows that items 5, 6, 7, and 8 respectively were all agreed as the influence of principals' personnel management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District. The table showed that the mean ratings of items 5-8 were 2.56, 2.75, 2.58 and 2.95 respectively with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.50, 0.25, 0.33, and 0.91. All the mean ratings were above the cut-off point of 2.50. The table indicated a grand mean of 2.66 and standard deviation 0.68 which reveal that there is positive influence of principals' personnel management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District.

Research Question Three

What is the influence of principals' school facilities management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Showing the Influence of Principals' School Facility Management Strategies on Organisational Resilience in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District

S/N	School Facility Management Strategies	\bar{X}	SD	DECISION
9	Principals ensure that learning facilities are available in the school and this boost organisational resilience in the school	2.75	0.88	Agreed
10	Recreational facilities available in the school are properly managed and this enhances organisational resilience	3.00	0.98	Agreed
11	Physical facilities available in the school and are well managed by school heads and this boost organisational resilience	3.10	0.55	Agreed
12	Health facilities are made available and well managed in the school and this aid in boosting organizational resilience	3.11	0.56	Agreed
Grand Mean/SD		3.15	0.41	

(Survey Data, 2024)

Table 3 shows that items 9, 10, 11, and 12 respectively were all agreed as the influence of principals' school facilities management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District. The table showed that the mean ratings of items 9-12 were 2.75, 3.00, 3.10 and 3.11 respectively with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.88, 0.98, 0.55, and 0.56. All the mean ratings were above the cut-off point of 2.50. The table indicated a grand mean of 3.15 and standard deviation 0.41 which reveal that there is positive influence of principals' school facilities management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the influence of principals' financial management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District

Table 4: T-Test Analysis Showing Significant Difference in the Mean Rating of Male and Female Teachers on the Influence of Principals' Financial Management Strategies on Organisational Resilience in Public Secondary Schools

Gender	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Df	t-test	Sig.	Remark
Male	140	2.76	0.30	341	.078	.090	Ho is Accepted
Female	203	2.56	0.41				

(Survey Data, 2024)

From the results in table 4, it can be observed that at 0.05 level of significance and 341 degrees of freedom, t-value = .078 and p-value = .090 > 0.05. Since the p-value = .090 > 0.05 the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the influence of principals' financial management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District is accepted.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the influence of principals' personnel management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District

Table 5: T-Test Analysis Showing Significant Difference in the Mean Rating of Male and Female Teachers on the Influence of Principals' Personnel Management Strategies on Organisational Resilience in Public Secondary Schools

Gender	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Df	t-test	Sig.	Remark
Male	140	3.00	0.62	341	.059	.070	Ho is Accepted
Female	203	2.99	0.73				

(Survey Data, 2024)

From the results in table 5, it can be observed that at 0.05 level of significance and 50 degrees of freedom, t-value = .059 and p-value = .070 > 0.05. Since the p-value = .070 > 0.05 the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the influence of principals' personnel management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District is accepted.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the influence of principals' school facilities management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District

Table 6: T-Test Analysis Showing Significant Difference in the Mean Rating of Male and Female Teachers on the Influence of Principals’ School Facility Management Strategies on Organisational Resilience in Public Secondary Schools

Gender	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Df	t-test	Sig.	Remark
Male	140	3.11	0.44	341	.083	.080	Ho is Accepted
Female	203	3.07	0.51				

(Survey Data, 2024)

From the results in table 6, it can be observed that at 0.05 level of significance and 50 degrees of freedom, t-value = .083 and p-value = .080 > 0.05. Since the p-value = .080 > 0.05 the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the influence of principals’ school facilities management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District is accepted.

Discussion of the Findings

The finding of the study Table 1 revealed that there is positive influence of principals’ financial management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District. The study further revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the influence of principals’ financial management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District. The finding is in agreement with the observation of Hanso (2017) who revealed that accounting, budgeting, auditing practices of principals which guard against fraud and waste when adequately and efficiently implemented enhances school growth, students’ performance and teacher’s productivity. The findings is also in line with the study of Bozeman (2020) who argued that school administrators have shortage of funds thus facing a lot of challenges in meeting staff requirement which should enhance their job performance. Hence, good financial management on the part of the school administrators would enhance collaboration, team spirit and excellence in job performance as well as promote organisational resilience among teachers.

The finding of the study Table 2 revealed that there is positive influence of principals’ personnel management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District. The study further revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the influence of principals’ personnel management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District. The findings are in line with Edem (2018) who argued that management of human resources have the ability to create schools that are more intelligent, flexible and competent than their rivals through the application of policies and practices, concentrate on recruiting, selecting, training skilled teachers and directing their best efforts to improve teachers’ job performance in schools.

The finding of the study Table 3 revealed that there is positive influence of principals’ school facilities management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District. The study further revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the influence of principals’ school facilities management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District. The findings is in tandem with the study of Usher (2021) who revealed that effective administration and maintenance of school furniture, library, laboratories and school plants are important aspects of the management of school physical facilities which would ultimately impact on school growth and productivity. As such the school administrators are expected to apply the available theories, principles and practices of management to ensure that all the available physical facilities were adequately utilized and managed against theft thereby promoting organizational resilience.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that there was positive influence of principals’ financial, personnel, school facility management strategies on organisational resilience in public

secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District. The study further revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the influence of principals' financial, personnel, school facility management strategies on organisational resilience in public secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. Ministry of Education should be more concerned about principals training and re-training on cutting edge management strategies such as financial, personnel, school facility management strategies in order to enhance organisational resilience in public secondary schools;
2. The Ministry of Education should revisit the policy concerning distribution of educational resources since unequal distribution and improper management of school resources would make managerial activities difficult for the principal thereby negatively impacting on schools organizational resilience;
3. The government should facilitate, in collaboration with school heads, civil society organizations and stakeholders, to provide seminars and workshops on management strategies as this is crucial for attainment of the overall educational objective and organisational resilience;
4. School administrators and government should urgently upgrade school facilities to meet up with modern demands of secondary school education by providing digital facilities in the schools. While the schools managers on their part should also try to maintain and manage such facilities in order to boost organizational resilience in the school;
5. School managers should access the vast resources provided by the internet where funds are limited for personnel capacity building trainings and programmes to enhance organizational resilience in the school.

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ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY IN OIL AND GAS INDUSTRIES IN PORT HARCOURT RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The Entrepreneurial orientation, is a company activity that are related to proactive decision-making practices that pay attention to innovative strategies, risk-taking and exploiting market opportunities. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and organizational sustainability in oil and gas industries in Port Harcourt Rivers State. The population of the study is made up of management staff of some selected firms operating in the oil sector in Port Harcourt Rivers State Nigeria. The paper used purposive sampling for the selection of the respondents. Copies of Questionnaire were distributed to the respondents for statistical analysis. The study utilized Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the data collected. The study revealed a number of findings including: there is a statistically significant correlation between Entrepreneurial orientation and organizational sustainability; there is statistically significant correlation between Entrepreneurial orientations and Economic sustainability, and there is statistically significant correlation between Entrepreneurial orientation and Social sustainability. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made as follows, those organizations operating in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria, whose objectives include improving on the employment relations in their firms, should create sustainable strategies to improve on their products and economic wellbeing of the employee and stakeholder. There is an urgent need for firms in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria to effectively protect the environment they are operating so that more resources can be regenerate for the future use. The management of oil and gas industries should ensure that they promote democracy, amplifying the scope of personal choices and distributing resources and property rights in a fair manner, fair pay, equal opportunities, good health and safety conditions.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial orientation, organizational sustainability, social sustainability, economic sustainability

Introduction

In a rapidly changing world, Technology and cost control are no longer adequate for sustainability. Entrepreneurship is very important for personal and economic development, (Manning, 2018). Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship globalization are important because entrepreneurship is the main catalyst for the country's economic growth (Mat et al., 2015). This is because entrepreneurship aims to carry out economic transformation and wealth creation through the ability and effectiveness of an individual in recognizing opportunities and changing opportunities into reality in the form of potential goods or services (Obembe et al., 2014).

Firms that show entrepreneurial behaviour have greater profitability and growth than those that do not adopt entrepreneurial systems (Antonicic, 2007). Furthermore, Antonicic stated that organizations that use entrepreneurship have more open communication, formal controls, are able to adapt in an intensive environment, including management, innovative, continuously renewing and proactive.

Consequently, entrepreneurship is today a permanent attitude that firms should develop (Dess et al., 2008).

According to Franco and Haase (2013), entrepreneurial orientation is a key concept in understanding whether a firm adopts entrepreneurial activities or not. Miller (1983) was the first author to identify entrepreneurship for three entrepreneurial activities, innovation, proactive action, and risk taking, and stated that companies that showed these activities had an entrepreneurial relationship.

Research on the topic of entrepreneurial orientation (EO) continues to develop. According to Gupta and Gupta (2015), research related to entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is a worthy research to be developed in the future. The purpose of this study therefore is to examine the relationship between the two variables entrepreneurial orientation and organizational sustainability in oil and gas industry in Port Harcourt Rivers State.

Conceptual Framework

The two key variables (predictor variable, and the criterion variable), and how they relate, gave rise to the conceptual framework of this study. That is to say, entrepreneurial orientation has a relationship with organizational sustainability in oil and gas industries in Port Harcourt. These variables and the relationships implied in this paper therefore constitute the operational framework below:

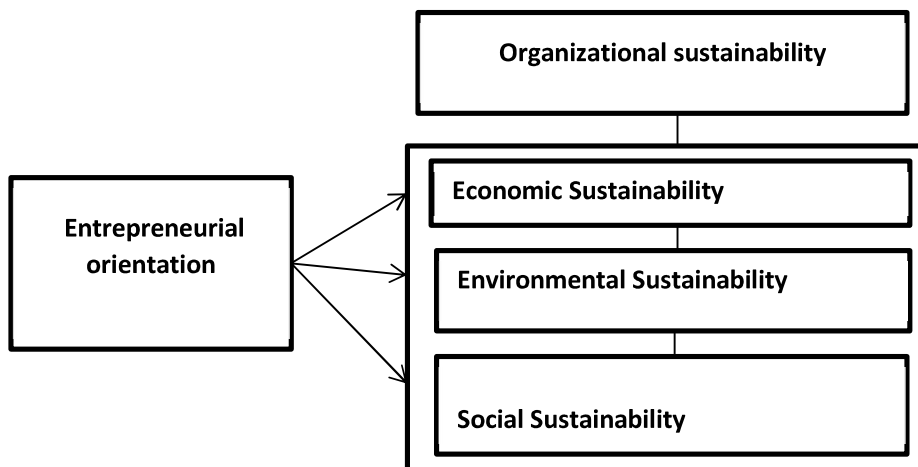


Fig 1 showing the relationship between Entrepreneurial orientation and organizational sustainability in oil and gas industries in Port Harcourt (Desk Research, 2024)

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study therefore is to:

1. determine the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on economic sustainability
2. determine the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on Environmental Sustainability
3. determine the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on social Sustainability

Research Questions

This study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent does entrepreneurial orientation affect economic sustainability?
2. To what extent does Entrepreneurial orientation affect environmental sustainability?
3. To what extent does Entrepreneurial orientation affect social sustainability?

Research Hypotheses

From the research questions raised for the study, the study further hypothesize as follows:

- H₀₁:** There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial orientations and economic sustainability
- H₀₂:** There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial orientations and environmental sustainability

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial orientations and social sustainability

Literature Review

The Entrepreneurial Orientation

According to Franco and Haase (2013), entrepreneurial orientation is a key concept in understanding whether a firm adopts entrepreneurial activities or not. Miller (1983) was the first author to identify entrepreneurship for three entrepreneurial activities, innovation, proactive action, and risk taking, and stated that companies that showed these activities had an entrepreneurial relationship.

Avlonitis and Salavou (2007) noted that entrepreneurial orientation constitutes an organizational phenomenon that reflects a managerial capability by which firms embark on proactive and aggressive initiatives to alter the competitive scene to their advantage. Lumpkin and Dess (1996) in their previous research measured entrepreneurial orientation with innovativeness, pro activeness, risk taking, autonomy and competitive aggressiveness. They define innovativeness as an inclination to experiment and creativity that lead to new products, services or technological processes.

Organizational Sustainability

Organizational sustainability denotes everything about integrating the goals of sustainable development, for example, societal fairness, economic efficacy, and eco-friendly exposures (Varsei et al., 2014). Organizational sustainability is referred to as "adopting organizational strategies and activities that meet the needs of the enterprise and its stakeholders today while protecting, sustaining, and enhancing the human and natural resources that will be needed in the future" (Deloitte & Touche, 1992). From the organizations' viewpoints, Elkington (2013) and Dyllick and Hockerts (2002) highlighted three circles measurements of sustainability like - profit, planet, and people, representing economic, environmental, and social sustainability, respectively, with the "triple bottom line" (TBL) concept

Economic Sustainability

What is economic sustainability? Sustainable development can be seen as an implied social reform complemented by traditional development goals, which do not fully deny pollution and environmental preservation policies (O'Connor, 2002). As a result, the relationship between sustainable development and organizations in the same field of competence extends beyond seeking the best definitions and replicating the best organizational techniques, as it requires an appreciation of how sustainability is approached, developed, and multiplied in organizational settings and behaviours.

Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability can be described as the combination of several organizational competencies or the overall performance of the organization to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the products (Lam & Lai, 2015). In this light, the activities of the organization are tailored to reduce and ultimately eradicate the negative impact of its activities on the environment. Thus, the contribution of the company to the local quality of the air is monitored for healthy air resources.

Social sustainability

What is social sustainability? Modern companies are paying special attention to the social aspects of sustainable development due to the pressure from stakeholders ranging from environmental to societal issues (Yawar & Seuring, 2017). Aspects of social sustainability can address both internal and external human resource concerns. Internal human resources may include job security, accommodation, health and safety, and capacity building (Ahmadi et al., 2017a, b; Rahman et al. 2022).

Methodology

The study adopted the cross-sectional survey research design. Data were generated from 8 statistically selected oil and gas companies, and these constituted the 157 statistically selected employees. The validity and reliability tests of the data collection instruments (questionnaire) were done to respectively ascertain its relevance and consistency.

A reliability of 0.876 was obtained using Chronbach's alpha test score with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software package. Chronbach's alpha test score is often referred to

as the coefficient of reliability or consistency and assesses the degree to which responses to the items on a measure are similar, hence it is an indicator of internal consistency of a measure. Likert 5-point scale measure with indicants ranging from Very Great Extent to Very Low Extent were used to aid the major research variables operationalization. After data cleaning, 113 copies of the questionnaire were found fit for use in data analysis. Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Statistical technique at 0.05 level of significance was employed in the tests of the posited hypotheses with the aid of SPSS, for the purposes of determining the influence of the predictor variables on the criterion variables.

Method of Data Collection

A total number of 113 copies of our research questionnaire were administered. 106 copies of the questionnaire we retrieved which represent 93.8%. 13 copies were rejected due to fundamental errors arising from wrong filling. On the whole, 93(87.7%) copies were found fit for usage in the analysis (see below).

Table 1: Questionnaire Administration, Usage and Response Rate

Organizations	No of Copies of Questionnaire Distributed	No. Retrieved	Usable Copies	% of Usable Copies
Shell petroleum	26	25	24	96.0
Belema oil	23	22	20	90.0
Chevron	25	23	19	82.0
Dominos oil	22	20	16	80.0
Eroton	6	6	5	83.0
Total	113	106	93	87.7

Source: Desk Research, 2024

Table 2: Reliability Test Results

S/No	Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha Results
2.	Entrepreneurial Orientation	3	.973
5.	Organizational sustainability	10	.990

Source: Desk Research and SPSS Window Output, Version 20.0

Table 2. Above revealed the results of the Cronbach’s Alpha test of reliability, using SPSS software package version 20.0. The results showed coefficient that are higher than 0.70, which is the acceptable standards. As a result, it therefore indicates that there is a high level of reliability of our research instrument which is an early signal that we have high level of reliability and consequent correlation amongst the study variables.

Operational Measures of Variables

The survey instrument used in this study to measure the variables was obtained from the literature, in addition to related scales developed adapted specifically for this study.

Presentation of Data

Entrepreneurial Orientation

This section reveals the position of respondents concerning the questions asked on Entrepreneurial Orientation. The information revealed that a range of 31 (33.3%) to 48(51.6%) indicated very high extent on the various research instrument items that there are practices of Entrepreneurial which impact on the sustainability of these organizations. The range of very high extent is followed by a range of 25(26.9%) to 44(47.3%) which indicated high extent that their Entrepreneurial department is very active. This is followed by a range of 8(8.6%) to 14(15.1%) which indicated moderate extent, and then by the range of 5(5.4%) to 7(7.5%), and range of 2(2.2%) to 5(5.4%) that indicated low extent and very low extent respectively.

Table 3: Weight of Score Evaluation of Entrepreneurial Orientation

Description	Entrepreneurial Orientation
Valid N (List wise)	93
Mean	3.5161
Standard deviation	1.12880
	1.274

Source: Desk Research, 2024, and SPSS Window Output, Version 20.0

Table 3 above showed the mean score of Entrepreneurial Orientation and also the standard deviation and variance values. The mean score for Entrepreneurial Orientation is 3.52, with a standard deviation of 1.13 and a variance of 1.27.

Economics as a Measure of Organizational Sustainability

The information on sustainability revealed the various respondents' responses on the test item instruments. The range of 33(35.5%) to 55(59.1%) favoured very high extent to the various items in the instrument. A range of 5(5.4%) to 16(17.2%) favoured moderate extent. Also, a range of 2(2.2%) to 9(9.7%) and 1(1.1%) to 7(7.5%) of the respondents indicated low extent and very low extent respectively. This information is buttressed in the bar chart below.

Table 4: Weight of Score Evaluation on Economics Sustainability as a Measure of Organizational Sustainability

Description	Economics Sustainability
Valid N (List wise)	S93
Mean	3.0359
Standard deviation	1.1824
Variance	1.4000

Source: Desk Research, 2024, and SPSS Window Output, Version 20.0.

Table 4 above revealed the weight of scores of evaluation on economics sustainability as a measure of organizational sustainability. The information provided showed that the mean score is 3.04, the standard deviation is 1.18, while the variance is 1.40. This information thus reveals that Economics Sustainability is a very strong measure of organizational sustainability.

Environmental Sustainability as a Measure of Organizational Sustainability

The information showed the ranges of respondents' views relating to the questionnaire items relating to Environmental sustainability. The information revealed that a range of 22(23.7%) to 50(53.8%), Also, a range of 29(31.2%) to 45(48.4%) showed high extent response, while a range of 6(6.5%) to 17(18.35) favoured moderate extent. However, a range of 2(2.2%) to 12(12.9%) and 1(1.1%) to 10(10.8%) indicated low extent and very low extent respectively, to the various items in the instrument.

Table 5. Weight of Score Evaluation on Environmental Sustainability as a Measure of Organizational Sustainability

Description	Organizational sustainability
Valid N (List wise)	93
Mean	3.1649
Standard deviation	1.0884
Variance	1.1857

Source: Desk Research, 2024, and SPSS Window Output, Version 20.0

Table 5 above revealed that the mean score evaluation of Environmental sustainability as a Measure of Organizational Sustainability is 3.16, the standard deviation is 1.09, while the variance is 1.19. This showed that environmental sustainability is an appreciable measure of organizational sustainability.

Social Sustainability as a Measure of Organizational Sustainability

The information reveals the various respondents’ responses on the test item instruments. Based on the table, a range of 33(35.5%) to 55(59.1%) favoured very high extent to the various items in the instrument. Also, a range of 2(2.2%) to 9(9.7%) and 1(1.1%) to 7(7.5%) of the respondents indicated low extent and very low extent.

Table 6: Weight of score evaluation on Social Sustainability as a Measure of Organizational Sustainability

Description	Social sustainability
Valid N (List wise)	93
Mean	3.0359
Standard deviation	1.1824
Variance	1.4000

Source: Desk Research, 2024, and SPSS Window Output, Version 20.0

Table 6 above revealed the weight of scores of evaluation on Social sustainability as a Measure of Organizational Sustainability. The information provided showed that the mean score is 3.04, the standard deviation is 1.18, while the variance is 1.40. This information thus revealed that social sustainability is a very strong measure of organizational sustainability

Data analysis

Correlation Analysis

Based on the descriptive analysis and responses, frequencies, scale of measurement options as well as the score evaluations outcome, the results of the univariate analysis of this study revealed strong positive correlations between the Entrepreneurial Orientation and the Organizational Sustainability measures of the oil and gas industry in Nigeria.

Hypotheses on Entrepreneurial Orientation and Organizational Sustainability

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Economic Sustainability

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Environment Sustainability

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Social Sustainability

Table 7: Results of hypotheses test on Entrepreneurial Orientation and Organizational Sustainability measures

Correlations

		EO	ECS	ENS	SOS
EO	Pearson Correlation	1	.907**	.924**	.911**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	93	93	93	93
ECS	Pearson Correlation	.907**	1	.920**	.946**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	93	93	93	93
ENS	Pearson Correlation	.924**	.920**	1	.944**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	93	93	93	93
SOS	Pearson Correlation	.911**	.946**	.944**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	93	93	93	93

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). P<0.01

Source: Data Output, 2024 and SPSS Window Output, Version 20.0

Key:

** = Correlation, at 0.01 significant level (2-tailed) i.e. $p < 0.01$

R = Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient

EO = Entrepreneurial Orientation

ECS = Economic Sustainability

ENS = Environment Sustainability

SOS = Social Sustainability

Result on Entrepreneurial Orientation and Environmental sustainability

The relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Environmental sustainability was tested statistically at a 0.01 level of significance, the correlation value of 0.924 and the test significant value of 0.000, revealed that a strong positive and significant relationship exist between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Environmental Sustainability. The relationship between in-country outsourcing and changes in the structure of workplace unions was tested statistically at a 0.01 significant level, the correlation value of 0.911 and the test significance value of 0.000, showed that a strong positive and significant relationship exist between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Environmental sustainability.

Result on Entrepreneurial Orientation and Social Sustainability

The results of the statistical test of hypotheses on Entrepreneurial Orientation and organizational sustainability, the relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Social sustainability was tested statistically at a 0.01 significant level. The test correlation value of 0.948 and the significant value of 0.000 showed that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Social sustainability

Discussion of Findings

Positive and significant relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational sustainability. The finding relating to the association between entrepreneurial orientation and economic sustainability revealed the existence of a positive and significant relationship. Evidence from extant literature (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002; Leimmbach, (2005); (Munck, Munck, & Souza, 2011). In line with the earlier studies according to Munck et al, (2011), environmental sustainability encompasses the prevention of the impacts created by the organization on the natural system, composed of living and non-living beings.

In collaboration with our studies Dyllick and Hockerts (2002) and Munck,et al. (2011). Noted the impact the organizations cause on the social systems by their operational activities. The entrepreneurial orientation creates the opportunity for new product which in return help to ensure that the expectations of the different social groups that relate to the organization are genuinely considered

In summary, entrepreneurial orientation incorporates questions related to human development (education, training, occupational health, workplace safety and competence development), to equality (fair salaries and benefits, equal opportunities and absence of workplace discrimination) and to ethical considerations (human rights, cultural values, inter- generation and intra-generation justice) (Munck, et al, 2011). The social sustainability covers the following area fair pay, equal opportunities, good health and safety conditions, gratification system, securing ideas for the improvement of the Triple Bottom Line, competence development and training, career plans and ethical organizational behaviour

Conclusion

The essence of this correlational study was to empirically examine the nature and extent of relationship that exist between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Organizational Sustainability in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. The findings from the analyses showed that there exist, a positive relationship between the entrepreneurial orientation and the measures of organizational sustainability used in this study. In the test of relationship in the oil and gas/industry, the results of the univariate and bivariate analyses revealed that there is a strongly positive and significant relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and sustainability, Thus, the researcher concludes that the organizational sustainability in the Nigeria oil and gas industry is influenced by entrepreneurial orientation.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made by the researcher;

- i) Those organizations operating in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria, whose objectives include improving on the employment relations in their firms, should create sustainable strategies to improve on their products and economic wellbeing of the employee and stakeholder.
- ii) There is an urgent need for firms in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria to effectively protect the environment they are operating on, so that more resources can be regenerate for the future use.
- iii) The management of oil and gas industries should ensure that they promote democracy, amplifying the scope of personal choices and distributing resources and property rights in a fair manner, fair pay, equal opportunities, good health and safety conditions.

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THE ROLE OF WORLD RELIGIONS IN PROMOTING HUMANE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The environmental crisis has necessitated reflecting on human attitudes and behaviours toward the natural world and all non-human life. Important non-human life worthy of consideration is animal. Animals have suffered from a great deal of human cruelty and pain has been inflicted on them. In Nigeria, the plights of animals are much. Domestic and farm animals are subjected to all kinds of suffering. This paper argues that there is animal suffering in Nigeria. It also argues that world religions have a role in promoting the humane treatment of animals. Critical analytic and hermeneutic methods are used to examine and evaluate the issues in the paper. The paper concludes that there will be better treatment of animals if the world religions will join in the advocacy for the humane treatment of animals in Nigeria.

Keywords: religion, humane treatment, animals, cruelty, biodiversity

Introduction

Animals remain some of the most essential living entities in the environment. Animals are essential part of the environment or nature. They form an invaluable and intricate part of the ecosystem. Animals have been sources of food for both human beings and other animals and play a role in every habitat they find themselves. But animals have also faced many dangers and have been subjected to immense pain and suffering. Some animals have gone into extinction, while many others are endangered. Without animals, biodiversity and biocultural diversity are gravely harmed. Shelter Animals Count (2022) records that on a global level in every second, an animal is abused. In Nigeria, it is difficult to get actual statistics on the number of animals subjected to cruelty as a result of poor statistics. But the fact remains that observation of streets, roads, and farms in Nigeria you are often going to see people flogging animals, animals being slaughtered brutally, and animals exposed to various dangers. This situation will be examined hereafter.

Outside their role of animals in biodiversity health, they provide invaluable services to human beings. It behoves humans to care for and protect animals for the biodiversity interests that they fulfil, as they provide for the moderate needs of human beings. As human beings make use of animals, they should be protected from suffering and pain (they should be humanely treated). Beyond their value to human beings, animals have a worth of their own and must be treated for their own sake. The goal of this paper is to argue that animals both domestic and wild should be humanely treated in Nigeria from the perspective of world religions. The reality is that religion can play a role in how people treat animals and non-human entities in general. To a certain degree, religion is still able to form many people's consciences and inform their attitudes and behaviours. Caruana (2020) writes that religion continues to affect individuals and communities and influences their moral dispositions and subliminal consciences.

Conceptual Clarifications

The following key terms need clarification and analysis in this paper. These terms include role, world religion, promoting, and humane treatment. The first of these terms, "role" implies what a thing or person is assigned or expected to do. A role is the duty that a person carries out. Concerning this paper, the concern is with the duty or responsibility that world religions are to play in promoting humane animal treatment in Nigeria. What place do world religions have in the care for animals in Nigeria? They are social agents that have specific contributions to make to society's functioning and survival. Concerning the word, "promote" is used to refer to the process of enhancing, inspiring, and instigating something or a person or society to advancement and more results. Promoting is the ongoing process of doing this task of enhancing or spreading.

The next terms that require explication are world religions. By “world,” the paper means global, international, and what influences at least many different regions of the world. Global does not mean it is present in every village, town, or city but has an impact in many different geographic areas of the world. For the term, “religion,” there is no univocal definition of the term. Religion means different things to different people. Greenway (2007) defines religion as belief systems with myths, ritual practices, prayers, and worship associated with supernatural deities or powers. Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica (2024) state that religion refers to what humans consider to be absolute, sacred, spiritual, divine, and deserving of reverence; also it is how to see issues of ultimate concern such as the afterlife. Stibich (2022) opines that it is beliefs, systems, practices, and worship of a controlling force (a supernatural being or person god) and often religious beliefs are embedded in cultural worldviews, revelations, prophecies, and morals. In this paper, the term world religions will be used to designate these systems of beliefs with their prayers, rituals, and worship of supernatural powers that have been organized into well-recognized groups or institutions operating at a global level. Concerning the worship of supernatural powers some religions are monothetic, some polytheistic, while others are mono-polytheistic. At the heart of many religions are ethical beliefs on how life should be lived on earth. Examples of world religions are Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, African Traditional Religion, etc. Indeed, many Eurocentric or Euro-influenced scholars will not mention ATR as a world religion. But it deserves to be considered a world religion. You can find ATR all through the continent of Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa, in the Caribbean, North America, South America (especially in Brazil), and the African diaspora.

The Dictionary (2024) defines the word, “humane” as “characterized by tenderness, compassion, and sympathy for people and animals, especially for the suffering or distressed” (p.1). Treatment refers to how a thing or person is perceived, taken, related to, and acted upon. Humane treatment of animals means how animals are perceived, seen, related to, and acted compassionately and kindly. The opposite of humane treatment is inhumane treatment. Inhumane treatment will include what Trusted Advisors (2023) calls “... kicking the animals, flogging the animals, causing them to fight against each other as in the case of ram fights, and using the animals for any form of entertainment.” Any form of cruelty to animals and mistreating them is a denial of humaneness.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of functionalism is suitable and adequate as a framework for this paper. The Editors of the Encyclopedia Britannica (2023) state that in the social sciences, functionalism means all aspects of society such as its roles, institutions, norms, etc. have an invaluable place to play in the harmony and survival of society just as the parts of an organism play a vital function in the health of that organism. The root of this theory is traceable to the French Sociologist Emile Durkheim who saw society as an organism. Society like an organism is made of many parts. Each of these parts is essential to the functioning of the organism, in this case, society. The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica (2023) state further that: “A social system is assumed to have a functional unity in which all parts of the system work together with some degree of internal consistency. Functionalism also postulates that all cultural or social phenomena have a positive function and that all are indispensable.” StudySmarter (2024) highlights the fact that functionalism is a theory of consensus that gives credence to the values and norms that help society function as a whole; and names two key theorists of functionalism as Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton. Janse (2023) argues that functionalism refers to the reality that the different parts of society, the institutions such as religion, family, economy, media, education, government, etc., have an essential role to play in society, and wherever there is a need society can develop new institutions.

The institutions of society such as religion, family, schools, government, etc. have their respective roles. Religion is one of the vital institutions of society and has an invaluable role to play. Religion comes with its values and mores which help the people who adhere to it bond and cohere. Religions remain a great force and influencer of people’s beliefs, values, and behaviour. As an influencer of morality and value religion through its teaching can inform people’s behaviour. This is where this theoretical framework is useful in this paper. It is argued here that religious teaching on animal welfare can help to galvanize people to treat animals humanely in Nigeria. When religions promote teachings on humane treatment of animals they help to create a peaceful and harmonious society. Thus, they play a vital role in the survival of society. When there are human-animal conflicts

they can to a certain degree cause instability in society and affect the health and wellbeing of the persons involved in human-animal conflicts. There have been cases of animals who in violence turned against those treating them cruelly.

Method

This study is qualitative. It is based on secondary sources such as books, journals, and online materials. It is essentially what some will call library research. No fieldwork or survey is undertaken. It adopts the method of critical analysis. Data on the treatment of animals in Nigeria and what world religions teach about animals are collected from the books and journals mentioned. These are looked at in an evaluative manner and ideas are synthesized from them to rich conclusion. The paper also adopts the hermeneutics method. Some of the basic concepts in the paper are interpreted and their meanings brought out. The paper will interpret what world religions enunciate about animals and how they should be treated.

The Situation of Animals in Nigeria

The situation of animal care and welfare is generally a troubling one in Nigeria. This paper would love to continue this section with the personal experience of the author which may be common to many others in Nigeria. This author has continuously witnessed open slaughters where cows are brutally dragged and killed without consideration for their pain and suffering. He has witnessed cow meat being carried in open drums in tricycles or *okada* machines. As they are being transported to the market, they become infested with flies and polluted air. This author has seen dog owners beating and flogging their dogs. He has witnessed piggeries and other places where animals are reared in commercial quantities, and the degrading treatment meted out to them. It is as if animals cannot feel pain. But this is not true, animals also feel pain. While this author was growing up, he could see monkeys, bush babies, and other animals climb and play in the neighbouring trees as he went to the farm with family members in Otogor in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Nigeria. All that is gone now as human factories and habitation have driven the animals away. Another thing that you find common in Nigeria even in streets and roads in towns and cities is cows being driven along the road. Open grazing in Nigeria is a serious challenge. You see cows driven on the roads that pose a threat to road users. On Nigerian roads, you can find bush meat that has been hunted and killed and displayed on sticks for people to buy. Some of those bushmeats have been brutally killed without concern for the pain they go through.

Animal farming in Nigeria is rarely based on ethical considerations for the welfare of animals. Most of it is purely for commercial purposes. Many of the persons engaged in it lack a knowledge of animal ethics and the need for humane treatment of animals. All that matters to them is the profit that they will make in the harsh economy. Adamu (2021) has noted that World Animal Protection has decried the poor treatment of animals in Nigeria and their 2020 report has shown that there is a lack of adequate legislation to regulate on humane treatment of animals. Adamu (2021) argues further that animals are subjected to harsh conditions in Nigeria, they are allowed to constitute a threat to the public and the regulation of pets that should be done at the local level is hardly and properly done. Adamu (2021) notes that in many households in Nigeria, animals such as pets are simply considered as properties owned by human beings. This certainly poses a serious challenge for the humane treatment of animals for if they are simply seen as properties, does it matter how they are treated? In the eyes of many people, you can do whatever you like with your property. In Nigeria, there is the Nigerian Institute of Animal Science, but as Adamu (2021) has noted, its mandate is very restrictive to improvement in animal production with no mention of animal welfare and the laws that exist in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and various States' Ministry of Agriculture are either moribund or not enforced; and they are rarely focused on animal welfare.

Abonyi (2018) corroborates the fact that in Nigeria cruelty against animals, including pet animals is rampant and there are no effective legal frameworks in the country to promote animal welfare. Advocacy for animal welfare, as Abonyi notes further is very low in the country. In Nigeria, it is not that there are no laws or regulations at all on preventing harm from being done to animals. It is just that there are poor enforcement mechanisms and so people continue to maltreat animals. There is wanton killing of animals in Nigeria. And there is generally, as Ifenkwe (2010) states, a low level of awareness of animal rights and welfare in Nigeria. Trusted Advisors (2023) relating to the issue of the

law notes that there is a gross lack of awareness of criminal liability for maltreatment of animals in Nigeria.

Nigeria (1916) has in her criminal code regulations that can enhance the humane treatment of animals. In that Code people are not to “(a) cruelly beat, kick, ill-treat, over-rides, over-drive, over-loads, torture, infuriate, or terrify any animal, or cause or procure, or being the owner, permit any animal to be so used.” People are to desist from causing suffering to animals wilfully and deliberately. Abonyi (2018) writes that the provision of the criminal code does not cover wild animals, but it is applicable and he also argues that sections 450, 456, and 490 apply to animals used in farming. In Nigeria, there is also the Animal Disease Control Act of 2004 which is against over-density to foster good ventilation for farm animals when they are being transported. Nigerian Endangered Species Act, Wild Life Regulation Law, Nigeria Animal Welfare Strategy of 2016. Are also instruments that can promote animal care. Ayoola and Olayinka (2019) agree that legal frameworks for animal rights protection and welfare in Nigeria are either obsolete or not enforced. Registrar’s Office of Bayero University Kano (2021) reports that the need for strong laws to promote animal welfare and rights was re-echoed by experts in animal and veterinary fields in Kano in their five-day workshop. At that workshop, the Registrar’s Office of Bayero University Kano (2021) reports that a veterinarian, Dr. Josiah Tagwai Kantiyok, Agwam Zikpak II, Chairman Zikpak Traditional Council, Zikpak Kingdom, Kafanchan in Kaduna State stated that: “...these laws should equally be followed by aggressive public enlightenment/education of the general populace, explaining that many people are not aware of any rights by the animals, hence the poor treatment meted out on them for both domestic and wild” (p.i). World Animal Protection (2020) states:

However, it is concerning that there is no singular act to prevent animal cruelty or to promote animal welfare in Nigerian legislation. Particularly wild animals – both in the wild and in captivity – and animals used in scientific experimentation are vulnerable to abuse due to a lack of legislation. While the National Institute of Animal Science has a mandate to ensure a high-quality of meat is produced, there is no reflection on the importance of animal welfare in producing high-quality meat. Also of concern, is the existence of the dog meat trade in some parts of Nigeria which is a risk to both animal and human health given the prevalence of rabies in the country

The humane treatment of animals requires that animal welfare be given prime consideration. One can't claim humane treatment of animals when their welfare is not cared about. Animal welfare implies protecting animals from harm, good and adequate feeding of animals, and their entire wellbeing. The concern should not just be on their productivity. Boluwaji (2018) states that farm animals in Nigeria are poorly catered for and in Nigerian many animals are subjected to extreme discomfort, many poultry birds in life suffer from discomfort, extreme restriction, their legs being tied during transportation, and often they are slaughtered in an inhumane manner. Boluwaji notes that cattle in Nigeria are often transported unpleasantly and they are packed together without adequate space. There is a need for better and more humane treatment of animals, and this is where world religions come into play.

Teaching of World Religions on Animals

The doctrinal teachings of some religions will be presented here regarding animals and how they should be treated. Caruana (2020) shows that even though in Hinduism human beings are held to be superior to animals and following the law of Karma human beings who fail to live well can reincarnate in a lesser form in animals; the law and practice of Ahimsa (non-violence) towards all creatures requires that animals are treated with compassion and the cow has a special place of veneration in India. The author just mentioned remarks that Hindu deities such as Rama and Krishna reincarnate as monkeys and cows. Concepts in Animal Welfare (2014) diverge from the statement that humans are superior to animals, as that paper states that humans are not more significant than animals, there are also the following affirmations that in the past life humans may have been animals, outside ahimsa there is the concept of *aghnya* (not killing any other being), and gods are often in animal forms.

About Buddhism, there are different schools in Buddhism. Caruana (2020) writes that though the animal realm is considered to be evil, some traditions support refraining from killing animals (by the eightfold path) and a high ideal in Buddhism is vegetarianism. Concepts in Animal Welfare (2014) states the Buddhist position in a different manner: “...humans are not more significant than other

animals. The central tenet of Buddhism is compassion for all of life: people are holy if they have pity on all living creatures. Ahimsa follows from this, and meat-eating is forbidden” (p.5).

Other world religions worth considering here are Judaism and Christianity which can be taken together as the Judeo-Christian tradition. In the holy book of Christianity which sprang from Judaism, the Genesis text is clear that God is the author of the created universe. It is God who created animals. Genesis 1 states as follows: “And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.’ And it was so. 25 and God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the cattle according to their kinds, and everything that creeps upon the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.” Regarding the position of Judaism, Concepts in Animal Welfare (2014) states that:

Jewish religious scholars disagree on whether eating meat is permissible. Some argue that because humans are created in God’s image we have a responsibility to be kind to animals and that this requires us not to kill them. Others argue that because humans are created in God’s image, human life has more value than animal life. Therefore, any evidence that human activity harms animals must be weighed up against whether the alternatives would still meet human needs. In this view, slaughtering using the methods required under religious law is humane when it is performed correctly, and eating animals is acceptable (p. 6).

In furtherance of this point, the Concepts in Animal Welfare (2014) states that:

The Torah’s instruction not to harm animals unnecessarily gave rise to strict rules about how to slaughter animals. The name for this method of slaughter is *shechita*. It involves a single sharp cut across the trachea and oesophagus by a highly trained religious slaughterman known as a *shochet* who has been formally licensed. The *chalaf* (knife) must be sharpened regularly.

Human beings are indeed given dominion over creation in Genesis 1:26-30. It has been argued that dominion is not domination, careless exploitation, and conquest of the earth and her resources, including animals. Dominion should rather be understood as stewardship. After all in the second account of creation, man is placed in the garden to cultivate and till it. In Genesis 2:18-20, Adam (the first man) is called to name the animals who are to be companions also to him. Though human beings are given dominion over animals, as many authors including Francis (2015) have argued that dominion is not domination, exploitation, and conquest. Rather dominion is stewardship, care, and compassion towards animals and other creatures. While it is true that human beings are free to make use of animals in food it should be done with prudence and moderation. In the Bible, there are instructions that animals should not be harmed. Deuteronomy 25 verse 4 states that oxen should not be muzzled when they are at work, Deuteronomy 22 verse 4 states that a fallen animal should be helped, Proverbs 12 verse 10 asserts that wise people are considerate of their animals, Exodus 20 verse 10 animals are not to be allowed to work on the sabbath for they too must rest, animals are to be properly cared for and protected from harm even on a sabbath (Luke 13 verse 15, Luke 14 verse 15), Jesus lived with wild beasts during his temptation in a friendly manner. The Vatican (2015) in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* following scriptural teaching and the lives of some saints enunciates that, animals are to be treated with kindness and benevolence; humans owe them an obligation to protect them. Aquinas was of the position that humans are rational but animals are not, and so humans can make use of animals. Aseneta (2017) argues that even though some have accused Aquinas of being anthropocentric, Aquinas admits to the fact that there is goodness in creation, and so by implication creation is not to be abused, and the hierarchy in creation is ordered towards ultimate perfection in God. Aseneta (2017) states that in Aquinas, cruelty is not to be done to animals not for their own sake but because it corrupts the character and virtue of the abuser. This as Aseneta opines is a weakness in Aquinas.

Islam is an important religion to be considered. In Islam, it is believed that God created humans, animals, plants, etc. Humans are God’s viceregent on earth. They are superior to animals and animals are there for human usage. Caruana (2020) writes that even though Surah 16:5 and Surah 40:79 affirm that livestock and cattle are created for human comfort and food; as God’s viceregent human beings must rule creation with benevolence and care. Concepts in Animal Welfare (2014) states that Muslims are not permitted to do certain things (Haram) and they include: not eating blood, pigs, animals that were not killed in Allah’s name, animals killed by violent blows, animals dying from a fall or goring or by wild animals; and the Muslim is not to kill animals for sport, not keep dogs though they should not

be maltreated, and animals should be slaughtered humanely, and the Muslim is to be compassionate and kind to all beings. It is clear that even though animals are not equal to humans, Islam abhors maltreatment of animals. The Editors (2018) state that there must be kindness to animals and Allah gives forgiveness to those who treat animals well as Prophet Muhammad taught.

Concerning the teachings of religion on animals, there seems to be a convergence, despite some differences. Caruana (2020) states that religions by using the word “creatures” affirm the common kinship, and though there is a hierarchy in creation human beings have a special role by their position and are assigned to care for animals and when human beings show a lack of respect towards others animals they are likely going to oppress the poor, the vulnerable, the sick, the mentally challenged, etc. Szucs et al. (2012) surmise that the major position in the Judeo-Christian understanding today is that animals should be treated with responsibility; though a minor Christian view shared also by Buddhists and Hindus that animals should be even be used neither for food or any other reason.

It should be noted that many papers you will find by Western scholars and even some African scholars on this subject hardly discuss the position of African Traditional Religion (ATR). This paper considers the papers by such authors as having a narrow orientation and even in some cases bias and prejudice. ATR is a world religion and should be treated as such. ATR believes in a created universe, and this universe is created by the Supreme Being. In this created universe things including animals are to serve human needs. This does not mean they should be misused, maltreated, or abused. Human beings are to make use of animals, plants, and other things in nature in humility and gratitude to the Supreme Being. One fundamental belief and practice in ATR is totemic practices. Philips-Kemenanabo (2021) writes:

There exist cultures where certain animals are considered sacred or untouchable, and the penalties for harming or killing such animals are considerably high. For example, the custom of the Nembe people of the Ijaw tribe, prohibits the killing of snakes, compelling violators of this unwritten law to spend considerable sums on the burial rites of the sacred animal.

Ikeke (2015) states that in the African worldview, all things are interrelated, and human beings share a kinship with other beings in the universe. Other beings in the universe that human beings are related to are animals. Ikeke indicates that among the Urhobo people of Nigeria, there are animals that are seen as sacred and protected from being killed or eaten. This practice you will find among many other African cultures.

World Religions and Humane Treatment of Animals in Nigeria: The Way Forward

Even if animals are to be used for food, they still need to be treated humanely. Chambers and Grandin (2001) in the document they prepared for the Food and Agricultural Organization states that:

The international livestock industry must be encouraged to practice increasingly better handling and welfare of slaughter animals. This is particularly important for developing countries, as this will improve production. Here, the introduction of better stunning practices and improved pre-stunning methods for ritual slaughter are urgently required. In developing countries, good standards of animal welfare can be achieved during transport and slaughter without the use of expensive high-tech equipment. These countries should be assisted to produce simple locally or regionally made improvements such as metal grating on the slippery floor of a vehicle or stun box or materials to construct races and restraint devices, as well as stunning equipment like electrical tongs and cartridges for captive bolt pistols. Importing expensive equipment and the difficulties in securing regular supplies of cartridges cause many slaughterhouse management to abandon recommended stunning methods and resort to inhumane methods (p. 91).

World Religions have a tremendous role to play in advocating for the humane treatment of animals in Nigeria. The question of the humane treatment of animals belongs clearly to the domain of ethics. It is an issue that religious ethics should not shy away from. It should concern itself with it. This is why the curriculum of all religious education in Nigeria should embrace the issue. Chambers and Grandin (2001) state that “When animals are subjected to unusual conditions or circumstances due to the wilful actions of people, it is people’s moral responsibility to ensure that the welfare of these animals is cared for and that they do not suffer unnecessary discomfort, stress or injury” (p. 1).

Religions in Nigeria have a very serious challenge when it comes to animals. Among those who maltreat animals are thousands of people of all religions in Nigeria. For religions such as ATR where there are still animal sacrifices animals are poorly treated before they are sacrificed. In light of the understanding of animal welfare today, the need for biodiversity protection, and nature conservation, it is time to move away from animal sacrifice. Philips-Kemenanabo (2021) states that the provision of the 1999 Constitution that guarantees freedom of religion, conscience, and belief is a sanction for cultural practices and rituals that permit using animals for sacrifices such as those done by the Igbo people during festivals, thanksgivings, and rituals to ward off evil spirits. This present author argues that people should not see the Nigerian Constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion as a sanctioning of animal sacrifice or rituals that degrade and pollute the environment. We must question practices like these in ATR. Worshippers and scholars of ATR must rise and advocate against animal sacrifice and other rituals that pollute the environment. ATR should not be silent on this in the name of culture. After all, there are practices such as slavery, and discrimination against women that people consider to be part of culture but today, we know better and are advocating against them. Practitioners of ATR should continue to promote in their teachings the value of sacred and totemic animals. In their shrines and religious, sites they should promote African values that speak of human inter-relationality with animals of other creatures.

It is rare to enter a church in Nigeria to hear a sermon or homily on animal care. Animal care seems to be a null or hidden curriculum in church life. Even when the readings speak of animal issues, the homilies/sermons are rarely devoted to the care of animals. There needs to be a radical change and re-orientation in religious curriculum. There should be a deliberate attempt to speak about animal care. Teachers and preachers of the bible should when doing annual outlines or topics for bible study or church service incorporate into it many topics that will deal with this issue. If it is not listed, it is difficult for preachers to speak about it. Philips-Kemenanabo (2021) notes that during Christian celebrations of their feast such as Christmas and Easter and other celebrations they often kill animals such as goats and cows. While it is not illegal to kill animals to eat, the slaughtering of animals should be done humanely and also there is a need to reduce the consumption of meat. The amount of energy and other resources required to keep and train animals for human consumption puts a great toll on the resources of the earth. The Parliament of World Religions (1993) affirms that religions must shun all forms of violence, live also in respect of animals, live humanely, and minimize our consumption.

There is no doubting the fact that religion is a powerful force and influencer of society. The role of religion is indispensable in society. Though some may have misused religion to do evil, there is good in religion and the moral teachings of religion can make a difference. It has a function to play in the Nigerian society. It is on note that a great majority of Nigerians are believers in one religion or the other. There are many Christians and Muslims in the country. The Christian churches and Muslim mosques should leverage their spiritual and moral power/authority to conscientize their members to work for animal care and welfare. In the country also there are Hinduists, Buddhists, and people of other religions. They too have a role to play in advocating humane treatment of animals. This author personally knows that there is a Hare Krishna Hindu Tempel in Okwuodiete, near Oha, Delta State. The author has seen a signboard of the Baha'i Faith towards Oghara. These people should not be sidelined. They all have a role. All religions have to be mobilized in this time of environmental crisis and biodiversity loss to work for the protection of animals. Religions in Nigeria should be concerned about animal abuse and mistreatment. Beyond the fact that the animals are abused, it invariably affects the physical health and wellbeing of the abuser and even owners of pet animals.

To the best knowledge of this author, there are hardly any animal shelters in Nigeria where stray animals can be taken in and kept and protected. Religions in Nigeria can work on this. Finley (2013) narrates that there is a connection between animal cruelty and violence or abuse against human beings for as Finley indicates from reports: Patrick Sherrill who was notorious for stealing pets and having his dog mutilate them killed 14 co-workers at a post office shooting; the Boston Strangler, Albert DeSalvo who raped and killed 13 women, use to abuse dogs by putting fire to their tails; Jeffrey Dahmer a dog abuser became a serial killer. Though these instances happened in the United States, they can happen anywhere. No religion does not believe in the health and wellbeing of human beings. That being the case, religion should show concern to ensure that all forms of animal abuse are stopped in Nigeria. The violence or abuse that people perpetuate against them; they may likely perpetuate the same violence against human beings. Nigeria is a nation inundated with violence and abuses. Whether it is domestic

violence and abuse from Boko Haram, domestic violence, youth violence, ethnic militancy violence, etc. Stopping animal abuse invariably helps to build human character and peace.

Conclusion

The paper examined the role of world religions in promoting humane animal treatment in Nigeria. It clearly showed that there is a great deal of degrading treatment meted to animals in Nigeria. Inhumane treatment of animals in the country includes violent slaughtering of animals, animal sacrifice, stress for animals in cages, cows on roads and highways posing danger to humans, etc. The paper noted that animals suffer pain and ought to be protected from this pain. The world religions that the paper examined all enunciate that animals should be treated with care and protected from pain and harm. Even when some of them see human beings as superior to animals and that human beings can make use of animals, they still concede that animals should never be abused or misused. The paper argued that it is imperative that religions in Nigeria promote this value of animal care and that when this is done, it will help to create a better and humane society.

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POLICE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN RIVERS STATE: ANCIENT AND MODERN

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Abstract

This article examines the evolution of the criminal justice system and police force in Rivers State, Nigeria, from its earliest days to the present. The police, as a security force, are implicated in several incidents of abuse across the twenty-three (23) local governments of Rivers State. Indeed, police protecting the public without conditions is usually the exception rather than the rule. Many Nigerians have heard tales of crooked police officers that extort money from unsuspecting civilians. In the light of the forgoing, it is obvious therefore to assert that the instrument of the state in Rivers State does not exhibit the tendency towards divergence in character of the issue under discussion. Recent political events in Rivers State, coupled with a resurgence of local crime and criminal gangs, have once again thrust the divisive question of public safety onto the agenda. Police relations with the people of Rivers State are troubled by the gap between public expectations and police actions. In most cases, the police either don't respond quickly enough to emergent calls or, even if they do, they end up arriving at the crime site too late or not at all because of their inadequate response capabilities. Bribery is a common practice for individuals who contact police stations directly to get service of process on matters that have been reported to the authorities. Much like in other federal states, this could be the reason why people in Rivers State are demanding protection from private security, civil militia, and vigilante organisations. Given the importance of police and policing operations to the criminal justice system, this study aims to analyse both the theoretical and practical challenges faced by the police in Rivers State. This article draws on the post-colonial state framework to examine the difficulties encountered by law enforcement in Rivers State and to support its central argument that criminal justice systems mirror the underlying socioeconomic systems of any given community. When seen in this light, the study's recommendations include, among other things, a return to the drawing board for police reform in Nigeria and a re-evaluation of the country's fundamental institutions.

Keywords: Police, criminal justice, corruption, reform, post-colonial state

Introduction

Rivers State's criminal justice system which includes the courts, police, prosecutors, prisons, and the legal assistance program is ineffective. Staff shortages, lack of accountability, and corruption are bringing the system to a crawl, despite claims that it is reducing crime. For example, the criminal justice system in modern-day Nigeria is quite different from the one that existed in Nigeria before to colonization. We can't say for sure that traditional societies didn't have crime, but almost everyone was involved in some way with the legal system (Sa'ad, 1988; Kolo, 2002). Many of the civil wrongs and criminal acts that are recognized by our laws today were understood and perpetrated by our ancestors long before the arrival of Europeans, according to Nweje (1975). Before Europeans arrived, our indigenous societies had a system in place to identify, prevent, and punish crimes like murder, robbery, arson, treason, common theft, burglary, assaults, rape, incest, sacrilege, and so on. If a dispute emerged between villagers or between the community and a few rebellious members, the assembly would often meet to hear and determine the matter, as there were no formal courts. The family meeting (often heard at the family gathering) was the tribunal that first heard the matter, but this can vary from community to community. The village assembly or gathering, consisting of either the whole adult population or only the village elders, was the recipient of this request. Higher tribunals were established in certain bigger towns. Nweje (1975) found that while the specifics varied from one

village to another, the overall trend remained consistent. According to Nweje (1975), the evidence was evaluated in the same way it is evaluated now. The credibility of an eyewitness testimony was always higher than that of hearsay. The veracity and honesty of the witness determined the weight. In light of all other aspects of the case, factors such as age, interest, reputation, and the likelihood of the claimed facts were taken into account. At the conclusion of the hearing, if the tribunal could not determine which party was speaking the truth, the decision was transferred from human to divine knowledge. The next step was to swear on a piece of juju. The dispute's specifics dictated who took the oath. It was the individual himself who took the oath of innocence if he was facing accusations of wrongdoing. In contrast, the party asserting ownership of the property was the one who took the vows in the event of a property dispute.

While the specifics may have changed from one town to another, you can typically expect something along these lines. For the most heinous of crimes, the punishment might range from a beating to death or other type of execution followed by the destruction of the offender's house and possessions; for less severe offences, it could be a fire and, as a default, the social exclusion of the offender and his loved ones (Nweje, 1975:188). Based on the data, it seems that the old judicial system of this civilization may have a lower rate of alienation than the current ones. Because of this, the contemporary criminal justice system evolved alongside a number of structural and conceptual shifts. Agencies in charge of enforcement are facing accusations of audience alienation, deprivation, subjection, exploitation, and dominance. After gaining independence, many expected things to improve, but instead, things have become worse (Kolo, 2002:13). A whole new scenario emerged with the arrival of European administration. All of the groups that had previously existed independently were subject to the Code of Conduct that the new colonial rulers had imposed. Some of these new kings were either contemporaries or quite comparable to those who had previously ruled the different realms, as mentioned above. As a key component of the criminal justice system, the police are the subject of this lecture, which lays out their many theoretical and practical issues. The document also offers suggestions for improving police efficiency within the Rivers State criminal justice system.

Clarification of Concepts

Dambazau (2007:174) posits that the term "criminal justice" may refer to either the judicial system or the field of study. The legal process encompasses the steps taken by law enforcement from the first arrest of a suspect all the way to the case's dismissal. The interconnected components of criminal justice, including the police, courts, and penitentiary institutions, form a legal entity, according to Newman (1978). "Each separately budgeted, each drawing its manpower from separate wells, and each of profession into itself" (Newman, 1978:3) describes the loose federation of agencies that make up the system.

On pages 3-4, Clare and Kramer (1977) put forth the following:

It is possible to view criminal justice as a sequence of decision making stages. Through this system offenders are either passed on to the next stage or diverted out of the system. This diversion may be due to any number of reasons such as lack of evidence or a desire to reduce the load on the system. Each subsequent stage of the process is dependent upon the previous stage for its elements; it is this dependent that best exemplifies the "system" nature of criminal justice.

Mehern (1972) argues that true governance is impossible in the absence of an efficient criminal justice system; in such a society, anarchy reigns and individual safety is guaranteed. Government functions and order is preserved when the judicial system is functional. Depending on the nature and fairness of the laws, the enforced order may be democratic and decent or despotic and unjust; yet, in any event, sufficient social control is preserved to enable society to operate (Mehern, 1972:211). The term "criminal justice system" is used in the context of this article to describe the network of organisations that work together to implement the fundamental laws of a society as outlined in its criminal law code. A functioning criminal justice system and widespread public support are necessary for any kind of government to exist; otherwise, chaos would reign and no one's safety or possessions would be guaranteed. An efficient system, on the other hand, works in the opposite way. Regardless, all society has lapses in criminal justice from time to time, characterised by broad disobedience to the law.

Theoretical Framework of Analysis

Abuse by security forces and police is common over much of the continent. Indeed, unfettered police protection of civilians is more the exception than the rule. There are many accounts of police corruption, incompetence, and extortion of the public. If the police are unable to respond quickly enough, even when they do get an emergency call, they will often arrive at the scene of a crime too late or not at all. Paying bribes before being served is not usual for personal callers to police stations. In places like South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria people turn to vigilante organizations, private security firms, and civil militias for safety (Olonisakin, 2008). To rephrase, a capitalist society's criminal justice system mirrors the country's capitalist production mode. Classical underdevelopment and dependence theories of development, which include the slave trade, colonialism, and neo-colonialism as its cornerstones, are the origins of this dependent connection. Although they only make up a small fraction of the world's nations, the voice of the ruling capitalist socioeconomic structures is, without a question, the most commendable voice that the world has heard so far. According to Marxist political economics, however, the ability to create ideas is directly proportional to one's control over the means of production. Without a question, the local population's repression and suppression was the criminal justice system's primary objective. The overarching goal of the criminal justice system was, without a doubt, to subjugate and oppress the indigenous people for the benefit of the white man. (Kolo, 2002; Tamuno, 1970). The police force in Nigeria is serving the interests of the wealthy and powerful, said Kolo (2002). According to Wyse (2001), the special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) operatives in Lagos state are allegedly quite wealthy. The police authority knew much of this. In addition to aiding crooks that pay them handsomely to keep in touch, the squad is said to be involved in the practice of exploiting innocent people as bait for other criminals willing to pay. People who aren't guilty or who are caught for minor infractions, such as loitering during non-peak hours, are occasionally transported to SARS and treated as thieves while the genuine offenders, who can afford to pay the fine, are released. The only thing you see every day is blood, according to a SARS-affiliated police inspector: "...in SARS, we see real money, not this 'kobo-kobo' business police men outside see." According to Wyse (2001:26) investigation has uncovered certain tragedies. Similarly, Atupulazi (2007, p.31) in *The Week Magazine* stated that some members of the leadership structure of the state police allegedly conspire with ritualists to trade human parts out of a hidden cult lair in the Emuoha and Etche local government areas of Rivers State. In addition, he speculated that the hiding spot is used to keep individuals who are victims of police arrests. The victims' families are sold to the ritualists for one million dollars apiece if they do not raise a fuss. This lends credence to the idea that whoever controls the means of production also controls all other parts of human existence. Those at the top of society food chain get disproportionate benefits from dependent capitalism; they've also coordinated to shape societal police operations to serve their own interests. In addition, the existing literature firmly asserts that the majority of Nigerian police officers are corrupt. Ibeanu (2007, p. 46) further validates this tangible public impression of the police by writing:

Extortion of money by law enforcement agents is clearly the most widely encountered problems among travellers across the different border communities of Rivers States. Evidence from our study clearly shows how widespread the problem is. It also shows that some sides of the borders tend to be more infamous for illegal demands for money than others, while some law enforcement agents also appear to be more notorious than others in extorting money from travellers... At all the borders; three law enforcement agencies, namely, customs, immigrations and police generally scored between 70% and 80% of all the yes hits demanding illegal payments.

Sa'ad (1989 p.19; Kolo, 2002 p.13) explains:

...the pervasiveness of corruption is a result of turning the state into a main source of private accumulation; it has at least two main effects on law, justice and state in Nigeria. The Nigerian Law Enforcement Agents and judicial personnel and socio-cultural units of Nigerian society can hardly remain immune to corruption. In fact, police reputation for bribery and corruption is well-known in Nigeria.

Fasua et al (2006, p.26) adds that:

... many policemen who spoke to TELL on condition of anonymity sneered at the IG'S resolve to stamp out corruption by dismantling the checkpoints. "Dem no fit do am. Not even 10,000 fit dismantle roadblocks. Truly, dem cancel roadblock with mouth talk but dem permit us to do stop and search, now!"...

Additionally, some police officers often said that:

bribery at checkpoints is analogous to a state's internally generated income (IGR). Our ogas use it to purchase petrol, school supplies and everything else they need, and then they split the remaining. Nothing at all from our stop-and-search returns Fasua et al. (2006).

Based on the information provided, it is safe to assume that most individuals associated with the criminal justice system are corrupt, particularly those in law enforcement. But compared to other types of criminals, these individuals are seldom brought to justice. Given the current condition of things. Odekunle (1978) argues that the likelihood of powerful individuals being arrested, prosecuted, convicted, or imprisoned is rather low, even in the event that their crimes are found. Wealthy and famous people sometimes get a pass when they're accused of a crime because they can afford to employ powerful attorneys, buy witnesses, and even pay the punishment if found guilty. He further states that... Examining Nigeria's dismal human rights record, the US-based Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour listed several pressing issues, including: the restriction of citizens' ability to elect a new government; extrajudicial and politically motivated killings by security forces; vigilante killings; the use of excessive force, including torture, by security forces; the impunity for abuses committed by security forces; arbitrary arrests; and lengthy pre-trial detention (Adejuwon, 2009:21).

Reported instances of politically motivated killings by government officials or their agents, including the Nigerian army, police, and other security forces, as well as their participation in extrajudicial killings and the use of excessive force to capture criminals, suggest that the Nigerian government has breached a substantial provision of respect for the integrity of the person, including freedom from arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life. In addition, Odi village is a quiet Niger Delta settlement where eleven policemen were assassinated in 1999 by teenagers. In response, the police and military were ordered to use deadly force against suspected criminals. It would be irresponsible to quickly forget the brutality and murder of Ikoku traders in Port Harcourt, infamous police massacre of six Igbo businessmen (Apo 6) in Abuja or the demolition of Zakibiam. Based on the data shown above, it is clear that the criminal justice system and the police in particular, have failed miserably in their responsibilities. Corruption permeates most branches of the security apparatus. The basic freedoms and human rights of the people of Nigeria are being violated. Finally, the security forces prefer the powerful and wealthy when administering justice.

Thematic Explanations on Why the Police is Ineffective in Criminal Justice System in Nigeria

Everyone believes that the police and other security services should keep the public safe by reducing criminal activity and making sure that everyone has equal access to the legal system. The public has a right to feel safe and secure, and they should be able to easily reach the police. But when it comes to effective police, the majority of Nigerian states fall short of what the UN has established as a benchmark. According to the international organisation, a minimum of one police officer for every fourth five people is necessary to ensure public safety (Dambazau, 2007 and Olonisakin, 2008).

Rivers State is an example of states where this ratio has not had a significant influence, despite the fact that it should be much higher in cases of civil unrest and excessively high crime rates. Taking into account the bare minimum set by the UN, it is widely believed that the number of police officers in Nigerian states is far lower than what is needed to keep order among the Nigeria's estimated one 120 million inhabitants considering the minimum United Nations standard. However, the disparity is very obvious going by the world body position that, at the very least, the ratio of police officers to population should be one per 45 individuals in order to sustain security. The example in Rivers State as presented on Table 1 below x-rays this dearth of police personnel.

Table 1 showing number of Police to Population

S/No	LGAs	No. of Police	Population
1	Asari-Toru	65	220,100
2	Akuku-Toru	54	156,006
3	Andoni	57	211,009
4	Ahoadia-East	60	166,747
5	Abua-Odual	53	282,988
6	Ahoadia-West	64	249,425
7	Bonny	69	215,358
8	Degema	56	249,773
9	Eleme	77	190,884
10	Emohua	68	201,901
11	Etche	62	249,454
12	Gokana	55	228,828
13	Ikwerre	64	189,726
14	Khana	76	294,217
15	Ogu-Bolo	50	74,683
16	Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni	68	284,010
17	Omuma	54	100,366
18	Okrika	72	222,026
19	Opobo-Nkoro	55	151,511
20	Oyigbo	78	122,687
21	Obio-Akpor	85	464,789
22	Port Harcourt	115 (Excluding Head Quarters)	541,115
23	Tai	67	117,797

Source: Institute for Strategic Studies; Fact book on Police Documentation, 2023 p. 20.

There is a glaring average gap between the population and police serving officers, as seen in the chart above; this imbalance is incomparable to the security concerns we are now facing in Rivers State. It is certain that whenever there are security breaches, the police are constantly told there is "no personnel," which means that the ones that are there are always frustrated and faced with many obstacles. According to Olonisakin (2008), the difference in police behaviour in the apparently more prosperous Nigeria states is a question of degree rather than substance. Images of police violence flooded national television screens during the recent post-election turmoil in Rivers State. There are concerns over the behaviour and rapport of the Rivers State security force towards the common people they are tasked with safeguarding due to their recent acts. Excessive force against unarmed protesters and uneven policing implementation led to suggestions that a "kill and go" or "shoot-to-kill" order was in force in some areas where protests were organised, despite the force's protestations that they were merely trying to preserve law and order in the state and Nigeria at large. The leadership of the Rivers State Police is also notoriously harsh towards the local populace.

As Olonisakin (2008:20-21) points out, there's little question:

The reasons for the entrenched practices of abuse, incompetence and corruption by the police across Africa are symptomatic of governance deficits in the concerned states. With decades of authoritarian rule and accompanying politics of patronage, it is to be expected that institutions responsible for security would instead be diverted to propping up various regimes. It is not surprising that out of this history has come poor number, badly paid and poorly trained police with little sense of their missions as protectors of citizens that has outgrown their capacity.

This citation has given credence to our position as raised above. The police force in Rivers State has recently been under heavy public scrutiny for what many see as a lack of effectiveness in crime prevention and control. Actually, police officers' chronic temptations and blatant disregard for their own health may be contributing factors to the epidemic of crime against them. When it comes to money, stationery, and any unexpected emergency costs, for example, police stations and barracks throughout the country often take care of themselves in the past out of the budgetary allocations from the force

headquarters. Once again, without official recognition and authorization from higher-ups in the police department, individual officers do not have the authority or right to sew their own uniforms or preserve bullets on personal grounds. Nonetheless, in the modern day, police not only make uniforms and preserve bullets but also sell them without proper clearance or legal licence. Many things have been said to have contributed to this disaster. First, traditionally, the Nigerian police force has been either politicised and militarised to ensure the survival of the government or disregarded in favour of a more powerful and prominent military system. The respect, decency, and orderliness that were formerly associated with law enforcement have been entirely eradicated. The following is an explanation from Adegbamigbe et al. (2008:29-30) based on this stance:

Police detention centres, except for a few, stink to high heavens. In some cases, police posted out of their stations are abandoned to sleep in classrooms or inside abandoned cars like refugees in a war-torn country. Closely associated with lack of necessary equipment are poor office and residential accommodation which reduce the morale of an average Nigerian cop.

For example, police officers in certain areas of Rivers State endure appalling living and working circumstances. The Divisional Police Headquarters in Port Harcourt is located at Moscow Road, Mile One and Three Barracks, and the smell that is lingering around the area is rather unpleasant. Each morning, the residents of these tenements face the challenge of using the two restrooms and two toilets. A potential catastrophe is imminent in some building blocks located inside the stations due to the fact that their concrete decking is crumbling, exposing corroded iron rods. However, due to a shortage of alternative housing, the occupants have chosen not to vacate the premises. These and many more has pushed the force unprofessional practices against the very innocent citizens they are meant protect. Therefore, the same individuals who are supposed to be protected have been repressed by the security forces and the police, according to Olonisakin (2008). Analysts have shown that a functional police force is a good indicator of police growth, expanding the link between government and police behaviour. As an example, political reforms have resulted from political “freedom” from military coup and take over in Nigeria. Second, the Nigerian police force is supposedly rotten to the core from the inside out due to widespread corruption. Many Nigerians see police personnel as ineffective, sloppily dressed, greedy, and open to extortion, claims Okereke (1993). A common example that is often used to describe the police department's stance on corruption is the "road block syndrome," when drivers are accused of being extorted by the police. As for the financial rewards of road block responsibilities, it is widely believed that lower levels pay to have them assigned, with the promise of regular reports to their upper commanders. It is often believed that corruption is prevalent in criminal investigations, with the amount of bribes offered by both sides serving as a determining factor. Put simply, the side that contributes more is more likely to have an impact on how the inquiry is conducted (Dambazau, 2007). Police checkpoints are more of a gathering area for bribes than a location that creates a feeling of safety, according to Olonisakin (2008). To really grasp the pervasiveness of police corruption in Rivers State, one need just take a road trip from Bori to Eleme and on to Port Harcourt (and the several Local Government Areas in Rivers State). Those who travel or work in commercial transport in these regions often know the usual quantity required at each checkpoint. Serious problems may arise if payment is not made.

There is a noticeable shortage of sufficient law enforcement equipment among the Nigerian police. They can't do their jobs well since they don't have access to contemporary means of transportation, communication, weapons, and ammunition, as well as logistical support. Based on their case study in South-South, Alemika and Chukwuma (2000, p.8) draw the following conclusions:

...quantitative and qualitative inadequacy of men and women, materials, and money within the Nigerian police as well as poor and inadequate social infrastructures ... within the Nigerian society, militate against police effectiveness, and positive estimation of the police by Nigerian citizens.

On the other hand, Dambazau (2007, p.222) posits that:

The African police have a very serious image problem in the eyes of the populace it is established to serve. Consequently, the police in Nigeria are viewed with suspicion, “unfriendly”, “brutal”, “trigger-happy”, “extortionist”, “crime collaborators”, gross isolators of civil liberties and human rights Nigeria has recently seen a debate on the conduct of its police force.

According to a recent editorial in the Nigerian Chronicle (one of the national daily), the police have allegedly lost track of the number of civilians killed by so-called stray bullets in a series of incidents involving the careless discharge of police weapons. In contrast to other nations that use water cannons to quell protests, "here in Ghana, the police personnel go to demonstrations with cocked guns, ready to fire," the editorial lamented (Olonisakin, 2008). Increasing crime, particularly violent crimes like as armed robbery, ritual killings, political assassinations, ethno-religious violence, and electoral violence, has diminished public faith in the police's ability to protect citizens and their possessions. The central argument is that the police in the country are neither able to decrease or prevent crime, nor can they solve existing crimes via effective prosecutions and arrests. This view persists despite evidence that other parts of the criminal justice system, such as the judicial and penal systems and prison, do have a role in the time it takes to resolve criminal cases. A number of factors have contributed to the general public's reluctance to assist law enforcement in Nigeria with crime prevention and control efforts, including (a) a lack of willingness to share information that could lead to the exposure of criminal activities, (b) a lack of interest in helping identify offenders, (c) occasional resistance to police efforts, and (d) the practice of "jungle justice," which involves enforcing laws unilaterally.

Challenges Facing Policing in Rivers State

One of the most obvious and serious societal issues in Rivers State is the high crime rate. Both the government and the public have acknowledged it as an important matter. Along with poverty, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, wealth, and the development of jobs, crime is a major problem that the population is concerned about. Victims of violent property crimes, such robbery and automobile hijacking, are pretty evenly distributed among the population in Rivers State, as they are in other places. However, not everyone is equally affected by crime. But several factors, including a person's gender, age, wealth, and location, greatly impact the probability that they will become a victim of crime. This last point remains a critical component in understanding the victimisation trend in Nigeria. Key determinants of who is victimised by what form of crime include socio-economic characteristics and living situations, just as they are in other nations. One of the main factors that determined the patterns of police victimisation was and is race, according to the Police Service extract (2002, p.1). This is because, in Rivers State, the political contestation atmosphere ensures that a person's freedom to exist within the bounds of some defined laws is determined by their candidate affiliation race. Between 1999 and 2023, organised crime flourished because to the general public's need for a new beginning. When compared to the highly organised mafias, local organised crime groups tend to be less cohesive and poorly organised. The Rivers State crime syndicates are notoriously difficult for the police to crack down on because of their fluid and poorly organised structure, which functions more like a web of criminals. Some of the state's organised crime gangs have formal and informal ties to criminal organisations outside of the country.

Secondly, it is widely believed that there remains a great deal of unfinished business in the domains of crime prevention, reporting detection, and case processing. Overcrowding in prisons and other issues with the criminal justice system's handling of crimes and offenders persist to this day. A great deal of the jail (now a correctional complex) is rife with reports of police corruption, ineptitude, and extortion. Mercenaries, or private army contractors, are a common sight in Nigeria, particularly in the oil-rich Rivers State. These individuals are known to be eager to accept payment for their services. Because, as Peter-Baker argued (2008, p.24):

With more than half of the registered security guards the state is still vulnerable crime and criminality. The reason for the explosion in more than it was in the past decade is not difficult to find. Soaring crime rate and a police service of limited effectiveness are among the more obvious causes. The 2017 announcement and recruitment by Rivers State government were to commence employing private security outfits to "guard" and assist police stations underscored both these problems and some other subsequent ones that may emerged.

In a similar vein to the last point, many Africans, both skilled and unskilled, find work in the criminal business. After that, Peter-Baker (2008) wanted to know: Can we really claim that the recent surge in crime in Nigeria, along with the police force's glaring incompetence in protecting the populace, has been a fortunate turn of events, given that it has created thousands of jobs in the security sector?

Alternatively, does the expansion of the security sector imply that only the well-off have such protection? The expansion of the security business is seen by opponents as a sign that the state is not fulfilling its responsibilities, according to Peter-Baker (2008), who finishes by making this claim. Based on these premises, it's clear that the security business (to use Peter-Baker's term) is crucial in bolstering democracies by providing citizens with access to private security services that are competent, dependable, and responsible. All over Nigeria, and especially in Rivers State, these are among the most pressing problems confronting law enforcement. Maintaining sufficient controls over the security industry's mercenaries is directly proportionate to the rising demand for state police, which poses a significant challenge to state administration. Not only will this prevent them from abusing their position, but it will also ensure that they get proper training and operate in secure environments. Additionally, it will rein in their extreme behaviour and prevent them from responding illegally or unconstitutionally. For every administration, dealing with criminal gangs bent on retaliation is an inevitable and catastrophic outcome. Every government is worried about it, and turning it around isn't easy. Today, governments would have fundamentally lost their fundamental foundation for ruling if the industry is not adequately controlled and criminal prosecutions occur behind the backs of those in power. Lastly, we can't turn a blind eye to the causes of police corruption and incompetence. The pervasive corruption in law enforcement necessitates sweeping reforms to the continent's legal system and institutional culture.

Conclusion

Although traditional policing did exist in Nigerian civilizations before to colonisation, the police force that we are primarily concerned with as part of the continent's criminal justice system is a product of that era's administration. Not to mention the most divisive. Law and order maintenance is the responsibility of the police. This is an essential job for the rule of law, democracy, and democratisation in Nigeria, as well as for the social order in Africa as a whole. Cops in Nigeria are dealing with some serious problems right now, and those problems are having an effect on what they do. The effects of police violence and corruption on their capacity to manage and prevent crime are among the most pressing problems in today's society. The police have a constitutional obligation to protect the public, and these pervasive problems undermine that obligation. As a result, criminal activity becomes easier, public trust in law enforcement and government plummets, and people feel even more unsafe. There is a well-deserved reputation for police brutality in Nigeria, and in the state of Rivers State in particular. That is shown by events both past and current. In Rivers condition and across Nigeria, the quality of policing is affected by factors such as the larger discretion used by officers, the effects of colonial domination and authoritarian regimes, and the poor condition of police administration and welfare.

Recommendations

Our recommendation in this study would take exception on the issue of police finance. The main reason for this is because it is very showy. But change is desperately needed to improve the criminal justice system and the public's perception of the police. To better prepare the police to play an active part in the criminal justice system, hence, we propose the following measures:

- i. The scope of reform has to go beyond the police, because it is ridiculous that the justice department can predict and account for the proceeds from checkpoints in its annual budget. Even Nigeria has a long way to go.
- ii. To add insult to injury, the country's police force is still subject to the Police Act of 2004, which was passed before independence. What's more, unlike in other African nations, the Inspector General of Police is not legally responsible to anybody other than the president. Reforms to the police force will be impeded unless these fundamental frameworks are altered. Put simply, the public's impression of the police force needs a makeover if it is to regain its former glory.
- iii. Furthermore, since we have limited number of personnel to enforce crime control there is a need for prominent Nigerians leaders should sign a protocol and enact laws prohibiting this security personnel from selling their services abroad (i.e. the influential citizens in society).
- iv. Nigerian authorities must once again raise their governance scores if their country is to escape the crises that plague the country and the pervasive ineptitude, corruption, and abuse that it fosters.

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SOCIAL CHANGE, SECURITY CHALLENGES AND THE FUTURE OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

This research discusses the trends of security challenges pari-passu social change which antecedently occurrences have necessitated the collapsization of some nations. The paper holds that every society undergoes a phenomenon of cyclical changes and challenges; hence the pattern of social life is rise, fall and decay. From antiquity, many ancient empires that were once at their peak had collapsed. Globally, while some governments had failed already, others are at the verge of collapse and this had increased the number of separatist groups internationally. Therefore, to juxtapose the status of Nigeria, this exercise adopted cyclical theory in relation to the trends of societal decline, security challenges, collapse and the endemic indices of state failure in Africa and especially Nigeria. The paper argued that the happenings around Nigeria are pointers to degeneration and proofs of eminent collapse just as the x-rays of the past with the present secessionist activities explain what the future holds. Development survey was adopted to trace the changes that had occurred overtime using secondary data collection with the objectives of tracing changes through ancient regimes, x-raying the western World, pinpointing the security challenges of Nigeria and to examine if Nigeria is a failed state and her collapsization. The paper recommended restructuring, good governance, proper management of human and material resources, conflict resolution and true democracy as a recipe.

Keywords: Empires, Failed State, Social Change, Security Challenges, Decline and Collapse.

Introduction

Societal collapse as a form of civilization collapse is the fall of a complex human society, characterized by the loss of cultural identity and socio-economic complexity, the downfall of government and the rise of violence Arbesman (2011). A collapse society may revert to a more primitive state, be absorbed into a stronger society or completely disappear. While some civilization such as India Valley civilization (19000 BC) North West India, Akkadian Empire, Mayan Empire, Easter Island etc has suffered the fate of collapse, others such as the British Empire (1981) alongside American Empire and Nigeria are gradually declining. Tainter, (1988) mentioned that the fall of western Roman Empire was the most widely known instance of collapse in the western world, and viewed societal collapse as a substantial loss of socio-political structure. While Eisenstadt (1991) argued for the clarification of the possibilities of regeneration, Diamond (2005) called it a complete end of political system. Kemp (2019) analyzed dozens of civilizations and found that the average life span of a civilization is 340 years. For Arbesman (2011) collapse is generally a random event and does not depend on age to fail, he agreed that state failure leads to state collapse.

A failed state is said to collapse and disintegrate. State failure occur when basic conditions and responsibilities of a sovereign government do no longer function properly, typically stratified with impoverish working class and a ruling plutocratic class composed of business, political and military elites. A state is defined as maintaining a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force within its

borders (Max Weber). But when this is broken, through the dominant presence of warlords, paramilitary groups, corrupt policing, armed gangs or terrorism, the very existence of the state becomes dubious and the state become failed. Hence a failed state is ineffective and unable to enforce its laws uniformly or provide basic goods and services to its citizens because of high crime rate, insurgency, extreme political corruption, judicial ineffectiveness. Bates (2008) refers to this as the “implosion of the state”. The indices of state failure according to Fund for Peace (2015) are:

Decline standard of living, loss of control of territory, loss of control of territory, loss of monopoly on the legitimate use of force, inability to provide public service, weakness of central government, wide spread corruption, wide spread criminality and the appearance of refugees. Call (2010), using the gap framework, stated that the three gaps a state is unable to provide when it is in the process of failure are: Capacity; when the state institutions lack the ability to effectively deliver basic goods and services to its population just as the case of Nigeria. Security; when the state is unable to provide security to its population under the threat of armed groups. Legitimacy; when a significant portion of its political elites and societies reject the rules regulating power and the accumulation and distribution of wealth.

Our understanding of society will not be complete unless we take into consideration its changeable nature and study through history the difference that had emerged in the centuries, ancient empires, civilizations and modernity. Egypt heralded civilization before Babylon, Mede-Persia, Greek and the Romans, later Britain then American. This was the way mark journey of civilizations. Change the law of nature is said to be permanent. Social transformation could be traced primitively through the hunting, shepherd and farming stages of the early man. Since food was the greatest need of man, early man wandered from place to place in the search of fruits, grains and animals on which he relied for meal. He learnt to produce better crops to extend the area under cultivation, and to store the grains for future use. These social changes later extended to the succeeding centuries. An improved system of irrigation, craft, government and the art of writing were established. Thus began the march of civilization and the antiquity of social change that had modified the world. Before 10,000 BC, Egypt was settled in around the Mesopotamia region and by 1200BC, due to war started to decline (Whelan, 2020). Around 2,300BC near River Euphrates, the Akkadian founded Babylon but in 539, Babylon declined to the Persian hands (History.com editors, 2019). By 200 BC, Greek empire became powerful and by 404 it collapsed because of internal conflicts just as Romans according to Guest (1977) reigned between 753 BC and waned by 479 AD. For BBC Bitesize, British Empire started in 1497 and declined between 1945-1997 and according to Turchin (2013), American empire started from 1776 and ended 2020.

From the aforementioned series of collapsology, one would acknowledged alongside Spengler (1923), Toynbee (1956) and Servigie et al (2020) that social decline is real and has become and the horizon of our generation. The present state of the Nigerian nation is characterized with poverty, aggression and anger, cultism, bombing, shooting, kidnapping, armed robbery, beheading and sales of human parts, farmers-herdsmen conflict, religious intolerance, inflation, debt crisis, environmental degradation and political corruption as socio-economic and political problems (Folarin, and Okodua, 2010). Others are insurgencies and reinsurgency groups such as MEND, NDVF, IPOB and Boko Haram sufficing that Nigeria wears an outlook of militant society. The level of social decay, and vices in Nigeria in form of abduction of school children that started from the Chibok girls Maiduguri (2013) to Bethel Baptist College Kaduna (2021), banditry, terrorism and ethnic secessionism, herdsmen among others amount to state failure.

In the words of Allswell Osini Muzan, “Nigeria at the moment is at a cross roads given the dynamics of turbulence in the country. One may wonder if the country would survive or splinter into fledging micro-mini states”. The future delineation of the country into Arewa Republic, Middle Belt Republic, Oduduwa Republic, Biafra Republic and Niger Delta Republic suffices and goes viral in internet, Facebook and WhatsApp such that the young generations are informed that the country is not one Nigeria but an anarchical comatose (Muzan, 2014). Similarly, Ndume (2021), checking through the decadence of immorality and untold social vices, came up with the conclusion that Nigeria is on the brink of collapse. Afenifere (2020), on the state of the nation, stated that Nigeria is in a state of sorry. Naira Forum investigated the Islamic agenda and saw that the Moslems are on with global Jihadation and Islamization of Nigeria.

But none of the aforementioned researchers used the historical antecedents through cyclical approach to compare and contrast the available indices of the past empires, nations, trends of decline and regimes to historically present the facts and figures and thoroughly portray the status of the present Nigeria hence the gap in knowledge.

Some of the questions asked are: are there ancient empires and regimes that had declined?; is the western world declining?; are there security challenges in Nigeria?; what is the status of Nigeria, a failed state or on the brink of collapse?. The objectives are to trace historically, changes and antecedents of past civilizations in relationship to the future of Nigeria, x-ray the Western World, pin point the security challenges of Nigeria and examine if Nigeria is a failed state or not.

Theoretical Framework

In order to explain succinctly the global antecedent of social change, security challenges and the trends of decline in Nigeria, the cyclical theory was adopted as it explains the various pointers of social change, collapse, decline and state failure. This theory was propounded by Oswald Spengler and popularized by Toynbee, Turchin and Wallingstein etc. Spengler (1923), studied Egypt, Greek, Roman and other empires and concluded that the Western World was on its decline. Later, Tynbee (1956) explored about 28 civilizations and came up with the conclusion that civilizations collapse due to factors of their own making. Just like Karl Marx, Wallerstein (1974), in his study of historical change, investigation of capitalism and the development of current international order in Modern World-System Theory, opined that this modern world system is capitalist and will collapse especially after going through the whole world for the contradictions to surface (Akikibofori, 2018: 132, 138). Turchin (1990) also studied USA and in 2010 predicted that USA will decline by 2020. Cyclical theory teaches that the pattern of growth and decay in human society's life cycle moves from birth through maturity, old age and finally dies or fade away. Thus, the story of many past kingdoms and failed states. The theory is also synonymous with the Holy Bible (Daniel 2). The level of social decay and vices in Nigeria are pointers of state failure. And just like the kingdoms past and the increase in delineated countries coupled with the endemic move by tribes to break away, Nigeria is in the brink of collapse. In the internet, Nigeria is splinted into Arewa Republic, Oduduwa Republic, Niger Delta Republic, and Biafra Republic etc. Therefore, cyclical theory provides the avenue to understand historical changes and future expectations.

Ancient Civilizations

While tracing the antecedents of decline and state failure from antiquity to the present day, globally, the paper discovered that until recent, Egypt (the cradle of civilization) sprang from the tribes that settled in the Nile Valley before 10,000 BC. They are responsible for great pyramids. The Egyptians Made huge advancement in math and were pioneers of medical science. They were the first people to use water ways as trade routes, the making of tools, phonetic, alphabet and papyrus (Whelan, 2020). The power of Egypt began to decline about 1200BC due to numerous wars and invasions and their ancient culture were replaced overtime. By the middle of seventeenth century BC, Egypt had ceased to become a strong military power. It fell a prey to the Assyrians (700BC), Persians (525BC), Greece (325BC) and Rome (30 BC) (Guest, 1977). The Mesopotamia region was situated between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The Mesopotamia civilization sprung from the Sumerian civilization. Today, it encompasses Iraq, Kuwait, Turkey and Syria. It was built on a fertile land around 500 BC. Mesopotamia was known for its trade, Leatherwork, metal work and masonry. It collapsed around 539 BC to the hands of the Persians (Whelan, 2020). Babylon was a state in around the ancient Mesopotamia Barrow (2013) citing Guest (1977) opined that it was founded around 2,300 BC more than 4000 years ago near the Euphrates River by the Akkadian speaking people of Southern Mesopotamia. It cut across today's Iran. Under Hammurabi's rule, it became an Empire and came to realm light, rich, powerful and influential city. In 612 BC, Babylon defeated Assyria and became the most powerful world empire. During the reign of king Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon built and preserved many statues, artwork and encircled it city with walls. In 539 when Prince Belshazzar, went about feasting, offended his subject. They left the city gate open and the Zealous Cyrus, king of Persia entered. Less than a century Babylon declined and collapsed and came under Persian control (History.com Editors, 2019). The Medes and Persians were the Indo-European nomadic people of the present western and southern Iran who settled in the region around 1000 BC (Alen, 2015). Led by King Cyrus in 539 BC, they invaded Babylon. The empire included

Egypt, India and Europe. Their system of government made use of satrap and the laws were rigid (Quest, 1977). The ancient Greeks were formed by groups of Aryan branches of the white race between 2000 and 1200 BC. First, they referred to themselves as Hellenes, depicting Hellen their ancestor and later as Greeks with Athens (sea) and Sparta (land) as their cities. As the Greeks spread over Europe and eastward, they came into conflict with the Persians, who were spreading west ward also. By 490 BC, the Greeks defeated the Persians whose king was Xerxes at Marathon (Guest, 1977). The Greek Empire was most powerful between 2000 BC, they developed new ideas in governance, science, philosophy, religion and art. It influenced modern culture in art and sports (Barrow, 2013). In 338 BC, Philip ruled and later Alexander his son took over. Greek Empire embraced Egypt, India and Europe. By 404 BC, Athens declined and collapsed alongside other cities because of internal conflict among its warlords.

While the cities of Greece were striving among themselves another civilization, the Roman Empire sprang in Italy. About eighth century BC, some Aryan tribes founded a village called Rome, a trading centre. The Romans learnt from the Greek Colonist just as the early Greeks had been influenced by the Cretans. The expansion of Roman Empire took over 300 years starting from about (753 BC to 476 AD) with Julius Caesar as the most ruler. Set over a province was a governor who collects taxes and returned to the Emperor (Guest, 1977). Roman Empire was the largest, wealthiest and the most powerful civilization in ancient times. It was very wide that the Emperor became unable to control, hence, governors were sent. Later, rebellions broke out in different parts of the empire, different war groups, Europe and barbarians around 254 AD attacked it severally until about AD 476, the Roman Empire split into two; eastern half overthrown by the Moslems in 1453, and the western half was overran by the barbarian invaders marking the end of the Roman Empire (Buah, 1977). Christianity started as a set holding private meetings and refusing to take part in general pagan activities of the state. This rift continued until AD313 when Emperor Constantine adopted Christianity and it became a state religion with the Roman Catholic as the instrument (Guest, 1977). For Buah (1977), up to the beginning of the 16th century there was only one Christian church and Pope was the head. The association of the church and state was established by Emperor Constantine (a Christian) with Sunday (catholic creation) as the day of worship rather than the biblical Sabbath of God. In his decree dated AD 321: "On the Venerable Day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often happens that another day is not so suitable for grains-sowing or for vine-planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost" (Boer, 1976: 143). Sequel to series of attack from the Huns and Vandals, Pope Leo I ensued a dialogue with Attila in 451 and 455 Rome was spared. Then people saw the need for the papacy as God's representative, to care for the souls of men and an Emperor to safeguard man's material needs (Guest, 1977). Therefore, Christianity became the state religion. Later, with Martin Luther (1483-1546), came the reformation and the birth of Protestantism.

Contemporary Civilization and Empires

Also, in this analogy especially during the earlier centuries of the Middle Ages, the researcher observed that the people of Europe were mainly interested in fighting and religion. They were not familiar with neither the Greece nor the Roman cultures, hence no civilization, the Dark Ages 500-800 (Guest, 1977). During the Middle Ages, England was part of other kingdoms. In 1066, William of Normandy conquered the areas that covered England. And during the reign of Henry II, England was part of the Angevin Empire. In support of this, BBC Bitesize added that the first British Empire started in the year 1497. The British empire was composed of the dominions, colonies, protectorates, mandates and other territories ruled by the United Kingdom. This great empire started around 1497, and when England and Scotland were separate kingdoms Wikipedia. Then came Renaissance and the Voyage of discovery, Crusaders, growth and freedom of towns, craft and merchant guilds, and the gradual decay of feudalism, learning and commerce became the order of the day other than fighting and religion. It began with the overseas possessions and trading posts established between the 16th and 18th centuries which turned to colonies. The early colonies were North America 1585, India 1612, Caribbean 1620, Jamaica 1670, Netherland 1664 and New York 1763. Between 1815-1914, 10 million square miles of territories and 400 million people were already added to the British Empire. After the World War I, it became difficult for Britain to hold on to empires, Britain started declining. Hence, it started dismantling

colonies. Between 1945 – 1997, through the period of decolonization, Commonwealth and the handover of Hongkong in 1997 ended British Empire (BBC Bitesize).

Prior to the voyages of discovery, man knew very little about the whole world. And around 1492 Christopher Columbus traced the West Indies, the native people of North and South America as Indians. Later, in 1513 Amerigo Vespucci was detailed. Because he was actually the one that discovered the South American coast, geographers named the new land, 'America', after him. Therefore, Columbus's discovery helped Vespucci and Balboa (Buah, 1977). The discovery of the American continent; 'New World' had led much jealousy in Europe, Spain, Portugal and France. They took turns scrambling America until finally in 1763, it passed into the British hands. Between 1777 – 1783, Britain and America fell out, within the war, in 1776, Americans declared their country independent of Britain with George Washington first as the commander-in-chief and in 1789 as its first elected President (Buah, 1977: 71 -74). By 1820, the thirteen rebel colonies had increased to 22 states. While the Southern states practiced slavery, the north did not and in 1820, Abraham Lincoln settled the dichotomy. America possessed extraordinary natural resources, vast fertile soil, and wide range of climate, abundant water ways, oil fields, and mineral wealth of almost every kind. The American Empire now consists of fifty states, each with a Star on the Flag (Guest, 1977). While examining how social factors were related to political inequality, Turchin (1990) found recurring cycles of unrest in historical societies. He identified two cycles; long and short cycles, long cycle, two-three centuries, short cycle; 50 years. Looking at the USA history, Turchin (1990) identified times of serious socio-political instability 1870, 1920 and 1970 and predicted that in 2020, the USA would decline and witness a period of unrest at least on the same level as 1970 because the first cycle coincides with the turbulent part of the second in around 2020. He announced this prediction in 2010.

Motesharrei (2014) had also applied the predator-prey model to human society to ascertain its decline status using the upper and lower class as predators and the natural resources being the prey. Thus, the old deal that held America's society together started to unwind, with social cohesion sacrificed to greed. Similar to the aforementioned, Packer (2013) asserted that America's character changed around 1978. That the USA became more entrepreneurial and less bureaucratic and less communitarian, more free and less equal. Banking and technology concentrated on the coast, turned into engines of wealth and without creating prosperity, capitalism (Packer, 2013).

Going by the theoretical view of Oswald Spengler (1880 – 1936), the western world is on its decline. This decay is evidenced by wars, conflicts and social breakdown that heralded their doom. Nuwer (2017) added that some other possible precipitating factors that would collapse the western world are instability, environmental degradation (climate change), sudden changes in world's future. While Hamilton (2021) noticed the rise of a perceptible decline of western power within the two decades, China had risen. Spinney (2018), citing Strauss & Home (1997) mentioned that the western (USA) culture has reached a critical juncture. Summatively, Swartz (2020) crowned this by saying that "what is been witnessed is not the demise of western civilization but the decline and fall of the American Empire". Paul Kennedy stated thus:

From the civil war to the first half of the 20th century, United States economy benefited from high agricultural production, plentiful raw materials, technological advancements and financial inflows. During this time the USA did not have to contend with foreign dangers. From 1960 to 1914, U.S export increased sevenfold, resulting in huge trade surpluses. By 1945 the U.S. both enjoyed high productivity and was the only major industrialized nation intact after World War II. But from the 1960s onward, the U.S saw a relative decline in its share of world production and trade. By the 1980s, the U.S experienced declining exports of agricultural and manufactured goods. In the space of a few years, the U.S went from being the largest creditor to the largest debtor nation. At the same time, the federal debt was growing at an increasing pace. This situation is typical of declining hegemony, (Kennedy, 1987).

For four years, Germany, Austrian Empire, Bulgaria, Ottoman Empire and Turkey (central powers), fought the British Empire; while France, Russia, Italy, Japan and stood as (Allied powers). The World War I (1914-1918), reshaped different political hegemonies and ended the centuries of predominance of Middle and Western Europe in World affairs (Guest, 1977). Later the world reshaped to the First, Second and Third World (Wilson, 2002). With the emergence of USSR and the allied powers led by USA as super powers, focus shifted to capitalism and communism. So suspicious of each

other, began the cold war; hence, civilization in danger. While in 1945, America manufactured the atomic bomb and hydrogen bomb in 1951, Russia achieved theirs in 1949 and 1954. Yet in 1957, China launched into the Orbit, the Sputnik an earth satellite. Military Superiority and technological contest waiting to destroy the modern world. The alignment of Donald Trump with Russia against Barack Obama's policies, the introduction of gay marriage etc led to the wining of Trump. Counting from Sorgwe (1999) calculation, Donald Trump was that eschatological president of USA. In a serious contest and alongside the infiltration of China and the Arab world, Biden defeated Trump's second term ambition, thus the ups and down in USA policies among others, the rise of China culminated in the 2020 decline prediction of USA. And the possible end of capitalist government (Wallenstein, 2011).

Security Challenges in Africa

- i. **Ambazonia and other separatist groups:** For Le Vine (2004), Ameba Land is a separatists region comprising of northwest and southwest regions of Cameroon. Through a referendum on 1st October 2017 declared them Federal Republic of Ambazonia Independence of Cameroon. Unity 1961, they were a British Colony while the rest of Cameroon a French Colony. About from Ambazonia according to Washington on post.com (2020), about 60 secessionist movements around the world wanted independence in 2020. Earlier UN admitted Timor-Laste 2020, Montenegro 2006, South-Sudan 2011 and Kosovo 2008 while Catalonia and Caledonia await recognition, Biafra etc await referendum Sawe (2017).
- ii. **The Islamization factor:** for many years Kanem-Bornu was one country. At about the time when this empire was flourishing, other Kingdoms such as Oyo, Bini, Tiv, Ibo, Ijaw and Ekpeye were growing in size and power (Buah, 1977; Ajugo, 2021). Islam became deeply rooted in the country after 1086 AD. Kanem-Bornu Empire declined in the seventeenth century when Tuareg and Jukun invaded it. By the eighteenth century many Fulanis had come to the Hausaland. Most of them were herdsmen moving through the bushes in search of grazing. But there were some of them, particular among their ruling families, who occupies important positions, yet was also a third group who neither lived in the town nor bushes but in the hamlets surround the towns. The Quest to deep the Quoran in the Atlantic Ocean as well as Islamization of Nigeria was started by Uthman Dan Fodio in around 1808, founded the Sokoto caliphate, a Fulani empire before the British rule in 1914 (Abiola, 1978). In 1986, Nigeria joined the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) The Nation (2018), Daily Post (2019). And as a member state sent delegation to the 13th Summit of Organization of Islamic Countries Istanbul 2016. This Fulanisation which had been instituted in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999), has Sharia court mentioned 73 times, Grand Khadi 54 times, Islam 28 times, Moslems 10 times and there is no single mention of neither Christ, Christian, Christianity or church (Nairaland Forum, 2014). Hence, 13 of the 17 nation's security agencies are headed by northerners (Nigeria Christian Graduate Fellowship, 2018). These were attempts to make Nigeria a full Islamic country.
- iii. **Herdsmen-farmer's conflict:** Farmers-herders crisis has become a re-occurring between 2017 and 2020. Fulani herdsmen conducted over 654 attacks, killed about 2,539 persons and kidnapped over 253 people. The Global Terrorist Index (2019) indicated that the primary driver of terrorism in sub-Saharan African was the rise in terrorist activities in Nigeria. In 2018 alone, Fulani extremist killed about 1,158 persons; 202 in 2017, 1,200 in 2019 (inter society, 2019).
- iv. **Insurgency and secessionism:** Going by indices since independence, Nigeria had been at war with itself and is sliding into anarchical-comatose (Muzan, 2014). It all started when some Eastern elements annihilated the northern and southern leaders. The successful reprisal attack by the north led to the Nigeria civil war (1967-1970). Ever since the return of democracy, Nigeria had witnessed upsurges of armed insurgencies (Folarin & Okodua, 2010). Earlier, 23 February 1966 general Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro declared Niger Delta a republic. These set the pace for the formation of Movement for the Survival of Ogoni people (MOSOP) by Ken Saro Wiwa, Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) Asari Dokubo, Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) Henry Okah, Ogbonnaya and Ehigiamusoe (2013). Others are Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOP) by Ralph Uwazuirike, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) by Nnamdi Kanu, Eastern Security Network 2021, Oodua People's Congress (OPC) 1997 by Fredrick Fasheun and Ganiyu Adams, Amotekun as advocate of Oodua Republic. Arewa Group 1999, Boko Haram 2009, by Ibrahim Shekarau and Shite movement etc.

- v. **Natural disasters:** The other factors that threaten the future of Nigeria which affected other civilizations also are natural disaster, acculturation, climate change and the responses to the challenges posed by physical, social and political environment (Toynbee, 1950). Paleolimnological temperature reconstruction suggest that historical periods of social unrest, societal collapse and population crash and significant climate change often occur simultaneously. There has been the connection between climate change and large-scale human crises in pre-industrial times. Climate has been the ultimate cause of major crises starting with economic depression. The major climate change and natural disaster in Nigeria are flood, desertification, erosion etc. And since agriculture is highly dependent on climate, any changes to the regional climate can induce crop failures (Diamond, 2005). And this occur when the society has exhausted their own design, and were unable to adapt to natural diminishing return for what they knew as their method of survival (Tainter, 1990). This assertion reiterated Toynbee's (1956) postulation that the ability to solve problem is key to every civilization and that society declines when its ability to do so stagnates or fails. Famine, pestilence, environmental change, depletion of resources, drought, earthquakes and sea level.
- vi. **The collapse of Nigeria:** With the level of precipitous social decline and state failure in Nigeria, collapse is eminent. Other indices of decline in Nigeria according to Akinlotan (2021) are debt trap, unbearable level of insecurity, hatred, bitterness and acrimony between the various ethnic groups, the forming of ethnic security outfit e.g. Eastern Security Network, Amotekun, endemic abduction and kidnapping herdsman killing, bandits and other criminal elements. The incompetent responses to the nations existential crisis is also not doubt, the country is in a serious crisis and evidently clear the present federal system cannot tackle the national challenges (Premium Time, 2021). While the Afenifere (2020) observed that Nigeria is on the brink of collapse, Ali Ndume pin-pointed that Nigeria is on a sorry state: It started like a joke, starting from small stealing into armed robbery. In the early 70s, one hardly hears of armed robbery from the days of Oyenusi an armed rubber executed in Lagos to Anini of Benin. But nowadays, what is raining is banditry, kidnapping, insurgency etc (Ndume, 2021). For Pillar (2021), Nigeria is on the verge of collapse and the survival of the nation at stake. It is falling apart. That under the watch of the government, Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen had killed more than 12,000 Christians and destroyed about 2,000 churches and mosques, displaced more than 4 million persons, clamour for self defence, ethnic successions such as the Niger Delta Republic, Biafra and the more recent call for Oduduwa Republics are fast gaining ground and calls for an outright opting of Nigeria (Martins, 2021).

Recommendations and Summary

The government must ensure legitimacy, proactively call the herdsmen to order, clear every arms bandits, Boko Haram, and safeguard its law abiding citizens, stop corruption, restructure the systems and entrench a true democracy, good governance, poverty reduction. The government must eschew discrimination, domination, nepotism and marginalization through an effective response to murder and genocide and human rights abuses. Individuals may strive for stability, societies may create the illusion of permanence, the quest for certainty may continue unabated, yet the fact remains that society is an ever-changing phenomenon, growing, decaying, renewing and accommodating itself to changing conditions and suffering vast modifications in the course of time. In this paper, the abstraction through the introduction and definition of concepts, social change was explored from the point of historical antecedents of nine (9) ancient civilizations, empires and kingdoms. It showed the rise and fall and social life-cycles of empires. The cross examination of Nigeria showed the infiltration of Fulani elements, the joining of Organization of Islamic Countries, gun gangs, terrorism economic and social insecurity among other socio-political indices of failure threatens its nationhood. Apparently what is been witnessed is the declined of Nigeria. A registered Islamic and Fulani empire discussed succinctly based on the perspectives of cyclical theory of social change.

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INSECURITY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SURVIVAL OF MICROFINANCE BANK

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Abstract

Insecurity in Nigeria has reached an alarming proportion showing its ugly head in different facets of our national life. This study assesses the impact of discomfort, terrorism and corruption on the survival of microfinance bank in Nigeria from 1990 to 2019. Using secondary data collected from World development indicators and National bureau of statistics, covering the period of 1990 to 2019. Ordinary least square, multiple regression analysis and Granger causality test were adopted to examine the relationship between insecurity and microfinance bank in Nigeria. The empirical finding of the study showed that insecurity has negative and significant impact on microfinance bank in Nigeria. The results also revealed that there is long run relationship between insecurity and microfinance bank in Nigeria. The study recommends that the government and policy formulators should make policies that will curb the trend of insecurity in the country.

Keywords: Insecurity, microfinance bank, Nigeria, Granger causality test.

Introduction

Since 1970s micro finance institutions around the globe increasing at alarming rate. In view of the dismal performance of the conventional finance sectors, policy formulators, practitioners and world organizations advocated micro financing as the means for poverty reduction. Now, there are more than 7000 micro lending organizations providing loans to more than 25 million poor individuals across the world, the vast majority are women. The success of Grameen Bank Model in Bangladesh which offered loans to poor people through group collateral was emulated in many nations worldwide. Throughout the world, poor people have little access to financial services. Financial institutions seen as banks, insurance services and others have generally regarded 80 percent of the world's population as an unprofitable market and have focused their attention in serving the richest 20%. The growth of micro finance over the last 10 years has demonstrated that poor people can make use of financial services.

According to Robinson (2001), microfinance is a supplier of loans and other financial services to the rural poor. Microfinance institutions can be non-governmental organizations, savings and loan cooperatives, loan unions, government banks, commercial banks or non-bank financial institutions (Ledgerwood, 1999; World Bank, 2007). It seeks to make financial services available on a sustainable basis to the economically active poor, low-income earners and micro, small and medium enterprises through privately owned enterprises. However, it is sad to know that this casual services offered by the microfinance banks has been marred by incessant insecurity raising from kidnapping, terrorism, violence and corruption and Nigeria is not exempted. Insecurity in Nigeria has reached an alarming proportion showing its ugly head in different facets of our national life. Lives are lost on daily basis, population decreasing, and businesses in comatose, investments are nose-diving, multinationals closing shops and vacating the country, financial activities are performing below the expectations and the populace in fears. Clearly, it poses a threat to governance and economic growth in such countries. According to Stewart (2004), the economic cost of insecurity is enormous. People who joined the fighting forces that are killed or flee, can no longer work productively and also schools, power stations,

and roads that are destroyed reduced the productive capacity of the economy. Further, displacement of people reduced the production of exports, thereby reducing foreign exchange earnings, import potentials and consequently reducing the output, leading to a decline in employment and earnings.

More so, it has been discovered that in areas that insecurity are prone in Nigeria, economic activities in that areas have been lagging behind. For instance, in the North East of Nigeria where Boko Haram has held sway, the area has been deserted, businesses including informal sector have been affected, unemployment have soared, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and camps have suddenly emerged, State internally generated revenue have plummeted etc. Again, in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria where militant's attack on oil installations and pipeline vandalism is persistent, a number of MNCs have closed shop or relocated their offices from the area, the country has been unable to meet its oil production quota, unemployment has skyrocketed, oil exports nosedived, foreign exchange dropped drastically and the cost of doing businesses in the area have increased. Despite rigorous efforts by Nigeria government to curb the issue of insecurity, the problem of insecurity is increasing on a daily basis. It has been noticed that the performance of micro financial is declining. Why this problem persists everyday despite huge amount of money being budgeted to tackle it? This study tends to assesses the relationship and hence the impact of insecurity on the survival, profitability and sustainability of micro finance bank in Nigeria from 1990 – 2019.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Micro finance was defined by micro credit summit (2-4 of February, 2007) people for self-employment projects that generate income; allowing them to care for themselves and their families (Awa, 2008). Micro finance refers to the provision of financial services to poor or low income clients including consumers and the self-employed. The term also refers to the practice of sustainably delivering those service, more broadly it refers to a movement that envisions a world in which as many poor and near poor households as possible have permanent at access to an appropriate range of high quality financial services including not just credit but also savings, insurance and fund transfer (Wikipedia, 2008).

Micro finance was defined by Ana (2008) quoting Gert Van Manner, a micro finance expert as banking the unbankable, bringing credit, savings and other essential financial services within the reach of hundreds of millions of people who are too poor to be served by regular banks in most cases because they are unable to offer sufficient collateral. A micro finance bank can therefore be defined as the bank for the poor. It means investing in the income generating activities of the poor. Micro finance is meant for those who cannot be efficiently served by regular commercial, universal or merchant banks because their activities and volumes are too low to warrant the high cost of services by big institutions. It is thus meant to lift the poor from their current level of poverty to a level of productivity and self-sufficiency. Therefore, it must be used for the income generating and economic activities of a person not for paying school fees, hospital bills, burial or marriage ceremonies. Banking originated purely from deposit taking and later metamorphosed into lending or what is called credit. However, an individual or a group of corporate bodies that has not been licensed as a bank by the Central Bank of Nigeria cannot be called bank no matter to what level such as person or institution carries on banking functions of financial intermediation or disintermediation consequently only microfinance institutions that have obtained the CBN license may use the word Micro-Finance Bank as part of their names. Those institutions known as micro finance institutions but do not have the CBN license are not banks even though they carry on micro credit activities. These include Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) finance houses, cooperatives etc.

According to Beland (2005) insecurity entails lack of protection from crime (being unsafe) and lack of freedom from psychological harm (unprotected from emotional stress resulting from paucity of assurance that an individual is accepted, has opportunity and choices to fulfill his or her own potentials including freedom from fear). As Achumba and Ighomereho (2013) puts it, those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also not able to stop it or protect themselves when it happens. In respect of the factors responsible for insecurity and conflicts, Collier (2006) stressed that countries which have a substantial share of their income (GDP) coming from the export of primary commodities are radically more at risk of conflict. The most dangerous level of primary commodity dependence is 26% of GDP. According to him, conflicts and insecurity is

concentrated in nations with little useful education, fast population growth and economic decline. This was also the views expressed by Aderoju (2007).

Theoretical Literature

Life-Cycle Stage Theory: The link with financial structure and firm-specific characteristics

Prior literature suggests new MFIs at the formative stage receive grants, soft or subsidies loans from governments, donors, or charitable institutions, with the primary mission of reducing poverty as they are not sustainable to attract commercial funding (de Sousa-Shields & Miamidian, 2004; Fehr & Hishigsuren, 2006; Mersland & Urgeghe, 2013). Besides, they suggest MFIs at this stage fund themselves, which can be in the form of tangible or intangible assets. Funding at this early stage is essential for the operational self-sufficiency of MFIs in achieving the poor's objectives through a loan. Thus, the first proposition is:

Propositions 1: New MFIs depends more on assets and equity funds in early stage for survival

The next stage is the growth stage where the institutions are growing in assets and operations, categorise into young MFIs. According to the theory of life-cycle stage of MFIs, young MFIs needs more capital and acquire large sums of long-term debt to achieve economies and operational scale, in which the investors in this stage are from large multilateral financial institutions, commercial banks, and private investments funds (de Sousa-Shields & Miamidian, 2004). Mersland & Urgeghe (2013) emphasize that young MFIs at this stage must increase their scale and gain market shares through retained earnings and subsidized loan as primary sources of funding. This is because internal resources are insufficient for these young institutions to support their businesses (Rocca, Rocca & Cariola, 2011). These sources of fund are the combination of both commercial and non-commercial capital, where young MFIs are in transmission process by opting to debt and equity financing, at the same time relies on donation and subsidies to support the operation. It means that MFIs require mezzanine financing or equity infusions and require them to prepare for public share offerings (de Sousa- Shields & Miamidian, 2004). Compulsory savings also are used to support the operation in the case of borrowers' default.

Second propositions as follows:

Proposition 2: In the growth stage, young MFIs less depends on assets, but rely on equity financing and debt financing for their institutions' growth

As MFIs grows, capital will decrease over time, means capital has a downward slope due to their advantage of increased borrowings (Ledgerwood, 1998; Hoque & Halloway, 2011). This is because the maturity level of MFI has curve effects where MFI below 18 years operation has a positive correlation, but it turns into negative correlation after 18 years, indicating that MFI with a matured level of operation leads to less performance (Al-Azzam, Hill & Sarangi, 2012). At the maturity stage, MFIs are similar like other formal financial institutions, where their financing will be in large volume but low costs, such as commercial bank loans, retained earnings, deposits, and medium-term debt (de Sousa-Shields & Miamidian, 2004; Hoque & Halloway, 2011). They also suggest commercial bank debt can be important, as deposit, for those MFIs can collect them legally. Based on other studies (Rocca, Rocca & Cariola, 2011) on the firm life cycle, enhancing firms in this stage have higher debt financing. Cull, Demirgüç-Kunt & Morduch (2007) address that when institutions grow and mature, they tend to increase clients to sustain financial position in the market. Therefore, this indicates that if the MFIs with high dependencies on deposit-taking are usually large institutions as they meet minimum capital requirements, they focus on offering a larger loan to meet the borrower's demand. Deposit regulation applies for regulated entities; thus, they will face management challenges to transform into regulated institutions. They also need to meet a minimum capital requirement by regulatory authorities (Fehr & Hishigsuren, 2006), suitable for mature MFIs, impossible for MFIs in the beginning stage of growth. Based on the above arguments, this paper posits the following propositions:

Financial Theory

This theory was developed by James Duesenberry. It is also known as the cost of capital theory of investment. The accelerator theories ignore the role of cost of capital in investment decision by the firm. They assume that the market rate of interest represents the cost of capital to the firm which does not change with the amount of investment it makes. It means that unlimited funds are available to the

firm at the market rate of interest. In other words, the supply of funds to the firm is very elastic. In reality, an unlimited supply of funds is not available to the firm in any time at the market rate of interest. As more and more funds are required by it for investment spending, the rate of interest rises. To finance investment spending, the firm may borrow in the market at whatever interest rate funds are available.

Empirical Literature

Bandyopadhyay, Sandler and Younas (2014) investigating the impact of terrorism on micro finance bank and Gross Domestic Production of 78 developing countries for 1980-2013 and applying a system-GMM estimator to a dynamic panel, consisting of eight three-year averages of all variables. They conclude that domestic terrorism has a negative and significant impact on micro finance bank as a share of GDP. In an empirical analysis on the state of insecurity on Nigerian economy, Coupland (2013) shows that insecurity has a far-reaching impact on people's lives and well-being.

World Bank (2014) on Conflict, Security and Development reveals that about 1.5 billion people live in countries affected by political and criminal violence, which has exacerbated human misery, and disrupted development. Consequently, more proactive initiatives regarding tackling menace of insecurity are needed in Nigeria since security is central to development, and the national transformation agenda of the current administration may not be achieved if there is no solution to the menace of insecurity ravaging the country (Ajufu, 2013).

Achumba et al (2013) in their work on insecurity and the Nigerian economy observed that the porous frontiers of the country, where inflows of persons and arms are largely untracked have aided militancy and criminality in Nigeria.

Babatunde (2013) showed that national insecurity may mean organized crime or trade union activities of essential workers capable of destabilizing or endangering life and property.

Nfor and Maimusa (2012) wrote that in the present circumstance, the major threats to national security in Nigeria are essentially internal, rather than external and they are essentially self-induced, accompanying strategies and machinations by greedy elites in the struggle and competition for power and scarce resources. Edem (2010) argues that the paradox of Nigeria's security is that instead of the state being the framework of lawful order and highest source of governing authority, it constitutes the greatest threat to herself.

Ogunmuyiwa (2011) examined whether insecurity promotes economic growth in Nigeria using time-series data from 1980-2010. The regression equation was estimated using econometric techniques such as Augmented Dickey-Fuller test, Granger causality test, Johansen co-integration test and Vector Error Correction Method (VECM). The results showed that there is no causality between insecurity and economic growth in Nigeria.

Malik, Hayat, and Hayat (2010) examined the relationship between insecurity and microfinance bank in Nigeria for the period of 1972 – 2005, using time series econometric technique. Their result reveals that insecurity is negatively and significantly related to microfinance bank. The evidence suggests that increase in insecurity will lead to decline in bank activities.

Choong, Lau, Liew, and Pua (2010) examined the impact of different types of insecurity on the microfinance bank in Malaysia during the period 1970 – 2006. Using Co-integration test, the study suggest that all components of debts have a negative impact on long run microfinance bank. The Granger causality test shows the existence of a short-run causality linkage between all insecurity and microfinance bank in the short-run.

Ayadi and Ayadi (2008) examined the effect of the insecurity on economic growth of the Nigerian and South African economies. The Neoclassical growth model which incorporates some macroeconomic variables was employed and analyzed using both Ordinary Least Square (OLS) and Generalized Least Square (GLS) methods. Their investigation showed negative impact of insecurity on the economic growth of Nigeria and South Africa.

Hameed et al. (2008) on Pakistan explained the long run and short run relationships between insecurity and survival of microfinance bank. Annual time series data from 1970 to 2003 was used to analyze the dynamic effect on microfinance bank, the study concludes that insecurity.

Adepoju, Salau and Obayelu (2007) analyzed the effects of insecurity on the microfinance bank of Nigeria for a period between 1962 to 2006 using Ordinary Least Square (OLS) of the various bilateral and multilateral arrangements. Their study revealed that insecurity adversely affected Nigeria's banking sector. Empirical studies not related to Nigeria are also reviewed to show evidence from other nations.

Audu E. (2004) examined the effects of insecurity on microfinance bank and public investment in Nigeria from 1970-2002. The empirical investigation was carried out using the Co-integration test and Error Correction Method. The investigation shows that insecurity crises in the nation has had a negative effect on the microfinance bank and negatively affect public investment.

Gap in Literature

The devastating effects of insecurity on economic growth were recognized early enough in the literature. UNDP (1994), Adepoju, Audu E. (2004); Collier Paul (2006); Hameed et al. (2008); Omoyibo and Akpomera (2013); Stewart (2004); Aderoju (2007) amongst others. Most of this studies however examined the subject from a political-socio economic perspective, only a few purely economic study of the subject exist in the literature. UNDP (1994) defined human security with a view to understanding what insecurity entails. According to it, human security means, first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, in jobs or in communities. The report identified seven elements that make up human security: (i) Economic security; (ii) Food security; (iii) Health security; (iv) Environmental security; (v) Personal security; (vi) Community security; and (vii) Political security. Anything short of this definition and elements amounts to insecurity.

However, despite the various effort being made by the past researchers in the field, nobody has ever discussed the effect of insecurity on microfinance bank in Nigeria in recent years, the last studied was done in 2014 and we all agreed that economic is growing on daily basis this has triggered this study to investigates the impact of insecurity on microfinance bank between 1990 to 2019 in Nigeria.

Methodology

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical Framework The theoretical framework adopted for the foundation of this study to examine micro finance is the Schumpeter (1911) theory of finance and growth which can also be derived from the neoclassical growth model by incorporating financial development into the simple model (Easterly & Levine, 1994; Elbadawa & Ndulu, 1994; King & Levine, 1993) . Thus, from the simple production function, financial development variables are included as the shift parameter in addition to the usual factors of production to form the unrestricted neoclassical growth model. Data used in this model are time series secondary data covering the period 1990 to 2019. They were sourced from the CBN statistical bulletin and author's computations.

Model Specification

This study will adopt econometric analysis to examine the impact of insecurity on microfinance bank in Nigeria. A general adoption behavioural model can be stated as follows:

$$MFD = f(DCI, TRI, CUPT)$$

In order to add the error term, the model stated above will be restated as follows:

$$MFD = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 DCI + \alpha_2 TRI + \alpha_4 CUPT + \varepsilon$$

The model can further be restated by adding log

$$\ln MFD = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \ln DCI + \alpha_2 \ln TRI + \alpha_3 \ln CUPT + \varepsilon$$

Where

MFD = Microfinance deposit

DCI = Discomfort index

TRI = Terrorism risk index

CUPT = Corruption perception index

Apriori Expectations

This is used to examine the economic usefulness of the equation as regards to meeting the a priori expected signs of the parameters. The positive relationship indicates that the explanatory variables have a positive relationship with the explained variable while a negative relationship indicates that the explanatory variable has an inverse relationship with the explained variables. The expectations are as follows:

B1 is the coefficient of discomfort index. This is expected to be negative, hence, $B1 < 0$.

B2 is the coefficient of terrorism risk index. It is expected to be negative. Thus, $B2 < 0$.

B3 is the coefficient of investment. It is expected to be positive. Hence, $B3 \geq 0$.

B4 is the coefficient of corruption perception index. It is expected to be negative. Hence, $B4 < 0$.

Estimation Techniques

This study seeks to examine the impact of insecurity on microfinance bank in Nigeria from 1990 to 2019. The method of study adopted in this study is analytical. The analytical tool used is the Granger causality test, Johansen cointegration test, employing multiple regression models and the error correction model.

Stationary/ Unit Root Test

For empirical process, a test for unit root is firstly required because all other models can be applied only to variables that are non-stationary in levels, that is, they contain a unit root. Dickey and Fuller (1979, 1981) and Said and Dickey (1984) have developed a method to determine whether a variable contains a unit root. The tests are conducted including a drift term and both with and without a trend. The inclusion of a trend allows testing that whether the series is trend or difference stationary (Amuedo & Pozo 2001; Sinha 1999; Pesaran & Smith 1998). This method was adopted because most of time series data exhibit a random walk and often non-stationary.

Granger- Causality Test

The granger causality test (1969) is used to see any cause and effective relationship between variables, implicitly, how much of the current value of a dependent variable can be explained by past values of that variable. A time series X is said to granger-cause Y if it can be shown usually through a series of t-tests and F-tests on lagged values of X. that those X values provide statistically significant information about future values of Y.

Error Correction Model

This analysis will be carried out using multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression is an extension of the ordinary least square because the method of obtaining the parameter is through the minimization of the square of the error term. The method of the ordinary least square method is attributed to Carl Friedrich Gauss, a German mathematician. The method is most preferred because it is easy to understand, simple in its computational procedure and parameter estimation. It also possesses the properties of Best Linear Unbiased Estimator (BLUE), which are consistent and sufficient.

Source of Data

This study used data covering 1990 to 2019 mainly from the secondary sources on the Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin and World Bank databank. The choice of these secondary sources is based on their authenticity and reliability.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Data Diagnostics

The objective of this study is to determine the impact of insecurity on microfinance bank in Nigeria. As stated in the previous chapter, the variables employed for this study include; MFD (Microfinance deposit) which is the dependent variable, DCI (Discomfort index), (TRI) Terrorism risk index and CUPI (corruption perception index).

Stationarity Test

The Augmented Dickey Fuller unit root test is used to test whether the variables are stationary at level or not. If the Augmented Dickey-Fuller test statistic is greater than the test critical value at the given level of significance (5%), it implies that the series is stationary at that given level. Also, the probability value must be less than or equal to 0.05 for the variables to be considered stationary. The result of the stationary test conducted on all variables in this model for this study is shown in the table below.

Table 4.1: ADF unit root test result

Variable	ADF test statistic	Probability value	Order of integration	Max no of lags
MFD	-4.227259	0.0020	I(1)	9
DCI	-8.275488	0.0000	I(1)	9
TRI	-4.609636	0.0007	I(1)	9
CUP	-5.504354	0.0001	I(1)	9
5% critical value	-2.943427			

Source: Author's computation

The result of the unit root test of the variables indicates that the MacKinnon (1996) critical value for the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test at the 5% level of significance is -2.943427. From Table 4.1, the ADF test result showed that all variables are stationary at first difference i.e. I(1). The ADF test statistic value of all variables is greater than the MacKinnon critical value at 5% level of significance. Also, the probability value of all variables is less than 0.05 implying that we reject the null hypothesis which states that the variables have unit root. Hence, we conclude that the variables do not have unit root and are stationary at first difference.

Johansen Co-integration Test

In order to test for co-integration among the variables, the Johansen co-integration test will be used to determine if any form of long run relationship exists among the variables. This is to say that if a set of variables is co-integrated, the effects of a shock to one variable spread to the others, possibly with time lags, so as to preserve a long-run relationship between the variables. The Trace and Max-Eigen statistics helps to reveal if co-integration exists among the variables. In a situation where the Trace test indicates at least one co-integrating equation while the Max-Eigen test indicates no co-integrating equations, we use the Trace test result and conclude co-integration exists among the variables.

Table 4.2: Johansen Co-integration test result

Sample (adjusted): 1984 2019				
Included observations: 36 after adjustments				
Trend assumption: Linear deterministic trend				
Series: LNMFD LNDCI LNTRI LNCUP				
Lags interval (in first differences): 1 to 1				
Unrestricted Co-integration Rank Test (Trace)				
Hypothesized		Trace	0.05	
No. of CE(s)	Eigenvalue	Statistic	Critical Value	Prob.**
None *	0.642940	108.6351	95.75366	0.0048
At most 1 *	0.544615	71.56043	69.81889	0.0361
At most 2	0.452032	43.24238	47.85613	0.1268
At most 3	0.359404	21.58703	29.79707	0.3220
At most 4	0.117648	5.554214	15.49471	0.7475
Trace test indicates 2 co-integrating eqn(s) at the 0.05 level				
* denotes rejection of the hypothesis at the 0.05 level				
**MacKinnon-Haug-Michelis (1999) p-values				
Unrestricted Co-integration Rank Test (Maximum Eigenvalue)				
Hypothesized		Max-Eigen	0.05	
No. of CE(s)	Eigenvalue	Statistic	Critical Value	Prob.**

None	0.642940	37.07468	40.07757	0.1049
At most 1	0.544615	28.31805	33.87687	0.1992
At most 2	0.452032	21.65535	27.58434	0.2386
At most 3	0.359404	16.03281	21.13162	0.2229
At most 4	0.117648	4.505926	14.26460	0.8025
Max-eigenvalue test indicates no co-integration at the 0.05 level				
* denotes rejection of the hypothesis at the 0.05 level				
**MacKinnon-Haug-Michelis (1999) p-values				

From the co-integration test result above, the Trace test reveals the presence of two co-integrating equations while the Max-Eigenvalue statistics reveal the absence of no co-integrating equations. Since the Trace test reveals the presence of at least two co-integrating equations at the 5% level of significance, we conclude that a long run relationship exists among the variables. Therefore, we estimate the error correction model.

Error Correction Model (ECM)

When they are all stationary at first difference and they are co-integrated, then the most appropriate technique to be used is the Error Correction Mechanism (ECM). An error correction model (ECM) is used to detect the dynamics of short-term and long term of a variable around its stationary equilibrium value. The error correction coefficient is expected to be negative and statistically significant.

Table 4.3: Error Correction Result

Dependent Variable: D(LNMFD)				
Method: Least Squares				
Sample (adjusted): 1990 2019				
Included observations: 36 after adjustments				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	0.002060	0.035073	0.058733	0.9537
D(LNMFD(-1))	0.886343	0.245891	3.604616	0.0015
D(LNDCI)	-0.102755	0.042210	-2.434398	0.0231
D(LNDCI(-1))	-0.054105	0.040861	1.324109	0.1985
D(LNTRI)	-0.205571	0.056849	3.616095	0.0015
D(LNTRI(-1))	-0.131444	0.075913	-1.731494	0.0968
D(LNCUPI)	-0.011032	0.043385	-0.254279	0.8015
D(LNCUPI(-1))	-0.052806	0.037784	-1.397563	0.1756
ECM(-1)	-0.977641	0.272983	-3.581328	0.0016
R-squared	0.685738	Mean dependent var	0.042483	
Adjusted R-squared	0.521775	S.D. dependent var	0.183436	
S.E. of regression	0.126853	Akaike info criterion	-1.017382	
Sum squared resid	0.370107	Schwarz criterion	-0.445555	
Log likelihood	31.31287	Hannan-Quinn criter.	-0.817799	
F-statistic	4.182274	Durbin-Watson stat	2.051077	
Prob(F-statistic)	0.001585			

From Table 4.3, the outcome of the result showed that MFD in the lagged period has a positive and statistically significant relationship with MFD in the current period. This implies that MFD in the lagged periods determine MFD in the current period. Discomfort index has a coefficient of -0.102755 and it's associated with p-value of 0.0231 and this relationship is statistically insignificant. Thus, DCI

exhibits a negative relationship with MFD in the lagged period with its coefficient of -0.054105; also there is insignificant relationship between them with p-value of 0.1985.

Terrorism Risk Index exerts a negative and statistically significant relationship with MFD in the current period with coefficient of -0.205571, and this relationship is statistically significant with p-value of 0.0015. The TRI in the lagged period has a Negative relationship MFD with coefficient of -0.131444 and statistically insignificant with p-value of 0.0968. In the current and lagged periods, CUPT has a negative relationship with MFD. and there is insignificant relationship between them.

The coefficient of the ECM is -0.977641 and is statistically significant at 0.0016 probability value. This is line with economic theory where the coefficient of the ECM is expected to be negative. The ECM coefficient shows the speed of adjustment towards long run equilibrium. Given the coefficient of the ECM, the speed of adjustment is slow.

The R² value of 0.685738 implies that the independent variables utilized for this study are significantly explain changes in the dependent variable, GDP by about 68%. Also, the R² value of 0.685738 is less than the Durbin-Watson statistic value of 2.051077. This shows that there is an absence of autocorrelation in the model and the model is not spurious. The probability value of the F statistic is 0.001585 showing that the independent variables are jointly significant in determining the dependent variable.

Granger Causality Test

The Granger causality test is used to determine the direction of causality between macroeconomic variables. It is useful in examining if one time series is useful in forecasting another. A time series X is said to Granger-cause Y if it can be shown that those X values provide statistically significant information about the future values of Y.

Table 4.4: Granger Causality test result

Pairwise Granger Causality Tests

Date: 06/22/21 Time: 10:31

Sample: 1981 2019

Lags: 2

Null Hypothesis:	Obs	F-Statistic	Prob.
DCI does not Granger Cause MFD	37	0.72764	0.5772
MFD does not Granger Cause DCI		0.21857	0.7328
TRI does not Granger Cause MFD	37	2.54933	0.0895
MFD does not Granger Cause TRI		0.00542	0.9870
CUPI does not Granger Cause MFD	36	8.54893	0.0036
MFD does not Granger Cause CUPI		0.78594	0.4033

From Granger causality test table 4.4, the result shows that bidirectional relationship exists between Discomfort index and MFD, discomfort index does not granger-cause MFD, also MFD does not DCI. More so, between TRI and MFD, unidirectional relationship also exists. TRI does not granger-causes MFD while MFD granger-causes TRI. Bidirectional relationship also exists between CUPI and MFD. CUPI does not granger-causes MFD and MFD does not granger-causes CUPI.

Residual Diagnostics Tests

The Breusch-Godfrey serial correlation LM Test, Jarque-Bera normality test and the Breusch Pagan Godfrey heteroskedasticity test will be used to test the residuals for serial correlation while the CUSUM test will be used to test for stability of the variables.

Table 4.6: Residual Diagnostic Test Results

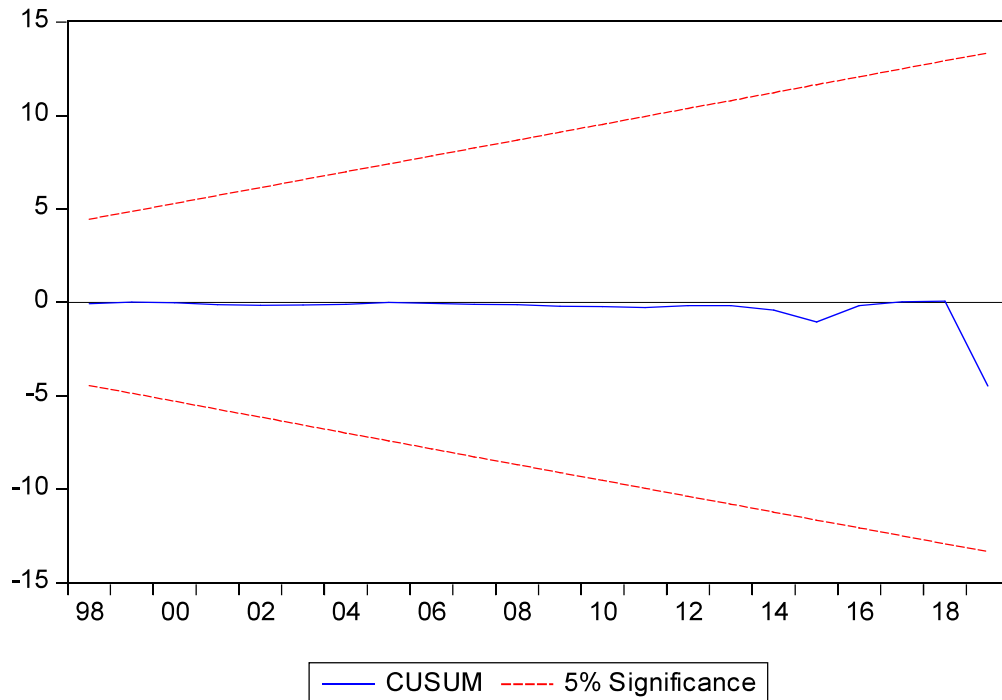
Residual Diagnostic Test	STATISTICS	PROBABILITY
Jarque-Bera normality test	1.458928	0.482167
Breusch-Godfrey Serial correlation LM test	0.460926	0.6372
Heteroskedasticity : Breusch Pagan Godfrey	1.559643	0.1732

Source: Author's computation from Eviews (2021)

To test the residuals for normality problem, the Jarque-Bera normality test was adopted and the result showed a P-value of 0.482167 which is above 5%. This means that the model is normally distributed. The Breush-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test result has a P-value of 0.6372 which also above 5% thereby signifying that the residuals are not serially correlated and similarly, the Breush-Godfrey Hetereskedasticity reveals the absence of hetereskedasticity in the model given its associated p-value of 0.1732 which is greater than 5%.

In summary, the residual diagnostic tests result reveals that the residual is not serially correlated, there is an absence of heteroskedasticity, and that the model is normally distributed.

Figure 4.1: CUSUM test result



The CUSUM test tests for structural breaks in the residuals. The graph above shows an absence of instability of the variables as they lie in between the critical bounds of the 5% significance level. This means the variables are stable in the long run.

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

On the whole, a Nation replete with insecurity can never attract investments nor grow its microfinance bank. This study examined the effect of insecurity on microfinance bank in Nigeria and considered the likely effect of such insecurity on microfinance deposit rate. Trends have shown evidently that insecurity is capable of drying-out investment, increasing unemployment, reducing export receipts and government revenue and by implication slows microfinance deposit rate. From these results it’s very clear that insecurity exert negative impact to microfinance deposit in Nigeria.

Recommendation

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

1. Nigerian government should employ a policy to reduce inflation and target unemployment by creating enabling and peaceful environment for businesses to operate and for investments to thrive. Such policies and strategies must equally target the agricultural sector by reducing communal conflicts, herdsmen clashes and the destruction of farmlands and produce following from these clashes.
2. Nigerian government and policy formulators should make policies that will curb the trend of insecurity and terrorism in the country. Such policy and strategy must target the population by eliminating or reducing to its barest minimum the massive loss of life in areas of violent activities.

3. Nigerian government should employ Policies and Strategies target towards oil production, exports and oil revenue by eliminating pipeline vandalism activities, oil bunkering and militancy struggles in the Niger-Delta of Nigeria. Further, it should target foreign investments by creating an enabling environment for investment so as to promote the deposit trend in microfinance bank in Nigeria.
4. Nigerian government should employ Policies and Strategies to promote and encourage active citizenry, whistleblowing, integrity and transparency in all spheres of society. Create corruption free workplace, develop sustainable partnerships with stakeholders to reduce corruption and improve integrity management. Improve transparency by government, business and civil society sectors.

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ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN ESSAY WRITING COMPETITION AS A TOOL FOR STIMULATING CREATIVITY AT THE NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS AND CULTURE (NAFEST)

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Abstract

This study is an analysis of the National Festival of Arts and Culture's Children Essay Writing Competition event as a tool for stimulating creativity. Children Essay Writing Competition is one of the Competitive events at the festival. Competitive events platform is the avenue designed by the organizers of NAFEST to determine the overall winner of each event at the festival. The study adopted Instrumentation Theory by Hans Bressers and Rosenau (2000). Primary and Secondary method of data collection were used for data collection. Primary method was used through the instrumentality of participant observation, while secondary materials were sourced from published articles and reports of NAFEST. Also reliance on other materials like the cultural policy and culture journals, magazines were fully exploited. The technique for data analysis was Charles Spearman rho correlation co-efficient analysis. Findings from the study revealed that there is no correlation between children essay writing competition at NAFEST and the stimulation of creativity. It further revealed that competitiveness created the quest to win at all cost, which did not allow seamless stimulation of creativity. The study recommended that the organizers of NAFEST should remove the competitive component of the event from the festival and make all events non-competitive.

Keywords: Arts, Competitive, Culture, Creativity, Stimulation.

Background to the Study

The Cultural Policy for Nigeria has its roots in the resolution of the inter-governmental conference on cultural policies in Africa held in Accra in 1975 and the UNESCO conference on cultural policies in Moscow in 1982. (Third Conference of Commonwealth Arts Administrators Report, 1983). According to Aig-Imoukhede in Bello (1991), these two conferences at the continental and world level set the tune for cultural policy formulation in Nigeria. The Cultural Policy is therefore a document designed to give reality and impact to the objectives of UNESCO as contained in the UNESCO World Decade for Cultural Development.

According to Nasidi (2010) the objectives of the two conferences above served as models and reference point for the formulation of the National Cultural Policy for Nigeria. The Charter is based on the recognition of the cultural diversity and national identity of the continents component unit and the basic principles covering a national policy and its priorities.

Bello (1991) stated that it was against this background that the National Council for Arts and Culture as an implementation agency of the nation's cultural policy in collaborated with the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies organized a five day workshop on national cultural parameters in decision making for culture executives, promoters, policy makers and stake holders at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPPS), Kuru from the 30th of July to the 3rd August, 1991 to decide on the way forward.

Before the formulation of the National Cultural Policy for Nigeria, the National Festival of Arts and Culture, (NAFEST) tagged as the Unity Festival was initiated as a means of mobilizing the people towards a practical demonstration of their diverse cultural heritage in order to forge cultural and national unity for Nigeria. The festival was to also serve as a rallying point for creativity in the field of arts, science and technology for ensuring the continuity and progressive updating of traditional skills and sports as a means of enhancing national self-reliance and self-sufficiency through the preservation, presentation, promotion and documentation of Nigeria's culture (Olofu, 2021).

The National festival of Arts and Culture has its origin in the local festivals of Arts staged at various centers before independence known as "All Nigerian Festival of Arts". The first three editions were limited to visual arts, paintings, crafts, sculpture and pottery. Also, the scope of participation was

limited to the few schools and colleges where art was taught, NAFEST 1990 (Special Publication). The trend and scope of the festival expanded leading to a spectacular festival in 1974 in which many schools and colleges participated. Furthermore, the National Festival of Arts and Culture was part of an initiative of the then military government to re-integrate Nigerians after the Biafra war. Olofu (2021) stated that the expansion of the festival after the civil war in 1970 was a symbol of cultural re-integration for the liberated eastern States of Nigeria though, it was staged in Lagos.

The fourth edition of the festival was co-hosted by Lagos and Kaduna States and it also served as preparation for the rehearsal of the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture 1977 (FESTAC'77). After FESTAC'77 and because of the loads of criticism that trailed FESTAC by culture stakeholders, it became necessary to devise a new format that identified a single subject for in-depth treatment in order to reduce the jamboree associated with the festival (FESTAC,77).

Olusola (2001) opined that from 1982-1989, the trend changed and each festival edition was organized around a single theme which is always in consonance with the policy direction of the government of the day. This is with the view to achieve more concrete and positive results. Furthermore, after the Nigeria Civil War, the military government under the headship of General Yakubu Gowon consciously used culture as an instrument for forging national unity, integration and a tool for stimulating creativity. The administration also provided both institutional and administrative framework for the implementation of the festival which added impetus to the operation of the festival (NAFEST 1990 Special Publication).

Meanwhile, in 1988 the National Cultural Policy for Nigeria was formulated and section 7.8(1) designates the National Festival of Arts and Culture as the vehicle for the realization of the following objectives among others;

- i. Promote an educational system that motivates and stimulates creativity and draws largely on our traditional values; namely: respect for humanity and human dignity for legitimate authority and the dignity of labor and respect for positive Nigerian moral and religious values and (FGN).

The festival tagged as the “unity forum” is designed with the aim of showcasing and celebrating the creative potentials of Nigeria in all the 36 States of the Federation, the FCT and stakeholders in the Arts and Culture. Since inception, 36 editions of the festival have so far been held, each built around a particular theme in succeeding year.

To achieve the objective of NAFEST, the organizers designed a competitive platform through which participants from States and the FCT compete for honours annually. Haruna (2004) however noted that the scope of the festival has expanded to include other events considered to be of importance to the development of the nation. He further stated that the restriction of participation to only State cultural troupe is not a fair representation of the diverse cultural heritage of each participating State. According to him, a State for instance may have up to twenty (20) identified cultural manifestations spread across the Local Government Areas, but with the exemption of Local Government Areas which warehouses these cultural manifestations, a State cultural troupe does not have the required spread to be a melting pot from which a national culture could evolve.

Furthermore, Iji (2014) noted that the cultural policy formulated thirty (36) years ago should be amended to meet the challenges and dynamics for which culture is known for. The above background provided the incentive on which this study is contemplated and premised. As expected, the way the festival has been organized overtime and the circumstances above metamorphosed into what culture enthusiasts termed as failure of cultural policy in particular and government policy in general and of course, the focus of this study. The study asked the following question; to what extent has NAFEST Children Essay Writing Competition event platform served as a tool for stimulating creativity at the festival?

The Problematic

The National Festival of Arts and Culture has been organized over the years to among other things, meet the aspiration for uniting the nation and stimulating creativity via competitive events platform. The competitive events at NAFEST viz; Dance, Drama, Traditional cuisine, Children Essay Writing competition, Children painting, Board Game and Traditional sports have created an atmosphere where every state wants to emerge the winner thereby cutting corners, thus leaving out the core focus

of the festival as a unity forum and an avenue to showcase talents and stimulate creativity (NAFEST Syllabus, 2013).

Local government areas/communities are not involved in the planning, conception and execution of the festival, the non-involvement of local communities left much vacuum in the implementation of the cultural policy. State cultural troupe which represent states at the festival is not a genuine representation of the cultural manifestations and heritages that are warehoused in the localities and communities, rather the administrative apparatus of supervising the implementation of NAFEST. The role of the communities/localities cannot be effectively played by State cultural troupes, so non-involvement of communities/localities where cultural manifestations and heritages are warehoused is a problem militating against the proper organization of the festival (Nasidi, 2010).

Lack of fund has led to the postponement of NAFEST for 18 (eighteen) consecutive years. NAFEST as a platform can only stimulate creativity if it is held regularly. The non-availability of fund is therefore a problem militating against the successful annual hosting of NAFEST, which is consequential to the non-implementation of the 1988 national cultural policy.

As formulated in section 4.1 of the cultural policy all the states of the federation and the FCT are to host and participate actively in NAFEST, but overtime sizeable number of states has not hosted nor participated in the festival. The hosting and participation are the only way the festival can have a great impact on the wider spectrum of the society and stimulate creativity. It is against the foregoing that this study analyzed children essay writing competition event platform in stimulating creativity at NAFEST (FGN, 1988).

Conceptual Framework

Literature of scholars on conceptual clarification of the various concepts of culture revealed cultural diversity and how it can be harnessed for overall development. Scholars like, Aig-Imoukhede (1991), Bello (1999), Ashiwaju (1990), Ijih (2014) are unanimous that no nation can develop without their culture. Apart from Duruaku (2017) and Ayakroma (2017), nothing elaborate has been done on cultural policy implementation with emphasis on the analysis of children essay writing competition in stimulating creativity.

The Concept of Culture

The concept culture, though very topical, yet very simple. It has defied any precise definition and it is now reputed to be among the two or three most complex words in English language. Already, there are over three hundred interrogative anthropological definitions of the word "culture". It is what Michael Foulcote in (Nasidi, 2010) called a repetition of the same when he said "*there is nothing else to say, all there is to say have been said, the rest is repetition*" (Nasidi, p.8, 2010).

Culture is dynamic and it varies from one society to another. There is a distinct cultural system in each human society which makes the members of one society behave differently in some significant respects from members of another society. There are networks of values, attitudes, customs and behavioural patterns that define the way of life and world in which men and women act, decide and solve problems, secure food, clothing, shelter and whatever goods and services they require in day to day living. Accordingly, Taylor as reported by Umokoro (2002) had over a century ago defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Umokoro, 2002, p. 2). Culture is thus reflected in this definition as the integrated system of learned behaviour patterns which characterized members of a society.

Culture is not genetically inherited and cannot exist on its own, but it is always shared by members of a society. Bello (1999) defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another" (Bello, 1999, p. 21) which is passed from generation to generation. It changes all the time because each generation adds something of its own before its transmission.

From these definitions above, it is clear that our culture is our identity stamped on the individual. Therefore, no society can survive without culture because it is what structured the individual perfection of his role and his identity in a particular socio- economic, political and cultural setting. Essentially, what we referred to as culture are the traces left behind by man in his quest to eke a good living out of the very difficult, physical and metaphysical environment. In the journey of survival, the

knowledge of the past and present is harnessed to assist how individuals navigate the uncertainty of the future, which is the essence of culture (Darret, 2018). Therefore, using culture to unleash and stimulate creativity is a task that must be achieved as envisaged and formulated in the cultural policy.

Cultural Festival

Cultural Festival is a festival organized by a community for a particular reason. It could be a yam festival, a religious festival. It is an event celebrated by a community showcasing some characteristic aspect of that community and its religions and traditions. It is a cultural event that serves to fulfill specific communal purposes in regards to commemoration or thanksgiving. It could be in different forms, but covers a wide range of events viz-harvest festival, betrothal festival, investing a new chief, funerals (Alagoa, 1990).

According to Duruaku (2017) in all human endeavours there is one human activity that remains common to all civilizations, that is, the need to aggregate at chosen moments to share or celebrate. He stated that humanity is about celebrating, presenting cultural performances, exhibitions, or competitions. He further maintained that the trend to be alone, to atomize, is a trait of new cultures, that it is a departure from the basic human spirit. Isolationist behaviour according to him is a drift from the core of humanity to the periphery and to a loss of foundational identity (Duruaku, 2017).

He further categorized festival into different forms, it covers an enormous range of events, from harvest festivals and betrothal – festivals, to investing of a new chief, funerals, age grade etc. (Duruaku, 2017).

According to Duruaku (2017) there are categories of cultural festival, those that are for ancestor veneration and deity worship, like the Eyo of the Yoruba, or the Owu and Odo of the Igbo. Durbar festival is a magnificent horsemanship display that is very popular in Katsina and Kaduna States. There are also festivals of the rites of passage, like those involving initiation, festival of the feast of the farming cycle, the folk festivals which are largely social. According to Alagoa (1990) the Kalabari people of the Niger Delta perform the Ikaki (Tortoise) masquerade in which an entire village participates. The Nembe people of the Niger Delta performs Sakiakpu cult. According to Uka (2006) rites of passage (coming of age) festivals are also social, to initiate one into new social groups and the maturity festivals fall in here. The Iwa Akwa (Igbo) is a good example. The Benin Igue festival takes place at the end of the rainy season, after the harvest. It is partly a kind of harvest festival but also serves another purpose where eligible young men and women of the village are displayed before each other to be ritually acquainted.

Festivals of agriculture, where the famous Argungu Fishing showpiece (Kebbi State) belongs are also of the farming cycle. Both the Igede Agba festival and the Eje'aje festival are all celebration of the new yam and harvest festivals held by the Igede and the Idoma people of Benue State. While, Kwaghir of the Tiv people of Benue State is an entertainment dance troupe used for various occasions. It is not restrictive to any particular festival (Olofu, 2021).

As noted above, there is no gainsaying how relevant cultural festivals are to the processes of the nation's growth. Yet, for many nations, especially in developing world, such relevance remains merely a potential untapped. Therefore, the tasks of harnessing such immense resources require careful planning. That was what informed the formulation of the cultural policy in 1988, which, its implementation is the bane of stimulating creativity at NAFEST events and the quest to embark on this study.

Overview of the National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST)

The National Festival of Arts and Culture began in 1970 as a post war strategy on the concept of using cultural festival to promote national unity by re-integrating the south eastern part into the Nigeria federation after the civil war. Though, the festival as we have today was initiated before the introduction of the cultural policy for Nigeria, the cultural policy in section 7.8.1 states that "the State shall recognize festivals. Further in 7.8.2, it stated that the State shall promote traditional festivals in order to preserve them 'in situ', (a) so that they may continue to be factors of communal interaction and cohesion in their localities and develop interaction of larger national and international dimensions; (b) promote Arts festivals at the Federal, State and Local Government levels for the purpose of discovering talents, developing skills, promoting and stimulating creativity in the arts (FGN, 1988).

These provisions above gave the legal right of organizing NAFEST to the National Council for Arts and Culture, which it does annually. Since inception, NAFEST has grown to be a veritable platform

for the stimulation of creativity and celebration of Nigeria's Unity in diversity and, NCAC has organized thirty-five (36) editions of the festival (NAFEST Review, 2023). Each year's edition of NAFEST is built around a theme and always in line with the philosophy or agenda of the government of the day.

NAFEST is a week-long celebration of Nigerian cultural heritage reflected through the various competitive and non-competitive events and participants are drawn from the thirty-six (36) States of the Federation, the FCT, sister cultural Parastatals and government agencies, the academic, cultural NGOs and relevant stakeholders in the sector (NAFEST 1990 special publication and NAFEST 2013 Syllabus).

Empirical Review/Review of Previous Studies

In this section, some of the empirical studies done on the National Festival of Arts and Culture were reviewed and discussed.

Olofu (2021) conducted a research on the challenges of implementation of the cultural policy for Nigeria. The researcher used both primary and secondary method of data collection in carrying out the research study. The research focused on the failure of the Nigerian cultural policy in achieving the desired development objective for which it was formulated. The result of the research shows that there is a gap between policy formulation and implementation by relevant agencies. The study recommended that cultural agencies should synergize so as to be able to properly implement the cultural policy for Nigeria.

Okpainya (2014) investigated the role of cultural festivals as catalyst for peace in Nigeria. The focus of the research is the myriad of conflicts ranging from sectarian youth restiveness, ethnic variance, tribal war, religious conflict, etc. these conflicts most often are violent and destructive of human and public structures, thus a unifying activity in the form of festivals is needed. Both primary and secondary methods of data collection were used for the study. The result shows that if festival activities are organized regularly, it will go a long way in creating a platform for unity and engage restive youths positively thereby bringing to bear their creative potentials.

Igbonezim (2014) carried out a research on bridging the gap between policy and administration of cultural festival in Nigeria. The focus of the research is on dance practice of the state as seen in the state's council for Arts and Culture which is an institution functioning under the ministry of culture and tourism and it houses the state troupe. The institution is charged with the responsibility of preserving, propagating and promoting the state arts and cultural heritage that are deemed as valuable and also represents artistic expressions as identity markers to the local communities, the Nigerian nation and the international audience. The researcher used survey method via participant observation as method of data collection. The result shows the existence of gap between policy formulation and implementation in the organization of cultural festivals. It identifies the importance of collaboration between the relevant stakeholders to develop a better understanding of the arts, festivals and community engagement in Nigeria and the world at large.

From the research conducted so far, there is a gap in a particular area which this study seeks to fill. The National festival of Arts and culture was ascribed some roles in the implementation of the cultural policy objectives, viz-a-viz, stimulating creativity. This study analyzed the extent to which, this particular objective of stimulating creativity in the cultural policy have been implemented.

Theoretical Framework

Bressers and Rosenau Instrumentation Theory

Bressers and Rosenbaum (2000) propounded the instrumentation theory to policy implementation process. According to the duo, policy implementation process is not only about achieving implementation, but also about attempt to prevent implementation or to change the character of what is implemented.

The process involves activities and interactions between the implementing government officials and members of the target group. Therefore, to assess the possibility of the new instruments being applied and correctly applied, it is necessary first of all to gain insight into the factors that determine the nature of the interactive process between government and target group (Bressers & Rosenbaum (2000).

This is because it places emphasis on the correctness of implementation, especially as it concerns the characteristics of the policy instruments and their impacts on the larger groups with great emphasis on the implementation processes and the interactions between government officials and the target population. The central focus of the instrumentation theory is the policy mandate which is referred to as an instrument. Instrumentation theory has so many significant justification of the problem under investigation.

Government policy on the preservation, promotion and propagation of culture and stimulating creativity would thrive well on the platform of instrumentation theory taking into cognizance the three perspectives of objective, information and power as it relates to the nature of interactive process between the government and the target group. This theory will pave way for sufficient knowledge and understanding of the level of interaction between the people and the government. As a matter of fact, the theory will convey the central message on what the government of the nation through the National Festival for Arts and Culture competitive event platform seeks to achieve on the campaign for preservation, promotion, propagation and stimulation of creativity, especially in Nigeria where there has been a long acknowledgement of the fact that there is no involvement of the stakeholders especially the grass root in policy implementation.

Methodology

The study adopted both primary and secondary method of data collection. The primary data was procured through participant observation. According to Obadan (2012), in observational survey, the researcher can either be a participant or non-participant observer. In the course of the observation, research questions were posed and answers provided gave rise to the data set. Secondary data were procured from reports of NAFEST. The research also relied on other official documents viz journals, NCAC information handbooks, NAFEST syllabus, the cultural policy, NAFEST reports were all used as confirmatory secondary data. The data procured were analyzed using Charles spearman' correlation, co-efficient tool of analysis.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study revealed that the National Festival of Arts and Culture competitive event platform cannot stimulate creativity in the children essay writing competition. It revealed that NAFEST cannot effectively be a medium for the promotion of creativity in the fields of arts, science and technology and serve modern technological development needs formulated as one of the objectives of the National Cultural Policy. The study further revealed that NAFEST has not been able to stimulate creativity in the competitive events because its themes have not been in line with the objective of the National Cultural Policy. It further revealed that the competitive events which is the basis of measuring performance has created a tense atmosphere where states are keen on coming first at the events by cutting corners, instead of using the platform to emphasize and re-emphasize stimulation of creativity and the promotion, presentation, preservation and documentation of cultural heritage which is the cardinal objective of the National Cultural Policy.

The findings further revealed that the number of states that participated in the festival has no significance correlation with the number of competitive events which is the basis for measuring performance at the festival.

The study also revealed that a state troupe is not a fair representation of the cultural heritage in a particular state. The findings show that the non-involvement of Local Communities in conception, planning and execution of NAFEST left much gap in the implementation of the National Cultural Policy.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that the distribution of hosting of the festival by geo-political zone is skewed. It shows that for the festival to have a national outlook and serve as platform for stimulating creativity and promote, present and preserve culture, no part of the country should be left out in participating and hosting of the festival, because it is by so doing that the cultural manifestations and heritage that are warehoused in different parts of the country will manifest and aggregate into a national culture, the constant usage of which will be a stamp of identity, which will reflect in Africa and the world.

Conclusion

Culture is capable of not only shaping our consciousness, but also setting pace for societal norm. Although, Nigeria can boast of a cultural policy, yet not much attempt has been made to implement the policy. The danger is that the policy remains mere ideas on papers, and this will remain so if our traditional values are not integrated into the four broad categories of state action namely; preservation, promotion, presentation and stimulation of creativity. If the National Festival for Arts and Culture events platform remains an avenue for dancing and drama for a few states, then the festival will not be able to achieve the objectives set out in the cultural policy in section 4.1 mentioned above. It is only when our traditional values are propagated and integrated at the festival as formulated in section 4.1 of the cultural policy that NAFEST competitive events platform will be deemed to be an avenue for the stimulation of creativity.

Recommendations;

1. For NAFEST to stimulate creativity in children essay writing competition, the organizers should ensure that the event is non-competitive. This will enhance a conducive environment where peace and harmony could thrive which will enhance the stimulation of creativity.
2. NAFEST should be held regularly and simultaneously across the six geopolitical zones of the country for it to be able to play the role ascribed to it in section 7.8 (1) of the National Cultural Policy.
3. Hosting of NAFEST and participation should be made compulsory for all the states and the FCT for maximum impact.
4. Government should appropriate enough fund for the culture sector so as to be able to organize cultural activities regularly for greater impact.
5. Local communities should be involved in the planning and execution of the National Festival of Arts and Culture; this will lead to the aggregation of cultural manifestations and heritages that abound in the 774 Local Government Areas, which in itself is a panacea for the stimulation of creativity if well harnessed.

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CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE HEALTH OF PEOPLE IN OBIO/AKPOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

Human society evolves daily as man seeks to transform its physical environment to make life comfortable for human existence. Climate change is one of the major evolutionary experiences humans have encountered on earth. Industrialization and population growth have led to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, causing a change in the climate. The change in climate has posed a major threat to human health, and its consequences are alarming. The influence of climate change is experienced through extreme temperatures, heavy rainfall, and drought, amongst others. This change in climate affects human health directly and indirectly. This study examined the implications of climate change on human health. Functionalism theory was adopted as the theoretical framework of the study; data was obtained from secondary materials, and the analytical mode adopted was the technique of content analysis. The results showed that cardiovascular disease, acute lower respiratory infections, cancer within the respiratory tract, and undernutrition among young children are associated with climate change's implications for human health. Also, mitigation strategies in power generation could simultaneously bring about public health benefits by reducing concentrations of the harmful carbon dioxide emissions that generate ambient air pollution. To avert the implications of climate change in our society, the government needs to take the necessary measures to adopt strategies to mitigate climate change in our society. Again, there is a need to create awareness among residents in our locality and the nation as a whole.

Keywords: Climate Change, Human Health, Greenhouse gas, Mitigation

Introduction

The world and its environment are becoming dynamic daily. The natural environment of man is changing as a result of man's activities. Climate change is one of the major evolutionary experiences humans have encountered on Earth. An international multidisciplinary body stated that the change in climate poses unacceptable threats to the health of current and future populations worldwide. (Goshua et al, 2021). The well-being of human populations is heavily reliant on the proper functioning and stability of the Earth's ecological and physical systems, which are commonly known as life-support systems. This fact has been established for a long time and should not be overlooked, as it can have potentially grave consequences. However, as humans become more urbanized and detached from the natural world, it is easy to forget this dependency. The world's climate system is a crucial component of these life-supporting processes, which are now being threatened by the increasing human population and economic activities. Human actions have unintentionally contributed to the accumulation of energy-trapping gases in the lower atmosphere, leading to an amplification of Earth's natural greenhouse effect. The world community is faced with the challenge of sufficiently reducing greenhouse gas emissions to avoid dangerous interference in the climate system (Bhatia & Kamble, 2019).

There are many different and substantial ways that the weather and environment affect human health. They cover a wide range of topics, from the obvious dangers posed by extreme weather conditions and strong storms to less evident links. For instance, mosquitoes and disease-carrying rodents are affected by the weather and environment in terms of their survival, dispersal, and behaviour. Also, water and food quality in particular areas, with implications for human health is affected by climate change. Furthermore, the total impact of climate change on human health includes the implications of the phenomenon on mental health and well-being (Balbus et al., 2016).

Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State has developed over the course of a few decades as a result of urban sprawl and industrialization, where small communities have combined to form megacities as a result of a large influx of people that has caused a rapid increase in population

(Okocha & Weli, 2021). This development has caused changes in land use, and land cover patterns in the state which affects the climate by altering the surface and boundary layer atmospheric properties (Kaur & Pandey 2013). There are growing warnings that the acceleration of climate change will have serious health consequences, and governments around the world are increasingly classifying it as a climate emergency (Hobbhahn et al. 2019).

According to the National Environmental, Economic and Development Study (NEEDS) report on climate change, Nigeria, is predicted to experience a possible sea level rise from 1990 levels to 0.3 m by 2020 and 1m by 2050, and a rise in temperature of up to 3.2°C by 2050 under a high climate change scenario. This will result in the loss of 75% of the Niger Delta (NEEDS, 2010). This prediction has become a reality as sea levels have risen and residents in lowland areas are faced with perennial flooding experienced by the people of Ahoada West and some coastal communities in the state. As these events unfold, human health is also affected by heat from increased temperature, floods from heavy rainfall displacing residents from their homes, and exposure to vector-borne diseases among another health-related issues. Climate report according to Nimet (2023), indicates that 2023 will be slightly warmer than the long-term normal condition. The annual temperature predicted in the area in 2023 will be 35°C while in 2022 it was 27°C and the amount of rainfall experienced in 2022 was 2790mm while in 2023 is predicted to have above 2790mm. This change will affect the health of urban populations. Attempts to reduce carbon emissions are insufficient to avoid further climate warming, and so the policy and research agendas are moving from mitigation (controlling greenhouse gas emissions) to adaptation (responding to climate change), and from global to local studies of impacts and responses (Kovats & Akhtar, 2008). Studies have been carried out on climate change and its effects from different perspectives, but this study is focused on bringing out the health implications of climate change on human health especially in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study examined climate change and human health with the following objectives:

- i. To examine the implications of climate change on the health of people in Obio/Akpor.
- ii. To examine the measures to mitigate the effects of climate change on human health.

In an attempt to achieve these objectives, two research questions were formulated.

- i. What are the implications of climate change on the health of people in Obio/Akpor?
- ii. Are there measures to mitigate the effects of climate change on human health?

Conceptual Clarification

Climate Change

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as variations in the global temperature that occur in addition to natural climate variability seen over comparable time periods and are ascribed, either directly or indirectly, to human activity that modifies the composition of the atmosphere. It can also be defined as any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity (Gobo, 2014).

Causes of Climate Change

Greenhouse gases (GHG) are gaseous constituents of the atmosphere, both natural and man-made that absorb and re-emit infrared radiation. These gases cause the greenhouse effect on planets namely: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and water vapor are the primary greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere. (NASA, 2020). Some of these gases released through natural processes are respiration, volcano eruptions, decomposition of wastes in landfills, agriculture, and human activities such as deforestation, land use changes, burning fossil fuels, power stations, industrial processes, and transportation. (NASA, 2020).

Climate Change in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State

The vulnerability of cities to climate change risks is largely underestimated. The cities experience high levels of carbon emissions derived from the consumption of hydrocarbon-based energy, deforestation, and industrial processes which makes them vulnerable to climate change effects (McCarney et. al., 2011). These are some of the peculiar situations in Rivers State. The state experiences flooding due to an increase in the world's average temperature resulting in drastic changes in rainfall patterns with significant increases and more frequent flooding in some areas. (Gobo, 2014). Air pollution is also a threat to the residents of the area. The presence of several chemical industries has for

many decades exposed residents of Obio/Akpor and Rivers State as a whole to severe air pollution due to various industrial and non-industrial operations and processes. In Port Harcourt, Obio/Akpor, and its environs, residents experienced soot (particles) in their homes, cars, offices, clothes, etc (Akinwotu, 2022). Experts claim that incomplete combustion of biomass, biofuel, and fossil fuels produces black carbon emissions, which are released into the atmosphere as both naturally occurring and man-made soot (Premium Times, 2016). The sources of soot in the state Activities that are included are those of illegal refineries, tire burning, gas flaring, liquefied natural gas (LNG) operations and processes, petrochemical companies, and refineries. (Yakubu 2017). In climatology, black carbon is a climate-forcing agent and the state is experiencing the emission of this climate-forcing agent that is described as dangerous to human health.

Health

“A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity” is how the World Health Organization (2011) defined health. The physical environment, an individual's traits and behaviors, and the social and economic environment are the primary determinants of health.

Climate change poses a significant threat to human health, as it jeopardizes the fundamental components of good health. These components include access to clean air, safe drinking water, nutritious food, and secure shelter. Moreover, the negative impacts of climate change could reverse the progress achieved in global health over the past several decades. Research indicates that climate change is likely to cause a staggering 250,000 additional deaths annually between the years 2030 and 2050. These fatalities would stem from malnutrition, malaria, and diarrhoea. The gravity of this situation necessitates immediate and concerted efforts to address the root causes of climate change and mitigate its detrimental effects. Climate change is expected to have a significant impact on global health. It is likely to increase the incidence of health risks such as heat-related illness, injuries, and fatalities caused by severe weather events like floods, hurricanes, and heatwaves. Additionally, air pollution is expected to become more severe as a result of climate change, leading to an increase in cardiovascular disease and asthma. Furthermore, the increased concentration of allergens in the air may cause respiratory problems, and the spread of vector-borne diseases such as malaria may increase due to the changing climate. As such, it is crucial to take steps to mitigate the effects of climate change and protect public health. (Hobbhahn et al. 2019).

There is a plethora of evidence that implies the detrimental impacts of climate change on human health, which can occur directly or indirectly via the role of socioeconomic systems and ecosystems. Temperature increases, as well as the intensity and frequency of heatwaves, droughts, wildfires, floods, and other extreme weather events, are examples of direct risks. Changes in air pollution, allergen exposure, water quality and availability, food and nutrition security, and the distribution of pathogens, vectors, and hosts of infectious diseases can all lead to ecosystem-mediated risks. It is imperative to recognize that climate change poses a significant threat to human health, and thus, this issue must be addressed appropriately. With this in mind, it is crucial to take adequate measures to mitigate the risks associated with such changes in the environment. Therefore, it is necessary to have a thorough understanding of the various factors that influence climate change and its impact on human health to develop interventions that are effective and sustainable. (Kaur & Pandey 2013). Furthermore, the effects of climate change on mental health are becoming more widely acknowledged. Extreme heat waves, forced migration, food insecurity, and weather disasters are to blame for this (Goshua et al., 2021). The most susceptible populations to the health effects of climate change include children, the elderly, sick people, and marginalized and migrant populations.

Theoretical Framework

This study uses the theory of structural functionalism, also known as functionalism. This theory sees society as a structure with different parts that work together to keep the system alive. The theory assumes that society is like a living organism. It has different parts that function together harmoniously to ensure the survival of the whole system. Parts that don't contribute to a system's success can cause it to malfunction and persist through generations. Structural functionalism requires parts to interact and be interdependent, as a part's function affects the entire system. Likewise, the change in our environment as a result of man's activities has altered the atmospheric condition of the climate causing change. This

change has affected the climate and in turn, affected human health. The relevance of functionalism to this study has shown that ignoring the implications of climate change on human health will affect the entire smooth functionality of the well-being of man in society which will in turn affect society's survival.

Methodology

This qualitative study gathered data from secondary sources such as journal articles, websites, etc, while content analysis was used to analyze data.

The Implications of Climate Change on the Health of People in Obio/Akpor.

Climate change is one of the greatest threats to human health. 23% of all global deaths are attributed to environmental factors, and a projection of an additional 250,000 climate-related deaths annually by 2030 has been reported by the World Health Organization (2015). Its effect has enormous implications in Rivers State and Nigeria at large. In Nigeria, vector-borne diseases have been attributed to climatic conditions. The changes in climatic conditions are germane to lengthen the transmission seasons of vector-borne diseases and alter their geographic range. Malaria, Dengue fever, and Yellow Fever are examples of these diseases (Ilevbare, 2019). In 2022, Rivers State had an estimated figure of 2,000,000 cases of malaria (WHO, 2023) and malaria was prevalent in Obio/Akpor by 33% (Egbom et. al. 2022). Evidence shows that malaria accounted for 60% of outpatient visits to health facilities, 30% of childhood deaths, 11% of maternal deaths, with 4,500 annual deaths; and 25% of deaths in infants (children aged one year) Punch Newspaper (2023). An additional 48,000 deaths due to diarrhoea and 60,000 deaths due to malaria are projected for the year 2030 (Kovats et. al., 2014).

Air pollution has been identified as one of the biggest environmental health risks by the World Health Organization in 2022. In 2019, it was estimated that ambient air pollution in both cities and rural areas caused 4.2 million premature deaths worldwide every year. These deaths are caused by exposure to particulate matter that results in cardiovascular and respiratory diseases as well as cancers. Out of the total premature deaths caused by outdoor air pollution, 37% were due to ischemic heart disease and stroke, 18% and 23% were due to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and acute lower respiratory infections, respectively. Additionally, 11% of deaths were due to cancer in the respiratory tract. Statistics from the Tertiary Health Facility in the state show that in 2022, 2,238 patients presented to the facility with cardiovascular diseases. In 2023, 2328 cases have been reported. COP admitted cases from 2022/23 were 256. Respiratory disease for 2022 was 2182 and for 2023 was 2217. Nwondah et. al., (2022) observed that an increased concentration of particulate matter is associated with respiratory health issues among residents in Obio/akpor LGA and continuous exposure will exacerbate health conditions.

Undernutrition is one of the leading causes of death in young children and is likely to remain so in future decades. The estimate by the IPCC suggests that climate change is likely to have significant effects on cereal crop productivity, potentially increasing the risk of undernutrition. The effects of climate change on child nutrition are projected to increase infectious disease morbidity, especially for diarrhoeal illness (Kovats et. al., 2014).

Climate change will force many people to leave their homes, particularly those who are already vulnerable. This could occur due to extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and the breakdown of local economies. Millions of people worldwide are expected to be affected by this issue. By 2050, up to 200 million people may be displaced due to climate change, causing distress from involuntary migration or loss of connection to home. (Deb et. al, 2012). The evidence of the studies further affirms the findings of Ogele (2020) that residents in the State are faced with flooding and erosion, poor agricultural harvest, and health challenges leading to death and displacement of the inhabitants.

Measures to Mitigate the Effect of Climate Change on Human Health.

To mitigate the effects of climate change, policies are developed in response to the perceived risk to society. According to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2014), the goal of mitigation is “stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened, and to enable economic development to proceed sustainably”. There

are ways to curb the effects of climate change such as reducing the flow of heat-trapping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, either by reducing sources of these gases (for example, the burning of fossil fuels for electricity, or transport) or enhancing the sinks that accumulate and store these gases (such as the oceans, forests and soil). In terms of electricity, renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, and hydro power have immense potential to combat climate change and provide a range of additional benefits. Numerous studies have examined the impact of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the electricity generation sector on public health by reducing particle air pollution emissions. These studies have shown that the health benefits of reducing air pollution far outweigh the costs of greenhouse gas mitigation, particularly in developing countries where pollution levels are high and the cost of implementing mitigation measures is low. This underscores the need for a shift towards renewable energy sources to not only mitigate climate change but also to promote public health and wellbeing. (Deb et. al, 2012). Again, Gao et al., (2018) in their study revealed that GHG mitigation strategies in power generation could simultaneously bring about public health benefits by reducing concentrations of the harmful Carbon dioxide emissions that generate ambient air pollution. Afforestation, another mitigation measure is also important. NEEDS (2010) report has shown that afforestation could be the most effective mitigation measure for Nigeria in land use change and forestry. Urban tree planting is an important tool to help cities mitigate the effects of climate change as well as being of importance to human health and wellbeing through regulating the air quality. Also, the erection of canals and guardrails is required in both local and urban communities. It will also help to reduce pollution, waterborne diseases, and vectors that breed and incubate in standing waters. An efficient healthcare system should be pursued and the primary healthcare system should be strengthened and restructured. Improvement in housing conditions for the masses is also needed (Ezegwu, 2014).

The findings of the study revealed the implications of climate change on health as follows: Climate change conditions lengthen the transmission of water and vector-borne diseases such as malaria and diarrhoea and could cause the deaths of 60,000 people by 2030. Cardiovascular, acute lower respiratory infections, and cancer within the respiratory tract are associated with ambient air pollution and are affecting the people in Obio/Akpor. The report from the tertiary health facility in Obio/Akpor indicates that these diseases affect the people within the area.

Measures to mitigate climate change implications to human health are: the use of renewable energy has significant potential to mitigate climate change and to provide wider benefits for public health by reducing concentrations of the harmful Carbon dioxide emissions that generate ambient air pollution. Afforestation is also an effective measure for Nigeria in land use change and forestry due to the importance of tree planting to human health and well-being through regulating air quality.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Climate change is a pressing issue that affects human health, the environment, and society as a whole. It will continue to be a significant challenge for our country, and we need to find answers to address the implications it poses. Climate change poses a challenge to health systems, governments, and health professionals both now and in the future. (Opoku et al., 2021). It has been projected that in 2030, sub-Saharan Africa will experience the greatest burden of mortality impacts attributable to climate change (Kovats et. al., 2014). It is expedient that the government and its agencies take actions needed to mitigate the implications on human health as a matter of urgency to avert possible future projections. The potential improvement of health, both physical and mental, will provide our policymakers with a strong incentive for change. Progress on mitigation is not only about the future climate but also about the health and well-being of populations.

In Nigeria, our government must adopt the mitigation strategies recommended by the IPCC. These strategies are: To reduce emissions in urban areas, we can use three strategies: electrification, low-emission energy, and increased carbon storage. We can increase carbon storage by using bio-based building materials, permeable surfaces, green roofs, trees, green spaces, rivers, ponds, and lakes. Enlightenment is also important because climate change involves everyone in society. To help people understand how climate change affects human health and how they can help, it's important to create campaigns using education and media. These campaigns should be strong enough to inspire action from governments, organizations, businesses, and communities, especially young people. We need to create awareness and encourage action to mitigate the effects of climate change.

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**AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE IMPACTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON
TRADITIONAL RELIGION OF MODERNIZING AUTOCHTHONOUS YORUBA
COMMUNITIES OF WEST AFRICA**

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Abstract

This is an anthropological study of the nature and effects of globalization on African traditional religion using the autochthonous communities of Yoruba land as case study. It examines and provides insights into real-world problems of globalization. The study attempts a synthesis and documentation of the religious system in Yoruba traditional society amidst globalization so as to fill the knowledge gap on globalization and its effects on the belief system of autochthonous traditional communities. The research shows that there are elements of change and continuity in the religious system of indigenous, but westernizing communities like the Yoruba and these are noticeable in an attempt of welding a coherent society together from these challenges. The notes that religion is a vital part of human activities and its effects permeate all spheres of life among peoples of all cultures. Methodologically, the study is based on ethnographical paradigms of In-depth interviews and Focus Group discussions with key informants. It is based on firsthand primary data and it adopted logical sequence and avoided numerical quantitative reasoning, it produces cultural details of the religious system of the people through ethnography and gives eyes to accurate information and details. The research concludes that the autochthonous communities of Yoruba land, nay of Africa, have come under the domineering influence of globalization and that this contact has serious effects on traditional religions.

Keywords: Anthropology, autochthones, globalization, traditional religions, Yoruba

Introduction

Scholarly quests to study the religious system of traditional autochthonous societies have incumbent rationale because of the influence of globalization on the beliefs and practices of such extant traditional societies. The success or otherwise of globalization on the one hand and the influence of foreign religions on the other hand in Africa indicate the need for more extensive study to validate their acceptance by the people. Thus, this is an ethnographic study of the effects of globalization on the traditional religions of autochthonous modernizing communities with focus on the Yoruba speaking peoples of West Africa. The study objectives were to participate, observe, study, narrate and describe what was observed. The researchers also avoided the use of foreign imposed terminologies which describe African religions as heathenism and paganism (Arinze, 2008; Idowu, 2018). This research opines that the study of the religious system of extant traditional societies like the Yoruba that have come under the influence of globalization and westernization is best served by ethnography.

Many scholars who have written on African cultures and contacts with the wider world have seen the need for authentic documentation of Africa's religious system as integral to the general study

of Africa, (Arinze, 2008; Idowu, 2018; Mbiti, 1990). In this light, the study critically examines the Yoruba by taking the Ekiti and Okun speaking peoples of North East Yoruba land Nigeria as case study, and investigates their traditional religious system, assesses the dynamism involved and examines how they have coped with the challenges of globalization. Globalization and westernization have exerted much influence on traditional societies and have resulted in upsetting many traditional norms and lores, thus creating multiple challenges in religious and political spheres.

The seminal anthropological treatises by Durkheim (1995) and Turner (2008) on traditional religions amongst others have made it imperative for the rigorous application of ethnography to the study of extant autochthonous traditional communities like the Yoruba of Nigeria. Andah (1989), Okpoko (2006) and Tubi (2015) have opined that the inadequacy of ethnography notwithstanding, it remains the best method to study traditional African societies. If this line of thought is accepted, then the study of targeted cultural groups like the Ekiti and Okun Yoruba peoples in the face of globalization and westernization is desirable. The study examines the traditional Ekiti and Okun religious system and considers the rapid erosion of critical aspects of traditional religious beliefs under acculturation with Islam and Christianity, westernization and globalization.

The *problematique* of Research

The *problematique* of this research is to investigate, examine and document in line with ethnographic methodologies, the autochthonous religious system of the Yoruba people. It examines the religio-social norms and mores of the people as they can be discerned by ethnographic study and it assesses the challenges of foreign influences, which confront traditional societies like the Yoruba. Traditional but westernizing and modernizing societies like the Yoruba present a good case for intellectual study. This paper looks critically at the traditional religious system of the Yoruba people and it notes the variables which make for continuity, changes, adaptations and innovations within the culture of a traditional autochthonous community that has come under the influence of globalization.

Issues that feature in this paper include qualitative examination of the prevailing religious system of the Yoruba and its immediate challenges amidst throes of globalization. It explores and provides concrete insights into globalization in traditional societies. It answers hows and whys of globalization on traditional communities of the Yoruba by explaining processes and patterns of behaviours of folks and thematic data on globalization. It attempts a critical inquiry into areas of convergence between traditional and modern religious system and it examines. The anthropological study of the people should provide detailed data and analyses of their religious past, present and project into the future irrespective of the cacophony of views on the origin, settlement, historicity, religious and political systems of the people.

Ethnographic Integration of Researchers

The researchers are culture-bearer who engages in an ethnographic study of the Yoruba. For the purpose of this research, the researcher visited several communities which are considered as the most pristine of all Yoruba communities in north east and north central parts of Yoruba land. The integration lasted 15 months. The period was used to observe and participate in many cultural activities of the people. A long period was desirable because some of the rites like the New Yam festival, and most religious festivities are assigned to specific seasons of the year. During this period, in-depth Interviews were conducted with the aid of an interview guide. It was held with acclaimed initiates of *oro* (traditional religion) and *oye* (chieftaincy title holders) of northern Yoruba land. Those who have gone through the initiation rites of are considered by their folks as those who are most familiar with the topic of research. Focus Group Discussions were held. The sessions were marked by consistent adherence to ethnographic paradigms. Six discussants formed a Focus Group team. They were made up of socially congruous folks in areas of age, sex and literacy/lack of literacy. This provided opportunity for free interaction among discussants which allowed for deep discussions of relevant issues. Unstructured questions were also used in conversational style with discussants so as to gain more insight. The approach was simple in style. This became necessary because many of the targeted discussants were non-literates.

There were two basic challenges which the researchers encountered. The first is that the researchers are culture-bearers and secondly, they are Christian clerics. The culture-bearer researchers face some problems; they may be highly selective of the data received, their emotional involvement in

their own culture will lead to sensitive zones of the culture, and they might use with restraint the data accruable. These were carefully guided against. Other sundry challenges were encountered, one of which is the presence of strict social boundaries among the people; social conditions which Christianity, Islam and westernization have not been able to erase. For this reason, it was necessary that women and men had to be grouped separately for interviews because of the secrecy involved in *oro* which remains a taboo for women. There were some data which were not divulged to the researchers because they were not considered to be initiates of *oro*. In matters of religious rites for example, some specifics were deliberately withheld from the researchers.

There are also advantages which the researchers possessed. It is clear to them that religious studies have fallen into the hands of professional religionists and trained theologians who do not possess scientific detachments of a social scientist and the required anthropological perspectives for analytical treatment of religious systems. The researchers' anthropological training and religious studies helped to avoid pitfalls of dogmatists. The second advantage is that the researchers studied as culture-bearers, therefore, their language is clearly understood, their proverb are perceptible, their body movements are well known, clichés were understood, and facial expressions were construed. As culture bearers the researchers were able to interpret the signs and symbols of the people. They avoided the tendencies of modern religious studies that tend to be materialistic and rationalistic. This condition insulates most social scientists from carrying out objective study of religions and other aspects of culture in traditional societies. There was maximum cooperation from the folks and the research proved to be challenging, educative and interesting.

Understanding Ethnography

This paper defines ethnography as a qualitative study of people and their culture *in situ* by a trained researcher, who participates, observes, records, describes and narrates the life-ways of the people under study. According to Encyclopedia Britannica (<https://www.britannica.com>), ethnography is the “descriptive study of a particular human society” and Cambridge Dictionary (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org>) defines ethnography as “a scientific description of the culture of a society by someone who has lived in it”. Ethnography is the science that defines the dynamic cause-effect relationship that operates within functional dynamic cultural systems, (Tubi, 2015). It is the study of the human society which “is concerned with the way of life (culture) of contemporary people such as economy, political system, kinship relation, ideas, morals, technology and crafts” (Okpoko & Ezeadichie, 2006). It critically studies humanity within a cultural locale and seeks an understanding of peoples' behaviour as manifested through culture. It is a scientific method, which concentrates intellectual inquiry on living cultures at a given moment. Scholars like Ezeh (2003), Okpoko (1989), and Tubi (2015) with various nuances define ethnography to mean the descriptions of customs of specific culture. By its “direct observation of the activity of members of a particular social group, and the description and evaluation of such activity” (Hogan, 2006:147) the field has achieved widespread acceptance across disciplines.

Scholars opined that despite the inadequacies of ethnography, it remains the best method to study traditional African societies (Ezeh, 2004; Okpoko, 2006). Participant-observation may be carried out in two ways. On the one hand, a scholar might study his own ethnic group therefore enjoying insider's privileged position in the area of study like Arinze (2008), Dike (1985), Fadipe (1970), Idowu (2018) and Tubi (2015), on the other hand, a scholar might study another ethnic group which is different from his own (Ezeh, 2004; Eva-Krampf, 1965). This research is in line with the former.

Understanding Globalization

Globalization is here construed as the universalization of peoples, cultures and commerce. According to Tubi (2015:20) globalization is “the universalization of peoples and cultures, the internationalization of trade and commerce, politics and culture and the planetary integration of ideas”. It is term that brings out the increasingly interconnectivity of person, cultures, trade and learning. It involves integration and interdependence of humanity. According Encyclopedia Britannica (<https://www.britannica.com>) globalization is the “stretching of economic, political, and social relationships in space and time”. The United Nations (<https://www.un.org>) defines it as global integration of economic and societies”. According to Steger (2020) “globalization is about intensifying planetary interconnectivity”, while Adefarasin and Adefarasin (2023) assert that globalization is an

inevitable process, because it is part of human nature. Globalization engenders a “world society” and “villagized world”.

Religion Explained

Religio (Latin) simply means devotedness, bond, reverence or felt obligation according to the New World Encyclopedia (<https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org>). Anthropologically speaking, a human being can be described as *homo religiosus* (religious man), because it is humans that practice religion. A precise definition of religion is difficult to come by. However as construed by its adherents, religion is a most sublime activity in which the Deity is inseparably linked with man in a covenanted relationship. Thus according to Encyclopedia Britannica (<https://www.britannica.com>) religion is “human beings’ relation to that which they regard as holy, sacred, absolute, spiritual, divine or worthy of especial reverence”. Treatises on religion generally give it dual broad perspectives. First, there are scholars like Weber (1922) and Durkheim (1961) who treat religion as a social reality which binds people together in social groups in which its beliefs and rituals point people within the society to the sacred. Second, the existentialists and theologians like Tillich define religion as “any set of coherent answer to human existential dilemmas -birth, sickness or death- which makes the world meaningful” (Hogan, 2006:30). Idowu (2018) describes religion as relationship with the Deity organized and expressed in human society through beliefs, creed, worship, ethical and moral behaviour. However, for Marx (1970:250), “Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of the heartless world, it is the spirit of the spiritless condition. It is the opium of the people”. Mbiti (1990) emphasizes the philosophical elements in religious observance of Africans, while Ephirim-Donkor (2016) associates it with ancestors’ worship.

Religion is a complex globalized culture of human beings which exhibits variety of cultural diversities. It is perceived as a sublime activity, however it has been exploited both for noble causes and for wars. It is impossible for scholars to provide essential definitions that suit all religious institutions. The problem of defining religion is perdurable due to two main reasons: On the one hand, it has been difficult and almost impossible to say in precise terms what is religious and what is not. This is due to the fact that what one religion considers as primal importance may not be reckoned as imperative in another. On the other hand, human’s indeterminate use of words made the problem of definition of religion more exacerbating. Contentious issues concern basic concepts of religion such as who/what is God, what is the nature and end of soul, what is the final end of man, is it heaven or hell or reincarnation, among others? (Barry 1983).

However, according to Tubi (2015), “there are certain agreeable delineations which characterize the religious realm and which are considered as typical of most, if not all religions. Religious phenomena consist of a system in which rituals, teaching of doctrines, myths, institutions and sentiments among others are interconnected”. As a working paradigm, this paper sees religion as the aggregation of human endeavours which links humanity with the Supreme deity. Detailed study of religion in Africa has been undertaken by scholars like Idowu (1962), Mbiti (1972, 1975, 1982), Parinder (1974), and Ekwunife (1992) amongst others.

The Yoruba People

All Yoruba groups trace their origin to Ile-Ife by popular tradition either directly or remotely. Orature points to Oduduwa, as the patriarch of the Yoruba, whose seven sons and their descendants populated the entire Yoruba land (Fagge and Willet, 1960; Fadipe, 1970; Johnson, 1921, 1960; Ojo, 1966). He reigned at Ile-Ife, where he sent out his children and grandchildren to establish kingdoms across Yoruba and Edo (Bini) lands. Ile-Ife the ancestral home of the Yoruba is also revered as the most sacred city where creation began. The Yoruba comprise groups of people who speak about 30 variants of Yoruba language. The language clusters of the Yoruba include Akoko, Egba, Ekiti, Ife, Igbomina, Ijebu, Ijesa, Ondo, Oyo, and Okun amongst others. They occupy the South-western part of Nigeria and Eastern part of Benin Republic and Togo Republic.

Politically, the Yoruba polity consists of multiple kingdoms. At the head of the political system is the *Oba* (monarch) who rules with the assistance of graded titled chiefs. The Yoruba monarchical political system makes room for checks and balances, which make totalitarianism abhorrent. Basically the Yoruba political system can be classified into two namely mega-kingdoms and mini-kingdoms. Mega-kingdoms, (characterized by large political territories), are found among the Oyo, Ife, Ijebu,

Egba, while mini-kingdoms (characterized by small territory), such that each community is a kingdom of its own are predominant among the Ekiti and Okun (Obayemi, 1985; Tubi 2015).

Explanation of Yoruba Religious System

The religious system of the Yoruba is an elaborate, organized, intricate web of man-deity relationships that exhibits both coeval temporal and non-temporal realities in which man and spirits, visible and invisible, created and uncreated, animate and inanimate, materials and spiritual, and the living and the dead coalesce (Idowu, 1962, Tubi, 2015). Yoruba’s religion is a diffused monotheism in which *Olodumare* (Supreme Deity) is acknowledged, but he is far removed from the daily chores of the people. The Yoruba religious system is linked to *Olodumare* (Supreme Being), who has numerous attributes such as *eleda* (creator), *alanu* (the merciful One), *oluwa* (lord). The multiplicity of deities (*ebora, orisa*), which are considered as viceroys of the Supreme Deity help in the day to day running of the world. Due to this fact, there are hundreds of deities (*ebora/orisa*) that have definite responsibilities in the affairs of the world, like Ogun (deity of iron), Sango (deity of thunder), Osun, Oya and Yemoja (goddesses of river), etc. The chief priest (*aworo/abore*) is the supreme pontiff of the Yoruba religious system, who in turn is assisted by sundry traditional priests, priestesses, herbalists, diviners and cultic functionaries. The traditional Okun’s religious system has five (5) orders namely; Supreme Being, deities, ancestors, spirits and human beings in descending order.

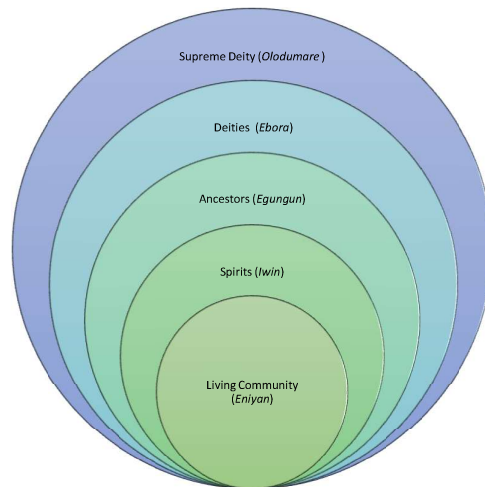


Fig. 1: Schematization of Yoruba Religious System
Source: Tubi, 2015

Effects of Globalization on Yoruba Traditional Religion

The Yoruba have come under immense influence of globalization. The result has been felt in all facets of their religious system, and in all their entire cultural systems. It is possible to highlight certain benefits of globalization on the traditional societies in general. These will include openness to the larger world, inflow of modernizing traits, wider knowledge and modern ideas, availability of modern technology, openness to international market, amongst others.

According to key informants, the Yoruba traditional religious system has lost much of its autochthonous life-ways. Due to contacts with Chinese influence, westernization, foreign religions and globalization, most of the traditional religious centres are facing extinction, (Adewumi, personal communication; Arupe, personal communication; Obahun, personal communication; Yakubu, personal communication). The study notes that unguided application of *sinoization* and westernization in the name of modernization and the adoption of unfiltered foreign religions among the Yoruba and Africans in general have done incalculable damage to traditional religions and cultures. According to Bitrus (2017) and Okure (2001) modernization has caused serious challenges to traditional Africa with dire consequences on its beliefs, ethos and customs. From the Colonial era, there have been critical challenges to the mores and lores of the Okun. In continuation of that challenge, there have been the

severe and persistent onslaughts of westernization and foreign religions on the traditional religion of the people which have resulted in the reduction of adherents of traditional religion, (Obioha, 2010).

In general terms, the effect of globalisation on the Yoruba people are summed up thus:

i. Desecration of Religious Sites

One of the most significant effects of globalization on the Yoruba ethnic group is the desecration of traditional religious sites such as shrines and groves. Due to the environmentally aligned nature of their traditional religion, their religious centres are located in hills, rivers, forests and trees, (Adewumi, personal communication; ...). Because of this fact, any destruction of natural resources automatically results in the destruction of their religious sites. It has been observed in a recent study among the Yoruba that immense destruction of forests, hills and despoiling of natural rivers and streams are rampant in the area (Tubi, 2021).

ii. De-divinization of Nature

A major consequence of globalization the Yoruba is the de-divinization of nature for a group of people who are very religious. The Yoruba are groups of people who construe the entirety of creation as animated by divine presence, thus every natural resource is dominated by spirits (Obahun, personal communication; ...). Divinization of nature brought tremendous respect for nature resources and as a result they attach a deep sense of sacredness to the environment. They see the earth and mountains in awe, and the rivers and forests are seen with amazement as all are expressing the grandeur of divinity. Importantly, for the people, deities are coterminous with natural resources such that all rivers and streams have dwelling spirits and hills and forests are abodes of deities. However rapid western education and modern scientific knowledge among the people have resulted in the removal of the sense of sacredness that was attached to the environment.

iii. Impacts of Foreign Religions and Ideologies

The Yoruba are suffering surfeits of Islamization and Christianisation for a long time, which deeply affect their traditional religious system. The ecological friendly traditional religion of the Yoruba is replaced with deep anthropocentrism of the Abrahamic religions. The ecospirituality of the Yoruba places the environment under the care of human beings to pamper and tender, whereas the Abrahamic religions see the earth as placed under human beings to master and exploit. Under the throes of foreign ideologies the people have lost the sense of respect to the environment. Key informants (Abiola, personal communication; ...) lament the abandonment of cherished norms about the earth and its ecofriendly management with unbridle exploitation brought by globalization, modernization and foreign religions.

iv. Destruction of Natural Landscapes

Loss of forests, mountains and massive soil exploitation are common in Yoruba land. Due to rapid modernization coupled with industrialization, several forests and mountain ranges have been destroyed and degradation of soil and natural landscapes are very common. The results of tree felling, animal grazing, bush burning, mining and quarrying activities in the area are clearly manifest and there are bewildering. Also building of industrial sites, social amenity centres, and educational centres amongst others require clearing of sizable portion of natural landscapes. Key informants (Arupe, personal communication; ...) assert that what were once sacred forests and abodes of deities have now been deforested and become public centres for markets, civic centres, educational institutions, etc.

Conclusion

The interconnectivity of religion and environment is profound in traditional communities and they bear directly on the lives of the people. This ethnographic study of the traditional autochthonous communities of Yoruba speaking peoples of West Africa discusses the religious perspectives of the Yoruba which is highly aligned with the environment. The study examines the effects of globalization on their general way of life and highlights its damaging effects on their hallowed traditional way of life. The study concludes that globalization unleashes massive and destructive influence which tends to amend, suppress and erode traditional practices.

The study of religious system cannot be complete without considering its anthropological relevance. Religion is too important to be left with theologians and religionists alone. Therefore, as

anthropologists seek to study various aspects of peoples' culture, there is a growing need to study and document extant autochthonous traditional societies that have to contend with external influences like foreign religions, westernization and globalization, lest they are suppressed.

The study of the Yoruba reveals that Christianity, Islam, and globalization have precipitated severe cultural shocks and brought changes in Yoruba land, especially in the religious system, as in other parts of Africa. In the face of the onslaught of foreign influence, the Yoruba have successfully managed stability versus vulnerability and cohesion versus changes that are taking place in their cultural milieu amidst onslaughts of globalization. By deconstructing the Yoruba cultural systems, in line with structuralism, the study discovered the tension between religio-social rationalizations of the people and the various subsystems into which they converge have anthropological relevance to contemporary traditional peoples of Africa in general.

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Acknowledgements

The researchers appreciate the immense contributions of local folks of Ekiti and Okun peoples, especially key informants who participated in in-depth interviews and focus groups discussions, towards the success of the study. They volunteered to take us through ravines and forests, forts and streams, mountainous ranges and valleys without demanding for pecuniary purposes but for the sake of “saving our culture, people and land”.

OIL EXPLORATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS AMONG LITTORAL HOST COMMUNITIES IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

This paper examined oil exploration and environmental crisis among littoral host communities in Rivers state. The petroleum Industry Act (PIA) signed into law by His Excellency President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR in 2022, amongst other things established the Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), charged with the responsibility to ensure compliance with Petroleum Laws Regulations and Guidelines and the determination of the Host Communities. The objective of this is to analyze how the petroleum act has been able to address the issue of oil exploration in littoral host communities. This study adopted descriptive (community survey research design). This study made use of the Resource Curse Theory (RCT) developed by Richard Auty in 1993. Thematic analysis was used to analysis the sourced data. Findings of the study revealed that all the five (5) littoral Local Government Areas of the state complained that the 500 meters buffer from the shoreline as stipulated by the PIA Act 2022 is grossly inadequate to address the devastation impacted on the littoral host communities by oil exploration activities; there is high insecurity along the coast line made it difficult for the Team to navigating to some of the Littoral Host Communities; host communities remain unhappy with the PIA's provision that oil companies must allocate 3 percent of their annual operating expenditure in the immediately preceding calendar year to the HCDTF; they had asked for 10 percent. The study therefore, recommends that all provisions of the PIA should be implemented to the last letter and should be followed up. Also, the agitation of 10% proceeds from oil revenue by host communities should be implemented.

Keywords: Oil exploration, environmental crisis, littoral host communities and petroleum Industry Act (PIA).

Introduction

United Nations Environment Programme (2022) and the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (2022) report that Nigeria is the world's tenth-largest producer of crude oil and possesses the world's thirteenth-largest crude oil reserves, respectively. The Niger Delta has been the site of oil production and exploration since the late 1950s. The United Nations in 2022 stated that oil spill pollution in Rivers state had not been addressed or had only been partly remediated. The problems and conflicts that have arisen as a result of oil exploration in the state prompted the current research on the efficacy of conflict management tactics in resolving these difficulties.

More than forty years ago, in the Niger-Delta region, Nigeria began exploring for and producing crude oil. The part of Nigeria that is home to the oil deposits that generate the governments and the oil industry's riches is vastly underdeveloped in comparison to the rest of the country. Even if there are plenty of resources available, poverty continues to endure (Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation UNPO, 2018).

By the mid-1960s, the oil industry had become more important to Nigeria's economy and government. Shell-BP began releasing land when Nigeria gained independence on October 1, 1960, and its exploration licences were changed to prospecting licences, allowing for development and production (Bamberg, 2000). The concession strategy was axed and exclusive exploration rights were granted as a result of the petroleum industry's outsized importance in the Nigerian economy. The purpose of this was to encourage more international oil firms to invest in petroleum exploration and production so that these processes might advance more quickly. Nigeria hosted oil and gas exploration efforts from a number of major oil firms. Amoseas, Gulf Company (now known as Chevron), Texaco Overseas Nigeria Petroleum Company Unlimited, Société Africaine des Pétroles (SAFRAP), which changed its name to Elf Nigeria Limited in 1974, Tennessee Nigeria Limited (Tenneco), Azienda Generale Italiana

Petroli (AGIP), ENI, Philips Company, and Pan Ocean Oil Corporation are all examples of such companies. As of the year 2000 (Bamberg).

Statement of the Problem

According to Genova (2007), the Nigerian government formed the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) Inspectorate in 1970, and the country joined OPEC the following year. In 1971, the Nigerian government founded the Nigerian National Oil Corporation (NNOC), a key state-owned corporation that would later be renamed the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) in 1977 in an effort to consolidate power in the country's oil industry. Shell-BP was renamed the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC) when Nigeria bought out BP's whole interest in 1979 (Genova, 2007). It is important to note that SPDC holds the largest acreage within the country, from which it contributes a substantial portion of the nation's oil output, and remains the dominant player in Nigeria's oil industry (Genova, 2007), despite the involvement of a few other oil companies in exploration and production activities over the past few decades. Several large oil companies are now exploring and extracting natural gas and oil from the Niger Delta. U.S.-based Chevron Texaco is one of them, along with ExxonMobil, Dutch Shell, ENI/Agip, Total Fina Elf, and Total.

The indigenous people of Nigeria are adversely affected by oil production on both ecological and social levels. Andrew (2021) claims that Nigeria's crude oil exports come from inside the country, but that the indigenous minority people who call these areas home get very little financial benefits as a result. Growth plans that put extra emphasis on attracting foreign investment to Nigeria's oil sector to boost exports have not been successful. Foreign countries and the ruling class in the Nigerian government have benefited most from the money made off of the indigenous people of Nigeria. Degradation of the natural environment due to oil extraction has led to widespread poverty among the local inhabitants. Food insecurity, health risks, land loss, pollution, forced migration, and unemployment are only some of the environmental problems that have worsened for local populations due to a lack of rules on multinational activities. This is what Andrew (2021) claims. Andonis, Edos, Efiks, Ibibios, Ijaws, Ika-Ibos, Ikwerres, Isekiris, Isokus, Kalabaris, Urhobos, and Ogonis are only some of the affected people groups. About a quarter of Nigeria's total population resides in these communities (Pyagbara, 2020), or about 36 million people. Given the profit-maximizing nature of oil firms and the fact that oil production contributes for 90% of Nigeria's total national income (Pyagbara, 2020), both have an incentive to maintain output at present levels. In the middle of the pipeline vandalism fight, the Federal Government awarded a private entity a surveillance contract in August of 2020. Reportedly worth N48 billion (or N4 billion each month), the Nigerian National Petroleum Limited has renewed its contract with Government Ekpemupolo, better known as Tompolo. Former warlord Tompolo led a violent group.

Adam (2018) discussed the effects of federal government, business, and community participation in Niger Delta area at the Development Studies Association Conference. The research showed that oil extraction poses serious threats to human health and the environment in the areas where it is conducted. Pollution of the Niger Delta's soils, streams, and creeks seems to have beyond the ability for natural repair.

Gbimene (2020) examined the causes of these conflicts. Conflicts in the Niger Delta area are exacerbated by environmental deterioration, and Shell Petroleum's alleged failure to immediately respond to accusations of oil contamination and implement appropriate environmental clean-up measures was identified as the principal cause of conflict in the region by the researchers.

The negative effects of oil drilling in Rivers state and other parts of the Niger Delta have been the subject of many prior studies. This paper reviews oil exploration and environmental crisis among littoral host communities in rivers state: the mediating role of the Petroleum Industry Act, 2021. The objective of this is to analyze how the petroleum act has been able to address the issue of oil exploration in littoral host communities.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive (community survey research design). A community survey is a method of collecting data from a filtered target audience to help you understand an issue particular to them. Primary and secondary data was also used for analysis of the study. The paper used the SASPLANET, 100mm Resolution Satellite Imagery, 2022-2023, of the Area of Interest (AOI) to

vectorize the shoreline and then created the specified 500 meters buffer zone inland from the shoreline in order to identify the settlements within the zone. The coordinates of the Communities within the 500 meters buffer zone was extracted from the imagery and uploaded into the hand held Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver. Thereafter the researcher Navigated to these Communities for on the ground identification of the host communities and capturing of their locality names. Thematic analysis was used to analysis the sourced data.

Theoretical Framework

This study made use of the Resource Curse Theory (RCT) developed by Ricahrd Auty in 1993. The term "resource curse" was first used by Richard Auty in 1993 to describe the paradoxical phenomenon wherein countries rich in natural resources actually grew more slowly than those without such richness (Okolie, 2015). The resource curse, paradox of plenty, or poverty paradox refers to the phenomenon whereby countries rich in natural resources (such as fossil fuels and specific minerals) experience lower economic growth, lower levels of democracy, or worse development outcomes than countries with fewer natural resources. Several ideas and intense academic debate centre on the reasons for and potential mitigations of these unfavourable outcomes. The vast majority of analysts believe that the resource curse is not universal but rather context-dependent (Adams, 2014).

Relevance of the theory to the study: Although there is a lot of oil, it doesn't always mean the places where it's extracted are thriving. Locals see this as a curse since it often leads to conflicts between their villages and oil companies, who are supported by the federal government (Okolie-Osemene & Okanume, 2012). The militant groups' attacks on oil companies can also be understood in light of the "resource curse" thesis, which provides a convincing link between an abundance of natural resources (the "paradox of plenty") and intergroup or intercommunity violent conflicts in Littoral Host Communities in Rivers state.

Conceptual Clarifications

Petroleum Industry Act (PIA)

The Petroleum Industry Act replaces the former Petroleum Act. The new statute indicates that the property and ownership of petroleum within Nigeria and its territorial waters, continental shelf, and exclusive economic zone is vested in the Government of Nigeria.

Nigeria's Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) 2021, which was recently signed into law, is one of the most audacious attempts to overhaul the petroleum sector in Nigeria. The Act seeks to provide legal, governance, regulatory and fiscal framework for the Nigerian Petroleum Industry. Despite being a major source of revenue, the oil sector lags other sectors in terms of GDP contribution. If implemented diligently, the PIA will help facilitate Nigeria's economic development by attracting and creating investment opportunities for local and international investors.

Regarding the institutional setting, this law:

- Maintains the Minister of Petroleum, which shall formulate, monitor and administer government policy in the petroleum industry;
- Creates the Nigerian Upstream Regulatory Commission, which is responsible for the technical and commercial regulation of upstream petroleum operations;
- Establishes the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority, which is responsible for the technical and commercial regulation of midstream and downstream petroleum operations;
- Replaces the old structure of Nigerian National Petroleum for a limited liability company called Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited.

Regarding licenses, this law:

- Maintains the provisions from the former Petroleum Act;
- Establishes the possibility of celebrating joint venture arrangements with the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited;
- Indicates different companies should be responsible for upstream, midstream, and downstream operations.

Regarding the operation of gas and petroleum activities, this law indicates:

- Gas flaring or venting is prohibited except in emergencies, for safety reasons or with an exemption granted by the competent authority;
- All licensees shall install metering equipment to measure flared volumes;
- The decommissioning and abandonment of petroleum wells, installations, structures, utilities, plants, and pipelines for petroleum operation on land and offshore shall be conducted following good international practices and guidelines issued by the competent authority;
- Leaseholders must provide a program of activities and their estimated costs for decommissioning and abandonment, which require approval by the competent authority;
- Leaseholders must establish a decommissioning and abandonment fund. (Petroleum Industry Act, 2021).

Littoral Host Community

The petroleum Industry Act (PIA) signed into law by His Excellency President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR in 2022, amongst other things established the Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), charged with the responsibility to ensure compliance with Petroleum Laws Regulations and Guidelines and the determination of the Host Communities. Pursuant to the (PIA) Act, a Littoral Host Community as defined by section 318 of the Act is a littoral Community to a deep water area of operation located along the Nigerian shoreline up to about 500 meters inland. Such host Community affected by Petroleum operations will be entitled to 3% of upstream Companies' actual annual operating expenditure of the proceeding financial year as enshrined in the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Host Communities Development Regulations 2022. The Act also provides that such Communities will be so recognized only if it is Gazetted by the National Boundary Commission (NBC).

Table 1. Littoral Host Communities within 500meter Buffer zone

S/N	Name of Community	LGA	Long (Dec)	Lat (Dec)	Long (DMS)	Lat (DMS)
1	Abajiokolo Kiri	Akukutoru	6.91831004	4.38606417	6°55'5.916"	4°23'9.830"
2	Tingibibi	Akukutoru	6.86700000	4.36800000	6°52'1.200"	4°22'4.800"
3	Sanga Piri	Akukutoru	6.75400000	4.34900000	6°45'14.400"	4°20'56.400"
4	Iselema	Akukutoru	6.73500000	4.35200000	6°44'6.000"	4°21'7.200"
5	Sanga Kiri	Akukutoru	6.72000000	4.35500000	6°43'12.000"	4°21'180"
6	Ilaja Kiri	Akukutoru	6.62400000	4.32400000	6°37'26.400"	4°19'26.400"
7	Edi Kiri	Akukutoru	6.63700000	4.32100000	6°38'13.200"	4°19'15.600"
8	Mana Kiri	Akukutoru	6.55700000	4.32600000	6°33'25.200"	4°19'33.600"
9	Macleankiri	Akukutoru	6.57000000	4.32700000	6°34'12.000"	4°19'37.200"
10	Idegeba	Akukutoru	6.52900000	4.32400000	6°31'44.400"	4°19'26.400"
11	Tiebelem	Akukutoru	6.54900000	4.32500000	6°32'56.400"	4°19'30.000"
12	Tingibi (NUPRC)	Akukutoru	6.86694526	4.36939082	6°52'1.003"	4°22'9.807"
13	Oyekiri (NUPRC)	Akukutoru	6.68016292	4.33788754	6°40'48.587"	4°20'16.395"
14	Tiebelem (NUPRC)	Akukutoru	6.55745667	4.32568829	6°33'26.844"	4°19'32.478"
15	Sucherbeach (NUPRC)	Akukutoru	6.99271927	4.37705007	6°59'33.789"	4°22'37.380"
16	Angalabio Fishing Camp (NUPRC)	Akukutoru	6.82943069	4.35781342	6°49'45.950"	4°21'28.128"
17	Ibrokiri (NUPRC)	Akukutoru	6.85454438	4.37950935	6°51'16.360"	4°22'46.234"
18	Sangakiri (NUPRC)	Akukutoru	6.77330328	4.34738389	6°46'23.892"	4°20'50.582"
19	Macleankiri (NUPRC)	Akukutoru	6.56862809	4.32560707	6°34'7.061"	4°19'32.185"
20	Kpogakiri (NUPRC)	Akukutoru	6.95678185	4.37435084	6°57'24.415"	4°22'27.663"
21	Ama Uzo	Andoni	7.57900000	4.47000000	7°34'44.400"	4°28'12.000"
22	Ama Uche	Andoni	7.57900000	4.46000000	7°34'44.400"	4°27'36.000"

S/N	Name of Community	LGA	Long (Dec)	Lat (Dec)	Long (DMS)	Lat (DMS)
23	Ethopia	Andoni	7.51900000	4.45200000	7°31'8.400"	4°27'7.2.000"
24	Ama Minini	Andoni	7.50700000	4.45100000	7°30'25.200"	4°27'3.600"
25	Darile	Andoni	7.48600000	4.44900000	7°29'9.600"	4°26'56.400"
26	Iwofuk	Andoni	7.46000000	4.44500000	7°27'36.000"	4°26'42.000"
27	Ama Renner	Andoni	7.45800000	4.44400000	7°27'28.800"	4°26'38.400"
28	Ama Okoson	Andoni	7.45500000	4.44400000	7°27'18.000"	4°26'38.400"
29	Ama Agada	Andoni	7.45300000	4.44400000	7°27'10.800"	4°26'38.400"
30	Ama Simeon	Andoni	7.44600000	4.44200000	7°26'45.600"	4°26'31.200"
31	Ama Ibiaki II	Andoni	7.44400000	4.44200000	7°26'38.400"	4°26'31.200"
32	Ama Fred	Andoni	7.44200000	4.44100000	7°26'31.200"	4°26'27.600"
33	Inyonkon	Andoni	7.43500000	4.43800000	7°26'6.000"	4°26'16.800"
34	Ama Renner	Andoni	7.40900000	4.43600000	7°24'32.400"	4°26'9.600"
35	Karamant	Andoni	7.34500000	4.44400000	7°20'42.000"	4°26'38.400"
36	Ama-Oke	Andoni	7.34100000	4.44500000	7°20'27.600"	4°26'42.000"
37	Inyonkon (NUPRC)	Andoni	7.43487224	4.43750800	7°26'5.540"	4°26'15.029"
38	Oyorokoto (NUPRC)	Andoni	7.34324388	4.44290922	7°20'35.678"	4°26'34.473"
39	Ebonokolo (NUPRC)	Andoni	7.38136044	4.44129753	7°22'52.898"	4°26'28.671"
40	Ibotusut (NUPRC)	Andoni	7.37035430	4.44422020	7°22'13.275"	4°26'39.193"
41	Ebon-Okolo (NUPRC)	Andoni	7.38017092	4.43972976	7°22'48.615"	4°26'23.027"
42	Katamat (NUPRC)	Andoni	7.35538971	4.44248676	7°21'19.403"	4°26'32.952"
43	Ama Remer (NUPRC)	Andoni	7.41477110	4.43407439	7°24'53.176"	4°26'2.668"
44	Ibot Usut (NUPRC)	Andoni	7.36662078	4.44184335	7°21'59.835"	4°26'30.636"
45	Ama Ibiaki	Andoni	7.58400000	4.48200000	7°35'2.400"	4°28'55.200"
46	Ama Afisia	Andoni	7.58748571	4.49139560	7°35'14.950"	4°29'29.026"
47	Ibot-Okpoon	Andoni	7.58501226	4.48204956	7°35'6.043"	4°28'55.380"
48	Ama Stephen	Andoni	7.58208552	4.47817341	7°34'55.510"	4°28'41.423"
49	Otuokporo	Andoni	7.57982773	4.47429791	7°34'47.381"	4°28'27.473"
50	Agbama	Andoni	7.57811377	4.47109406	7°34'41.210"	4°28'15.938"
51	Ama Owen	Andoni	7.57803049	4.46915480	7°34'40.908"	4°28'8.958"
52	Utoon Obolo I	Andoni	7.57788249	4.46848308	7°34'40.375"	4°28'6.539"
53	Utoon Obolo II	Andoni	7.57820461	4.46588932	7°34'41.538"	4°27'57.200"
54	Otuoyo	Andoni	7.57779812	4.46116212	7°34'40.073"	4°27'40.183"
55	Ama Ikwut	Andoni	7.50034412	4.45093012	7°30'1.238"	4°27'3.348"
56	Ama Inwon	Andoni	7.45218443	4.44278225	7°27'7.862"	4°26'34.015"
57	Ama Ayayi	Andoni	7.44806003	4.44276956	7°26'53.016"	4°26'33.972"
58	Oyorokoto	Andoni	7.33331205	4.45062337	7°19'59.923"	4°27'2.243"
59	Ajegule I	Bonny	7.31600000	4.44500000	7°18'57.600"	4°26'42.000"
60	Ajegule II	Bonny	7.01600000	4.43900000	7°0'57.600"	4°26'20.400"
61	Ajegule III	Bonny	7.31700000	4.43400000	7°19'1.200"	4°26'2.400"
62	Finita-Singi (NUPRC)	Bonny	7.15458600	4.38740100	7°9'16.510"	4°23'14.644"
63	Ngoloko (NUPRC)	Bonny	7.31184764	4.41507965	7°18'42.652"	4°24'54.287"
64	Bonny Main Town	Bonny	7.17000000	4.45500000	7°10'12.000"	4°27'18.000"
65	Deadman Island	Bonny	7.07400000	4.45000000	7°4'26.400"	4°27'0.000"
66	Finita-Singi	Bonny	7.13496535	4.40405503	7°8'5.874"	4°24'14.598"

S/N	Name of Community	LGA	Long (Dec)	Lat (Dec)	Long (DMS)	Lat (DMS)
67	Ajiokolo I	Bonny	7.13719014	4.40877826	7°8'13.884"	4°24'31.601"
68	Ajiokolo II	Bonny	7.13854644	4.40775509	7°8'18.766"	4°24'27.918"
69	Elem-Ifoko (NUPRC)	Degema	7.01912763	4.40284791	7°1'8.859"	4°24'10.252"
70	Abajiokolo Kiri (NUPRC)	Degema	6.91831995	4.38612064	6°55'5.952"	4°23'10.034"
71	Bregede	Degema	7.07100000	4.45200000	7°4'15.600"	4°27'7.200"
72	Imbiaka Fimimo	Degema	7.02200000	4.44400000	7°1'19.200"	4°26'38.400"
73	Elem Ifoko	Degema	7.01300000	4.41000000	7°0'46.800"	4°24'36.000"
74	Sibo Ofori	Degema	7.01500000	4.40800000	7°0'54.000"	4°24'28.800"
75	Gold Coast (NUPRC)	Degema	6.91056120	4.39195425	6°54'38.020"	4°23'31.035"
76	Opokolo (NUPRC)	Degema	6.87402942	4.39294085	6°52'26.506"	4°23'34.587"
77	Idegeba (NUPRC)	Degema	6.58130347	4.32538394	6°34'52.692"	4°19'31.382"
78	Deadman Island (NUPRC)	Degema	7.07535879	4.44919193	7°4'31.292"	4°26'57.091"
79	Okolo-Ogono	Degema	6.91300000	4.38800000	6°54'46.800"	4°23'16.800"
80	Boko Kiri	Degema	6.93900000	4.38000000	6°56'20.400"	4°22'48.000"
81	Elem Oporoama	Degema	6.89700000	4.39400000	6°53'49.200"	4°23'38.400"
82	New Jerusalem	Degema	6.86500000	4.40000000	6°51'54.000"	4°24'0.000"
83	AmaKiri Konboko	Degema	6.97800000	4.38100000	6°58'40.800"	4°22'51.600"
84	Leke Kiri	Degema	7.01600000	4.40800000	7°0'57.600"	4°24'28.800"
85	Fouchee Island	Degema	7.02000000	4.40200000	7°1'12.000"	4°24'7.200"
86	Hornby Ama	Degema	7.01700000	4.39500000	7°1'1.200"	4°23'42.000"
87	Efere Owolo	Degema	7.00700000	4.38600000	7°0'25.200"	4°23'9.600"
88	Odobu Ama	Degema	6.99600000	4.37800000	6°59'45.600"	4°22'40.800"
89	Fred Amaso	Degema	7.07200000	4.44800000	7°4'19.200"	4°26'52.800"
90	Fouchee Community	Degema	7.03200000	4.44000000	7°1'55.200"	4°26'24.000"
91	Ijigla Ama	Degema	7.06100000	4.44200000	7°3'39.600"	4°26'31.200"
92	Mbiaka Fimimo II	Degema	7.04600000	4.43900000	7°2'45.600"	4°26'20.400"
93	Tienbo Ama	Degema	7.05100000	4.44200000	7°3'3.600"	4°26'31.200"
94	Elem-Ifoko	Degema	7.01249215	4.41214781	7°0'44.971"	4°24'43.733"
95	Sibo Ofori	Degema	7.01692366	4.39768450	7°1'0.926"	4°23'51.662"
96	Leke Kiri	Degema	7.00070914	4.37806814	7°0'2.552"	4°22'41.045"

Source: Report of the Field Team on the Determination of Littoral Communities along the Bight of Bonny, Rivers State Sector, Nigeria

Discussion

Former President Muhammadu Buhari signed the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) 2022, bringing to a close a 20-year effort to reform Nigeria's oil and gas sector, with the aim of creating an environment more conducive for growth of the sector and addressing legitimate grievances of communities most impacted by extractive industries. A lot has changed in the sector domestically and globally since the reform efforts began. The number of indigenous oil and gas firms has grown, but so has the number of oil-producing countries in the region. Militancy in oil-rich communities, while remaining, has diminished. Concerns over climate change have fueled aggressive efforts to reduce global consumption of fossil fuels driving divestment from oil and gas by companies, institutions, and countries (Kasirim, 2023). The PIA represents an effort by Africa's leading oil-producing country to respond to this changing environment. In 2019, the oil and gas sector accounted for about 5.8 percent of Nigeria's real GDP and was responsible for 95 percent of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings and 80 percent of its

budget revenues. In addition, because the law is far-reaching in its remit, it is complex and not easy to summarize.

Kasirim, (2023) posits that if properly and vigorously implemented, the PIA can represent the gold standard of natural resource management, with clear and separate roles for the subsectors of the industry; the existence of a commercially-oriented and profit-driven national petroleum company; the codification of transparency, good governance, and accountability in the administration of the petroleum resources of Nigeria; the economic and social development of host communities; environmental remediation; and a business environment conducive for oil and gas operations to thrive in the country. However, these results are conditional on Nigeria's political and oil industry leaders overcoming some key challenges that are discussed following the summary of the key provisions of the act.

Key Provisions/Innovations of the Act

The PIA overhauls the regulation and governance of the oil and gas industry. The law provides for two regulatory agencies the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) and the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority, (NMDPRA) that will be responsible for the technical and commercial regulation of petroleum operations in their respective sectors, and have the power to acquire, hold, and dispose of property, as well as sue and be sued in their own name.

The law commercializes the perennially loss-making state-owned enterprise, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC), turning it into the NNPC Ltd, a quasi-commercial entity the ownership of which shares shall be vested with the government, and the ministries of Finance and Petroleum shall hold the shares on behalf of the government. Per the PIA, the president of Nigeria will appoint the president of NNPC Ltd as well as heads and members of the regulatory agencies. Separately, the minister of petroleum, then, will head the industry with a wide range of powers to formulate, monitor, and administer government policy under the PIA. Importantly, the PIA provides that 30 percent of the profits of the NNPC Ltd will fund a new entity, to finance exploration in other basins in the country (Frontier Exploration Fund). Ten percent of rents on petroleum prospecting licenses and 10 percent of rents on petroleum mining leases are also assigned to Frontier exploration. The act is unclear on whether there will continue to be exploration in existing basins.

A New Era for Host Communities

The relationship between oil and gas host communities in Nigeria has historically been very poor. The PIA aims to address this problem by creating the Host Community Development Trust Fund (HCDTF) whose purpose will be to, among others, foster sustainable prosperity, provide direct social and economic benefits from petroleum to host communities, and enhance peaceful and harmonious coexistence between licensees or lessees and host communities. Specifically, the law stipulates that existing host community projects must be transferred to the HCDTF, and each settlor (or oil license holder) must make an annual contribution of an amount equal to 3 percent of its operating expenditure for the relevant operations from the previous year. The management committee of the trust must include one member of the host community. In addition, the act stipulates a penalty for failure to comply with host community obligations, including revocation of license (Kenneth, 2022). Interestingly, the PIA also imposes the duty and responsibility to protect oil and gas assets on host communities. More specifically, clause 257 stipulates that any host community that fails to protect oil assets in its community from vandalism will be held accountable for the repairs.

A New Fiscal Framework

The PIA introduces a new tax regime, replacing the existing petroleum profits tax with a hydrocarbon tax and introducing a tax on the income of oil companies. Under this new fiscal regime, hydrocarbons including crude oil, condensates, and natural gas liquids produced from associated gas will be subject to taxation. Notably, crude oil from deep offshore is excluded from the tax. One of the more controversial stipulations in the PIA is the provision stating that, in the event of supply shortfalls, only companies with active refining licenses or proven track record of international crude oil and petroleum products trading will be allowed to import such products. This is a controversial provision that has been interpreted as an attempt to confer monopoly powers on a few domestic refiners

(John, 2021). The fiscal framework provides for penalties for gas flaring arising from midstream operations. Revenues from these penalties will accrue to the Midstream and Downstream Infrastructure Fund and will be used to finance midstream and downstream infrastructure investment.

Challenges

As asserted by Kasirim, (2023), the most important challenge is the challenge of interpretation and imprecisions in the law. For example, it is unclear whether host community development trust obligations are additional to existing community levies (such as the Niger Delta development levy) or will be an aggregation of those levies. Similarly, the law is silent on the definition of “frontier basin” and host community, instead deferring to the NUPRC on the definition of frontier basin and to settlers or license holders on the definition of “host community.” These definitions are not neutral to revenue; they have revenue implications. This lack of clarity creates uncertainty and even possible disputes, especially if relevant parties define them differently. This law is complex and complicated. While capacity in the oil and gas sector has been built over the years, the new legal provisions and fiscal framework will need new capacities to succeed. This challenge will be particularly acute in the new regulatory institutions; in the understanding, interpretation, and application of the law; and in the management of the funds, including the HCDDTF.

The PIA also comes with a challenge of equity between indigenous oil producers and multinational corporations. International producers such as Shell have largely disengaged from onshore oil exploration and production activities, concentrating instead on deep offshore. As stated earlier, deep offshore is exempt from taxation. By divesting themselves of onshore assets, international multinationals are “technically” exempt from the 3 percent contribution to the HCDDTF. These provisions confer cost advantages to oil multinationals, making it difficult for indigenous companies to compete and grow. One solution might be to amend the act to require all oil companies operating in Nigeria to contribute to the HCDDTF.

Lingering North/South disagreement: The bill that became the PIA was originally proposed by the executive (largely supported in the North) and passed largely along regional (North/South) lines. In short, lawmakers and leading politicians from the oil-rich Niger Delta states opposed it, and many lawmakers from the South believe the bill advances Northern interests to the detriment of the South. In fact, although enacted, the PIA continues to generate anger in the Niger Delta region. For example, critics of the PIA claim the 3 percent contribution to HCDDTF is insufficient and the 30 percent profit to the NNPC Ltd for the Frontier Basin Development Fund unfair. Suspicions in the South that the Frontier Basin Fund is a means of transferring resources to the North have been given credence by public statements by some Northern leaders. For example, the Group Managing Director of NNPC, a Northerner, recently stated that the North will benefit more from the law because “new crude oil deposits are being discovered in the region and the funds derivable from exploration would propel more discoveries in the North.” Such statements hurt efforts to arrive at a national consensus on oil and gas policy that is region neutral in its interpretation and that is in the interest of the country. There is, thus, a very serious challenge of building a national consensus for the law without which some of the objectives of the law may not be achieved (Kasirim, 2023).

Tensions over revenue sharing: The law has serious implications for the public finances of the federation and its constituent states and local government areas. First, the reduction in taxes and royalties will result in considerable reduction in revenues to the three tiers of government at a time they cannot afford it. Second, Nigeria’s revenue law requires that entities or enterprises owned by the federation remit their profits to a pool, the Federation Account, for sharing among the three tiers of government. Revenue from the Federation Account accounts for more than 80 percent of the revenues of many states and local governments. Therefore, the stipulation that 30 percent of NNPC Ltd.’s profits must be set aside for frontier exploration could cause a significant decrease in its contribution to the Federation Account. In the short term, revenues shared among the three tiers of government from the Federation Account will fall. Many states and local governments, especially those with very weak internal revenue-generation capacity will be unable to discharge their duties of providing essential social services to their citizens. Then again, such a change could lead to innovations at the state and local government levels to increase internal revenue-generating capacity and fiscal efficiency, such that the long-term effect of this policy could be positive (Kasirim, 2023).

Politics: Under the PIA, the president has the power to appoint members of the boards of the various institutions established by the act. Appointments to the boards of oil companies are watched keenly and could be a source of discontent among constituent parts of the country. To manage this discontent, it has become the norm (but is not the law) to have at least six positions in the board of federally owned companies and parastatals, reflecting the six geopolitical zones of the country. Unfortunately, the PIA does not create enough board positions for this condition to be met. Not increasing the number of board positions to manage out possible accusations of marginalization could be politically risky. Then again, expansion of board positions could raise the overhead of the boards and slow decision-making.

Key Findings

It was generally observed that all the five (5) littoral Local Government Areas of the state complained that the 500 meters buffer from the shoreline as stipulated by the PIA Act 2022 is grossly inadequate to address the devastation impacted on the littoral host communities by oil exploration activities. The state is therefore requesting that the buffer zone should be increased to at least two (2) Kilometers.

- There is serious difficulty in accessing some of the Littoral Host Communities due to the nature of the terrain.
- There is high insecurity along the coast line made it difficult for the Team to navigating to some of the Littoral Host Communities.
- The littoral host communities are not benefiting from the proceeds of the oil revenue.
- The petroleum industry act (PIA) has not been fully implemented to the last letter.
- There is lack of human capital development in the littoral host communities.
- Due to abandonment of the littoral host communities, youths in the area have resorted to crime thereby causing high level of insecurity in the creeks.
- Scholarship programmes (undergraduate and postgraduate) sponsored by Operators, Contractors and Project Promoters do not reflect the trends in manpower requirements in the oil and gas industry in the littoral host communities.
- Host communities remain unhappy with the PIA's provision that oil companies must allocate 3 percent of their annual operating expenditure in the immediately preceding calendar year to the HCDDTF; they had asked for 10 percent.

Conclusion/Recommendations

A persistent concern for host communities is the continued degradation of their environment and habitat from gas flaring associated with oil drilling. Nigeria has passed several laws to stop this with little effect. The PIA penalizes companies for gas flaring and provides that the revenues from the penalties will be used for environmental remediation and relief of the impacted host communities. However, the penalty must be steep enough to achieve its intended purpose. If it is not, oil companies will continue to flare gas if doing so minimizes their cost more than the penalty adds to it. The PIA is a missed but not lost opportunity to position Nigeria to face a future without oil or fossil fuels. Given the "exponential growth in renewable energy" over the past 20 years, Nigeria should invest more in renewables and new energy technologies. The stipulation that 30 percent of the profit of NNPC Ltd. should be used to fund frontier basin development to include renewable energy as a frontier is a good start. The best response to competition from other African fossil fuel producers is not increasing Nigeria's oil and gas reserves through the discovery of new reserves but increasing energy reserves. Nigeria does not need a Frontier Exploration Fund. Nigeria needs a science, technology and innovation (STI) fund, to develop new energy sources in the face of climate change and net-zero emissions targets.

Furthermore, now that most onshore oil wells are owned by indigenous oil companies, host communities are uncertain whether contribution will be even made. The previous owners of the oil wells were foreign companies, meaning that there were two sets of laws Nigerian and those of the home country to apply pressure for legal compliance. Now, with domestic ownership of most onshore oil wells, the risk of noncompliance with host community contributions is high, especially since, in Nigeria, the risk of political and regulatory capture of the new industry governance institutions is high, the judiciary is weak, and court decisions are seldom enforced. The domination of onshore oil activities by indigenous companies raises legitimate fears that no contributions will be made to the HCDDTF, which

means that host communities will remain underdeveloped. Related, a particularly sticky provision of the law is the stipulation of punishment for host communities for acts of vandalism of oil assets committed in their domain. This provision imposes collective punishment on host communities for acts of vandalism that they may not have committed and could raise constitutional and legal problems for the PIA.

The following recommendations are proffered by the study:

- All provisions of the PIA should be implemented to the last letter and should be followed up.
- There should be an extension of “Nigerian Content incentives” for companies that setup business in host Communities in the following categories: manufacturing, logistics base, fabrication and training. Incentives should include First Consideration in Bids and allowance of 10% premium price during commercial bid evaluation.
- More sensitization and enlightenment campaign should be undertaken at the grass root, in order not to misconstrue the good intention of Government by the host Communities.
- Adequate time should be allotted for field exercise of to expose the sufferings of the littoral host communities.
- The agitation of 10% proceeds from oil revenue by host communities should be implemented.

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YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND VIOLENT CRIMES IN ABUA/ODUAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The study examined youth unemployment and violent crimes in Abua/Odual Local Government Area, Rivers State. The study adopted the anomie/strain theory which attempt to provide the prospective on discrepancies between societal cherished goals and the institutionalized means of achieving such goals. The study adopted descriptive survey research design with population of 650,872.4 as the 2021 estimated Abua/Odual population. The study utilized Taro Yamane to determine the sample size of 400. The study adopted accidental and quota sampling techniques. Data was retrieved using questionnaire. Simple percentage was used to analyze both socio-demographic data and research questions. Results showed that youth unemployment is responsible for armed robbery, kidnaping and cultism in Abua/Odual local government area of Rivers state. The study therefore, recommends that Youths should avoid violent crime like kidnaping, armed robbery and cultism to embrace hard work so as be self-employed.

Keywords: Youth unemployment, Violent Crimes, Anomie Theory.

Introduction

Youth unemployment is not only a critical concern for African countries or Nigeria alone, it has gradually but consistently become a global phenomenon that creates unease for virtually every country. Alda (2011) maintained that, despite efforts in tackling unemployment, verifiable evidence suggest that youths worldwide unemployment figures is constantly rising. And the social implication to a nation is continuous increase in crime. Youth unemployment and violent crimes especially murder, arm robbery, kidnapping and pipe line vandalism etc. are unimpeachably, the most worrisome social issues wrestling against the harmony and impoverishment of numerous countries particularly Nigeria. At the point when individuals especially, youths are denied the opportunities to really explore their innovative, potentialities and vitality to boost up the economy and social request, the vitality would be wrongly used to affect social order, thereby jeopardizing and endangering the normative.

Unfortunately, this is more serious in Nigeria for her burgeoning youthful population, and the exacerbated situation of unemployment that is monotonously turning the youths to engage in various forms of social menace. According to the National Bureau of Statistics cited in Onuchuku (2016). More than 50% of youths in Nigeria are jobless, creating earning opportunities and employment – related prospects for young people to partake in, has never been an easy task in Africa (Hemslin, 2008). No wonder there have been rise in the instances, in which young graduates were arrested for involving in one form of crime or the other.

Measurably, the National Population Commission (NPC) uncovered that the 140 million individuals chronicled from the census of 2006, the inhabitants in Nigeria is put at 20 million, and a noteworthy size of its population are under 30 years (United Nations, 2019).

Franka (2012), the poor conditions of life in the rural areas generally the result of wrong policies, which Abua/Odual is not excluded as the case of this research work. Poor planning and misallocation of resources couple with misappropriation of funds has resulted to an unbelievable waste of huge chums of the country's human resources. Oruh, (2004) believes that it is not unexpected that a society at a lower trend of development tends to experience an upsurge in the rate of violent crimes such as armed robbery, political motivated killing, used of illegal weapon and possession.

Bello (2003), is of the view that criminality is part and parcel of human nature and society, that is why no society can claim to be completely free of crime. But noteworthy, the types of criminal behaviour tend to follow the pattern of social and economic development of a given society. It is therefore not barbaric to state emphatically that a society with a low level of development tends to experience an upsurge in the rate of violent crime such as armed robbery, kidnapping, political

motivated killing etc. the use of illegal weapon, ethnic and religious clashes and its like. Notwithstanding, the present pattern of youth joblessness and the remarkable dimension of violent crime desolating the nation and Abua/Odual Local Government Area especially is an eloquent attestation that no noteworthy effect has been recorded in endeavours by progressive government to limit or annihilate youth joblessness and violent crime in Nigeria.

Consequently, as appalling as the marvels of youth unemployment and violent crime right now show up, very few studies have been achieved on the nexus between the two social wonders in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State. It is therefore the focal undertaking of this study to explore the connection between youth unemployment and violent crime in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Lately, criminality in Rivers State in general and in Abua/Odual Local Government Area in particular where violent crime for example capturing, inter-cult rivalry, arm robbery, oil pipeline vandalism persists. This situation is additionally amplified by the disappointing, disparaging, and mortifying knowledge of rising youth joblessness especially in the locale. A few intelligent people have built up the nexus between youth joblessness and adolescents support in culpability in the nation. For example, Nwigo, et al. (2016), saw that unemployment was fingered as one of the key propellers of social indecencies including outfitted burglary, desperation, prostitution, political thuggery, grabbing, hostage taking and significantly more. The fear of crime especially violent crime like kidnapping, inter-cult rivalry, oil pipeline vandalism and arm robbery among the abounding jobless young people have represent a gigantic different to the fulfilment of peace and security of lives and property in Abua/Odual Local Government Area. In light of the swelling dimension of youth joblessness occasioned by lacking expertise upgrade and subsidizing of pioneering ventures, prominent debasement, and nepotism have made most adolescent to accuse their predicament for an unfeeling society that does appear to think about them. This negative inclination moves them to violently challenge business as usual in order to gain a living, subsequently establishing a considerable danger to society.

Anthony, (2019) in his study on youth's unemployment and crime in Nigeria: A nexus and implications for national development' asserts that various countries across the globe in varying degrees as it affects policies and development. Any nation striving towards development must reduce the frequency of crime to the barest minimum. In recent years in Nigeria, there has been an upsurge in the frequency of crime committed. This has led to palpable fear among the populace as security of lives and properties can no longer be guaranteed. The phenomenon of crime has impacted negatively on the economic, social and political life of the nation over time. The youth population of any nation represents the driving force for development. However, for the youths to become useful resources, they must be gainfully employed. The paper argues that criminal activities such as armed robbery, kidnapping, political thuggery, militancy and other social vices found among the unemployed and jobless youths have contributed greatly to the slow pace of development in Nigeria.

Expectedly, successive administration has made a few endeavours to capture the ceaseless ascending of these twin social wrongs - youth joblessness and vicious violent crime - yet they remain unabated. As serious as these issues seem to be in Abua/Odual Local Government Area. very few researchers have inquired about the connection between youth unemployment or criminality on the area's economy. Therefore, this investigation looks to explicitly built up the correlation between youth unemployment and violent crime in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria.

Hence, the underlisted contributes to some of the problems that bordered youth unemployment and violent crime:

- i. How does youth joblessness impact armed robbery in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State?
- ii. How does youth unemployment lead to kidnaping in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State?
- iii. In what ways does youth unemployment buttress on cultism in Abua/Odual Local Government Area?

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to how examine youth unemployment leads to violent crime in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State. The following specific objectives are formulated to aid our investigations.

- i. To investigate how youth joblessness impacts on armed robbery in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State.
- ii. To examined how youth unemployment leads to kidnaping in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State.
- iii. To investigate the ways youth unemployment buttresses on cultism in Abua/Odual Local Government Area.

Literature Review

Unemployment in Nigeria: Youth unemployment is general wonder whereby energetic and qualified youthful workforce of the state is denied in the support of the nation (Uddin, 2013). Okafor (2011) contend that, it is not just a genuine economy issue yet additionally has suggestions that influence practically all nations and all individuals either straightforwardly or in a roundabout way youth joblessness, concisely put clarifies the general population who needs occupations.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2010) reports that the nation's youngsters' populace was assessed at 30 million, speaking to 60 percent of all the out populace of the nation and out of which 64 million adolescent are jobless while 1.6 million are underemployed furthermore, ongoing report by NBS (2017) uncovered that the joblessness rate in Nigeria went up 18.8 percent Q3 2017 from 13.9 percent recorded in Q3 of 2016. Making the most elevated jobless rate since 2009. Every year, the joblessness level raised by 4.9 rate focuses while quarter-on-quarter. It bounced by 2.6 rate focuses, as joblessness level was 16.2 percent in the second quarter of 2017.

The joblessness level was at its top in the urban region as it recorded 3.04 rate focuses develops from 20.36 percent in Q2 2017 to 23.4 percent in Q3 2017. As underemployment in down town areas remain at 0.2 rate focuses from 8.8 percent in Q2 2017 from 26.4 percent in the past quarter. Complete jobless and underemployed male residents went up to 15.9 million in Q3 2017 from 14.5 million in Q2 2017. While the female expanded to 18.1 million in Q3 2017 from 16.6 million recorded in Q2 of same year (NBS, 2017).

Nigeria Unemployment Rate

Year	Unemployment Rate (%)	Annual Change (%)
1991	3.71%	0.04%
1992	3.75%	0.04%
1993	3.81%	0.06%
1994	3.83%	0.02%
1995	3.83%	0.00%
1996	3.83%	0.00%
1997	3.83%	0.00%
1998	3.83%	0.00%
1999	3.85%	0.02%
2000	3.83%	-0.02%
2001	3.82%	-0.01%
2002	3.85%	0.03%
2003	3.84%	-0.01%
2004	3.81%	-0.03%
2005	3.77%	-0.04%
2006	3.69%	-0.08%
2007	3.62%	-0.07%
2008	3.59%	-0.03%
2009	3.75%	0.16%
2010	3.77%	0.02%
2011	3.77%	0.00%

Year	Unemployment Rate (%)	Annual Change (%)
2012	3.74%	-0.03%
2013	3.70%	-0.04%
2014	4.56%	0.86%
2015	4.31%	-0.25%
2016	7.06%	2.75%
2017	8.39%	1.33%
2018	8.45%	0.06%
2019	8.53%	0.08%
2020	9.01%	0.48%

Source: National Bureau of Statistics Unemployment Rate, 1991-2020

In line with its statutory mandate to provide government and policymakers with reliable and timely information, the National Bureau of Statistics routinely computes and disseminates the labour force statistics. These statistics presented in this report are generated from a nationwide socio-economic survey, which sampled thirty-three thousand three hundred households across the country, both in urban and rural areas. Under this exercise, indicators such as the economically active population, labour force, unemployment and underemployment rates were computed to inform the work of policymakers and government. The last Unemployment survey conducted was in the 2nd quarter of 2020, which produced an unemployment rate of 27.1% and an underemployment rate of 28.6%. Following the success of the Telephone-based Abridged Labour Force Survey (LFS) under Covid-19, Quarter 2 (Q2) 2020, preparations continued to ensure the continuity of the production of this important economic indicator to provide much needed information on the level of employment and unemployment in the country. Following the lifting of movement restrictions by government in the q4 2020, in line with set Covid-19 guidelines and protocols for interactions, NBS conducted this round of the survey using the usual face-to-face interview for data collection. The results of the survey are hereby presented in this report.

Adenuga (2020) in his study ‘Youth Unemployment and Violent Crime: Evidence from Developing Countries in Africa’ examined the link between youth unemployment and violent crime, as available data sourced from 2006-2016 for ten developing countries in Africa (Botswana, Morocco, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Zambia). Analysis of the data is done using the Panel Corrected Standard Error Approach. This study found that youth unemployment and population increase violent crime. But income per capita and employment in agriculture reduce violent crime. The result suggests to the policy makers to invest in agriculture, as it is capable to provide income-employment to the large youth population. This serves as discouragement tool to engage in violent crime, thereby reducing violent crime in the region.

John (2020), studied Youth Unemployment: The Cause of Ethnic Conflict and Criminal Activities in Takum Local Government Area of Taraba State Nigeria. This research work examined youth unemployment: the cause of ethnic conflict and criminal activities in Takum LGA of Taraba state, Nigeria. Unemployment to a large extent remains Nigeria’s socio-economic and political problem. Historically, unemployment situation in the country was heightened by the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). Cross-sectional research design was used for this; both primary and secondary sources of data collection were employed for the success of the research work. Simple percentages were applied on a cross-sectional data of 120 sampled unemployed youths randomly selected from Takum local government area in 2016. The study revealed that lack of employment opportunities stimulates young people to engage in ethnic conflict and criminal activities such as theft, arm robbery, kidnapping etc., in order to survive and earn material success. The study recommends that government should create more jobs opportunities and industries so that unemployed youths can be absorbed in order to meet their immediate needs, as this will drastically curtail ethnic conflict and criminal activities by the unemployed youth in the study area.

Ogunbameru (2004)’s ‘Organizational dynamics’ saw that a great many people work to acquire a living, to profit and to present a feeling of accomplishment. At the end of the day, being utilized particularly in an entrepreneur society where riches is celebrated makes one satisfied, upbeat, regarded, needed and required, while being jobless gains one disgrace, offensiveness, sadness and harshness.

Garba (2019) in *Violent Crime and Unemployment in Nigeria: An ARDL Bound Test Cointegration* examined whether there is a long-run relationship existing between crime rates and unemployment in Nigeria for the period 2004 to 2016. The autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) bounds testing approach was used to determine the cointegration between unemployment and crime rates. The results show that unemployment and crime (murder, armed robbery, robbery, assaults, sexual offense, and cultism) are cointegrated. The empirical findings show that the unemployment rate and violent crime, such as; armed robbery, robbery-murder, assaults, sex violence, and cultism is all cointegrated. The long-run coefficients results indicated that the unemployment rate has a positive and significant effect on murder, sex violence, assaults, and cultism.

Ogbebor (2012) in his study 'Youth violence in contemporary Nigeria society: A psychological approach' contends that property wrongdoing is brought about by long haul or changeless joblessness. Chamlin and Cochran imaging that joblessness is just fit for creating property wrongdoing, yet Ogbebor (2012) kept up, that youth joblessness is emphatically identified with criminal harm and outfitted burglary while grown-up joblessness is connected to robbery. Notwithstanding, an examination by Iwarimie-Jaja (1994) referred to in Iwarimie-Jaja (2012) of 56 professional burglars serving term for theft in a medium security jail in Port Harcourt (Port Harcourt Correctional Centre) reported that 75 percent of them were jobless at the time they were sentenced for their present offense.

Ololo and Meisaman (2007) in their study on 'The effects of poverty on youth criminality in Imo State' contended that the base of urban brutality has been credited to the misfortune of customary structures, expressing that the end of the civil war in 1970 saw the rise and across the board utilization of guns in theft. Also, the utilization of guns offered impulse for furnished burglary and expanded fierce demonstration of guiltiness. Okiro (2005) agreed that the acceleration of brutal violations in Nigeria is ascribed to the multiplication of arms and ammo in the hands of private people. It is noteworthy that Igbo and Okiro failed to acknowledge, for a moment, that most savage wrongdoings like grabbing, assault and even some homicide cases are not done with guns, and guns are just helpful in the hands of the inert, the denied and individuals who are financially battered and broken because of joblessness.

Propelling this view, Ademola and Olajubutu (2009) in 'Spinning of an entrepreneurship culture among Nigerian university students: Prospect and challenges' contended that joblessness has been recognised as one of the significant reasons for social indecencies including furnished theft, desperation, prostitution, political thuggery, grabbing and some more. Adebayo (2013) additionally uncovered that the substantial number of young people who are jobless is fit for undermining majority rule practice as they established a genuine risk whenever connected by the political class for furtive and crimes (Adepegba, 2011; Ibrahim, 2011; Lartey, 2011; Otatunji & Abroye, 2011; Okafor, 2011). These researchers posited that young joblessness all alone can't cause fierce wrongdoing except if the jobless adolescent is locked in by the political class in crimes. They neglected values that most occasions jobless young people have their groups of thugs shaped as of now, for business while the political class just goes to employ their administrations.

As indicated by Nwigo (2016) 'Youth unemployment and crime rate in the Niger Delta: A comparative analysis of its intensity in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Rivers', normal youth joblessness in 2012 was 46.5 percent up from 35.2 percent in 2010. Accessible figures showed high youth contribution in wrongdoing; for instance, in 2008, 92.5 percent of indicted detainees were matured 16 – 35 years.

Longe (2016), in 'Youth-Unemployment and Criminality in Nigeria', investigated the public perception of the relationship between youth unemployment and criminality in Nigeria. Questionnaire was administered to participants which comprised 1,200 members of diverse groups drawn from three major cities; Enugu, Ibadan and Kaduna in three main ethno-geographical regions of the country using simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The finding established a significant causal link between youth unemployment and criminality in Nigeria. The study also found that a combination of multiple factors was responsible for the vast youth unemployment situation which has raised the spectre of serious and street crimes in the country. The culminating effects on the affected unemployed youths were social disgrace, labelling and loss of self-esteem which devoured their moral characters thereby creating impaired safety and security in the society. The study concluded that youth unemployment was not only an individual problem but also a societal malfeasance which portend a real danger and threat to the socio-economic stability of the country.

Anthony (2019), in a study on 'Youths' unemployment and crime in Nigeria: A nexus and implications for national development', averred that crime is a phenomenon that is bedeviling various countries across the globe in varying degrees as it affects policies and development. Any nation striving towards development must reduce the frequency of crime to the barest minimum. In recent years in Nigeria, there has been an upsurge in the frequency of crime committed. This has led to palpable fear among the populace as security of lives and properties can no longer be guaranteed. The phenomenon of crime has impacted negatively on the economic, social and political life of the nation over time. The youth population of any nation represents the driving force for development. However, for the youths to become useful resources, they must be gainfully employed. The youths are also the most volatile when their energies are misdirected or channelled into wrong endeavours. Available data show that youth employment is very rampant in Nigeria and this has contributed immensely to their involvement in criminal activities. The paper argues that criminal activities such as armed robbery, kidnapping, political thuggery, militancy and other social vices found among the unemployed and jobless youths have contributed greatly to the slow pace of development in Nigeria. The paper proffers that addressing youths' unemployment will stem the tide of crime and foster rapid development in Nigeria.

Ebele, (2015) examined the implications of youth unemployment and violent crimes on the economic growth of Nigeria. From a sample of 272 randomly selected from the population of identified business owners and members of the National Council of Youth in Anambra State Nigeria the study found that there exists a significant relationship between youth unemployment and violent crimes in Nigeria. The study also found a strong relationship between youth unemployment and violent crimes in Nigeria. It concluded that youth unemployment negatively affects economic growth in Nigeria due to high increase in violent crime such as, kidnapping, robbery, thuggery and terrorism which hinders business investment and economic growth. Based on the findings, the study recommends that government should support unemployed youth with incentives such as unemployment benefit as it is done in developed nation like America, Europe and Asia. Finally, government should make entrepreneurship education compulsory at all levels of education and monitor its implementation to ensure that both the trainees and the instructors are complying with the laid down policy and budget plan.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the anomie/strain theory which attempt to provide the prospective on discrepancies between societal cherished goals and the institutionalized means of achieving such goals. According to Merton as cited in Akikibofori (2018), there are two elements of social and cultural structure. Merton observed that there is a major contradiction between cultural goals and social structures. He calls this contradiction "Anomie" a concept first introduced by Durkheim. Merton posit that societal cherished goals which includes achieving wealth is deemed possible for all citizen even though the social structures limit the legitimate means of achieving such goals. Merton (Akikibofori, 2018) submitted that deviant performance are not brought into existence by headstrong bent affectionate experiences; they happen as designed feedback to a break of the values and norms of the society.

It is therefore fitting to apply the Strain/Anomie theory to connect the growing rate of youth unemployment and violent crimes in Nigeria. Countries that annually produces thousands of university graduates without corresponding employment opportunities may face the problems of frustration among the unemployed graduates. Undoubtedly, there is always a hope and great expectation when young persons are admitted into higher institutions of learning. These feelings of hope empower the students to endure the stress and withstand all the challenges meted to him or her in the process, so as to acquire a degree hopeful of eventual employment after graduation. But the hope is thwarted and the high expectation is quashed and sudden feelings of regret and frustration after some years of joblessness instigated by bad government and lack of good political will by those in the helms of affairs of the country. As the persistence of frustration and feeling of deprivation of what was expected increases, there is that possibility that the individual or the people can resort to illegitimate means to actualize their evergreen expectation.

The teeming unemployed youths of Nigeria view the business of oil-pipeline vandalism, ransom-driven kidnapping, armed robbery, etc. as lucrative. In addition, criminal networks and cynical politicians are tapping on the vulnerable state of unemployed youths by recruiting them to perpetrate violence. However, contrary to Robert King Merton assumption that "the discrepancy between what

people think they deserve and what they get triggers rebellion” there are hedonistic offenders who derive pleasure in committing crime, and those who involve in such crimes are those that are mentally retarded. In other words, violence is not an only exclusive reserved for those with shattered expectation.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was used for this study with a population of 650,872.4 (2021 estimated population of Abua/Odual by National Population Commission, 2021). The study sample was 400 as derived using Taro Yamane formula.

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

Where

- n = sample size sought
- N = Total population
- I = Constant
- e = Signifies the margin error

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

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Therefore } n &= \frac{650,872.4}{1+650,872.4(0.05)^2} \\ &= \frac{650,872.4}{1+650,872.4 (0.0025)} \\ &= \frac{650,872.4}{1+(1627.181)} \\ &= \frac{650,872.4}{1628.181} \\ &= 399.75 = 400 \end{aligned}$$

Hence the sample size is 400.

The study made use of accidental sampling techniques on the basis of reaching out to respondents. The police, civil servant and unemployed youths supplied all the needed characteristic of the group, and to allow different suggestion on conditions surrounding the twin ills of youth unemployment and violent crime. The quota sampling was then applied to ascertain the number of respondents from each of the 13 wards in Abua/Odual Local Government. Thirty (30) participant were selected from 9 wards while ward one (1) Ogbo Abuan and ward eight (8) Okpeden had thirty-five (35) respondents each due to their higher population and dominance of violent crime.

Table 1: Names and Number of Wards in Abua/Odual Local Government Area

S/N	Name of Ward	Ward	Respondents
1.	Ogbo Abuan	Ward One (1)	35
2.	Ogbo Abuan	Ward Two (2)	30
3.	Ogbo Abuan	Ward Three (3)	30
4.	Ogbo Abuan	Ward Four (4)	30
5.	Emughan	Ward Five (5)	30
6.	Emughan	Ward Six (6)	30
7.	Otapha	Ward Seven (7)	30
8.	Okpeden	Ward Eight (8)	35
9.	Adada	Ward Nine (9)	30
10.	Emelego	Ward Ten (10)	30
11.	Kugbo	Ward Eleven (11)	30
12.	Akani	Ward Twelve (12)	30
13.	Anyu	Ward Thirteen (13)	30
	Total		400

The study used both primary and secondary information. Questionnaire was used for the collection of primary data with the use of research assistants and the secondary sources were collected from published write-up, books etc. Simple percentage was used for analysis of research questions. The formula for percentage is shown as.

$$\% = f/N \times 100/1$$

Where f = frequency of respondent's response

N = Total Number of responses of the sample

100 = Consistency in the percentage of respondents for each item contained in questions.

Evaluation of Research Questions

Research Question 1: How does youth joblessness impact armed robbery in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 2: How youth joblessness impact on armed robbery in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State

S/N	Item	SA	% of SA	A	% of A	D	% of D	SD	% of SD	Total	Total %	Remark
1	Youth joblessness has the potential to push young adults into armed robbery	80	20.4%	262	66.8%	40	10.2	10	2.6	392	100%	Agreed
2	Youth joblessness increases the number of people in armed robbery gangs	92	23.5%	250	63.8%	36	9.2	14	3.5	392	100%	Agreed
3	Due to joblessness, some youths settled for robbery	94	23.9%	236	60.2%	45	11.5	17	4.4	392	100%	Agreed
4	Youth joblessness is the rationale behind crime	98	25%	116	29.6%	90	22.9	88	22.5	392	100%	Agreed
5	Youth joblessness has impacted negatively to armed robbery	80	20.4%	262	66.8%	40	10.2	10	2.6%	392	100%	Agreed

Source: Researcher's Field Work Data (2023).

Research Question 2: How does youth unemployment lead to kidnaping in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 3: How youth unemployment leads to kidnaping in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State

S/N	Item	SA	% of SA	A	% of A	D	% of D	SD	% of SD	Total	Total %	Remark
6	Due to lack of jobs, most youths venture into kidnaping to make illegal incomes	98	25%	247	63.1%	27	6.8%	20	5.1%	392	100%	Agreed
7	As a result of unemployment for the youths, most youths have carried arms to victimize and vandalize others by kidnaping	96	24.5%	249	63.5%	22	5.6%	25	6.4%	392	100%	Agreed

S/N	Item	SA	%of SA	A	% of A	D	%of D	SD	%of SD	Total	Total %	Remark
8	Youth unemployment has made most youths to abandon their values for quick money processes through kidnapping	95	24.2%	250	65.8%	18	4.6%	29	7.4%	392	100%	Agreed
9	As a result of youth unemployment, kidnapping is on the increase	110	28.2%	255	68.9%	28	7.1%	19	4.8%	392	100%	Agreed
10	Youth unemployment triggered the youths to engage in kidnapping	109	28%	256	69%	28	7.1%	19	4.8%	392	100%	Agreed
	Remark											Agreed

Source: Researcher's Field Work Data (2023).

Research Question 3: In what ways does youth unemployment buttress on cultism in Abua/Odual Local Government Area?

Table 4: Ways youth unemployment buttresses on cultism in Abua/Odual Local Government Area

S/N	Item	SA	%of SA	A	% of A	D	%of D	SD	%of SD	Total	Total %	Remark
11	Youth unemployment is the brain behind cultism	90	22.9%	255	68.1%	24	6.2%	23	5.8%	392	100%	Agreed
12	Unemployed youths have time to engage in cult related activities	112	28.5%	218	53.6%	42	10.7%	20	5.1%	392	100%	Agreed
13	Lack of employment for the youths instigates the youths to venture into cultism	95	24.4%	200	51.1%	57	14.5%	40	10.2%	392	100%	Agreed
14	Joblessness among the youths have greatly affected them to go into cultism	112	28.5%	218	53.6%	42	10.7%	20	5.1%	392	100%	Agreed
15	Cultism is been practiced by youths to be engaged in the absence of jobs											Agreed
	Remark											Agreed

Source: Researcher's Field Work Data (2023).

Data Analysis

Analysis on how youth joblessness impact on armed robbery in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State. From the results, it was discovered that: Youth joblessness has the potential to push young adults into armed robbery; Youth joblessness increases the number of people in armed robbery gangs; Due to joblessness, some youths settled for robbery; Youth joblessness is the rationale behind crime and Youth joblessness has impacted negatively to armed robbery. These findings are in tandem with Feyisetan, (1991) who believes that the existence of a causal relation between unemployment and armed robbery has been a subject of some investigation in the past, in fact, citations in field (1990:10) as confirm in Coller (1993), reveal that such investigation dates as far back as the first century. For instance, Gurr (1975), found a significant positive relation between state level unemployment and the incidence of right- wing extremist armed robbery in Germany, (Fougere & Kramars, 2009:33), also gained support for the positive relation between unemployment and armed robbery using regional level data for 95 departments of metropolitan France. Similarly, Merlo (2009), using bounds test, found that, in the long run, strong economic performance real income per capital). Indeed have a positive impact on armed robbery. On the other hand, weak economic conditions have a negative impact on armed robbery.

Analysis on how youth unemployment leads to kidnaping in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State discovered that: Due to lack of jobs, most youths venture into kidnapping to make illegal incomes; As a result of unemployment for the youths, most youths have carried arms to victimize and vandalize others by kidnapping; Youth unemployment has made most youths to abandon their values for quick money processes through kidnapping; As a result of youth unemployment, kidnapping is on the increase and Youth unemployment triggered the youths to engage in kidnapping. These findings are related with Baharon and Habibullah's findings have significance for our present study on unemployment and violent crime such as armed robbery, kidnapping etc because it shows that unemployment has a positive impact on violent crime. Also (Edmark, 2003:18) examine the effect of unemployment violent crime such as kidnaping and found that unemployment had a positive effect on violent crime, however the connection between unemployment and aggregate kidnapping as an example of violent crime rate was found to be somewhat ambiguous.

Lastly, analysis on ways youth unemployment buttresses on cultism in Abua/Odual Local Government Area discovered that: Youth unemployment is the brain behind cultism; Unemployed youths have time to engage in cult related activities; Lack of employment for the youths instigates the youths to venture into cultism; Joblessness among the youths have greatly affected them to go into cultism and Cultism is been practiced by youths to be engaged in the absence of jobs. These findings are also related to the findings Baharon and Merlo (2009), examined the relationship between income, unemployment and cultism and armed robbery and found that armed robbery exhibits positive and significant relationship with income and unemployment for all categories of crimes especially cultism. They also discovered that armed robbery had a positive significant relationship with unemployment.

Conclusion/Recommendations

The study examined youth unemployment and violent crimes in Abua/Odual Local Government Area, Rivers State. Youth unemployment and violent crimes especially murder, arm robbery, kidnapping and pipe line vandalism etc. are unimpeachably, the most worrisome social issues wrestling against the harmony and impoverishment of numerous countries particularly Nigeria. Based on the findings and the gaps that this study has closed in terms of knowledge, the following contributions to scholarship have been recorded. This study has not been done in Abua/Odual local government by any other scholar previously, thus, this study has contributed to knowledge in terms of geographical scope. The findings of this study have also contributed to knowledge. Thus, the following recommendations are made in accordance with the findings of the study.

- Government should provide adequate jobs for the youths in order to curb the menace of violent crime in Abua/Odual Local Government Area, Rivers State.
- Youths should avoid violent crime like kidnapping, armed robbery and cultism to embrace hard work so as be self-employed.
- Non-Governmental Organizations, Religious bodies and well-meaning Nigerians should always teach the youths to be productive to themselves and should avoid violent crimes.

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ARTISANAL REFINING AND THE COLLAPSE OF TRADITIONAL RELIGION: THE EXPERIENCE OF RURAL COMMUNITIES IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The primary focus of the widespread impact of artisanal refining on traditional religion in the rural communities of Rivers State is crucial. The analysis of the ensuing implications of the already damaged environment in the Niger Delta, particularly in relation to the traditional religion and the denigration of religious and cultural beliefs of the indigenous people in the rural villages of Rivers State, is warranted. Past research has found that fundamentalist Christians are much more concerned about global environmental problems than other religious belief system mainly because of their ardent faith on God Almighty as the creator of the universe, this finding upheld the claim that religiosity can also inspire an enhanced commitment to environmental stewardship. As a result of this, we focus on the impact of small-scale crude oil refining activities on the traditional religious and cultural beliefs of the rural communities in Rivers State, ultimately causing their complete downfall. The study further enhanced the analytical methodology used to investigate the subject matter by employing the tools of logical reasoning and critical assessment commonly utilized by historical sociologists. This aspect of research primarily focuses on the rural communities in the Rivers States of the Niger Delta. The study concludes that the decline of traditional religious and cultural beliefs among native people can be attributed not only to the introduction of Christianity, but also to the significant impact of environmental degradation caused by multinational oil exploration and subsequent artisanal refining activities. Consequently, the study proposed the implementation of more sophisticated methods for handling waste generated from processed crude oil, as it is increasingly evident that these illicit practices cannot be completely eradicated.

Keywords: Artisanal refining, traditional religion, belief system, environmental degradation.

Introduction

Almost half a century ago, prominent historian Lynn White spoke at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a topic widely discussed, on the role of religion in environmental movement. Given by White in 1967, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis" was a controversial lecture. It was later published as an essay in Science. White contended that environmental attitudes are negatively impacted by the Judeo-Christian belief system, specifically its promotion of an anthropocentric, "dominion over nature" worldview. The fact that people's level of religiosity determines the nature of the connection between religious beliefs, environmental attitudes, and the degree to which they identify with certain activities within their sphere of influence is well-known. Because of the shared belief that God Almighty created and owns the universe, Christians and other members of Christian denominations often display extreme environmental concern. Religiosity obviously modifies the connection between environmental attitudes and religious affiliation for people who identify with certain religious traditions. As a rule, people who are very religious, such as Christians, are more likely to take an environmentally conscious stance than those who are not.

These characteristics let us analyse if and how Indigenous and Christian traditions shape these interactions, as well as to distinguish between and within traditional views about environmental attitudes. This is due to the fact that the local climate and topography often have a significant impact on the Christian and non-Christian faiths practiced by the local populace. For example, the majority of

Rivers State residents who live near rivers or the shore believe in the presence of sea spirits. These are the places where oil companies wreak havoc for their gas collection operations, revealing the human cost on a regular basis. The reason for this is because petrol, a petroleum product, or hydrocarbons must undergo a transformation from crude oil to various byproducts throughout the distillation process in order to be useable by customers. In most cases, the rules that authorise these types of industrial endeavours also include provisions for reducing or managing the negative effects on the environment. On the other hand, some indigenous people in and around Rivers State's coastal communities have found a way to refine petroleum products using local technology that circumvents the law and helps close the gap between production and consumption (Akeredolu & Sonibare, 2015). By heating distilleries containing crude oil over an open fire, this approach employs a straightforward, locally sourced distillation technology to create refined commodities. The refined petroleum products include diesel, kerosene, and petrol. The process makes use of a wide variety of locally produced and manufactured items, including: pipes, rubber hose, dried wood, storage facilities, fuel woods, pumping machines, Cotonou boats, and drilling equipment. The company operates with remarkable efficiency due to the small number of individuals engaged. The processing capability and the entrepreneur's skill level determine the least starting expenses. It doesn't cost much to set up, works effectively, and is simple to use the refinery. Asuru and Amadi (2016) state that the low entry barrier to entry makes it an attractive business opportunity for private investors in the area. As an example, private investors have taken advantage of the Niger Delta's cheap labour and plentiful raw materials to establish over 20,000 artisanal refineries (Akeredolu & Sonibare, 2015). A common practice among artisanal petroleum refineries is illicit bunkering, which comprises piercing a crude oil flow line with holes and inserting taps to extract the oil.

Most rural communities in the Niger Delta area, particularly those around the rivers of Rivers State, are increasingly facing the societal challenge of artisanal refining. The axis of Rivers State's streams and shrubs are the best places to find this. A large quantity of trash from refining ends up in waterways and on land, and even less of it ends up polluting the air we breathe when it evaporates (Obenade & Amangabara, 2014). The environment's biotic and abiotic substances are also threatened by these wastes. The heating and processing of crude oil is a major source of air pollution. Health problems and higher social responsibility costs may result from operators' and nearby residents' continual exposure to toxic hydrocarbons, whether in liquid or gaseous form (WHO, 2016; 2018; Pier & Massimo 2017; Dean et al., 2019; HEI, 2019). Many distilleries still use traditional methods of heating their stills, which use open flames and crude oil poured into a dug pit underneath the oven. This process releases heavy smokes and smells into the air as a consequence of the oil burning away. On top of that, the federal government has already destroyed the activities by setting fire to the structures (Nigeria Navy, 2015). The presence of hydrocarbon compounds, which are major sources of photochemical oxidants, is posing a threat to human and environmental health, particularly in highly technological metropolitan areas (Mohamed et al., 2002; Sonibare et al., 2007; Oladimeji et al., 2015). In their study on the effects of illicit crude oil refining on the Niger Delta vegetation, Asimiea and Omokhua (2013) found that the activities had a negative effect on biodiversity, the forest's aesthetics, plant regeneration, wildlife habitat destruction, water cycle disruption, and medicinal plant species loss. Similarly, a Water Quality Index score of 1 showed that the water is terrible in the Okrika and Ogu-Bolo regions of River State in the Niger Delta, where Nwakwoala et al. (2017) investigated the effects of artisanal crude refining on soil and water quality. In their study on the effects of artisanal refining on soil microorganisms in Ke, Rivers State, Douglas and Cornelius (2019) found that this practice consistently contaminates soils, reducing microbial populations and diversity. This, in turn, threatens ecosystems and the health of animals and humans through the food chain.

When asked about the effects of artisanal crude refining, the Nigerian National Response Commission (2014) said that all unlawful refining operations cause significant environmental harm. The most noticeable symptoms are oily river water, a shiny film of oil on the water's surface, and the presence of oily debris along the riverbanks. High concentrations of hydrocarbons in the environment degrade water and soil quality (Johnson et al, 2003). Communities around rivers in Rivers State continue to have alarmingly high levels of criterion air pollutants, which pose serious risks to human health and the environment. According to Cape (2003), environmental criteria pollutants may harm plant reproductive processes and cause DNA damage, decreased lung function, and respiratory diseases in humans. Additionally, Johnson et al (2003) noted that hydrocarbons degrade aquatic habitats and cause

acid rain, which in turn degrades water quality. The likelihood of diffusion means that these impacts may spread from their site of genesis to sizes on a regional or even global basis (Mitra & Sharma, 2002). This is due to the fact that, in most cases, a region's natural setting dictates the long-held religious practices of its indigenous inhabitants. A good example of this is the widespread belief in the presence of forest and sea spirits among the Andoni, Ibani, Ogoni, Okrika, and Kalabari peoples who reside in riverine and hinterland regions. Consequently, it is clear that the natural environment that provided inspiration for many of their ancient religious beliefs - including animism, totemism, pantheism, metempsychosis, and transmigration - is deteriorating, rendering these beliefs outdated.

The plain truth is that this is happening because the riverside vegetation and the flora around the illegal refining company camps are both dying. Those who practise traditional faiths in riverine areas have had their religious practices and worship impacted by the loss of flora and fauna as well as contaminants in the waterways. Many riverine societies hold rivers and woods in high regard as holy elements in their cultural traditions. The degradation or contamination of religious or holy sites and objects of worship, such as sacred streams, rivers, wicked forests, and shrines of the gods, by players of artisanal crude refining has led to the abandonment of most traditional religious beliefs, ceremonies, and rituals. Because of environmental degradation from artisanal crude refining, it is difficult to find certain trees that housed the ancestral spirits of the people, as well as animals that functioned as totems and mediums for the traditions of metempsychosis and soul transmigration. The artisanal refining business's imposition of this incidental conflict has sparked the spread and conversion of many devout traditionalists and adherents of Christian religious cults. Timeliness is of the essence in this inquiry. This study delves into the effects of artisanal refining on the population's attitudes in areas where the process takes place. Despite numerous studies and comments on the effects of this industry on the physical environment, none have examined how it contributes to the erosion of indigenous cultural beliefs and the subsequent strengthening of Christianity. In particular, the research aims to compare the religious observance and attitude shifts of people living in regions with a history of artisanal refining with those of people living in similar places now. This paper's methodology, including its results and conclusions, was based on an analytical approach to research.

Environmental Concern and the Role of Religion

Humans and their natural environments have an inextricable bond that benefits both parties. To survive, people rely on the environment just as much as they rely on themselves. Man and his natural environment have a complex interaction. While he is subject to and regulated by some natural events and controls, he also exerts dominion over several physical and biological systems on Earth. Odum (2004) claims that the connection has changed throughout the years. The early humans who lived on Earth got along well with nature. The reason for this was their firm conviction that the natural world both mirrored and facilitated communication between humanity and the divine. They downplayed the potential monetary and material benefits of nature and instead highlighted the potential spiritual ones. However, since the scientific revolution, individuals have prioritised the material, industrial, and financial benefits of nature above its spiritual ones. This might be the cause of the worldwide environmental disaster, even if some Western scholars could disagree. Many people felt that the widespread belief in one's right to use the earth and its resources for one's own gain stemmed from the instrumental rationality that emerged during the Industrial Revolution. This attitude towards nature had its origins in religious influences that reached back to the Middle Ages and had an exploitative effect on Western culture. While the research did provide some historical context, its primary contribution was to our understanding of the ecological disaster that hit the world in the middle of the twentieth century. The modern environmental movement, for instance, was gathering momentum when White's argument ignited a contentious debate over the role of religion in environmental issues.

A counterargument that has persisted throughout history is the teachings of Christianity, which urge its adherents to treat the earth with reverence and stewardship (White, 1967). Environmental stewardship is based on the idea that God has given people the responsibility to protect God's creation and the natural world (Tarakeshwar et al., 2001; Wilkinson 2012). Some religious organisations may have embraced this stewardship ethic, based on anecdotal evidence. In the 1970s, for example, organisations such as the World Council of Churches began providing funds for programmes that educated the public about the environment (Fowler 1996). The objective was to increase eco-awareness among religious groups. Additionally, a large number of African scholars have investigated the

connections between traditional African faiths and eco-friendly practices. The freedom of the gods and goddesses to reside in whatever place they like - the ground, trees, rocks, streams, or ponds—is a fundamental tenet of traditional African religion (Rim-Rukeh et al., 2013). According to Attuquayefio and Gyampoh (2010), before modern environmental conservation methods emerged, traditional Africans used a complex system of religious and cultural beliefs to govern and oversee their natural resources. Included in this complex network were totems, closing seasons, myths, taboos, and conventions. A few examples of indigenous peoples' approaches to water resource protection are the Kalabari, Okrika, Andoni, and Igbani (including the Opobo and Bonny) and the remainder of the Ijaw peoples.

In addition to using these waterways for food and shelter, the indigenous people also believed that many gods called these waterways home. Consequently, even though Christianity has spread to most of these regions, many of these groups still have festivals that honour water spirits. In contrast, eco-spirituality discourse revolves on the concept of a spiritual bond between humans and the environment. This connection has nothing to do with proof of the existence of a supernatural being or religious belief. Beyond Christian apologetics, now we can talk about how religion views the human-nature interaction through the lens of religion's significant role in conservation and environmental preservation. According to several experts, traditional religions throughout the world have all played a part in protecting the environment, but in their own unique ways. After decades of disinterest, religion has recently emerged as a force for environmental protection. Nature is central to many (traditional) religious ideas, asserts Sachdeva (2016). Symbolically and pragmatically, it helps people endure harsh environments and have a spiritual experience. To back up this allegation, Dwivedi (1993) states that many religions throughout the world believe that it is unjust, immoral, and unethical to take advantage of nature for personal gain.

Religion and Artisanal Refining in Rural Communities of Rivers State: The Expectation

The coastal rural villages of Rivers State, Nigeria have recently made headlines due to environmental disputes caused by oil drilling. These conflicts have affected both huge enterprises and small-scale refineries. One of the reasons it is known as a biodiversity hotspot is because of its tropical rain forest, marshes, mangroves, and many of plants and animals (John & Nnadozie, 2021). Among the many ecological and economic services provided by mangrove ecosystems are protection from coastal erosion, water filtration, breeding grounds for fish and prawns, building materials, medicinal ingredients, and tourist attraction (Kuenzer et al., 2011). These indigenous resources were vital to the agricultural and fishing livelihoods of the bulk of the people. The traditional method of refining crude petroleum into refined products such as diesel, fuel and kerosene is known as bush burning, cooking or *Kpofire* in the local language (Ikanone, 2014). There is a symbiotic relationship between pipeline vandalism and oil bunkering and artisanal crude refining. As a result of these interrelated activities, environmental disputes and pollution in Rivers State and the larger Niger Delta have intensified, according to all parties concerned. Artisanal oil refining, according to the actors, is a means by which the inhabitants of the Niger Delta cope with their social and economic marginalisation. People are losing their livelihoods due to the environmental disaster, but keep in mind that legal oil exploration is worse for the environment than artisanal crude processing.

The general population of Nigeria has strong feelings on environmental disputes and climate change policy. There are a lot of variables that influence how people categorise their beliefs, such as their socioeconomic and political status and the circumstances in which they find themselves. In this article, we argue that people's religious beliefs may shape their perspectives on environmental issues and climate change policy. Smith (2013) cites research from the United States and Europe that found that religious affiliation is a significant factor in climate change policy and message. According to Posas (2007), who analysed the teachings of nine major religions on subjects such as other-person centeredness and environmental stewardship, religious groups like Bahá'í, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity should be able to teach their followers to support policies that combat climate change. As White (1967) contends, the dominion mindset - which he links to a Christian worldview—explains the current state of environmental devastation. This concept of domination has its roots in Genesis 1:26. "Come, let us mould humanity to reflect our likeness and image. "Then they will be kings over all the living things," God said. This includes the birds of the sky and the fish of the sea, as well as the cattle and all the wild animals.

A number of American studies have demonstrated that this perspective manifests as a conservative Christianity effect, whereby people who believe the Bible literally are less worried about environmental problems and more sure of their power to influence the results (Hand & van Liere, 1984, Guth et al., 1995). This effect plays a significant role in determining the overall level of climate change denial and the perceived necessity of legislation. Dwivedi (1993) adds that many faiths throughout the globe consider it unjust, sinful, and unethical to use natural resources for one's own benefit. For example, those who do not believe in the divinity of Christ would consider this sacrilegious since they hold the belief that every life has the inherent value and dignity of its own kind. Even those who do not believe in Jesus Christ should try their best to live in harmony with nature and not destroy it for personal gain. The fact that adherents of these religions are complicit in illegal oil refining while being unable to find a solution that aligns with their principles is glaringly clear.

Artisanal Refining and the Corresponding Impact on Religious Beliefs in Rural Communities of Rivers State

By bringing together Christian, political, socio-demographic, and environmental viewpoints, Sherkat and Ellison (2007) hoped to unite the many empirical investigations on the topic. Using structural equation modelling with data from surveys conducted in the United States, the researchers attempted to quantify the impact of various beliefs and socio-demographic factors on environmental orientation. A high level of education and a belief in the gravity of the problem were positively correlated with environmental activism on both the political and private levels, while political conservatism, biblical inerrancy (in the context of activism specifically), conservative Protestantism, and rurality were negatively correlated. In accordance with what Sherkat and Ellison discovered (2007, p. 78):

Future studies investigating the connections between religious factors and a host of other political concerns would benefit from adapting a more comprehensive view of religious influences, and attending to nuances of political beliefs and connections.

The impact of traditional African cosmology and worldviews on environmental ethics and behaviour is intriguing (Asadu & Nzuanke, 2014). The cultural and religious customs of Rivers State's rural inhabitants bear witness to this. Traditional religious beliefs, culture, ethics, politics, and economics did not seem to distinguish the rural inhabitants of Rivers State from one another until the modern age. Natural factors also had a significant role in shaping their religious practices and cultural practices. Crude oil drilling and the subsequent bastardization of the artisanal refining sector in the region have disrupted the peace that once existed between the indigenous people of Rivers State's rural communities and the natural environment. Traditional methods of preserving the environment in this part of the state are under jeopardy due to the effects of artisanal oil refineries on the surrounding ecology. According to Appiah-Opoku (2007), traditional groups in tropical parts of Africa, South America, and Asia have used various resource management strategies since the dawn of recorded history. In order to control and preserve certain resources, old societies developed intricate theological and philosophical systems (Attuquayefio & Gyampoh, 2010). Among these systems were conservation initiatives, myths, taboos, limited seasons, and totems. Some of the various beliefs held by these individuals include metempsychosis, soul transmigration, and reincarnation. Despite their intended purpose of bringing people closer to nature, Western parks, zoos, and nature preserves often have the opposite effect. Traditional African religious beliefs and the environment are linked. There is a crucial connection among the entities in African ontology, despite the fact that there are hierarchies of beings (God, deities, ancestors, people, animals, and plants). Furthermore, unlike Western environmental ethics, which classifies living things according to their intrinsic or instrumental worth, African environmental ethics does not follow this framework.

Gods and goddesses may reside on any plot of land, stream, pond, tree, or rock that the traditional Niger Deltans deem fit, according to their pantheistic view of nature. The native people of the Niger Delta area of Nigeria have a rich history of paying respects to sacred environmental occurrences. Even if most people living in Rivers State and other riverine states now disagree, the original people who lived in the rural parts of the state were quite religious. The Ijaw are of the belief that several spirits oversee the universe due to the manifestation of powers, similar to other indigenous African ethnic groups. These ghosts, in the eyes of the Ijaw, are impersonal energies that take on human

traits. They are non-physical beings that reside only in one's thoughts (Mangiri & Kquofi 2014). The vast majority of the Niger Delta's riverine inhabitants hold this kind of paranormal belief in high regard. It seems logical that the riverine settlements of the Niger Delta would name their rivers and lakes after deities. This helps with the preservation of lakes in regions where artisanal refining has caused their decimation.

Because of the damage that occurs during artisanal refining, traditional communities have undervalued lake fishing (Oviedo et al., 2013). Elders in these communities say that fishing in holy lakes requires a number of rites and observances tied to traditional beliefs. The presumption here is that the fertility of the lakes and the offerings made by their priests dictate the standard of the produce that comes out of them. What really got people talking, however, was how the industrial activities of artisanal crude refining impacted the religious traditions outlined earlier among the rural population of Rivers State. Woods are a common location for artisanal refineries, as stated before in the research. But you should know that reptiles commonly call these woods home. The ecological degradation that has accelerated the demise of these reptiles has its roots in artisanal crude refineries. Because of the significant roles these animals played in the creation myths and historical events of Rivers State, some of its citizens consider them totemic. Crude oil leaks have reportedly covered most of the mangrove and swamp environments that were formerly home to these reptiles. Not only does the litter devastate these animals' natural habitats, but the actors also often clear a considerable area to put up their equipment. The method entails moving the reptiles to a different place.

Also, we earlier speculated that some people in rural Rivers State believed in goddesses or water spirits and blamed them for the bumper fish harvests that happen during fishing seasons. Now the tables have turned; many sacred rivers in the Niger Delta, especially in the state of Rivers, have been poisoned by unregulated artisanal crude refinery operators. Because they were formerly sacred habitats for certain aquatic species, these rivers are now subject to cultural and religious restrictions that limit human use of their resources. Artisanal crude refinery actors are degrading these rivers, rendering this theory outmoded. The cutting down of trees in some forests is another major problem with hand-crafted refinement. Because people of all different ethnic backgrounds in Rivers State believed in the existence of spirits, the state's rural communities were able to keep more of their native flora and fauna intact. But now things are different since fuel wood and space for artisanal crude refinery activities have necessitated the felling of some of these sacred trees and woodlands. Rumour has it that the trees here have symbolic carvings of water spirits or gods, and that some of the shrines dedicated to the priests even include statues of these same deities.

Conclusion/ Recommendations

The artisanal crude refining method has not only helped reduce the widespread unemployment in the aforementioned locations, but it has also eased the lack of crude products in the riverine area of Rivers State and the Niger Delta region. Christian belief was able to gain power because artisanal refining caused social problems and the denigration of traditional religion. Even though artisanal crude refining actors have contributed to host communities' development by providing social amenities like classroom buildings, boreholes, and power, the environmental damage has greatly outweighed the supposed advantages, according to some scholars. Significantly, environmental deterioration in rural regions of Rivers State caused by artisanal crude refineries has hindered the cultural and religious rituals of some indigenous peoples. Finding a greener method to refine these basic materials is a top priority, according to this study. Another reason we need a better system for dealing with refined crude oil waste is that these illegal enterprises are becoming more and harder to halt. The article continues by stating that if artisanal crude refinery owners in Rivers State do not adhere to national environmental rules, the indigenous people of the state will completely lose their identity. This assertion relies heavily on cultural and religious belief systems, which provide light on interpersonal dynamics and allow us to objectively describe shared and unique traits across social categories.

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RITUALS OF CHIEFTAINCY INSTALLATION IN OPOBO KINGDOM AND THE INFLUENCE OF CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

This study is an analysis the chieftaincy installation rituals in Opobo Kingdom. It specifically look at the leadership pertain in Opobo Kingdom, the rituals and ritual officers involved in chieftaincy installations in Opobo. The study also looked at the influence of modernity on chieftaincy installations and the associated rituals. To achieve this, the study laid a ground work by given a working definition of both leadership and chieftaincy installation. Literatures on chieftaincy and chieftaincy installation rituals were review, using the modernity theory as a tool of analysis. The study therefore concluded that, despite the influence of modernity on the rituals of chieftaincy installations in Opobo Kingdom, the age long practice has remained largely unchanged, however, the practice of Christian religion has had some influence on the rituals of chieftaincy installations in Opobo Kingdom. The study therefore recommended a proper documentation of all the process, procedures and rituals of chieftaincy installation as a way of shielding and preserving them against the influence of modernity.

Introduction

In the African societies before the advent of colonialism and socio-economic and political integrations with Europe, the structure of leadership is designed in such a way that the chief is at the apex of the leadership structure. At the earliest stage, the selection of a chief in an African society was based on blood relationship with the progenitor of such tribe, community or kingdom. However, with the advent of time, the selection process became skewed in favour of those who have the ability to provide leadership and for the performances of all the required rituals that are necessary and needful for the effective worship of the supreme deity in accordance with the African traditional religious worship system.

Thus, leadership became an important and aspect of every traditional African society. Leaders in the African society plays an important role in the attainment of communal goals by creating an environment that would influence the attitudes of residents, and motivate their behaviours to contribute voluntarily to the realization and attainment of the objective and communal goals (Choioldlury, 2014).

Leadership is all about taking ownership and accountability with the sole purpose of achieving the stated objective by applying all the needed and available resources, while ensuring a cohesive organization where an individual who possess exceptional abilities influences the community to achieve its common objective. The place of leadership in the quest for development in a given society cannot be over emphasized, therefore, traditional political system practitioners rely on its as one of its core areas to drive the much-needed development and stability in their domain.

To this end, traditional politics practitioners and adherent have set a very high qualification and selection criteria and standards for would be chiefs especially in Opobo with its attendant ritualistic initiation practices that proceed the actual installation. This is to ensure that one possesses the requisite leadership qualities and charisma and also a repertoire of the knowledge of customs and tradition of the people before attaining the headship of a War Canoe House, especially in the face of the constant

battering of the second wave of assault by European influence in the guise of religion on traditional political system.

Chieftaincy installation rituals in Opobo dates back to at least five hundred years when Opobo was still part of Bonny Kingdom (Ibanise) when the major functions of a House Chief was the codification of customary laws, arrangement of ceremonies, festivals and religious rituals and the settlement of disputes arising from socio-economic activities (Eremie, 2018).

Chieftaincy installation process includes all the procedures a person must go through to either institute a new War Canoe House (Chieftaincy House) or to occupy the position of a War Canoe House Chief. The climax of Chieftaincy Installation is the coronation ceremony. The event which is one of the biggest community event in a traditional African society, especially in the city states of the eastern delta communities is only second to the burial ceremony of a War Canoe chief in glitz, glamour and traditional rituals (Opusunju, 2021; Diri, 2022).

Statement of the Problem

The Christian religion which was first introduced in Bonny by King William Dappa Pepple in 1863 upon his return from England where he was exiled for over six years, and later to Opobo by Chief Oko Epele in 1873 when he opted to join the King Jaja alliance after the signing of the peace treaty between Bonny and Opobo. Christianity however is not the only phenomenon that have had enormous influence on the rituals of Chieftaincy installations in Opobo, the vicious attempt at foisting democratic ethos on the time revered traditional political system in Opobo Kingdom had eroded much of the ritualistic aspects of chieftaincy installation over the years.

Opobo Kingdom, founded in December 1869 and officially declared independent on 25th December 1870 was as a result of conflicts of interest within the Perekule Royal House of Bonny (Alagoa & Fombo, 1972). The Kingdom founded by King Jaja and his co-liberators who left Bonny is governed based on a traditional political structure known as Ama-Ngekirifaghja or the fourteen section House system.

Over the years, the institutionalization of new War Canoe Houses has brought the number of Chieftaincy Houses in Opobo to sixty seven (67). Because it is a taboo in Opobo Kingdom for free born children to participate in pulling of their father in a Canoe regatta during ceremonial gigs to establish a new War Canoe House, the abrogation of the House Rule Ordinance which encouraged domestic slavery 1915 has also seen to the cessation of the creation and launching of new War Canoe House in Opobo.

Taking into account the influence of modernity that is fast eroding the roots of tradition and cultural practices in Africa, this study seeks to analyze the rituals of chieftaincy installation in Opobo Kingdom and ascertain the influence of modern changes on the rituals of chieftaincy installation in Opobo Kingdom.

Literature

Chieftaincy installation is the process through which a person is coroneted as a chief. It is that process and procedure one must have to be taken through to assume the leadership role of a War Canoe House in any of the city states and kingdom of the eastern Delta (BBC New 2013). Chieftaincy installation also mean the *stooling* of a person to the position of leadership of a chieftaincy House in any of or all of the kingdoms of Opobo, Bonny, Nembe, Okrika, Kalabari, Bille, Andoni, and Nkoro (Diri, 2022).

Oguonu, (2007) discussed the role of the traditional political institutions in conflicts management. Using the Ijaw/Itsekiri conflicts as basis, he explained how the tussle of chieftaincy coronation and succession usually degenerate into armed conflict. The analysis of the Ijaw/Itsekiri conflict will help us understand the chieftaincy installation and chieftaincy tussles especially in Opobo Kingdom.

Dike, (1956) in his book, "Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1803-1885" tried to correct the misconceptions of earlier writers on the Eastern Delta City States. Dike was able to give account of the internal chieftaincy politics in Bonny that gave birth to Opobo Kingdom after the withdrawal of Jaja and his collaborators in 1869.

Nlerum (2015) noted that land and especially chieftaincy coronation disputes are a threat to national security. His work examined chieftaincy installation and coronation disputes, stating several

factors that led to chieftaincy disputes including the political importance attached to chieftaincy institution, the issues of succession and the selection of successor.

The installation of a new chief in Opobo Kingdom is inundated with a plethora of ritual activities. It is often preceded by the second burial ceremony of the last chief of the House. The rituals of second burial is climaxed by the Alapu dance procession led by the Amanyanabo or his appointed chief. The crowning of the second burial ritual is the dinner banquet in honour of the late chief at the Wari-Gula (Palace Hall) of the War Canoe House, culminating in the Efere-ba ritual (Breaking of plates) usually done by the eldest chief by age who exits the dinner banquet hall last, signifying the severance of relationship between the living and the dead. The broken pieces of the plates are taken and buried at the site of the late chief's grave amidst incantations and libation (Ogolo & Diri, 2024).

Presentation and Analysis of Chieftaincy Installation Rituals

The installation of a new chief in Opobo kingdom is usually preceded by the second burial of the last chief of the house. The second burial is climaxed by dance procession of the Opobo council of chiefs led by the Amanyanabo of Opobo or his appointee, Dinner banquet in honour of the late chief at the Wari-Gula (Palace Hall) of the House after which the Efereba ritual (Breaking of Plates) is done by the eldest Chief, signifying the severance of relationship between the living and the dead. The broken pieces of the plates are taken to the burial site of the late Chief and buried at the foot of the amidst some incantations and libation.

Process of Chieftaincy Installation in Opobo Kingdom

The Alabo Palibo or the most senior seniobo of the House (by gburusu ranking or by date of investiture) summons a meeting of all seniapu to inform them of the existence of vacancy in the chieftaincy stool of the War Canoe House. Where such meeting is summoned by the Alabo-palibo, his office also ceases to exist as soon as the members of the meeting converge. The Alabo Palibo is only elected as a deputy chief to a particular chief therefore upon the demise of that chief his deputyship (Alabo Palibo) also ceases to function in that capacity. At the meeting chaired by the most senior seniobo of the House, the burial rites of passage of the late chief is discussed and a call for the nomination of a new chief and head of the House is also proposed.

Before the burial of the late chief, a chief elect must first be elected from amongst the members of the House. Where the candidate elected for the position of a new chief is not yet a Seniobo of the House, the chief-elect must as of necessity be inducted into the council of seniapu before the burial of the late chief. Upon his election/induction into the Seniapu Council, the new chief elect take over as the leader of the House and conduct the burial rites of the late chief on the advice of the Seniapu Council.

Ekere and Ngelenge Fari

As part of the requirements for the establishment of a War Canoe House in Opobo Kingdom, every House must own a set of wooden musical instrument (Sonoma Ekere) one bangi (agama), and a xylophone (Ngelenge) as well as Akusa (bass drum). These instruments of music which are sacred are kept at the Dua Bie of the House, only to be brought down for use during special occasions like chieftaincy installations and during the burial of a chief. Other occasions when these instruments can be used are war time or special gig regatta in honour of an illustrious son of the House or community.

After a set of rituals by the Sanipu making of Ora manu (a simple dry fish, palm oil and ikika salad) armed with a bottle of gin from which libation are made, the Seniapu Council led by the chief elect, the Wari-Asawo Sibidabo is ordered to bring down and set up the Ekere and Ngelenge at their different locations. Once these instruments of music are set a canon shot would go off signifying the beginning of Ekere and Ngelenge Fari and the beginning of the chieftaincy coronation ceremony.

Saigbani

While the Ngelenge and Ekere fari continued, the Seniapu Council, the Orualabo and the Owu-ogbo Sibidabo converge at the Wari-Gula, after a series of libation, process to the Duabia to perform the Saigbani (welcoming/ initiation) ritual. The Saigbani ritual is considered as the real chieftaincy installation, because it is at this point that the chief elect is formally introduced (inducted/welcome) to the ancestor of the House to either accept or reject. This ritual is performance in the middle of the night at the sacred grove (Duabie) of the fore bearers of the War Canoe House. Where the War Canoe

House is not privileged to have either of Oru-alabo or Owu-Ogbo sibi-dabo, the eldest Senibo of the House by age performs the Saigbani ritual for the chieftaincy installation/coronation.



Fig 1: Duabie (Sacred Grove)

Chieftaincy Coronation Ceremony

On the next day after the Saigbani ritual, the coronation ceremony takes place in full public glare. Here all members of the War Canoe House, (male and female) and all guest are seated amidst the fun fair, rendition of the different genre of Ibani music, (Ngu nume, Eremina Ekpete and Okporo nume) masquerade display.

Amidst the intermittent sound of canon shots the chief elect is crowned either by the most senior senibo of the House, a pastor or the head chief of the Polo (section) were applicable. As the crown is placed on the head of the new chief, women cheer with the chorus of “Asama, sama, sine owu mapiri, owoeeee owuee”.

While all these goes on, Ekere fari and Egelenge fari continue, after the crowing, the new chief undertakes his first assignment by visiting the Dua bie, and answers to the War Canoe House name as its being sounded by the chief drummer on the Sonoma Ekere of the House.

Aru Tii

The climax of the chieftaincy installation in Opobo Kingdom is the Aru Tii, where a Canoe regatta or gig is staged in honour of the newly installed chief. A ceremonial gig, well fitted with about forty to fifty paddler (Aru Asawo) Ngele (xylophone) and Akusa (bass drum) Nge Ekere (wooden gong) and decorated with flags bearing the insignia of the War Canoe House, ferries the newly installed chief to Opuwariku (Amanyabo Palace) in Opobo town (i.e. in the case of a chief from any of the satellite communities) for induction into the Opobo Council of Alapu (Council of Chiefs). Where the Chief is from any of the War Canoe Houses within Opobo Town. The Canoe regatta take off from the Aru-wari of the War Canoe House, and bath at the Kpokpo Kiri waterfront (Ntugbu jojo) after a brief display along the Opobo river between the Strong face creek (Okolo mission) and not exceeding the Cookey creek (Okolo Cookey).

The Chief who disembarks at Ntugbu jojo, process with his people through Kpokpo Kiri to Opuwariku (Amanyabo’s Palace) and is received amidst cheers from the men and women of his War Canoe House by the Council of Alapu who are on hand to receive him. The Chief is then escorted by a

retinue of his people singing and dancing while parading with the flag of the War Canoe House to the palace of the Amanyanabo of Opobo where the Chief is now officially inducted into the Opobo Council of Chiefs, after which the chief is escorted back to his Opu Wari by his people.



Fig 2: Picture War Canoe House Ceremonial Gig

Note: The Deputy Chief (Alabo Palibo) does not join the Chief in the canoe regatta; otherwise he himself can also lay claim to being a chief. By Opobo Tradition, up until a Chief is ferried in a ceremonial gig, he is not considered to be a chief according to Opobo tradition.

Chieftaincy Installation Dinner

The last ceremony in the chieftaincy installation in Opobo Kingdom is the chieftaincy installation dinner. The dinner which is held a day after the formal induction of the newly installed chief into the Opobo Kingdom Council of Alapu (Chief Council) is usually held at the Wari Gula in the main Opu-wari (Palace) of the War Canoe House. Attendance at the dinner banquet is restricted to only the Chiefs of the sixty seven (67) War Canoe Houses in Opobo Kingdom.

Traditionally, foods to be presented at the chieftaincy dinner are usually being prepared with a He-Goat (note: All the parts of the goat must be presented to the chiefs for inspection before the commencement of the dinner banquet).

The following fish must also be used for the preparations of delicacies for the dinner (i) Agbara (Red Snapper), (ii) Ndah (Shrine nose), (iii) Alapu Nji or Ponmi (iv) Sika (Sting ray) (v) Singi (African saltwater cat fish) (vi) Erem (grouper), which must be prepared whole and presented to the chiefs for inspection before the commencement of the dinner ceremony. The chieftaincy installation dinner is served in three course meal, comprising of Ipopo (pounded yam and over ripped plantain mixed with red palm oil) and a very peppery soup to go with it. Gburu (yam) boiled with pepper soup and dried fish. Orosi (Rice) and goat meat stew. As well as assorted kinds of soups with eba and pounded yam.

Drinks of all kinds ranging from Gin, Brandy, Whisky, Red wine (sweet and sour) Palm wine, Beer and soft drinks. The drink must as of necessity include at least two bottles of original Gordon Gin which is the recognized drink for libation in Opobo Kingdom.

Although the food for the Chieftaincy Installation Dinner may have been prepared by women, the female gender are not allowed by law to serve at the Dinner table, neither are they to be seen around the vicinity of the Gula during the dinner.

Finally, despite all the efforts, time and resources put into the preparation for the dinner, the Chief Council, if they find any reason, can reject the food and the newly inducted Chief is obliged to repeat the Chieftaincy Installation Dinner before he will be allowed to take his seat at the Council of Alapu.

Thanksgiving Service

Due to the influence of Christianity, in recent times most chiefs after the traditional installation ceremony do resort to a thanksgiving service in a Christian church the next Sunday after the last traditional ceremony. In other cases, some chief elects opt for a Christian pastor or bishop perform the crowning function rather than the *oru alabo*, eldest *senibo* of the House or the head chief of the *Polo*

Ritual and Ritual Officers during Chieftaincy Installations in Opobo Kingdom

Chieftaincy installation processes in Opobo could be adjudged to be ritualistic by nature. This is basically because of the repetition of a set of actions and sequence of events that must be carried out during every chieftaincy installation in any War Canoe House in Opobo. The following are the ritual and ritual officers during chieftaincy installation in Opobo kingdom.

Efere-Ba: as stated above, the *Efereba* ritual precedes the actual chieftaincy installation. *Efereba* (breaking of plates) is a ritual that take place after the formal dinner in honour of the last chief preparatory to the installation of the new chief. Here the officer who performs the *Efereba* (breaking of plates) usually is the oldest chief in the council of chief. After the dinner, all the chiefs files out in a single from the dinner hall while the oldest chief who usually break the plates with his walking stick (staff of office) come out last after performing the ritual which signifies the severance of relationship between the dead and the living. After breaking the plates, the last chief in the dinner hall exists the hall without looking back. The pieces of broken plates (*Efere*) are swept, packed and buried at the foot of the grave of the dead chief in whose honour the dinner was held. (Source: Oral Interview; Orualabo Saturday Jack Tolofari, 2023).

Ekere and Ngelenge Fari

War Canoe Houses in Opobo Kingdom own a set of wooden gongs (*Sonoma Ekere*) and a xylophone (*Ngelenge*). These instruments of music are usually kept on the *Soroko* (a wooden elevated palate) inside the *Dua-bie*, and must be brought down before the commencement of the installation of a new chief. The ritual of bringing down these instruments is usually performed by the *Orualabo*, the *Woki* or *Owu-Ogbo Sibidabo*. In the absence of any of the of aforementioned traditional ritual officers. The *Asawo Sibidabo* of the War Canoe House is mandated to perform the duty of bringing down the instruments of music in the presence of the chief elect and the *seniaopu* council of the House..

The *Sonoma Ekere* and *Ngelenge* are a vital part of the War Canoe House regalia, without which it ceases to be recognized as a War Canoe House (Tolofari, 2023).

Saigbani

The *Saigbani* (entry ritual) is performed by the *Orualabo* or the eldest *Wari Senibo* of the House at the *Dua bie*. It is a way of informing the *Duaapu* (spirit beings) of the House that a new chief is about to be installed by the House. *Saigbani* therefore is more of an initiation into the spiritual fold of the War Canoe House, as the chief after installation becomes the link between the living and the dead (*Agbara na sobie na*).

Aru Tii

Arutii is a ceremonial gig paraded in honour of a new installed chief of a War House. Canoe regatta ritual is one of the most vital rites to be performed during a chieftaincy installation in Opobo. The failure to perform this ritual vitiates the installation because it is after the gig or canoe regatta that a newly installed chief of a War Canoe House can be formally inducted into the Opobo Council of Alapu (Council of Chiefs) during a special meeting session mainly for that purpose. The major actors in *Aru-tii* are the *Asawo* of the War Canoe House whose chief is being installed. The ritual officer during the *Aru-tii* is first and foremost the *Asawo Sibidabo* of the House, whose duty it is to initiate the action for the withdrawal of the ceremonial Canoe from the *Aru-wari* (Garrage) and the subsequent decoration of the ceremonial canoe in readiness for the gig/regatta.

The other ritual officer who performs some functions before the Aru-tii is the Orualabo or Woki, (whichever is applicable depending on the status of the War Canoe House in the Kingdom). The duty of this ritual officer (Orualabo) is to traditionally cleanse the ceremonial gig and all the paddler (Asawo) to avert any form of mishap during the Aru-tii. The cleansing process takes the form of libation at the river bank by the Orualabo with a bottle of Gordon gin in one hand and a bunch of Ogirish leafs on the other, with which he cleanses (Kparani) the physical bodies of all the paddlers after which they deep themselves in the river before boarding the canoe.

Alabo Suobo

Suobo is the formal welcoming and induction of a newly installed chief into the council of chiefs. (Alapu council). The ceremony is usually conducted by the Amanyamabo or the Chairman of the Alapu Council in the absence of the Amanyanabo. The ceremony which usually hold at Opuwariku (Amanyamabo Palace) is preceded by Aru-tii and a procession of women, youths and elders of the War Canoe House escorting the chief to the induction Hall singing, dancing and waving the flag of the War Canoe House.

After a brief introduction and libation by the Amanyanabo or his privy, the newly installed chief is invited to come in and take up his seat according to the ranking of his War Canoe House in the Opobo Council of Alapu. Not minding the position of the newly installed chief (a head chief of a polo or a chief of a sub War Canoe House), after his induction into the Council, he will have to take over from the last installed chief that was inducted before him as the divisor of the Alapu Council. His responsibility in the Council will include the sharing of drinks and food to other chiefs during every occasion or gathering of the members of the council of chiefs, a duty he must perform until he hands over to a successor, who will be inducted after him. (Alabo, S. Jaja, Oral Interview).

Chieftaincy Installation Dinner and Dance

There are two major dinners usually held for a chief according to Opobo custom and tradition. One is the chieftaincy installation dinner and the other the burial dinner of a late chief. The two major ritual officers during the chieftaincy installation dinner are the Amanyanabo of Opobo or the chairman of the council of chiefs and the last installed chief inducted into the council.

The dinner session is used as a ground to teach the new chief on how to serve during dinner and how to eat dinner as a chief. His duty as the divisor of the Chiefs Council actually begins immediately after the dinner held in his honour. Women and non-chiefs are expressly forbidden from the vicinity of the chieftaincy dinner hall. While the duty of the women ends in the kitchen after cooking the food, that of the non-chief male, preferably a senibo ends after placing the food and drinks on the table.

In Ibani tradition, there are three genres of music (i.e. Ngu nume, Okporo Nume and Eremina ekpete). Led by the Amanyanabo or the chairman of the council of Alapu, the chiefs will have to file out in a single line to dance to these three genres of music in commemoration of the chieftaincy installation. Most often, the chiefs would prefer the Ikpoki dance steps while performing the traditional chieftaincy installation dance.

Influence of Change

Over the years, changes have occurred in every facet of the society in Opobo Kingdom. The chieftaincy installation processes and procedures in Opobo had also received its own share of the changes that are prevalent in the society. Notable among the many changes that have occurred over the years with regards to chieftaincy installation in Opobo Kingdom is the issue of the crowing of the chief. Before the advent of Christianity, chiefs in Ibani clan are crowned by either the oldest Senibo of the House, the head chief of the polo in the case of a sub House or the Orualabo of the House or community as the case may be. With the rise in the influence of Christianity, so many chiefs during installation opt for a clergy (Pastor, Bishop, Reverend) to perform the crowning duty as against the original norm.

Secondly most War Canoe Houses now resort to organizing and attending a thanksgiving service in a church after a successful chieftaincy installation and coronation ceremony. This altogether is a new phenomenon which is influence by the drastic incursion of the Christian faith into the purveyor of the custom and tradition of the people of Opobo Kingdom.

Finally, some War Canoe House chiefs are aggressively fighting to replace the traditional libation at the Gulla or Dua-bie with Christian prayers, while others are advocating for the abolition of Dua-Bie. Most Houses now organizes yearly fasting and prayer session in the Gula of the House.

One major finding in the cause of this research is that, the female folks have no role to play in the chieftaincy installation process apart from cooking, singing and dancing. Another finding is that, the position of the deputy chief is only ceremonial and his offices ceases with the death of the substantive chief. The deputy chief cannot lay claim to the throne because, he was not ferried in the canoe regatta to Opuwariku.

Conclusion

The work concludes that despite the continued battering of the African culture and tradition by forces of change and alien influence, the process of chieftaincy installation has to a very large extent withstood the test of time.

Apart from the aspect of chiefs being crowned by a clergy, and the issues of thanksgiving services after the chieftaincy installation, the processes and procedure had remained the same since the founding of Opobo in 1869/1870 up until today, retaining most of its (Bonny) and Ijaw root with only minimal changes.

The study concludes also that, the traditional political system as practiced in Opobo since inception had aided to the development, especially as it relates to the peace that is being experienced in the Kingdom. However, that except aggressive steps are taken to safeguard the custom and tradition, the forces of change will with time erode every aspect of it.

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AN ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE OF 'OBIDIENT' MOVEMENT AND QUEST FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined 'Obidient' movement and quest for good governance in Nigeria in an analytical perspective. In any society where the elites, are faced with wide social inequality, mass poverty, unemployment and conspicuous waste of limited national resources, such an elite society is bound to be challenged, especially by the frustrated younger generation. Political pundits indicate that the 'Obidient' movement has become a symbol for broader resentment and opened the path for marginalized Nigerians to vent perceived bottled-up grievances against bad governance brought about by the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and the main opposition party, People's Democratic Party (PDP) administration. The aim of the study was to analyze how the quest for good governance in Nigeria could contribute to 'Obidient' movement named after the presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Peter Obi, a youth-driven group that leveraged on the polish public image of the former Governor of Anambra State, to create a 'third' alternative in the 2023 general poll. The study was guided by Relative Deprivation Theory which argues that a feeling of frustration resulting from deprivation can lead to protest. Data were collected from secondary sources using thematic analysis. It was revealed that 'Obidient' movement has reshaped Nigeria's political landscape by showing that the masses can make revolutionary impact at the polls. The study therefore, recommended among others that the Nigerian youths should sustain the ongoing political awakening by making Labour party to transcend from a normal Nigerian political party to a revolutionary political institution. This must be driven by mandates to cause a national transformation in the country.

Keywords: Good governance, marginalized, youth-driven, 'Obidient' movement, political awakening

Background

Nigeria has been in the news for developmental crisis since independence, but currently being referred to as the poverty capital of the world is unimaginable given her rich endowment in both human and material resources. Aside huge youth population, the country has nothing less than 43 natural resources (Emeh, 2022). Despite these resources, hunger, poverty, inequity, unemployment has continued to foster around her despite the promises of good governance from every political party and politicians.

In any society where the masses are faced with wide social inequality, mass poverty, unemployment and conspicuous waste of limited national resources, such a society is bound to be challenged, especially by frustrated younger generation. According to Okonta (2022), youths and older persons think the current leadership of the country has not performed well. The worsening economic conditions and bleak projections for the future have only fanned the flames. Youths are incensed by reports of high-level elites' corruption, galloping inflation, and unprecedented levels of unemployment. People have identified it and people want to lend a helping hand to ensure that Nigeria is salvaged in the 2023 presidential election.

The 2023 political season was shaped to be Nigeria's most defining moment in history, it may also be the country's most upsetting as large swaths of Nigeria's young people who make up over 70 percent of the population seem determined to take back their country from a rampaging political class under the leadership of Peter Obi, presidential candidate of the Labour Party (Okonta, 2022). This explains why many young people were majorly involved in the last-minute rush to register for the Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) as a means of carrying out their 'revolution' in 2023 (Esele, 2022).

The recent political awakening of the Nigerian youths can be likened to a miniature copy of the famous Arab Spring wave of pro-democracy protests and uprisings that took place in the Middle East and North Africa beginning in 2010 and 2011, challenging some of the region's entrenched authoritarian regimes (Nnanna, 2022). Not every country saw success in the protest

movement; however, the political and social impact of these popular uprisings remains significant today. Young Africans had been inspired by the Arab Spring and have staged several protests over the years expressing their political and economic grievances which were often met with violent crackdowns by their countries' security forces.

Nnanna (2022) further explained that in Nigeria, the youths had reacted in several ways to the decades of corrupt, incompetent and selfish governance weaponized poverty among the Nigerian *hoi polloi*. For instance, is the series of sporadic #EndSARS protests which started in response to police brutality, extortion, extra-judicial murders, summary detentions and general harassment of the youths and ordinary citizens. In October 2020, the #EndSARS protests took on a new dimension. Youths, mostly in their twenties and thirties, gathered in many cities to protest against the latest waves of police brutalities. They shouted "EndSARS", but underpinned in their agitation was a demand for better governance. Unfortunately, it was brought to a halt in bloody and fractured limbs at the Lekki Tollgate in Lagos.

The bottled anger of many of the country's youth over the bad state of the nation has found an outlet in this 'Obidient' movement. The new movement coincided with the eight months closure of educational institutions due to long strikes held by university lecturers, leaving many young people alienated and angry and the alarming rate of unemployment, especially among young people. Interestingly, young Nigerians are saying this is their chance to take back their country from bad governance by breaking out of the vicious cycle of failures, disunity, political instability, near economic ruin, even hunger and famine, and insecurity which the Constitution says is Job Number One of government (Punch, 2022).

Some studies have investigated the phenomenon of 'Obidient' movement in Nigeria since its emergence in 2022. For instance, Wehmeyer (2023) examined Peter Obi's 'Obidient' Movement and how it reshapes Nigeria's political landscape, emphasizing how its driven by social media; and it was discovered that the movement has brought a new trend into the polity, such as volunteerism, with many young men and women working without consideration of pay. Also, people that Obi has never met before have been donating offices for him across the country. Regardless of the outcome of the result of 2023 presidential election at the time of this study in which Peter Obi, was adjudged by Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC) to have lost although Obi had headed to court to challenge the results of the presidential poll on the claim that he won the election, Peter Obi has spiced up the political landscape and ushered Nigeria into a new political era, by building the interest of millions of young Nigerians into believing and participating in politics through the use of social media.

Again, Aziken (2022) asserts that 'Obidient' movement advocates for justice and fairness; Obi, being Igbo, represents the South-East's aspiration for the presidency. It was noted that since the re-emergence of democracy in 1999, the South-West and the North have had shots at the presidency as well as the South-South while the south-East has not been given such opportunity; it is argued that there is moral justification for presidency to shift to the south-East. Moreover, it was discovered that the 'Obidients' are not quite big players in the separatist agitations of the Indigenous People of Biafra rather they are agitating for nationwide unity. Thus, it is revealed that in the South-East, the movement is driven by a combination of political and ethnic factors.

Among these and several other existing studies that investigated the phenomenon of 'Obidient' movement, to my limited knowledge, there was no existing analytical study on 'Obidient' movement and quest for good governance in Nigeria. Thus, this study was a paradigm shift from other studies by critically examining how 'Obidient' movement can lead to good governance in Nigeria.

The aim of the study was to analyze how 'Obidient' movement could contribute to good governance in Nigeria. Therefore, the question is: How does 'Obidient' movement contribute to good governance in Nigeria?

Concept Clarification

'Obidient': 'Obidient', according to Chinedu, Ikechukwu and Ezugwu (2022) is a term coined from the name of Peter Obi, former governor of Anambra state to represent a people that have pledged allegiance to his presidential ambition.

Movement: A movement is a group of people who share the same beliefs, ideas, or aims (Collins Dictionary). It is often used interchangeably as social movement. social movement is a loosely organized but sustained campaign in support of a social goal, typically either the implementation or the

prevention of a change in society's structure or values. And social movements can occur on the local, national, or even global stage (Smelser, 2023).

'Obidient' Movement: The 'Obidient' Movement, named after the presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Peter Obi, is the ongoing youth-driven group that is determined to leverage on the polished public image of the former Governor of Anambra State, to create a third alternative in the 2023 general poll to the governing All Progressives Congress (APC) and the main opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP), perceived to have brought governance to its poorest state in Nigeria (Esele, 2022). The 'Obidient' movement has gone beyond Peter Obi as a person; he is just a symbol, representing millions of Nigerians dissatisfied with the existing status quo. It also stands for the renewal of the political class.

Governance: The concept of "governance" is not new. It is as old as human civilization. According to UN (2022), simply put "governance" means the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented).

Good governance: Good governance is the process of measuring how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources and guarantee the realization of human rights in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption and with due regard for the rule of law (Good Governance, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Relative Deprivation Theory. Relative Deprivation Theory stems from sociology and was developed in the 1930s. Both Garry Runciman and Ted Gurr are credited with developing the theory (Gurr, 1970 as cited in Crosselt, 2010). This theory states that the subjective sense of being deprived of certain needs or freedoms by a domestic or international governing body can result in feelings of frustration, and when individuals can no longer bear this misery or indignity, a rebellion ensues. When these feelings of frustration go unresolved through productive or legal means and are left to fester, they can manifest in acts of violence motivated by, but not always directed toward, the governing body.

Relative deprivation theory was initially very popular, but scholars later pointed out that frustration often does not lead to protest, as people can instead blame themselves for the deprivation they feel and thus not protest (Gurney & Tierney, 1982). Scholars who favour the theory point out that people will ordinarily not take part in social movements unless they feel deprived, even if many who do feel deprived do not take part (Snow & Oliver, 1995).

This theory is relevant to this study because it relates to the discontented state of young Nigerians over the degenerating state of the nation as a result of perceived bad governance by the major parties and are searching for alternatives to take their pound of flesh on the APC and PDP (Esele, 2022). An overwhelming majority of those participating in the movement are young Nigerians. The Nigerian youths are frustrated as they have been impoverished by massive unemployment and graduate unemployability. Few Nigerian young men are in a position to propose marriage to our young women. Large numbers of young women are getting old without getting married and settling down in their own homes as expected of them. The ruling class has stolen their joy and future. The young Nigerians see the 'Obidient' movement as a chance to take back their country.

Methodology

This study adopted desk research methodology. This method was considered appropriate for this study because the researcher collated and synthesized secondary data through journals, official documents, books, newspapers and the internet. The sourced secondary data was subjected to thematic analysis.

Historic Movements outside and within Nigeria: The Arab Spring and #EndSARS Protests

The name "Arab Spring" is a reference to the Revolutions of 1848—also known as the "People's Spring"—when political upheavals swept Europe. Ever since, "spring" has been used to describe movements toward democracy like Czechoslovakia's 1968 "Prague Spring." Western media began popularizing the term "Arab Spring" in 2011 (Oxford Reference, 2022).

The Arab Spring was a wave of pro-democracy protests and uprisings that took place in the Middle East and North Africa beginning in 2010 and 2011, challenging some of the region's

entrenched authoritarian regimes. According to James (2016), the wave began when protests in Tunisia and Egypt toppled their regimes in quick succession, inspiring similar attempts in other Arab countries. Not every country saw success in the protest movement, however, and demonstrators expressing their political and economic grievances were often met with violent crackdowns by their countries' security forces. However, the political and social impact of these popular uprisings remains significant today, years after many of them ended.

According to Nnanna (2022), something similar to Arab Spring but in a much more muted dimension is on here in Nigeria. Decades of corrupt, incompetent and selfish governance weaponized poverty among the Nigerian *hoi polloi*. The youths reacted in several ways. Some became the foot soldiers of the corrupt politicians; rigging elections for them, acting as their e-rats, becoming cultists, robbers, kidnappers, ritualists or prostitutes; taking up cybercrimes, fleeing abroad to hustle in search of a greener pasture, becoming musicians or comedians, burying their heads in Big Brother Naija and generally floating around like logs at sea. Then, the series of sporadic #EndSARS protests started in response to police brutality, extortion, extra-judicial murders, summary detentions and general harassment of the youths and ordinary citizens. In October 2020, the #EndSARS protests took on a new dimension. Youths, mostly in their twenties and thirties, gathered in many cities to protest against the latest waves of police brutalities. Unfortunately, it was brought to a halt in bloody and fractured limbs at the Lekki Tollgate in Lagos.

Like the #EndSARS, the 'Obidient' movement is largely driven by educated youths who have a very strong social media presence. The rejection of the system, which Atiku and Tinubu represent, coupled with the anti-government sentiments of the #EndSARS momentum according to Irede (2022) crystallized into a force for social change and a support base for Peter Obi.

'Obidient' Movement and Quest for Good Governance: The Nexus

A new people's movement is born in the country powered by our youths. The last two peoples' movements which brought about profound change in the country were the Zikist Movement in the late 1940s that paved the way for Independence in 1960 and the June 12 1993 Movement which ended military dictatorship in the country in 1999. Both movements were led primarily by Nigerian youths (Esele, 2022).

According to Chinedu et al. (2022), the 'Obidient' Nigerians believe that the current political class does not have what it takes to give the new Nigeria. Thus, they were out to correct whatever they thought was wrong with Nigeria by following the solution to the problem since provided by Chinua Achebe in his book, *the trouble with Nigeria* which states that it is the responsibility of the citizens to seek out the leaders with the competence and character and to also ensure that they create a level playing ground for those people to emerge.

At the beginning of the current race to 2023, the youths were simply not interested. They ignored the one-year period that the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, gave for people to register. They even abandoned 20 million already registered PVCs in INEC offices because according to Nnanna (2022), APC and the PDP did not present any viable pathway to the future for the youths. But the involvement of Peter Obi in the process, particularly his departure from the PDP to the Labour Party, became the touchstone for the Nigerian Youth Spring. Obi, one of the very best governors who have served this country from Anambra State, has captured the imagination of the youths across board desirous of good governance. They are pioneering a new political culture where party members contribute to politics in order to be able to force the leaders to perform in future (Nnanna, 2022).

By their actions and rhetoric, Nigerian youths seem ready to travel the road to correct whatever they thought was wrong with Nigeria once and for all. It was reported by Abidoye (2022) that the 'Obidients' marked Nigeria's 62nd Independence Anniversary with rallies and street marches in many cities across Nigeria. Although the candidate did not appear in any of the events, his supporters defied the elements and attempts by the authorities to restrict them in some places and poured out in thousands chanting the praise of the candidate and dancing in Nigerian pop music. In Lagos, despite an early morning downpour, the supporters gathered at Lekki, Surulere, Ikeja, and Festac Town for what the organizers called a #4MillionMarch4PeterObi. But they also made themselves seen in Kaduna, Bauchi, Uyo, Warri, Benin and other cities where they caused traffic gridlocks with their carnivals along major highways. Many supporters outside Nigeria also did their part as seen in Ghana, the United Kingdom,

and in America. Unfortunately, the Nigerian Electoral Act does not empower them to vote though they send huge diaspora remittances back home (Anyago, 2022).

It was interesting that the youths were not quite big players in the separatist agitations of the Indigenous People of Biafra and the Oduduwa Nation protagonists. They were focused on their intention to get Nigeria to run in a way that they will prosper as individuals, who will no longer have the wish or desire to migrate out of Nigeria. According to Esele (2022), the party is recruiting people into the movement. The general impression was that even if Obi did not win the presidency, he will be able to meet the required two-thirds majority to satisfy followers' "desire to teach the APC and PDP a lesson..." and that he made the desired impact.

The emergence of Obi as the presidential candidate of the Labour party (LP) at a convention held in Asaba in June 2022 has brought the party to limelight and a 'third force' to reckon with. According to the National Chairman of the LP, Julius Abure, expressed that it was encouraging that even before the presidential campaign started, the party which was once among the minor political parties started getting overwhelming support from many support groups and coalitions, cultural and diaspora groups, name them (Vanguard, 2022). Young people who are mostly casualties of failed PDP and APC administrations were adopting the cause with a fury that knows no name.

This political awakening drew the attention of many politicians even before the 2023 presidential election. Edo State governor, Godwin Obaseki, raised the alarm in his interview with Arise TV over the impact of the 'Obidient' movement and the effect on the ruling party and the PDP because of the level of disenchantment with the existing parties, "I'm sure in all our homes here, we have so many people now, who call themselves 'Obidients'. I don't know whether you have them in your house, just ask them, which party are you, they say 'Obidients'. They are not looking in the direction of PDP or APC, they are looking for alternatives". In addition, he warned the members of the party to sit up and wake up to the new challenge in town posed by the movement to the big political parties in the forthcoming general election (Anyago, 2022).

There were other factors besides the quest for good governance that has made Peter Obi's momentum to sweep across the states in the country like wildfire which has been found by other studies among which are:

Social Media

The emergence of social media has changed the way in which political communication takes place in the world over. The Obama presidential campaigns in 2008, which revolutionized interest in networked digital connectivity and political action, is an example of the political power of social media in our times today (Lumpa, 2016). Since then, the use of internet and social media has become a common feature in today's political communication and campaigns all over the world.

In the last few months, the social media space has been agog with the name of former Governor of Anambra State, Peter Obi on the lips of many Nigerians, majority of whom are youths below 30 years (Elijah, 2022). Going by engagements, Peter Obi is a force to reckon with and he is adjudged in certain quarters to have dominated the social media space. According to Kazeem (2022), in getting Obi the Presidency, the social media became the vehicle through which his supporters intended to achieve their aim. There were series of efforts by the youths to promote Obi's candidacy with jingles, billboards, and door-to-door campaigns. But what the youths, Obi's online soldiers unleashed on social media was beyond the ordinary. The Labour Party candidate consistently enjoyed Twitter trend with his much-touted 'Obi-dient' followership base who were adamant that he will emerge as Nigeria's next president, banking on a social media political structure and campaign.

During the 2021 elections in Zambia, social media networking undoubtedly contributed to shaping the opinion of a lot of voters, especially the youths, and increased their political awareness and consciousness as evidenced by the massive youths turn-out in the recent past elections (Lumpa, 2016). Also in Kenya, during the 2022 elections, the 55-year-old newly elected William Ruto used the vehicle of social media as an edge to succeed the incumbent following competitive elections and the first to win the presidency at first attempt (Olisah, 2022). Thus, it was believed that if the mentioned duo African politicians regarded as "social media candidate" can defeat the older politicians with "structure" in their different countries, then Obi could!

On several occasions, the opposition parties who were conspicuously glued to the old style of politics disregarded how powerful 'Obidients' could be. For instance, in an interview on September

2022, the then National Chairman of APC, Adams Oshiomhole (now Senator-elect at the time of this study), said 'Obidients' were just "4 persons tweeting in a room" (Okonta, 2022). This phrase has been used by 'Obidients' to mock opposition whenever they pulled out large crowds offline for Mr. Obi's campaign. Mr. Obi's candidacy has shown that politics has gone digital. Just as the local grassroots are important, digital grassroots are also vital.

Also, from the results of the just concluded general elections, it was clear that social media could influence the political space of any society, challenging the narrative that one needs to have 'structure' to pull massive support. Thus, if a candidate has strong support online, such a person is likely to have support offline. According to Okamgba (2023), some of the old politicians who underestimated the power of social media lost the elections. Some of these positions were lost to 'Obidients' Labour Party.

Justice and Fairness

Generally, in the South-East, according to investigation, the movement was driven by a combination of political and ethnic factors; the thought that Igbo aspiration for the presidency in 2023 was shortchanged by the PDP and APC and the fact that Obi, being Igbo, represented the South-East's aspiration for the presidency (Aziken, 2022). Also, it was argued that there was no moral justification for the north to be seeking to take another eight years rather it should go to the south. Moreover, there was strong opposition to the "Muslim-Muslim" ticket. According to Balami (2022), without a doubt, the Northern Muslims have held sway and enjoyed the full support of the Northern Christians from the inception of our nascent democratic existence. It was, therefore, unreasonable and unjust that when an opportunity for a Northern Christian to be given a chance, presented itself in the form of a running mate to the APC flag bearer, such a rare opportunity to reciprocate and heal open wounds, was missed in favour of disregard for the regional and nationwide unity we have continued to preach and demonstrate in our ways.

Impact of 'Obidient' Movement in 2023 General Elections

Getting committed and capable leadership depends on committed citizens, who exercise their civil rights by choosing credible and transparent individuals that can be held accountable (Onwe, 2023). It was the quality of leaders that citizens elect that will birth the good governance the people yearn for.

At the polls on February 25, 2023, the 'Obidients' who kickstarted the journey online came out en masse to cast their votes. However, Obi, 61, was adjudged by INEC to have lost the presidential election after having won twelve (12) states, including Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Lagos and other former strongholds of the two previously dominant parties with a total of 6,101,533 votes. INEC subsequently declared Bola Tinubu of the ruling APC winner of the contest with a slim margin against his opponents, having scored 8,794,726 votes ahead of Obi; and Atiku Abubakar of the PDP who scored 6,984,520 votes. His opponents had expressed their discontent and have gone to challenge the results in court. In his victory speech, Tinubu said that his rivals could rightfully challenge the results in court, but that the lapses in the election "were relatively few in number and were immaterial to affect the outcome of this election" (Rajvanshi, 2023).

According to Oyero (2023), although Obi had headed to court to challenge the results of the presidential poll on the claim that he won the election, citing the failure of the electoral umpire to transmit results electronically, widespread rigging and reports of violence and disruption at many polling units during the poll, many observers would argue that the just - concluded 2023 general elections was a fairly good start for the 'Obidient' family and a milestone for Labour party (LP) which was relatively obscure in the political arena before now but has gained unprecedented popularity within nine months prior to the 2023 presidential election with what has been described by many as the Peter Obi phenomenon. At the time of writing this paper, LP has won eight senatorial seats and 34 seats in the federal House of Representatives; the party has one governor and 68 state House of Assembly members in a historic precedent (Mbagwu, 2023). Labour might get more through reclaim mandate in court and in the supplementary elections.

This election was seen as Nigeria's most technologically advanced, with INEC deploying an electronic voter accreditation system and results-viewing portal that would enhance transparency and accessibility. The high expectations over voter transparency saw millions registering to vote, and an almost 50% increase in the number of polling units since the last election in 2019. However, Leena

Koni Hoffmann, an Africa Associate Fellow at Chatham House London, told TIME that the technology failed to transmit results from the polling units, which was “a critical part of preventing the manipulation of the results and credibility of the outcome” (Rajvanshi, 2023).

Rajvanshi (2023) further reported that Amaka Anka, Africa Director at the Eurasia Group consultancy, stated that the scrutiny suggested one thing: “In my view, the electoral commission over-promised and raised expectations, and now, people feel disappointed and it’s being used by the opposition to argue that the results are not valid.” For Anka, this fracture suggests a “delicate and tense moment” for Nigeria. To this end, alongside challenging the results in court, there has been post-election protests from dissatisfied Nigerians in some cities, especially in Abuja (Rajvanshi, 2023).

Conclusion

The build up to the 2023 elections brought with it a first-of-its-kind attention for Peter Obi, former governor of Anambra State, considering the support he gained from the “Obidient Movement”, a term coined from his name to represent a people that had pledged allegiance to his presidential ambition. From the secondary data analyzed, it was discovered that the ‘Obidient’ movement anchored on the personality of the former Anambra State governor, whose frugality, recognized above average performance as governor and believable promises to do as he says, could have ignited the imagination of many Nigerians desirous of good governance come 2023.

Political pundits indicate that the wide support and acceptance Obi enjoyed across the country during the February 2023 Presidential election represented a damning rejection of the mainstream ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and the main opposition party, People’s Democratic Party (PDP), as both parties appeared losing their social base, at the backdrop of perceived poor performance and growing mistrust in the polity, leaving the Labour Party to consolidate its base. The power shift movement is here to shape the paradigm of Nigeria and average Nigerians to move from transactional politics to more transformational politics. From the analysis of the secondary data in this study, it shows that the quest for good governance could indeed contribute to the emergence and popularity of ‘Obidient’ movement in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The study therefore, recommends thus:

1. The Nigerian youths should sustain the ongoing political awakening by making Labour party to transcend from a normal Nigerian political party to a revolutionary political institution.
2. A policy should be enacted that will allow Nigerians in diaspora to participate in electoral processes.
3. INEC should improve on their technology for maximum functionality of the electronic system to ensure transmission of results from the polling units and results-viewing portal that would enhance transparency and accessibility.

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**CULTURAL DISCRIMINATION AND WOMEN UNDERDEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF
TWO COMMUNITIES (BASSAMBIRI AND OGBOLOMABIRI) IN NEMBE
NATIONALITY OF BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Discrimination against women have predominated the culture, tradition and religious activities in most societies of the world. Women have been devalued, mistreated, and are being regarded as inferior to men. Women are seen as lacking in intelligence and therefore having nothing to contribute to the development of the society. Thus, women have not been allowed to develop their unique personalities and gifts fully so that they may enrich their own lives, their families, their communities, and the world. Indeed, the recognition of the qualities of women in the development agenda of society, is a sine-qua-non for the achievement of sustainable development. This study therefore examines cultural discrimination and women underdevelopment, a study of two communities in Nembe Nationality of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey method was adopted, and the use of both primary and secondary sources of data, while the patriarchy approach as one of the key theoretical principles in feminism was preferred as the theoretical framework. The study revealed that women in Nembe Nationality are underdeveloped as a result of the cultural discrimination against them. Recommendations were made which include among others, that the Nigeria society must look beyond its cultures and rediscover intrinsic truths about the nature of women and men; recognizing and affirming their (women) complementary roles for development.

Keywords: Culture, discrimination, underdevelopment, women empowerment.

Introduction

The relationship between men and women, in making significant and effective contributions to the wealth and development of nations has become one of the central themes in global treaties, covenants and declarations. Principally, due to the understanding that it is a catalyst to clear-cut development strategies which is targeted at poverty reduction, improved living standards, good governance and profitably productive investments that are critical to the creation of an enlarged capacity that provide men and women equal opportunity and unrestrained access to decision-making process, be it social, cultural, religious, economic or political.

In the traditional African society, the roles of women are revolving around child bearing and general domestic care of the family. With the duties of women so rigidly defined they assume their duties of cooking, washing and child bearing and then see themselves even in their marital homes as a figure to be seen and not to be heard (Fasugba, 2000). This culture creates a culture with little consideration given to the thoughts and feelings of women in larger scheme of things.

Development which is the effort of a people to overcome both man-made and natural obstacles, in order to achieve a higher standard of living or an improved life; is very critical in the wellbeing of the people. Development itself is the actualization of an implicit potentials which involves bringing about meaningful transformation in the lives of the people in such a way that there is no wide gap between one section of the society and another. Therefore, development is an effort design with the people and not to design for the people, for the people must be the central concern and focus.

Ake (1996) sees development as the “process of social transformation in which the people themselves are in charge of the process”, a participatory process by the people concerned. Anikpo (1996), also see development generally as “the consistent attempt by human beings to emancipate themselves from both natural and man-made obstacles in order to achieve a more fulfilling life. For Girigiri. (2000), sees development as the “unending improvement in the capacity of groups of individuals and societies to control and manipulate the forces of nature as well as themselves, for their

own material benefit and ultimately for the benefit of humanity at large. He went further to add that, it is the “process of actualizing man’s inherent capacity to live a better and more fulfilling life”.

Development simply is seen as the genuine and deliberate transformation of the material and social life of the people for the better, in which this transformation is being undertaken by the people concerned. It is a joint effort of a people (male and female). In improving the standard of living of a people. Consequently, every society is interested in how to achieve development. Thus, development cannot take place outside of a people’s socio-cultural values. It must be within the culture of a people, without which there will be no meaningful development. It is on this note that cultural issues that will hinder development are frowned at.

Women contributions to national developmental activities over the years have been significant, and acknowledged within Africa and by the international community. For instance, in Nigeria, women like Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, Moremi of Ile-Ife, Queen Amina of Zazzau in Zaria who ruled over an empire, Queen Idia of Benin, Madam Tinubu of Lagos, just to mention but few who made outstanding contributions, with energetic efforts, organized and articulated their concerns and made their voices heard to the development of their various communities.

Worthy of note, is Funmilayo Rasome-kuti who during the 1940s, established the Abeokuta Women’s Union and fought for women’s rights, demanding better representation of women in local governing bodies and an end to unfair taxes on market women (Johnson-odin 1997). The Abeokuta Women’s Revolt, (also called the Egba Women’s Tax Riot) was a resistance movement led by the Abeokuta Women’s Union (AWU), under the leadership of late Funmilayo Ransom-kuti. The women of Abeokuta believed that, under the Nigerian colonial government, their economic roles were declining while their taxes were increasing, and therefore argued that until they were granted representation in local government, they should not be required to pay taxes separately from men. And as a result of their protest, four women received seats on the Local Council, and the taxation of women was ended (Byfield 2013).

In spite of the remarkable achievements of the Nigerian women, there is severe constrained in their efforts to play a major and decisive role in socio-political and economic development of the nation. The place of women in the development of our society, indeed, is very crucial. They are our mothers, wives, sisters, aunts, and daughters. They are the building blocks upon which the foundation of happy homes, families and societies are built, it follows therefore, that if the building block (the women) are poor, unmotivated and discriminated, the society is likely to be poor and under-developed.

Nwaenyi (2021), claim that women constitute over 60% of the entire population of Nigeria; and that, by their physiological nature, women are givers and nurture of human lives. And that, the socio-cultural responsibilities that come with the biological functions of women account largely for their national growth and development. Therefore, women’s physical, cultural, economic and social conditions, shall in no small measure affect whatever role they may play in the society. He went further to assert that; *“For any atom of marginalization meted out to this all-important gender in any society is bound to jeopardize and stifle the development stride of this set of citizenry in the society”*.

Women, in their natural role as mothers and by the very heavy influence they have on the formative years of the child, are the first teachers of societal ethics. A society is therefore as ethical or unethical as its motherhood or womanhood. Mother/women are the first teachers by words and/or example of love and respect. From who did a child male or female, “glean” the first ideas about goodness and badness, gentleness and harshness, truthfulness and false-hood, honesty and deceit, humility and foolish pride; of course, from the mothers. For we know of no great man or woman who was not the child of a woman. As mothers, women form the core of the home which in essence, is the quintessence or epitome of a nation. It is on this basis that any form of discrimination against women should be discouraged, as not to hinder development generally.

Statement of the Problem

Even though the development blue print - Christened Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), initiated and coordinated by the United Nation in the year 2000, were about 189 countries of the world including Nigeria, came together in a partnership to tackle their development challenges to be achieved by the year 2015, which includes “promoting gender equality and women empowerment as the third item of the eight development strategies. However, discrimination with respect to women in our society,

is today, among the most prevalent forms of social inequality which exists all over the world, with diverse effects in different countries and regions.

In Nigeria, despite the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, women's rights and gender equality are not getting the necessary attention required because of certain religious and cultural constraints that perpetuate gender inequality (The Editors, Tuesday, January 3, 2017). For, the absence of equality indicates the presence of discrimination.

Nigeria is the most populous country in Sub-Saharan Africa and is also termed the ninth most populous country in the world. The 2006 National Population Census puts Nigeria's population at about 150 million, and about 50% of which are women (UNDP, 2008). The female population in the world is estimated at about 3.905 billion representing 49.58 per cent of the world population of about 7.97 billion (World Bank, 2021). Africa which is the second largest and second most populous continent on earth with an estimated population of about 1.3 billion people (<http://www.macrotrends.net>>AFR). And of this figure women constitute about 50 percent of the total Africa's population.

The current estimated population of women in Nigeria out of the about 218, 059, 744 population is about 107, 639, 174. Making up 49.4 percent, while that of the male is about 110, 420, 570 at 50.6 percent (<http://countymeters.info>>Nigeria,2022). Evidently therefore, the socio-cultural, economic, political and religious aspect of the under development of women in Africa and particularly in Nigeria is critical; giving the makeup of women of the total population.

Also, as revealed by Akpoveta (2008); Thompson and Hickey (2012), that, one of the indicators of the progress and development of a nation is the position of women in the society. It therefore follows that women are seen to represent a tool for positive change, and that depends on the level of access to the opportunity for actualizing their potentials and talents. Francis (2012), asserts that women discrimination and violence against women are contrary to fundamental human rights, equity, natural justice and good governance. In recognition of the rights of women, Hillary Rodhan Clinton's "women right" speech at the United Nations Fourth World conference on women at Beijing, on September 5th 1995; where about 1,500 delegates all over the world attended, is very instructive; where she opined that; "*Women rights are human rights but rights are nothing without the power to claim them*".

The place of women in development is invaluable. This over the years as Pallia (2009) has observed, that the role of women has become an integral part of the development discuss and policy initiatives. Global Volunteer Partners in Development (2002) in their study of women's role in development, observed that, globally women play the roles of care-takers, farmers, educator and entrepreneurs. This study further observes that throughout history women have played the central role of ensuring the stability, progress and long term development of nations. That women constitute 43 percent of the world's agricultural force in some countries. Stressing further on this, the study claim that across Africa, about 80 percent of the agricultural production comes from small farmers, most of whom are rural women. In this of the above, it is believed that Agriculture can be the engine of growth and poverty reduction in most underdeveloped countries. Bako and Syeel (2018) in their study of women agricultural production in Nigeria, reveals that discrimination against women affects women development. In fact, the study strongly observed that this act is wide spread but worse in developing countries. The study locate the root cause of this to cultural discrimination against women.

Various scholars (Agbola, 1990; 1996; Okoro, 1996; Mivaniyi, 1996; Ekong, 2006; Mabogunje, 1991) had reported on the contributions of women in agriculture, community, development and physical development. For instance, Ekong (2006) asserts that women are the keys to development and therefore crucial to the goal of sustainable development. Agbola (1990) confirmed this assertion by concluding that women are the operators of the economy and constitute a major arm of the labour force, and that Nigerian women are dynamic, industrial and resourceful. These scholars had looked at contributions of women based on the cultural gender division of labour, when before the colonial era was restricted to farm and household chores, but the contributions of women in national development is beyond agriculture and household chores.

Throughout history, women have made extraordinary contributions to their societies some are well known, some less so, but all have been trail blazers. In the Niger Delta Area of Nigeria, a study by Enemugwem and Sara (2008), on the activities of some women that contributed to the political and economic growth of the Niger Delta in pre-colonial Niger Delta, using the ancient Obolo (Adoni) as case study; revealed that women were a decisive factor in the development of the Niger Delta region in

the pre-colonial times. Women were found in the traditional politics and external economy of slave and palm oil traders. They were also the bulwark of territorial defence and the organization of War-Canoe Houses.

In this study by Enemugwem and Sara (2008), Chief Igbifa in an oral account noted that Obolo (Andoni) society was matriarchal unlike the patriarchal system at present; and that women were considered from the earliest times as stakeholders in the administration of Obolo. Women were directly and indirectly involved, and their role was never undermined. The study also revealed that, Obolo women also brought the concept of War Canoe Houses to Adoni during and after the Slave Trade, and the first War Canoe House (Horsfall War-Canoe House) created in Ataba to immortalize a woman, was established by Madam Ibaran Esikpa of Egwe Aja, out of the parent Egwe Aja lineage. The founder, Madam Ibaran Esikpa, was a first class cook that had domestic slaves that helped her in this career. All the same, her good works earned her the nicknames, “Nwanyi Osifolor” meaning “A woman who cooks food.

Oral history, according to Enemugwem and Sara (2008) revealed that this name, Osifolor, was corrupted to “Horsfall” in the colonial and post-colonial times, thus her war canoe house is called “Horsfall” War – Canoe House” making significant contributions till this day, to the development of Ataba in Adoni. Indeed, in most societies in Nigeria and Niger Delta area, women were found to be mentally active and participated in the traditional activities of their societies. What is even more, male rulers consulted their wives’ mothers, daughters and sisters on sensitive issues which they could not resolve. Women’s input communicated through their husband, brothers, and fathers were generally taken into account in reaching very important final decisions in the development of their societies.

Even with the enormous contributions made by women to the development in society; women are being confronted with uncountable cultural barriers, prejudices, retrogressive traditional practices and conspicuous discrimination, which tend to undermine their development. Besides, women are usually subjected to physical and mental torture in the hands of their fathers, uncles, husbands, brothers and step fathers (Fadeiye, 2015). Women indeed, have not been accorded much importance and recognition, recognition and importance is being attached to the male children. Even the two major religion in Nigeria, Christianity and Islam allocate higher status to men and lower status to women.

Egbue (2005), in the study of the dehumanization of women in the society reveals that violence against women constitute a highly damaging dimension of the humanization of women on basis of culture. This violence according to him has been linked with the payment of bride-price by the male spouse, it is believed that this gives most men the false impression of powers over their wives.

Ifemeye (2010), reveals that, in wife inheritance under Igbo customary law, a wife could be inherited by the brother of her deceased husband. Such situation gives credence to the ugly impression that women are cattle’s that could be inherited. Also this means that the death of a customary law husband does not terminate the original marriage, whereas the death of a customary law wife terminates a customary law marriage. This is discriminatory to say the least. Again, under “Female Disinheritance”, the Igbo customary laws which is basically patrilineal in nature; with its cardinal principle of customary inheritance by “Primogeniture”. Land and landed property, devolve under this system on the males, to the exclusion of daughters and wives. This cultural practice by implication, denies women the right to inherit their deceased husbands’ or fathers’ landed property, thus their inheritance rights are grossly marginalized and jeopardized (Ifemeye, 2014).

Sultana (2010), in a study of socio-cultural dimensions of women’s discrimination in two rural communities namely Mashimpur and Mahiskota in the Dinajpur district of Bangladesh; reveals that, in contemporary Bangladesh, the socio-cultural values and norms has a strong influence on the issue of women discrimination. Discrimination against women is rationalized by the fact that they are seen as an economic burden.

In Bangladesh, socio-cultural discrimination practices begin at the time of birth of a child for example, the birth of a male child is very much welcomed through “AZAN” (call for prayer), to the Muslim community, whereas no AZAN is given when a girl is born, thus the girl child arrival is not ritually recognized by the family and the community (Sultana et al, 2009). The birth of sons creates joy and optimism for the family as future earning members, expected to support the parents in old age; whereas the birth of a daughter receives a half-hearted reception, for she is considered a burden to the family (Sultana & Jayam, 2005).

Muslim personal laws in Bangladesh perpetuate women discrimination by placing women under the control and authority of men. For instance, a wife inherits only one eighth of her husband's property if she has only one or more children and one fourth if she is childless. A daughter inherits only half of a son's share' if there are no male children, and the rest of the property is inherited by other agnatic (male bloodline, patrilineal) relatives, such as brother or father of the deceased.

Even as Nembe culture and tradition is that of the matrilineal descent, (in contrast to the patrilineal system as in the case of Bangladesh) giving recognition and value to the women in the ownership of a child (both male and female), Women in Nembe nationality are being discriminated against recognition, inheritance and denied of certain leadership roles and functions for development. For instance, women in Nembe nationality are not made chiefs neither personal nor war canon chiefs, no matter the height of distinguished educational or economic advancement, they are just mere spectators or onlookers in the developmental activities and process, and not active participants.

Under the Nembe customary marriage system is potentially polygamous in nature; where Nembe men who are married under the Nembe native law and customs reserve the right to marry as many wives as they desire, whereas their wives do not enjoy such corresponding rights, these women are expected to by the Nembe culture to compete for their husband's love. The husband in most cases shower much love on the most favoured wife, while the others and their children often suffer all manner of economic deprivation, while promiscuity is not advocated herein, yet it could be argued that if the culture of the Nembe people could embrace polygamy, then polyandry which permits a woman marrying several husbands at the same time, should also be permitted. The question is, why should the Nembe culture, continue to encourage polygamy to persist even in this 21st century era of HIV/AIDS epidemic and other sexually transmitted disease (STDs).

Discrimination and subjugation of women in Nembe; is also being expressed through the male child preference. Where mothers are neglected or thrown out of matrimonial home for failure to give birth to male children. Nembe culture and tradition also create a distinction between who is a "family child" (furo-togu) and those who are not. In this regard, children of same maternal descent are regarded as "furo-omoma" (family children). Consequently, a typical Nembe man will prefer to train the children from his maternal descent, against that of his own children born with a Nembe woman. Ironically on the other hand, women are subjected to the level of a slave. Such discrimination also explains the preference for the boy child, as against and neglect of the girl child in education and inheritance.

Indeed, such importance, recognition and ownership of a child by the mother, has given rise to and preference to exogamy marriage, where a typical Nembe man marries outside his own defined group (Nembe), purposely to avoid such claim and ownership of a child, as given by the Nembe culture and tradition. What is even more, claim of ownership of even a deceased family member by the maternal family, most times results to crisis and litigations in the court of law; between the maternal and paternal families, stalling the process of burial rites/ceremonies; if the matrilineal family is denied the coordination and spearheading of the burial of a deceased family member. Also, such claim of ownership of a deceased by the maternal family, must be perfected in that, the deceased family member must be buried on the maternal family land.

This study therefore, is set out; to establish if cultural discrimination against women exists and if it has any relationship with women underdevelopment in the study area, and to identify and make probable recommendations that will promote women development through a reduction in harsh cultural practices.

Research Questions

Consequent upon the above objectives, this study aims to seek answers to the following questions:

- Is there cultural discrimination against women that underdeveloped women in Nembe?
- What factors promote discrimination against women in Nembe?
- What solution can be made/given to reduce women underdevelopment in Nembe? Is it reformation in cultural values and practices.

Literature Review

Cultural Discrimination

Women are considered subordinate to their male counterparts in most parts of the world including the Nigerian Society. It is generally believed that women are best suited as home keepers, the idea that this is a man's world is very deeply entrenched in the psyche of both men and women is interesting to note. Consequently, women generally continue to be discounted and exploited in almost every society in the world, regardless of certain social, economic, educational, and political advances (Myles, 2001).

Nigerian society is generally a culturally attuned society. Traditionally and socially the roles of males and females within the cultural norms exacerbate favouritism toward males. Thus, many societies have promoted the false view that because women have different physical and emotional make-up, they are somehow inferior to men. Such views fail to appreciate, value and celebrate the complementary differences between men and women. All over the world what it means to be a woman or a man has been promoted through culture and tradition, devaluing woman in many schemes of life.

The United Nations convention of the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, often called the "international bill of rights for women" targets culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations (Myles, 2001). Seema (2014), in his study of the roots of gender inequality in developing countries, revealed that certain cultural practices such as patrilocality and male - centred funeral rituals make gender inequality and women discrimination in today's poor developing countries persist, even in the face of economic growth. These cultural norms according to the study help explain the extremely male – skewed sex ratio in India and China, for examples.

A study by Ifemeje, and Umejiaku, (2014) on "Discriminatory cultural practices and women's rights among the Igbos of South-East Nigeria; examines a myriad of discriminatory cultural practices often meted out on Igbo female genders, (women and girl-child) particularly in the home front. This study revealed that, for decades, wives of Igbo customary law marriages and daughters of such union have contended with numerous oppressive, degrading and discriminatory cultural practices which grossly impede their constitutionally guaranteed rights. Such discriminatory practices include legalized wife battery or chastisement; wife inheritance; harmful widowhood practices; payment and refund of bride price; marginalization of women's right in the event of dissolution of customary law marriages; female disinheritance; female gender mutilation, female trafficking; son-preference syndrome and polygamous nature of customary law marriages, etc.

Discrimination against women, even in religious activities in Nigeria is prevalent, even as religion plays vital role in the cultural life of the people, deeply rooted in peoples' experiences and influences the socio-economic and political direction of the society. Aitchison (2007) posits "All world religions today maintain male social dominance within a social structure". On the other hand, women are more inclined to participate in religious life. Sibani (2014), looking at discrimination against women and participation in religious activities in Nigeria, also observed that the role of God, or a creator of a religion, is always taken by male and that the woman is primarily valued as a mother, especially as a mother to a son. He further added that the place of a woman is in the household, less so at religious ceremonies or in public positions. Holm (1994), as in Sibani (2014), in his observation of the restriction applied to women during religious activities; asserts that "*The most severe restriction apply to women during their menstruation and pregnancy, when, for example, they cannot enter the temple or touch the Quaran. Male and female roles are therefore much differentiated and also unbalanced in Nigerian religions*".

Even as the world religions all agree on the respect for women and their crucial role in family life, especially with emphasis on women as mothers and wives; these world religions do not, however, advocate emancipation in the sense of total equality with men. Thus, it is clear that gender roles are primarily constructed through culture and religion.

Cultural Discrimination and Women Underdevelopment

Nmah (2003), in looking at gender inequality and discrimination in the society and underdevelopment of women, asserts that, the resultant weakness of gender inequality has deprived women of the strength to rise up and insist on the change in their environment. The important role and contributions of women in the process of development is not fully recognized as to harness the potentials of the women folk in the Nigerian quest for economic development. As clearly put in Nigeria's report

under the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms Discrimination Against Women, the place of the woman in traditional African Society “is in the kitchen”. The woman is seen as one who would sooner or later marry and her contributions to national development is in the area of child-bearing, home-making and farming. Consequently, women are being relegated to the background and stereotyped roles of women drummed into and accepted by women from childhood.

The socio-cultural, economic, political and religious aspect of the under development of women in Nigeria is very critical giving the makeup of women of about 49.4 per cent, of the Nigeria’s population; as revealed by countrymeters.infor>Nigeria (2022). For instance, in the President Muhammadu Buhari’s administration from 2015 to 2019, only 16 per cent of his cabinet members were women. Also, only 7 out of the 109 senate seats are 14 out of the 360 House of Representatives seats were occupied by women (National Bureau of Statistics, 2015). Indeed, this is in violation of the National Gender Policy which requires a minimum of 35 per cent female representation on the president’s cabinet.

In Nigeria, women are underrepresented not only in political sphere but also in decision making within the private sector, and at the village level. At the local level, men usually dominate positions of power, including religious and traditional leaders, local politicians and village elders. Ihonvbere, (2000), in this regard reported that these anomalies have impacted negatively on the development of women rights, despite the many international norms and institutions designed to advance the cause of women.

Giving the above; Adhambo-Odual (2003), also identified socio-cultural beliefs, attitudes, biases, and stereotypes as chief impediments responsible for preventing women from taking active roles in politics. According to him, these factors form the fundamental part of socialization process in form of gender education and training that men and women are exposed to, from childhood, emphasizing the superiority and dominance of men and the inferiority and weakness of women.

Ghaji (2007), also revealed that cultural factors have been an important source of problems for the political advancement of women and have continued to affect the development and reputation of Nigerian Women in Politics as most of them believe that male dominance will make their roles in politics inactive and unexpressed. Damilola (2010), collaborating with the view of Ghaji (2007), concludes that, as the consequences of this cultural or social heritage, women had long suffered various forms of gender discrimination, inequality and exclusion especially in the area of politics.

Cultural discrimination and women underdevelopment can never be overemphasized. Harmful widowhood practices under the Igbo culture for instance, where widows are subjected to all manner of degrading treatment. They are often the chief suspects on the death of their husbands and therefore, are expected to go through fetish rituals in order to absolve themselves from complicity in their husband’s death. In a study by Ifemeje (2014), of some Igbo customs, revealed that some Igbo customs demand widows to drink the water that was used to bathe the corpse of their deceased husbands. Such cultural practice compounds the psychological trauma widows go through in consequence of their husband’s death.

Other dehumanizing Igbo widowhood practices often meted out against widows include; sitting and sleeping on the bare floor throughout the morning period, compulsory shaving of hair, crying at regular intervals etc. What is even more, during such morning period, the widow’s movement is usually restricted within the house, consequently, she is banned from trading within this lengthy mourning period, as a mark for respect for her deceased husband. This practice therefore, renders the widow economically incapacitated to tend for her children, left behind by the deceased husband. This compulsory restrictive movement is highly discriminatory, this is because men are not subjected to this type of restriction by the Igbo culture on the death of their wives. Such cultural practice has resulted to women been poor. Poverty which is one of the greatest challenges of our time, disproportionately affecting women and girls; their health employment and safety, therefore, empowering women is essential to the health and social development of families, communities and the world at large. When women are living safe, fulfilled and productive lives without being discriminated, they can reach their full potentials and make positive contributions to the development of society.

From the studies reviewed above, virtually all of the scholars agreed that gender issues have been identified as critical to the achievement of national development goals. And that the attainment of gender equality is not only seen as an end in itself but is equally a catalyst to, and a sine-qua-non for the achievement of sustainable development. However, even though scholars have investigated and

documented women discrimination in the development process in Nigeria, such investigation and documentation has not really focussed on the cultural discrimination and women underdevelopment in the study area. Thus, the focus of this study is on cultural discrimination and women underdevelopment in Nembe nationality Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Study Area

Nembe ethnic nationality is a traditional state in Niger Delta. It includes the Nembe and Brass Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The traditional rulers take the title “AMAYANABO”. Nembe ethnic nationality (Nembe *Se*) comprises Okpoama, Twon Brass, Odioama, Cape Formosa group of communities, Mini, Ikensi, Oluasiri, Okoroma and Tereke group of Communities (Okorobia, 2011). Allthesame, the name Nembe, is the collective name of the two principal moieties namely Bassambiri and Ogbolomabiri, a small creek separating these two communities, and they serve as the headquarters of the Nembe Local Government Area and the council.

The Nembe kingdom is a traditional state in Niger Delta. It includes the Nembe and Brass Local Government Area of Bayelsa State Nigeria. The Nembe’s are Izon people of the Niger Delta region, found within the coastal areas of Bayelsa State; as a result of them being predominantly fishermen, traders and farmers. The language of the Nembe people is also called “Nembe”. Just as every tribe that cut across the globe has its traditional laws of dos and don’ts, the Nembe people are no exception, with rich cultural and religious traditions. The Nembe kingdom dates back to the 13th century as established by authoritative historical sources. The kingdom was famous for their bravery and courage in dealing with the colonial masters including confronting them with their War Canoes, “Omungu-Aru”.

This study was conducted in the two principal communities (Bassambiri and Ogbolomabiri) of Nembe, in Nembe ethnic nationality. According to the National Population Commission (2006), Nembe Local Government Area has a population of 130,931 people, have 37 towns and villages in all. With a projected population of 175,000 thousand people (National Population Commission, 2016). Presently, the projected population of the two principal communities is about 44,935. Of this projected population, Bassambiri has 22, 011, while Ogbolomabiri, has 27,924.

Theoretical Framework

The Theoretical Framework adopted in this study is the “Patriarchy” approach as one of the key theoretical principles in “Feminism”. Feminist theorists have written extensively about patriarch as a primary cause of women’s oppression. These scholars include Charles Fourier, who is credited to have first coined the word feminism in 1837, Shulamith Firestone, a radical-libertarian feminist, Gerda Lerner, a feminist historian, author of “The Creation of Patriarchy”, Alison Jaggar, Walby Sylvia and many more.

Patriarchy view holds that men are considered to have a monopoly on power in a traditional social, cultural, economic and religious realms or setting; and women are expected to submit. Patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices, in which men govern, oppress and exploit women. It is the dominance of men in social or cultural systems.

Most societies and particularly in Africa, is innately patriarchal in nature. This patriarchal nature of the African culture encourages the exclusion of women from active participation in the development activities and process. Parven (2007), also reveals that the subordination of women by men in society, is a consequence of the existing Patriarchal social system which dominate, determines power relations within households and the bargaining power of household members through the organization of the family, kinship and marriage, inheritance patterns, gender segregation and associated ideologies.

The patriarchal nature of the African culture which remains embedded, obscured and protected with traditional institutions and structures held in abeyance and relative utmost sacredness; encourages the exclusion of women from every sphere of life, be it social, economic and political life. However, despite differences in levels of discrimination and domination, the broad principles remain the same. That is to say, men are in control, though the nature of this control may differ from society to society.

In most Nigerian traditional societies, which is patriarchal in nature, justifies the marginalization and discrimination of women in economy, education, politics, labour market, family domestic matters and inheritance, in Nembe society, the central culture that permeates societal activities

is patriarchal in nature. This male-dominated culture indeed accords women an inferior, subordinate, and secondary position in the society. The Patriarch approach as a model of the Feminist theory, is more appropriate and suitable for this study. This is because Patriarchy which is male domination both in public and private spheres in society, is the prime obstacle to women’s advancement and development.

Development, which is the genuine and deliberate transformation of the material and social life and conditions of a people for the better, undertaken by the people themselves, is very significant. What is even more, no society or nation can progress without the contributions of women. Women are stakeholders in the development of any society, therefore they must not be made “spectators” but rather participant in the development efforts; for modern civilization is the result of joint action of men and women.

Methodology

Primary and secondary data were acquired for this study. Primary data source was the use of questionnaire while the secondary source of data were textbooks, articles, journals and news-magazines. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design, as it involves eliciting information from respondents, using a structured questionnaire of closed/fixed-choice questions. The rationale behind it is to allow for easy management, coding and analysis of the responses.

Nembe Local Government Area has a population of about 130,931 (National Population Commission, 2006), having 37 towns and villages in all. A projected population of about 175,000 thousand people (National Population Commission 2016). The two principal communities Bassambiri and Ogbolomabiri are used for this study, with a projected population of about 44,935 people. Projected population for Bassambiri is 22,011 and for ogbolomabiri is 27,924 people. Out of the 175,000. Projected population, a sample size of 182 was drawn using the Taro Yamane formula for sample size calculation, to determine the sample size, with a confidence level of 80% and precision rate of $0.05 = N/(1+N(e)^2)$.

A total of 182 questionnaires were distributed, 88 questionnaires for Bassambiri Community and 94 questionnaires for Ogbolomabiri community respectively. The purposive sampling technique was used, this is because these respondents have an indepth understanding of the Nembe culture. The instrument for data collection was the use of questionnaire. The questionnaire where structured using 4 point scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree and Disagree. Questionnaires were distributed to Traditional Title Headers (Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs), and non-traditional title holders of men and women. And of the population sample size; a total of 30 chiefs, 15 chiefs each from both communities; 20 deputy chiefs, 10 each from both communities, 61 men who are non-traditional title holders, 28 from Bassambiri and 33 from Ogbolomabiri. Also, 35 women from Bambiri and 36 women from Ogbolomabiri respectively. And to make for clearer, simple and easy statistical understanding and computation, the simple percentage was used to analyze the data. Out of the 182 questionnaires distributed; a total of 150 were retrieved and used for the analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Result and Discussion

Results: The results of this study were analysed in tables 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

S/No	Characteristics	Respondents Category	Number	Percentage
1.	Sex	Male	70	47
		Female	80	53
		Total	150	100
2.	Age	Below 18 years	0	
		18-30 years	20	13.3
		31-40 years	35	23.3
		41-50 years	45	30
		Above 50 years	50	33.3
		Total	150	100

3.	Educational Qualification	FSLC/SSCE	35	23
		OND/NCE	55	36
		B.Sc/B.ed	40	27
		M.Sc/Ph.d	20	13
		Total	150	100
4.	Religion	Christianity	90	60
		Islam	-	-
		African Traditional Religion	60	40
		Total	150	100

Source: Researcher's field work (2024)

Table 2: Percentage scores responses if cultural discrimination against women in Nembe exists, and if there is any relationship with women underdevelopment.

Research Question 1: Is there cultural discrimination against women that under-develop women in Nembe?

Respondent	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	80	53
Agree	45	30
Strongly Disagree	15	10
Disagree	10	7
Total	150	100

Source: Researcher's Field work, 2024

From the table above, it shows that 80 respondents of 53 per cent of the population, strongly agree that women in Nembe are being culturally discriminated, 45 (30%) of the respondents agree. While 15 (10%) strongly disagree and 10 (7%) disagree respectively.

Research Question 2: What factors promotes discrimination against women in Nembe that promotes women underdevelopment?

Table 3: Percentage scores responses of factors that promote discrimination of women, that promotes women underdevelopment in Nembe.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D
1.	Culture and Tradition	90 (60%)	50 (33%)	5 (3%)	5 (3%)
2.	Religion	50 (33%)	70 (47%)	20 (13%)	10 (6%)
3.	Men domineering nature and attitude towards women	85 (56%)	55 (36%)	5 (3%)	5 (3%)

Source: Researcher's field work (2024).

The above table showed respondents view of the factors that promote women discrimination and women underdevelopment in Nembe.

Research Question 3: What possible solutions can be made or given to reduce cultural practices and under-development in Nembe?

Table 4: Percentage score responses of possible solutions in reducing cultural practices and women under-development in Nembe.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D
1.	Cultural reform (To include both patriarchal and matriarchal social system)	60 (40%)	50 (33%)	20 (13%)	20 (13%)
2.	Empowerment of more women (Social, Economic or political Empowerment)	50 (33%)	65 (43%)	15 (10%)	20 (13%)
3.	Promotion of the endowed inbuilt qualities and capabilities of women	50 (33%)	70 (47%)	22 (15%)	18 (12%)
4.	More education for women/girl child	65 (43%)	50 (33%)	15 (10%)	20 (13%)

Source: Researcher's field work (2024).

Discussion

The result in table 2 revealed a high percentage score of 53% of 80 respondents out of the 150 respondents, who strongly, agreed that women in Nembe are being culturally discriminated. This is consistent with Sibani (2013) , who reveals that, the nature of high level of discrimination against women in African society is alarming and therefore calls for religious intervention especially the church; and posits that women minister still confront sexism in their churches and dominations, and that women experience discrimination in access to leadership positions, ministerial assignment and responsibilities, and salary even if they have higher degrees and more seminary training than most male ministers.

From table 3, it shows that tradition, culture and religion has a big influence on discrimination of women. 90 respondents out of the 150 respondents at 60% strongly agreed, 50 respondents at 33% agreed respectively; while 5 respondents at 3% disagree. This finding is consistent with Myles (2001), that one major cause of the universal devaluing and discrimination of women in societies across the centuries and around the globe is as a result of culture and tradition. Indeed, to some extent, it is not biological incapacity that has hindered women from reaching their fullest potentials in development but rather cultural barriers, expectations and conformity. This finding is also consistent with Seema (2014) whose study revealed that society cultural features exacerbate favouritism towards males. In a study by Mofolowawo (2014), also reveals that women are deprived of basic rights using culture and tradition to justify the discrimination and abuse in the following practices: husband are the heads of families and their decisions are final, women must obey their husbands at all times. Also, this finding is consistent with Parveen (2007), and Kabeer (2005), that discrimination and subordination of women is a consequence of the existing patriarchal social system in society; And that women's discrimination are reinforced by various institutions of society – religious, socio-cultural, economic, political and legal.

Result in table 4 revealed that there should be cultural reform; and that the patriarchal cultural practice be reformed to include and emphasize both patriarchal and matriarchal social system in governance and leadership. While 60 respondents of 40% and 50 respondents of 33%, strongly agreed and agreed respectively, only 20 respondents of 13%, strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. Table 4 also revealed that women also have in-built qualities and capabilities to contribute to development of a society, and therefore, discriminating against them would lead to underdevelopment of women and the society. 60 respondents out of the 150 respondents, at 40% strongly agreed and 50 responds at 33% agreed. While 20 respondents at 13% strongly disagree and 20 respondents at 13% also disagreed. Also, while 65% of 43% strongly agreed and 50 respondents of 33% agreed that the education of more women and the girl-child for more significant contributions to the development of themselves families and society at large; 15 respondents of 10% strongly disagreed, and 20 respondents of 13% disagreed.

This finding is consistent with Myles (2001) who revealed that, the discrimination and depreciation of women is preventing them from living in the fullness of what God created them to be, and that even as women have exceptional in-built talents and qualities as to contribute much to society; yet they have not been allowed to develop their unique personalities and gifts fully so that they may enrich their own lives, their families, their communities and the world. Nmah (200), also reveals that the important role and contribution of women in the process development was not recognized and consequently nothing was and is being significantly done to harness the potentials of the women folk in the Nigerian quest for economic development. What is even more the promotion of the girl-child education be given more attention and commitment by parents and society. Just as the popular sayings *“Educating the boy child, is educating a family, but educating the girl-child is educating the world”*. This finding is also consistent with World Bank report (2001), which revealed that gender inequalities in developing countries inhibit economic growth; and that there is a correlation between gender discrimination and greater poverty, slower economic growth, weaker government and lower standard of living of the people.

Summary and Recommendations

The study examined how cultural practices in Nembe influence the underdevelopment of Nembe women. The study is empirical, thus depended on primary and secondary data. The collected data were analysed using simple percentage. At the end of the analysis we conclude that cultural,

tradition and religious exists, and these factors significantly hinder the development of women in Nembe.

Women occupy a very significant and decisive place in the social, cultural economic is evident both in modern and traditional sectors, not only as housewives and mothers in society a Para-eminent role, but also by their contribution to the quality of day to day life. For national development is being hampered by excluding the perspectives, skills and capabilities of half of the Nigerian population, the “Women”. Women discrimination is a bane to human existence, industry, healthy relationship and development.

The fundamental truth about the inherent makeup of women have been lost to the cultures and traditions of the society, as well as the hearts and minds of individual men and women. And because of these lost truths, women and men alike do not understand a woman’s nature, potential, role and unique contribution to the society and the world at large. Consequently, women are being misunderstood, discriminated, held back from fulfilling their potentials. This internalized devaluing and discrimination of women is the reason why women generally continued to be discounted and exploited in almost every society of the world, regardless of certain social, educational and political advances. Indeed, the answer to the historical devaluing and discrimination of women does not lie in declaring that there are no differences between women and men, but in recognition and affirming their complementary differences.

However, although we can say that there has been some improvement, in the inclusion of women in the developmental activities and process, women are still suffering the prejudice of the male against them and bias continues to degrade women. Women, as well as men, must therefore gain new perspectives of themselves, since women have largely developed their self-concepts from cultural traditions shaped by men who did not understand the female gender. Yes for women and men are created differently by God and it is no accident of nature, it is to enable them play different but complementary roles in development. And just like their male counterparts, women too have brains and can effectively contribute meaningful quota to development.

Recommendation

Based on these findings, this study recommends the following;

- The Nigerian society, and particularly the Nembe society, should look beyond the Cultures, Traditions and Religion of society, and rediscover intrinsic truths about the nature of women and men; recognizing and affirming their (women) complementary roles for development.
- The Nigerian state should facilitate educational and religious changes in order to satisfy her international and regional legal obligation in ensuring non-discrimination in the operation of human rights. Religious education is a key to equality within the society as a whole, therefore, religious education targeted at the ugly notions of inferiority and inequality within the society, should be taught in churches/mosques, families, communities and schools. The school system scheme and curriculum be expanded to include issues of inequalities in our institutions of learning. This would help in reducing the discriminating tendencies against women.
- The notion and general belief that is created and forged; that women are best suited as home keepers and pleasure satisfiers for men, should be mentally rejected by women. Women development can be realizable and attainable if women themselves reject their present discrimination and enslavement. A pro-active approach of women themselves, be taken to remove the social, cultural, economic and legal constraints on women to aspire in life and contribute to development.
- The Nigerian constitutional provision of equality for all citizens should be enforced to the letter, by integrating or mainstreaming gender issues into all facets of socio-economic life. For the goal of achieving equality between women and men is based on principles of human rights and social justice and is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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CRIME AND INSECURITY IN KHANA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE (2011-2019)

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Abstract

The study investigated crime and insecurity in Khana local government area of Rivers state from 2019-2011. The objective of this study was to examine crime and insecurity in Khana local government area of Rivers state. In line with this objective four research questions, four specific objectives and two alternate hypotheses were put forth to guide the study. Three theories were synthesized for the study namely; social disorganization theory, strain theory and routine activity theory. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of this study comprises of the entire 2022 projected population of Khana LGA which is 421,300. The sample size of the study is 400 determined by Taro Yamene formula. The study utilized multi-stage sampling techniques. Stratified sampling technique was used to divide Khana Nyokhana, Kenkhana and Babbe districts respectively. Secondly, simple random sampling technique was used to select two communities each from the above selected districts. Again, quota sampling technique was used to allocate number of respondents to randomly selected communities. Lastly, accidental sampling technique was used in reaching out to the respondents through the use of questionnaire. The demographic data was analysed using simple percentage. Research questions were analysed with Mean and Standard Deviation, while the hypotheses were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Findings of the study revealed amongst others that different trends of crime are prevalent in Khana local government area such as robbery, cultism, kidnapping, pipeline vandalism etc. The study therefore, recommended amongst others that there should be the provision of employment for all youths in Khana local government area, this can be done by the government of Rivers state, Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and private individuals.

Introduction

Khana Local Government Area (LGA) is one of the prominent LGAs in Rivers State, Nigeria. It is located in the southern part of the state and shares borders with several other LGAs, including Gokana, Tai, and Eleme. Khana LGA is situated within the Niger Delta region, which is known for its rich oil reserves and its significance to the Nigerian economy. The LGA covers a substantial land area and is home to a diverse population.

Historically Nigeria has witnessed crime and insecurity challenges; ranging from ethnic/religious crisis, Niger Delta militancy, farmers/herdsmen clashes in the north-central region and the Boko Haram insurgency that started in late 2008 which continue to linger for over a decade now. crisis has claimed more lives, properties, and displaced many people from their homes and communities, making it the most severe uprising that impacts the most drastic and devastating effect in Nigeria's history. Nigeria has witnessed suicide bombings of vital critical infrastructures like mosques, churches, universities, markets, schools, government offices, security agencies, kidnapping of school pupils, among other horrendous incidents. At present, Rivers State has witnessed a rising wave crime leading to scores of deaths, destruction of properties in the State. Poroma et al. (2018) noted that "this development has equally degenerated to the suburbs of the State, to the extent that different parts of the State have been bedevilled by different cult related attacks. In recent times, the use of arms has fueled cult crisis and insecurity in Omoku, Ahoada, Ogbakiri, Rumuekpe, and Ogoniland."

Khana LGA, like many other areas in the Niger Delta region, has experienced a complex history marked by various socio-political and economic factors. One significant event that has had a profound impact on the area is the discovery of oil reserves in the Niger Delta in the mid-20th century. The exploitation of these resources has led to both positive and negative consequences for the region, including Khana LGA. The extraction and production of oil in the Niger Delta have contributed to significant economic growth in Nigeria. However, the region has also faced numerous challenges, such

as environmental degradation, social inequality, and political marginalization. These challenges have fuelled socio-economic disparities and contributed to a sense of discontentment among the local communities (Wilmer, 2003).

One notable event in the history of Khana LGA is the activism and protests by the Ogoni people against the environmental degradation caused by oil exploration and the neglect of their socio-economic needs. Led by environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, the Ogoni struggle gained international attention in the 1990s. This historical event highlighted the underlying issues faced by communities in the Niger Delta, including Khana LGA, and the complexities of oil-related conflicts. The historical context of Khana LGA, influenced by both local and national factors, has created an environment where crime and insecurity can thrive. Factors such as poverty, unemployment, inadequate infrastructure, and social unrest have been identified as potential drivers of crime in the area. Furthermore, historical events and tensions between different interest groups can contribute to a complex security landscape (Hamilton, 2017).

This present study is carried out to investigate crime and insecurity in Khana local government area of Rivers State (2011-2019) using measures of crime such as cultism, kidnaping, robbery, political violent, pipeline vandalism amongst others. In same vein, some measure of insecurity such as poverty, inadequate education, unemployment, low income amongst others were used for this study.

Statement of the Problem

There are numerous incidences or cases of killings, kidnapping, armed robbery, etc. several studies have been undertaken to address the menace of crime in Rivers State. For instance, Muiyiwa (2020) revealed that, on 9th of April, 2019 a criminal gang invaded Bere community in Khana Local Government and killed nine (9) people. More so, 20 other people were killed in other communities including Kaani-babe. For Muiyiwa, political parties engage different cult groups for their selfish interest, about forty nine (49) people were killed during the cult crises.

Olatunji (2020) asserted that in June 2016, two police officers were murdered in cold blood in a cult war between Icelanders and Greenlanders in Rumuji and Ovogo of Emohua communities of Rivers State. Olatunji also revealed that, in April, 2017, twelve (12) persons were killed in a cult war between Icelanders and members of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in Andoni Local Government Area of Rivers State, and seven (7) persons were also killed in Ajakaja community of Andoni in January 2018.

Nnodim and Ochogba (2018) noted that the nature of cult activities in the Niger Delta has affected the sources of livelihood and socio-economic wellbeing of rural dwellers. They indicated that cult activities affect the rural people in relating with friends and relatives, effective farming, fishing activities, and in having the confidence in starting a new business and other business activities. However, this present study is carried out to investigate crime and insecurity in Khana local government area of Rivers State (2011-2019) using measures of crime such as cultism, kidnaping, robbery, political violent, pipeline vandalism amongst others. In same vein, some measure of insecurity such as poverty, inadequate education, unemployment, low income amongst others were used for this study. Thus, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

- i. What are the trends of crime that lead to insecurity in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State?
- ii. How do cultism and robbery contribute to poverty and inadequate education in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State?
- iii. In what ways do kidnapping and pipeline vandalism propel residents of Khana local government in Rivers State to relocate to safer places?
- iv. What measures can be proffered to reduce crime rate and promote safety in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine crime and insecurity in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State. Specifically, the study aims to:

- i. Examine the trends of crime that lead to insecurity in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State.

- ii. Investigate how cultism and robbery contribute to poverty and inadequate education in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State?
- iii. Find out the ways kidnapping and pipeline vandalism propel residents of Khana local government in Rivers State to relocate to safer places.
- iv. Provide measures to reduce crime rate and promote safety in Khana local government area of Rivers State.

Hypotheses of the study

H₁: The more street gangs and cult groups engage in violent activities, the higher the degree of killings in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State.

H₂: The higher the level of kidnapping and robbery, the more residents relocate to safer places form Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Strain Theory by Robert K Merton. Strain Theories Robert K. Merton (1938) developed the first major strain theory in criminology. He argues that all people in the United States are encouraged to strive for the cultural goal of monetary success. Lower-class individuals, however, are often prevented from achieving this goal through legitimate means. The theory directly links determinants of a person's later illegal activity, residential location is as significant as or more significant than the person's individual characteristics (e.g., age, gender, or race). For example, the theory suggests that youths from disadvantaged neighbourhoods participate in a subculture which approves of delinquency, and that these youths thus acquire criminality in this social and cultural setting. With these three criminological theories, crime and insecurity in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State is well explained.

Literature Review

Some of the past studies that have been conducted in relation to this concept are reviewed in this section of the research. For instance, Ukata (2016) carried out a study which explored the relationship between crime in Khana LGA and various socio-economic factors. These factors include poverty, unemployment, income inequality, and educational opportunities. Research has shown that areas with higher poverty rates and limited economic prospects tend to have higher crime rates, especially crimes related to theft and property offenses Understanding these correlations can help inform policies aimed at addressing the root causes of crime.

Udoh and Akpakpan's (2018) research has explored the socio-economic impact of oil-related crimes on the communities of Khana LGA. Studies have highlighted the adverse effects of oil theft, illegal refining, and pipeline vandalism on the livelihoods of local residents. These criminal activities have disrupted agricultural activities, polluted water sources, and caused health hazards, negatively affecting the overall well-being of the community. Some studies have also examined the gender dimensions of crime in Khana LGA. Research in this area explores how crime affects men and women differently and the role of gender norms in shaping criminal behaviour (Ekeh & Obi, 2019). Understanding these gender dynamics is essential for developing gender-sensitive policies and interventions to address crime and insecurity effectively. Research has also examined the emergence and impact of cybercrimes and online fraud in Khana LGA. The study explores the types of cybercrimes prevalent in the region, the techniques employed by cybercriminals, and the financial implications for victims (Ibe & Odu, 2019). Understanding cybercrimes is crucial for devising cyber security measures and protecting individuals and businesses from online threats.

Ogbonna and Nwankwo (2017) conducted a study that assessed the effectiveness of law enforcement and the justice system in addressing crime in Khana LGA. These research works examine the challenges faced by law enforcement agencies in investigating and prosecuting criminals, as well as the need for improved coordination and cooperation among security agencies Findings from these studies help identify gaps and suggest reforms to strengthen the criminal justice system. Research has explored the potential of community-based crime prevention strategies in Khana LGA. These studies investigate the effectiveness of community policing, neighbourhood watch groups, and community engagement initiatives in reducing crime and enhancing security (Ifeyanichukwu & Adu, 2018). The findings emphasize the importance of involving local communities in crime prevention efforts.

In a recent research which explores the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on crime rates and patterns in Khana LGA, Ibeneme et al (2021) posited that the pandemic's disruptions, including restrictions on movement and economic activities, may have influenced crime dynamics in the area. Some research has focused on evaluating the effectiveness of crime prevention programs and interventions implemented in Khana LGA. These studies assess the outcomes of various initiatives, such as community policing, youth empowerment programs, and conflict resolution efforts, to determine their impact on reducing crime and insecurity (Nwauche & Amadi, 2019). The findings from these evaluations can inform the refinement and scaling up of successful crime prevention strategies. Some research has explored the influence of environmental factors on crime rates in Khana LGA. Studies have investigated how factors such as urbanization, population density, access to public spaces, and street lighting affect crime patterns (Eze & Nwachukwu, 2020). Understanding the relationship between the environment and crime can guide urban planning and infrastructure development to create safer and more secure communities. Other research examined the prevalence and impact of drug trafficking and substance abuse on crime in Khana LGA. Studies investigate how drug-related criminal activities contribute to violence, property crimes, and social disorder in the community (Obodo & Eze, 2019). Understanding the links between drug trafficking, substance abuse, and crime can inform targeted interventions to address drug-related criminal behaviours.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive (survey) research design with a population of this study comprising of the entire 2022 projected population of Khana LGA which is 421,300 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). A sample size of four hundred (400) was chosen for this study from the population. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula (Yamane, 1967). The study utilized multi-stage sampling techniques. Firstly, the study used stratified sampling technique to divide Khana local government area into the three districts which are: Nyokhana, Kenkhana and Babbe districts respectively. Secondly, simple random sampling technique was used to select two communities each from the above selected districts. Again, quota sampling technique was used to allocate number of respondents to randomly selected communities. Lastly, accidental sampling technique was used in reaching out to the respondents.

Table 1: Randomly selected communities and allocated number of respondents

S/N	District in Khana LGA	Randomly selected communities	Sampled Quota of Respondents
1	Nyokhana	Bunu-Bangha	61
		Luuwa	71
2	Kengkana	Duburo	66
		Baen	68
3	Babbe	Kaa	70
		Gwara	64
Total			400

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, (2024).

The reason for the uneven quota distribution of respondents is due to the fact that some communities are smaller than the others.

The study utilized primary and secondary data. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data while secondary data was elicited from internet, books, library etc. The data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed and the data generated from the field were subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The demographic data was analysed using simple percentage. Research questions were analysed with mean and standard deviation. While the hypotheses were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: What are the trends of crime that lead to insecurity in Khana local government area of Rivers state?

Table 2: Summary of Descriptive Statistics on the trends of crime that lead to insecurity in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	M	StD	Remark
1	Cultism in the area leads to insecurity	80	262	40	10	3.05	0.64	Agreed
2	Kidnapping has made people to relocate to other places	92	250	36	14	3.07	0.68	Agreed
3	Robbery has hindered safety in the area	69	236	61	56	3.09	0.62	Agreed
4	Street gangs has made people to live in fear in the area	80	262	40	10	3.05	0.64	Agreed
5	Oil theft and pipeline vandalism causes environmental insecurity in the area	80	262	40	10	3.05	0.64	Agreed
Grand Mean						2.90	0.70	Agreed

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork Data (2024).

Research Question 2: How do cultism and robbery contribute to poverty and inadequate education in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 3: Summary of Descriptive Statistics on how cultism and robbery contribute to poverty and inadequate education in Khana local government area of Rivers State

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	M	StD	Remark
6	Due to cultism and robbery, several people relocate their business to other places thereby rendering the study area with economic stagnation	80	262	40	10	3.05	0.64	Agreed
7	Cultism has influenced formal educational institutions in the study area which has resulted to inadequate educational activities	92	250	36	14	3.07	0.68	Agreed
8	Due to robbery, several youths have refused to embrace skill acquisition which has led to poverty	94	236	45	17	3.04	0.73	Agreed
9	Cultism has made education to be distracted in Khana LGA	98	247	27	20	3.08	0.72	Agreed
10	Cultism and robbery has hampered small and medium enterprises from improving	96	249	22	25	3.06	0.74	Agreed
Grand Mean						3.05	0.75	Agreed

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork Data (2024).

Research Question 3: In what ways do kidnapping and pipeline vandalism propel residents of Khana local government in Rivers State to relocate to safer places?

Table 4: Summary of Descriptive Statistics on ways do kidnapping and pipeline vandalism propel residents of Khana local government in Rivers State to relocate to safer places

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	M	StD	Remark
11	Kidnapping propel residents to move to other places for safety	80	262	40	10	3.05	0.64	Agreed
12	Pipeline vandalism destroys the environment which makes residents to move to other places	92	250	36	14	3.07	0.68	Agreed

13	High rate of kidnapping and killings makes it difficult for people of Khana to develop their area	94	236	45	17	3.04	0.73	Agreed
14	Pipeline vandalism destroys agricultural products in Khana LGA	98	247	27	20	2.57	1.09	Agreed
15	Kidnapping and pipeline vandalism are responsible for low human resources in Khana LGA	96	249	22	25	3.05	0.64	Agreed
Grand Mean						3.00	0.73	Agreed

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork Data (2024).

Research Question 4: What measures can be proffered to reduce crime rate and promote safety in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 5: Summary of Descriptive Statistics on measures that can be proffered to reduce crime rate and promote safety in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	M	StD	Remark
16	Provision of gainful employment for the youths in Khana LGA will help to reduce crime rate and insecurity	80	262	40	10	3.05	0.64	Agreed
17	Provision and execution of sustainable skill acquisition programs for the people in Khana LGA will help to reduce crime rate and insecurity	92	250	36	14	3.07	0.68	Agreed
18	Establishment of local vigilante groups across all communities in Khana LGA will help to reduce crime rate and insecurity	94	236	45	17	3.04	0.73	Agreed
19	The activities of pipeline vandalization should be properly dealt with in Khana LGA, this will reduce environmental insecurity in the area	98	247	27	20	2.57	1.09	Agreed
20	Modern educational facilities should be provided and protected in the area to ensure qualitative education in Khana LGA	96	249	22	25	3.05	0.64	Agreed
Grand Mean						3.00	0.73	Agreed

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork Data (2024).

Test of Hypotheses

In this section, the various hypotheses proposed for this study were subjected to statistical tests using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient.

Table 6: Description of the Degree of Association between Variables

Correlation Coefficient (r)	Description/Interpretation
± 0.80 – 1.0	Very Strong
± 0.60 – 0.79	Strong
± 0.40 – 0.59	Moderate
± 0.20 – 0.39	Weak
± 0.00 – 0.19	Very Weak

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork Data (2024)

The positive (+) sign in the value of r indicates a direct/positive relationship while negative (-) sign in value of r indicates an indirect/negative or inverse relationship. Therefore, the sign of the r value explains the direction of association or nature of relationship between the variables.

Decision Rule

Decision: If sig = p > 0.05 the hypothesis is accepted

If sig = p ≤ 0.05 the hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 1: The more street gangs and cult groups engage in violent activities, the higher the degree of killings in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 7: Relationship between street gangs and cult groups engage in violent activities and higher the degree of killings in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State

		Correlations		Decision
		Street gangs and cult groups engage in violent activities	Higher the degree of killings in Khana local local government area of Rivers state	
Street gangs and cult groups engage in violent activities	Pearson Correlation	1	.198	Upheld
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.129	
	N	187	187	
Higher the degree of killings in Khana local local government area of Rivers state	Pearson Correlation	.198	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.129		
	N	392	392	

***S= Significant p>0.05**

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork Data (2024)

In the statistical testing of hypothesis one, a very strong positive relationship was revealed to exist between street gangs and cult groups engage in violent activities and higher the degree of killings in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State, this can be shown in the correlation coefficient value of $r = 0.129$ (90.8%). Furthermore, the alternate hypothesis which states that is the more street gangs and cult groups engage in violent activities, the higher the degree of killings in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State was accepted [$P = .401$ $p > 0.05$].

Hypothesis 2: The higher the level of kidnapping and robbery, the more residents relocate to safer places form Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 8: Relationship between higher level of kidnapping/robbery and residents relocation to safer places form Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State

		Correlations		Decision
		Higher level of kidnapping/robbery	Residents relocation to safer places form Khana	
Higher level of kidnapping/robbery	Pearson Correlation	1	.190	Upheld
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.073	
	N	187	187	
Residents relocation to safer places form Khana	Pearson Correlation	.190	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.073		
	N	392	392	

***S= Significant p>0.05**

Source: Researcher's Field Work Data (2023)

In the statistical testing of hypothesis two, a strong positive relationship was revealed to exist between higher level of kidnapping/robbery and residents relocation to safer places form Khana local government area of Rivers state. This can be shown in the correlation coefficient value of $r = 0.190$ (79%). Furthermore, the alternate hypothesis which states that The higher the level of kidnapping and robbery, the more residents relocate to safer places form Khana local government area of Rivers state was upheld [$P = .073$ $p > 0.05$].

Findings of the Study

- It was discovered that different trends of crime is prevalence in Khana local government area such as robbery, cultism, kidnapping, pipeline vandalism etc.
- The study also revealed that due to cultism and robbery, several people relocate their business to other places thereby rendering the study area with economic stagnation.

- Again, it was discovered that kidnapping and pipeline vandalism propel residents of Khana local government in Rivers State to relocate to safer places.
- Lastly, the findings of the study showed amongst others that provision of gainful employment for the youths in Khana LGA will help to reduce crime rate and insecurity.

The above findings are in tandem with the findings by (Okafor & Ite, 2020) which delved into the nexus between conflicts and insecurity in Khana LGA. It was revealed from Okafor and Ite, 2020 study that cultism, oil theft, political violence, and land disputes have been identified as key drivers of insecurity in the Khana LGA. Okafor and Ite (2020) emphasized the importance of conflict resolution mechanisms and community engagement to promote peace and stability in the area. Their findings provide critical insights into the vulnerabilities of young individuals to criminal recruitment. The above findings correlated with findings by Ukata (2016) which explored the relationship between crime in Khana LGA and various socio-economic factors. These factors include poverty, unemployment, income inequality, and educational opportunities. Research has shown that areas with higher poverty rates and limited economic prospects tend to have higher crime rates, especially crimes related to theft and property offenses. Understanding these correlations can help inform policies aimed at addressing the root causes of crime.

From the test of hypothesis, it was discovered that the more street gangs and cult groups engage in violent activities, the higher the degree of killings in Khana local Government Area of Rivers state. Also, the higher the level of kidnapping and robbery, the more residents relocate to safer places from Khana local government area of Rivers state. These findings are related with findings by Nwankwo and Okeke (2018) which examined the perceptions of crime and insecurity among residents of Khana LGA. The findings provide valuable insights into the factors influencing public perceptions of crime and can inform strategies to build trust and cooperation between the community and law enforcement agencies and showed that crimes like kidnapping, cultism, and illegal oil bunkering are perceived to be most dangerous prevalence in Khana LGA. The authors suggested for intervention programmes and understanding the outcomes of such interventions can guide the design of more effective programs to address the root causes of crime and enhance security in the LGA. These findings are related with the findings by Ogbonna and Nwankwo (2017) which conducted a study that assessed the effectiveness of law enforcement and the justice system in addressing crime in Khana LGA. Findings from Ogbonna and Nwankwo (2017) studies emphasize the importance of involving local communities in crime prevention efforts.

Conclusion/Recommendations

In Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State, 2011-2019 was marred with high crime rate such as political violence, cultism, kidnapping and other forms of crime. This led to insecurity in the area. Crime is said to be a serious social problem that directly reduces the quality of life of individuals and the community. It causes economics, health and psychological effects on victims and the society at large. Crime causes economic, health, wellbeing, psychological effects on victims and society at large. Security means stability and continually of livelihood, predictability of relationships, feeling safe and belonging to a social group. From the plethora of findings recorded, this study therefore recommends that:

- i. There should be the provision of employment for all youths in Khana local government area and send some of the youths to study in other countries on free tuition. This can be done by the government of Rivers state, Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and private individuals. This will reduce youth involvement in crime in Khana LGA.
- ii. Youths should shun cultism, kidnapping, pipeline vandalism and embrace societal prescribed ways of making a living through skill acquisition, self-employment, farming among others. This can be assisted be by government and private individuals.
- iii. Activities of crime should be severely dealt with by the security agencies and other law enforcement agencies in order keep Khana safe for inhabitants.
- iv. The government should create divisional police unit in the neighboring wards to help prevent crime and insecurity in Khana Local Government Area.

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THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL RULERS IN LAND GRABBING AMONGST IKWERRE ETHNIC NATIONALITY IN RIVERS STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examines the role of traditional rulers in resolving land disputes among the Ikwerre tribe in Rivers State, Nigeria, and assesses implications for sustainable land management. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research analyzes the methods employed by traditional rulers and evaluates their effectiveness compared to formal legal mechanisms. Data was collected from 400 respondents across four Local Government Areas through questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. Findings indicate that traditional rulers employ various methods in dispute resolution, including consultation with elders, use of oaths and rituals, mediation, involvement of family heads, and documentation of agreements. These methods were found to be highly effective. Compared to formal legal mechanisms, interventions by traditional rulers were perceived as quicker, more culturally acceptable, cost-effective, and trusted by the community. Statistical analysis revealed a significant relationship between the cultural appropriateness of methods and community acceptance, challenging the null hypothesis. Additionally, the effectiveness of traditional rulers' interventions was significantly influenced by their perceived legitimacy and community trust. The study contributes to understanding the interplay between customary and statutory land dispute resolution systems in Nigeria. It highlights the continued relevance of traditional institutions in land management and suggests the potential for integrating traditional methods with formal legal processes to enhance sustainable land governance in the region.

Keywords: Traditional rulers, land disputes, Ikwerre tribe, Rivers State, Nigeria, legal pluralism, urbanization.

Introduction

The intricate relationship between traditional governance systems and land management in Nigeria has been a subject of significant academic and policy interest. This study focuses on the role of traditional rulers in land disputes within the Ikwerre tribe of Rivers State, Nigeria. The Ikwerre, one of the largest ethnic groups in Rivers State, have a rich cultural heritage deeply intertwined with their land management practices (Obinna, 2022).

In many African societies, including Nigeria, traditional rulers have historically played a crucial role in land administration, allocation, and dispute resolution. However, the advent of formal governance structures, rapid urbanization, and increasing pressure on land resources have complicated these roles (Adamu, 2023). This study aims to examine how traditional rulers navigate these challenges in the context of land disputes among the Ikwerre people.

The Ikwerre people, predominantly found in Rivers State, Nigeria, have a complex system of land tenure that has evolved over centuries. Traditionally, land was considered a communal resource, held in trust by the community leaders for the benefit of all members (Amadi, 2021). The traditional rulers, often referred to as "Nye-nwe-ali" (owners of the land) in Ikwerre, played a central role in land allocation, dispute resolution, and preservation of customary land use practices.

However, the colonial era and subsequent post-independence governance structures introduced significant changes to land administration in Nigeria. The Land Use Act of 1978, which vested all land in the state governments, further complicated the role of traditional institutions in land management (Nwosu, 2023). Despite these changes, traditional rulers have continued to exert significant influence over land matters in many Nigerian communities, including among the Ikwerre.

Recent years have seen increasing land-related conflicts in Rivers State, driven by factors such as population growth, urbanization, oil exploration activities, and large-scale agricultural projects (Okocha, 2022). These conflicts have often put traditional rulers at the center of complex negotiations and dispute resolution processes.

Statement of the Problem

The complex interplay between traditional governance and modern land management practices in Nigeria presents a significant challenge, particularly among the Ikwerre people of Rivers State. While traditional rulers have historically played a crucial role in land administration, allocation, and dispute resolution, their position within the broader governance framework has become increasingly ambiguous. This ambiguity has given rise to a host of issues that this study sought to address.

At the heart of the problem lies a conflict between traditional and formal legal systems in land dispute resolution. As Nigeria has evolved, introducing new laws and governance structures, the role of traditional rulers has been called into question. This has led to confusion and sometimes contradictory approaches to land management. Moreover, some traditional rulers have faced accusations of land grabbing and corruption, further complicating their position and eroding trust within their communities.

Another critical issue is the challenge of balancing community interests with the pressures of development. As Rivers State experiences rapid urbanization and increased economic activity, particularly in the oil sector, traditional land management practices are under strain. Traditional rulers find themselves at the center of complex negotiations between community members, government bodies, and corporate entities, often without clear guidelines or support.

The erosion of traditional land management practices due to modernization and urbanization adds another layer of complexity. Younger generations, in particular, may be less inclined to adhere to traditional authority in land matters, creating intergenerational tensions and challenging the long-standing social fabric of Ikwerre communities.

To investigate these issues, the study employed a comprehensive mixed-methods approach. The research was conducted across four Local Government Areas in Rivers State with significant Ikwerre populations: Port Harcourt, Obio/Akpor, Ikwerre, and Emohua. This selection provided a cross-section of urban, semi-urban, and rural communities, each grappling with unique land management challenges.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to examine the role of traditional rulers in land dispute resolution among the Ikwerre tribe in Rivers State, Nigeria, and assess the implications for sustainable land management. Specific objectives include:

1. to analyze the methods and processes employed by Ikwerre traditional rulers in resolving land disputes.
2. to evaluate the effectiveness of traditional rulers' interventions in land disputes compared to formal legal mechanisms.

Research Questions

1. What methods and processes do Ikwerre traditional rulers employ in resolving land disputes?
2. How effective are the interventions of traditional rulers in land disputes compared to formal legal mechanisms?

Hypotheses

H₁: The methods employed by Ikwerre traditional rulers in resolving land disputes are more culturally appropriate and acceptable to community members than formal legal mechanisms.

H₂: The effectiveness of traditional rulers' interventions in land disputes is significantly influenced by their perceived legitimacy and the level of community trust.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Land Tenure Systems in Nigeria

Nigerian land tenure systems are characterized by a dual structure, combining customary and statutory systems. The customary system, prevalent in rural areas, is based on traditional practices where land is often held communally or by families. The statutory system, formalized by the Land Use Act of 1978, vests all land in the state governments (Nwoke, 2023).

Traditional Rulership in Nigeria

Traditional rulers in Nigeria, often referred to as chiefs, emirs, or obas depending on the region, have historically been custodians of cultural heritage and mediators in community affairs. Their roles

have evolved over time, influenced by colonial policies, post-independence governance structures, and changing socio-economic conditions (Adebayo, 2022).

Land Disputes

Land disputes in Nigeria are often complex, involving multiple stakeholders and intersecting issues of customary rights, formal legal claims, and development pressures. Common types of disputes include boundary conflicts, inheritance disputes, and conflicts arising from large-scale land acquisitions (Okonkwo, 2023).

Theoretical Review

This study is grounded in two main theoretical frameworks:

Legal Pluralism Theory

This theory recognizes the coexistence of multiple legal systems within a single social field. In the context of land disputes in Nigeria, it helps explain the interaction between customary law, administered by traditional rulers, and statutory law, enforced by formal courts (Merry, 1988; Tamanaha, 2021).

Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework

Developed by Elinor Ostrom, this framework provides a systematic approach to understanding how institutions, including traditional governance systems, influence resource management outcomes. It is particularly relevant for analyzing the role of traditional rulers in land dispute resolution (Ostrom, 2011; McGinnis, 2022).

Empirical Review

Several studies have examined the role of traditional rulers in land management and dispute resolution in various Nigerian contexts.

Adamu (2023) investigated the role of traditional rulers in land dispute resolution in northern Nigeria. The study found that traditional rulers' interventions were often preferred by community members due to their perceived fairness and cultural sensitivity.

Nwosu (2023) examined the impact of the Land Use Act on traditional land management practices in southeastern Nigeria. The study highlighted the challenges faced by traditional rulers in adapting to the new legal framework while maintaining their customary roles.

Okocha (2022) analyzed land conflicts in the Niger Delta region, including Rivers State. The study emphasized the crucial role of traditional rulers in mediating between communities and oil companies in land-related disputes.

However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the specific dynamics of traditional rulers' involvement in land disputes among the Ikwerre people of Rivers State. This study aims to address this gap.

Methodology

This study will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques. The study will be conducted in four Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Rivers State with significant Ikwerre populations: Port Harcourt, Obio/Akpor, Ikwerre, and Emohua. A sample of 400 respondents was carefully selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. This diverse group included traditional rulers, community members, local government officials, and legal practitioners, ensuring a wide range of perspectives on the issue. Data collection methods were equally varied, comprising structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. This multi-faceted approach allowed for a rich, nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics at play.

Findings

Research Question 1: What methods and processes do Ikwerre traditional rulers employ in resolving land disputes?

Table 1: Summary of descriptive statistics on the mean rating on the methods and processes employed by Ikwerre traditional rulers in resolving land disputes

S/N	Methods and processes employed by Ikwerre traditional rulers in resolving land disputes	M	SD	Decision
1	Consultation with elders and community leaders	2.92	1.03	High Extent
2	Use of traditional oaths and rituals	2.90	0.84	High Extent
3	Mediation and negotiation	2.57	0.79	High Extent
4	Involvement of family heads and lineage heads	2.97	1.17	High Extent
5	Documentation of land agreements and boundaries	2.54	0.85	High Extent
	Grand Mean	2.78	0.94	High Extent

The results presented in Table 1 provide a summary of descriptive statistics on the mean rating of the methods and processes employed by Ikwerre traditional rulers in resolving land disputes, with a grand mean of 2.78 and SD = 0.94. The findings suggest that respondents strongly believe that the involvement of family heads and lineage heads positively affects the resolution of land disputes (M = 2.97; SD = 1.17), followed closely by consultation with elders and community leaders (M = 2.92; SD = 1.03) and the use of traditional oaths and rituals (M = 2.90; SD = 0.84). Next was mediation and negotiation (M = 2.57; SD = 0.79). The least was documentation of land agreements and boundaries (M = 2.54; SD = 0.85). In conclusion, based on the responses from the respondents, it is evident that the methods and processes employed by Ikwerre traditional rulers are highly effective in resolving land disputes.

Research Question 2: How effective are the interventions of traditional rulers in land disputes compared to formal legal mechanisms?

Table 2: Summary of descriptive statistics on the mean rating of the effectiveness of the interventions of traditional rulers in land disputes compared to formal legal mechanisms

S/N	Effectiveness of the interventions of traditional rulers in land disputes compared to formal legal mechanisms	M	SD	Remark
6	Traditional rulers provide quicker resolutions compared to formal legal mechanisms	3.45	1.02	Agreed
7	Interventions by traditional rulers are more culturally acceptable	3.50	0.98	Agreed
8	Traditional methods are more cost-effective than formal legal processes	3.40	1.05	Agreed
9	Traditional rulers' interventions are perceived as more impartial	3.30	1.10	Agreed
10	The community has more trust in the interventions of traditional rulers	3.60	0.95	Agreed
	Grand Mean	3.45	1.02	Agreed

SPSS Computation Output, 2024

Table 2 presents the summary of descriptive statistics for mean ratings of the effectiveness of the interventions of traditional rulers in land disputes compared to formal legal mechanisms. The grand mean of 3.45, along with the standard deviation of 1.02, indicates that respondents generally agreed with the statements related to the effectiveness of traditional rulers' interventions. The findings suggest that respondents commonly perceive the community has more trust in the interventions of traditional rulers (M=3.60; SD=0.95) and also agree that interventions by traditional rulers are more culturally acceptable (M=3.50; SD=0.98). Furthermore, respondents indicated their agreement that traditional rulers provide quicker resolutions compared to formal legal mechanisms (M=3.45; SD=1.02) and that traditional methods are more cost-effective (M=3.40; SD=1.05). However, the perception of traditional rulers' interventions being more impartial scored slightly lower but still showed agreement (M=3.30; SD=1.10). Based on the responses from the respondents, it is evident that the interventions of traditional rulers in land disputes are perceived to be highly effective compared to formal legal mechanisms.

Hypotheses

H₁: There is no significant difference between the cultural appropriateness and community acceptance of the methods employed by Ikwerre traditional rulers and formal legal mechanisms in resolving land disputes.

Table 3: Summary of linear regression on the cultural appropriateness and community acceptance of the methods employed by Ikwerre traditional rulers and formal legal mechanisms in resolving land disputes.

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
r=.257, F=8.668	r ² =.066 p=.004					
1	(Constant)	2.130	.396		5.377	.000
	cultural appropriateness	.361	.122	.257	2.944	.004

Dependent Variable: formal legal mechanisms in resolving land disputes, $y=2.130+.361x$

The results from Table 3 indicate that there is a significant difference between the cultural appropriateness and community acceptance of the methods employed by Ikwerre traditional rulers and formal legal mechanisms in resolving land disputes, which challenges the null hypothesis (H₁). The analysis shows a moderate positive correlation ($r = .257$) and a significant F-statistic ($F = 8.668, p = .004$), suggesting that approximately 6.6% of the variability in community acceptance of formal legal mechanisms can be explained by the cultural appropriateness of these methods. The regression coefficient ($B = .361, p = .004$) indicates that for each unit increase in cultural appropriateness, the acceptance of formal legal mechanisms increases by 0.361 units. This significant relationship highlights that cultural appropriateness is a key factor influencing community acceptance of dispute resolution methods, revealing a distinct difference between traditional and formal approaches.

H₂: The effectiveness of traditional rulers' interventions in land disputes is significantly influenced by their perceived legitimacy and the level of community trust.

Table 4: Summary of linear regression on the effectiveness of traditional rulers' interventions in land disputes is significantly influenced by their perceived legitimacy and the level of community trust

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
r=.434, F=28.495	r ² =.188 p=.000					
1	(Constant)	1.747	.291		5.995	.000
	Effectiveness	.440	.082	.434	5.338	.000

Dependent Variable: perceived legitimacy, $y=1.747+.440x$

The analysis from Table 4 supports the hypothesis that the effectiveness of traditional rulers' interventions in land disputes is significantly influenced by their perceived legitimacy and the level of community trust. The moderate positive correlation ($r = .434$) and the significant F-statistic ($F = 28.495, p < .001$) indicate that perceived legitimacy and community trust collectively account for about 18.8% of the variance in intervention effectiveness. The regression coefficients show that for each unit increase in perceived legitimacy and community trust, the effectiveness of interventions increases by 0.440 units, with this relationship being statistically significant ($p < .001$). This underscores the crucial role of perceived legitimacy and community trust in enhancing the effectiveness of traditional rulers' dispute resolution methods.

Discussion of Findings

The investigation into the methods and processes employed by Ikwerre traditional rulers in resolving land disputes reveals a significant reliance on community-based approaches. The findings indicate that the involvement of family and lineage heads, consultation with elders and community leaders, and the use of traditional oaths and rituals are particularly effective. These strategies are deeply

rooted in cultural practices and emphasize the importance of maintaining social harmony and order within the community. This reliance on traditional methods underscores the community's trust in their leaders and their ability to resolve conflicts in a manner that is culturally resonant and widely accepted. In comparing the effectiveness of traditional rulers' interventions to formal legal mechanisms, the findings suggest a strong preference for the former. Traditional interventions are perceived as quicker, more cost-effective, and more culturally acceptable. The community places considerable trust in traditional rulers, viewing their methods as impartial and effective. This preference highlights the limitations of formal legal systems in addressing local disputes and underscores the enduring relevance of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. The trust and cultural alignment that traditional rulers bring to the resolution process make their interventions not only more effective but also more sustainable in maintaining long-term peace and cohesion within the community.

Continuity and Change in Traditional Roles

The study revealed a landscape of both continuity and change in the role of traditional rulers in land dispute resolution among the Ikwerre. Traditional rulers continue to employ a variety of methods, including mediation, arbitration, consultation with elders, and the use of historical knowledge and oral traditions. Remarkably, 73% of community members surveyed expressed a preference for these traditional dispute resolution mechanisms over formal court processes, citing their accessibility, lower costs, and cultural appropriateness.

Effectiveness of Traditional Methods

The effectiveness of traditional interventions was found to vary significantly depending on the nature and scale of the dispute. Traditional methods proved particularly effective for smaller, localized conflicts but often struggled with larger-scale issues, especially those involving external parties or large-scale land acquisitions.

Challenges in Land Management Roles

The study uncovered significant challenges faced by traditional rulers in their land management roles. Conflicts with formal legal systems were common, particularly in cases involving large-scale land transactions. Additionally, urbanization and changing social norms were gradually eroding the authority of traditional institutions, with younger generations showing less adherence to traditional authority in land matters.

Adaptation and Resilience

Interestingly, many traditional rulers have adapted to these challenges by incorporating elements of formal legal procedures into their dispute resolution processes and collaborating with local government authorities and legal practitioners in complex cases. This adaptability suggests a resilience in traditional institutions that may be key to their continued relevance.

Gender Dynamics

Gender dynamics emerged as a critical issue, with women's participation in traditional land dispute resolution processes found to be limited. This reflects broader gender inequalities in land rights among the Ikwerre and points to an area requiring significant attention and reform.

Impact of Oil Exploration

In the context of oil exploration, a significant factor in Rivers State, traditional rulers were found to play a crucial role in mediating between communities and oil companies in land-related conflicts. However, the complexity of these conflicts often exceeded the capacity of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, highlighting the need for more robust and integrated approaches.

Conclusion

This study has examined the role of traditional rulers in land disputes among the Ikwerre tribe in Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings reveal a complex picture where traditional rulers continue to play a significant, albeit evolving, role in land administration and dispute resolution.

Traditional rulers employ various methods in resolving land disputes, drawing on cultural knowledge and customary practices. Their interventions are often preferred by community members due to their accessibility, cultural sensitivity, and perceived fairness. However, the effectiveness of these interventions varies depending on factors such as the nature of the dispute, the ruler's perceived legitimacy, and the level of community trust.

The study also highlights the challenges faced by traditional rulers in navigating the complex landscape of land management in contemporary Nigeria. These include conflicts with formal legal systems, erosion of authority due to urbanization and changing social norms, and accusations of bias or corruption in some cases.

Despite these challenges, many traditional rulers have demonstrated adaptability, incorporating elements of formal legal procedures into their dispute resolution processes and collaborating with local government authorities and legal practitioners in complex cases.

The findings underscore the need for a nuanced approach to land management that recognizes the valuable role of traditional institutions while addressing their limitations. Such an approach should aim to integrate traditional and formal systems in a way that enhances access to justice, promotes sustainable land use, and respects cultural values.

Recommendations

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

1. **Legal Recognition:** The government should consider formalizing the role of traditional rulers in land dispute resolution through appropriate legislation. This could involve creating a framework for the integration of customary and statutory land management systems.
2. **Capacity Building:** Traditional rulers should be provided with training on modern land management practices, relevant laws, and alternative dispute resolution techniques. This would enhance their ability to handle complex land disputes effectively.
3. **Collaboration Mechanisms:** Establish formal mechanisms for collaboration between traditional rulers, local government authorities, and the judiciary in land dispute resolution. This could include regular consultations and joint dispute resolution panels.
4. **Gender Inclusivity:** Efforts should be made to promote women's participation in traditional land management and dispute resolution processes. This could involve sensitization programs and the inclusion of women in traditional councils.
5. **Documentation of Customary Practices:** There should be a systematic effort to document and codify customary land management practices. This would help preserve valuable traditional knowledge and provide a reference for dispute resolution.

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SHELL CORPORATE OPERATION AND UMUECHEM MASSACRE IN ETCHE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The study investigates Shell corporate operation and Umuechem massacre in Etche local government area of rivers state. The activities of this multi-national company gave birth to environmental degradation and pollution in oil host communities in Etche Local Government Area. The objective of this study includes having an in-depth revelation of the disastrous and injurious effects of oil exploration and exploitation in Umuechem community. Though there are several theories relevant to this study but the researchers anchored the work on the economic theory. The descriptive survey design was adopted in this study while the sources of data were both primary and secondary. The in-depth interview was the instrument for primary data while its sampling technique was the purposive sampling. Its analytical tool remains the thematic analysis. From the foregoing the study reveals among others that the activities of the multi-national were hazardous to the development of the inhabitants on the host community, such that it became unbearable after several appeals. In view of the above findings, the study recommends adequate compensation and restoration of the means of livelihood of this host community.

Keywords: Shell, corporate operation, Umuechem, massacre, environmental degradation, deprivation, neglect, corporate social responsibility

Introduction

Shell came to Umuechem for oil exploration and exploitation in 1957 as Shell – BP Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited before the change of company name on December 13, 1979 to The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited, and struck oil in commercial quantity in the community in 1958. Presently, Shell operates the Umuechem/Otamiri oil field which comprise Umuechem and Abara communities. The Umuechem/Otamiri oil field falls under Oil Mining Lease (OML 17). In Umuechem there is one major facility: a flow station. Others are 56 oil wells, 10 manifolds, 26 trunk lines, 30 borrow pits, numerous delivery lines that crisscrosses the community. The crude oil otherwise known as “Bonny Light” which Shell explores from Umuechem for the past 65 years is adjudged the best type of oil in the international oil market because its sulphur content is low (light). The discovery of oil in Umuechem was after the historic discovery of oil in commercial quantity in Oloibiri, Bayelsa State in 1956 (SAGE, 2000).

Prior to the discovery of the “black gold” in Umuechem, the people relied on their land, waters, vegetation, wildlife as their sources of livelihood through agricultural and other activities such as farming, hunting, fishing, palm produce, palm wine tapping, distilling of local gin etc. Hence the discovery of oil brought much hope and joy to the people as they expected to benefit from its proceed maximally. For the community, it was an opportunity to have access to such basic social amenities such as good roads, pipe-borne water, hospital, well equipped schools, electricity, etc. Besides, Shell would also provide employment for their sons and daughters. Their children would therefore be well-positioned to take good care of them in their old age. According to Dafinone (2007), the oil host communities had hoped that with the discovery of oil in their communities, all their needs would be met and their town would be the most beautiful (Sunday New Nigerian, August 30, 1981:7). Saiyipu

(2006), the initial reaction of the Niger Delta communities to the discovery of oil in their territory was that of joy and anticipation of development.

Professor M.I.O Ikejiani-Clark, in her Foreword to Duru (1999:8), has this to say about crude oil exploration and exploitation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria:

When crude oil was discovered in Nigeria in the late 1950s, it was hope that, its exploration, refining and marketing would improve the lots of all Nigerians, especially the people of the Niger Delta region. Unfortunately, this “black gold” which has made many Nigerians and our leaders millionaires has more or less become a curse on the people of the Niger Delta.

According to Iwayemi (2021), in spite of the substantial oil resources accruing to the Nigerian State, our hope to build a great and dynamic economy has remained a pipe dream as the “black gold” failed to deliver the anticipated “nirvana” in Nigeria. On April 27,2023, as part, of the problem bedevilling oil host communities in Nigeria, it was reported by Rhythm FM Port Harcourt that the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation appeared before the House of Representatives Ad hoc Committee investigating the unremitted \$ 2.4b being money for 48 million barrels of crude oil exported between 2016-2020.

Obviously, Shell’s unregulated exploration activities in Umuechem has remained unfriendly to the environment and had caused a lot of environmental hazards, damages and degradation to the host community. This in turn has resulted to resource scarcities as there are inadequate lands for farming, polluted waters which has affected aquatic life and the extinction of wildlife because of the presence of flow station, gas flare sites, borrow pits, pipelines, waste dump sites and other exploration activities which are a common sight in the community. Even the unoccupied land suffers from poor crop yield because of acid rain which contributes to lack of soil fertility in the area as a result of oil exploration. This is evidence in poor crop yields in plantain and cassava farming which Umuechem community is known for. In the same vein, acid rain, oil spillages, and leakages keep polluting the rivers, streams, and other water bodies and these remains a threat to aquatic life. The destroyed flora and fauna has also distorted the existence of wildlife for the benefit of the people and all these has contributed to rural-urban migration, economic and social disruption. Thus, the very roots of the primary economic base of the people such as farmlands, rivers, ponds, wildlife, etc has been destroyed thereby making the people to depend on other sources for survival.

Where once the people sourced and thrived on natural resources for their survival, they have now become unemployed, poor and malnourished, and dependent on food from other sources to sustain their livelihood because of the distortion and destruction of their environment. Thus, Shell has not only diminished but has dislocated their local economies, local economic productivity and viability, local livelihoods and economic sources of the people thereby causing poverty and misery to the people.

More worrisome is that there seem not to be any systematic effort by Shell towards the mitigations of the environmental effects of their operations on the host community. Of particular concern is the fact that there is no curative, remedial and adequate compensative efforts by Shell in relation to the host community’s productive land and waters or in terms of restoration and re-capacitation of the people’s resource based productive economic activities and livelihood sources.

The equality of opportunity and amelioration could only become possible and a reality by compensating for the deprivations and deficiencies caused by environmental degradation in Umuechem. It is by so doing that the neglected host community will have a sense of social inclusion and equal chance to partake in oil exploration activities in their environment as major stakeholders without any form of conflict. It is equally on this basis that the people of Umuechem will take their pride of place, and their environment which is poverty- stricken in economic terms will begin to witness the needed infrastructural, human capital development as well as an ecosystem that is devoid of any form of distortion and therefore habitable. All these being achieved through responsible corporate social responsibility will eliminate the catalogue of deficiencies that led to the peaceful demonstration by the people against Shell which resulted into the invasion, massacre of about 80 persons, destruction of 495 houses, properties, and the displacement of the community by a detachment of the mobile police forces at the instance of Shell.

Therefore, the corporate operation of Shell in Umuechem in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State has been destructive, destabilizing, dehumanizing and repressive. Shell’s corporate interest has remained business and profit making. This policy of Shell is at variance with the stockholder theory

as propounded by Milton Friedman (1970). Against the stakeholder theory, Friedman (1970) argued that the only social responsibility of business is to increase its profits. He opines that business has no business in social responsibility. He went further to say that compensation related acts like corporate social responsibility is synonymous to acting against the best interest of the business.

This theory which Shell adopted makes it operate in Umuechem and indeed other host communities without real consultation. Shell makes billions in dollars from the community but this enormous wealth it generates for itself, home country and host country has not impacted positively on the community's income, infrastructure and the wellbeing of its people. Shell's social investment in the community remains insignificant. Compensation for damaged lands, polluted waters, crops, fishery and other organisms in their habitat such as snail as commonly found in the community as a result of oil spillage has been either absent or inadequate while the protocol involved in accessing these monetary rewards remains tedious and delayed.

Despite the associated hazards, damages and environmental degradation as a result of Shell's operations, the livelihood, economy and infrastructure of the people has not been enhanced. This is because there is no systematic consideration of the feelings, sensitivities and social realities of the people on whose community Shell has operated since inception. According to Lubeck, Watts and Lipschutz 2008:7, Shell has neglected the life chances of oil producing communities in which they operate: Frynas (2012:27-54) found that the multinational oil companies (MNOCs) are not close to the village communities, has not been responsible to the needs and demands of the local people and has not met the growing social aspiration of the people. According to him, the attitude of the MNOCs do not favour dialogue or negotiations, indicate some detachment and ignorance of the "basic concern of the communities and as a consequence, the MNOCs have not been addressing the real life's problems of the communities". The nonchalant attitude and lack of purposeful engagement of the MNOCs with the host communities even in time of crisis was revealed in the Conclusions of the Government of Rivers State on the Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Umuechem Disturbances (1991). According to the Report, "it is the view of the Commission that there had been absence of medium of communication, lack of meaningful contact and consultation between the oil company/companies, and the communities in which they operate gives room for lack of understanding, hence confusion, disorder and all that make for disturbance".

Thus, Ikelegbe (2006) opines that, threats to Shell's operations and public image were the only things that elicit its response and social engagement. Shell acknowledged that its earlier Community Development Projects (CDPs) activities until 2003 were characterized by poor interaction and attention to community issues and concerns, poor community participation, non-partnership with communities, poor management of community interfaces, distortions of genuine community needs. Further, there are corrosive practices and poor, and sometimes negative impacts in community governance and stability, weakness in the control framework and inability to report accurately and completely (Shell 2003: 15-18).

This open acknowledgement of unfair treatment of host communities by Shell was responsible for the escalation of the peaceful demonstration which resulted into what the Conclusions of the Covenant of Rivers State on the Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Umuechem Disturbances (1991) described as "acts of homicide, doing grievous harms, malicious damage to property and arson" by the Nigerian Mobile Police Force who acted at the instance of Shell. It is obvious studies exist on Shell corporate operation and Umuechem Massacre, but none has been able to reveal if the community has been adequately repatriated by either Shell or the federal government of Nigeria. This is the gap the papers seeks to fill. The main objective of this study is to reveal the disastrous and injurious effect of oil exploration and exploitation in Umuechem.

Theoretical Framework

Theories of social conflict are interrelated just as we cannot separate politics, economics and social processes. In other words, no matter the degree by which we attempt to classify theories, as structural, biological, economic, political, physiological or otherwise, their causal interrelationship are inseparable, intertwine and interwoven.

However, political explanation may be more deeply rooted in one particular conflict, such that political solutions is also needed more than anything else in attempting to resolve it. Economic or psychological frustration may inform the cause of a particular crisis as well. In such situations, their

causal factors must be sought in trying to address the respective situations. We are therefore, compelled to reflect on the categorization of Best (2006). According to him, the theories of social conflict include, structural, realist, biological, economic, physcho-cultural and systemic.

Having given this preamble, this paper will be anchored on the economic theory. According to Best (2006), the most single undisputed factor of conflict in the society has been economic disparities among states, between individuals, or groups. Economic disparities, he says generate from two main sources. Firstly, it may result from the natural accumulation of wealthy, such as hard work and frugality in the use of resources well over others. It may also generate from wrongful exploitation of natural resources arising from contradictions of democracy in under-developed states by economic and political elite or the activities of multi-national corporations (MNCs) with support by their own or host governments.

Shell Corporate Operation in Umuechem

Umuechem like other Niger Delta communities where oil exploration and exploitation are being carried out have suffered incidents of environmental degradation and neglect by Shell. This is as a result of digging of wastes/borrows pits, blow out, oil spillage, land encroachment, loss of bio-diversity, pollution of Otamiri river and streams which are the people's major sources of drinking water as a result of inefficient drilling production and waste disposal system. According to Adebawu (2008), since the inception of the oil industry in Nigeria, there has been no concerted effect on the part of the government, let alone the oil operators, to control the environmental problems associated with the industry. These unwholesome practices of Shell are not accompanied with adequate compensation for the land or any form of compensation for the environmental distortion as stipulated in the Conclusions of Government of Rivers State on the Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Umuechem Disturbances. The effect of environmental degradation on the vegetation and population of the Delta has been devastating (Aboribo & Ikenga, 2019). Asakitikpi and Oyelaran (2019) state that the processes of oil exploration in the Niger Delta has led to the degradation and destruction of life supporting ecological system and natural resources. Apart from the destruction of the vegetation during the exploration and production, the flaring of associated gas in the process of extracting crude oil poses a threat to human life. Eteng (2018) opined that "oil exploration and exploitation has over the last five decades impacted disastrously on the socio-physical environment of the Niger Delta oil-bearing communities, massively threatening the subsistent peasant economy and the environment, and hence the entire livelihood and basic survival of the people". In spite of this indescribable level of environmental degradation, perceived economic deprivations, poverty, hunger and the absence of infrastructure such as good roads, electricity, pipe-bone water, hospital, employment opportunities, scholarship, etc, Shell did not consciously take any measure to ameliorate the hardship faced by the people as a result of its exploration activities or provided the community with alternative source of livelihood or survival as a result of its exploration activities. The MNOCs operated with restraints in relation to the environment for almost 30 years without any serious concern about the environmental effect of their operations. They did not pay serious attention to environmental degradation and health hazards associated with their operation until these concerns became challenged largely in early 1990s (Somerekum & Obadare 1998: 47). The MNOCs disregarded existing environmental regulations and laws capitalizing on their weak and ineffective enforcement.

According to Kelechi and Ayuba (2013), the federal government failed in regulating the operations pattern of the MNOCs to adequately guarantee that they carried out corporate social responsibility to their host communities. Rather, it is the State that is subordinate to the MNOCs who control the oil industry. Consequent upon this, Ibeanu (1997) and Owugah (2001) are of the opinion that the Nigerian state has been privatized by IOCs into serving their common interest.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive research design, while the source of data includes both primary and secondary data. The primary data were sourced through in-depth interview technique and the secondary data were derived from books, newspapers, magazines, unpublished articles, etc. The secondary data was analyzed using thematic analysis.

Agitations and Protest by Umuechem Community

According to memorandum submitted by the Society for Awareness and Growth in Etche (SAGE) on the massacre of Umuechem community by Shell and the Federal Military Government of Nigeria in 2002 to the Human Rights Abuses and Violation Investigation Commission (Opota Panel), the people of Umuechem has as a result of the economic, social and health problems caused by oil exploration and exploitations formed various groups such as Umuechem Central Union (UCU), and Umuechem Development Committee amongst others. These organizations in the past have sent several appeal or protests letters to Shell, and the Rivers State Government demanding to put to a halt exploration activities that are not environmental friendly and provision of social amenities, job opportunities, scholarship, etc. These appeal and protest letters did not yield any positive result as the only facilities in the community were a primary school set up by the early missionaries, and a tarred access road leading to Shell oil facility. Another tarred road is a ¼ kilometre road in the community which was a self-help project as the people paid the sum of one hundred and twenty pounds in the 1960s for its construction. In 1985, the Oganihi Social Club of Umuechem paid another money to a Shell engineer for the repair of the road and its extension to the community arena. Also, the memorandum states that the only Shell project in the community is a garri processing industry, a Shell CDP which the people did not have need of as no need assessment was conducted before it was sited. The people did not patronize the project because it did not improve on their local method as mobile cassava grinding machines were readily available and accessible, and the few who bore the burden of going to the garri processing plant still have to pay some money to process their cassava. On education, SAGE submitted that Shell has not built or assisted in the renovation of the only school in the community, while scholarship to indigent students is grossly inadequate. Furthermore, the memorandum pointed out that the only contribution to agriculture in Umuechem by Shell given the level of environmental degradation is the planting of orange seedlings in the primary school in 1973/74 which it described as improved variety. As for employment, only 4 indigenes of the community are in full time employment with Shell. Out of the four, three are holders of first school leaving certificate, while one held a National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) certificate. This is in the midst of thousands of unemployed graduates some of whom are vast in related fields.

The Conclusions of Government of Rivers State on the Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Umuechem Disturbances (1991) opines that the people of Umuechem, particularly the unemployed are facing economic hardship and frustration as a result of the hazards of oil exploration such as displacement from farm, damage of farm crops, economic trees, streams and rivers through oil pollution without adequate compensatory benefits.

As the community's historical antecedents and grievances heightened and Shell's refusal to harken to their genuine demands and several invitations for dialogue, the people weighed options, and resolved to embark on a nonviolent protest to attract the attention of Shell to their plight on October 30-31, 1990. Rather than come to the dialogue table which should be the disposition of an international oil company (IOC), Shell responded with violence by deploying a team of riot police. This police invasion led to the death of about 80 persons, disappearance of live-stocks, and the destruction of 495 houses as well as the displacement of the community thereby making them internally displaced persons (IDPs) for years in neighbouring communities.

Anger at the inequities associated with oil economy has led increasing numbers of people to form the communities in the Delta region to protest their exploitation. Also the degradation of the environment and loss of traditional livelihoods due to long years of oil exploration, without any sustainable alternative has been followed by conflicts aimed at expressing feelings of marginalization and derivation. This is the case of the conflicts experienced in Umuechem, Peretrugbene, Bagi, Ekerekana-Okrika, Ikrete and Ibeno (Ayotammo, 2010, p. 24). First of such protest took place at Umuechem in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State on October 30-31, 1990, a protest which took place at Shell's facility at Umuechem led to the police killing 80 unarmed demonstrators and destroying or badly damaging a total of 495 houses (Nwanna-Nzewunwa, 2008). Girigiri (1990, p. 42) reported that the most nefarious form of conflict has been that of protest demonstration by oil producing communities. This, he said is usually followed by grave counter action from the Nigerian state security agents. He cited Olumehense (1994, p.19), recalled the Umuechem disaster as a processing of demand. The youth and women of the community has gathered on the previous day to protest what they describe as unfair neglect by Shell, asking that Shell provide the community with basic amenities and scholarship

and employment for their people. The report continued that, instead Shell invited mobile police squad to halt the protesters. This police squad was described by a panel set up by the police hierarchy to investigate the situation as acting like an invading army, who sacked the entire village and left many dead.

Lukula (1993, p. 32) quoted in Girigiri (1997, p. 46) points out that Amnesty International put the death toll in the incident at 8 persons, with 500 houses razed, while the conclusion of the government of Rivers State on the Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Umuechem Disturbances declares that,

the Umuechem crisis started on October 30, 1990 when the youths of the community staged a peaceful and harmless demonstration against oil exploration activities in their community by Shell. They had at various intervals complained of the cease less pollution of their rivers, streams, farmlands and disruption of various economic activities. They wanted to discuss this and other matters of importance with Shell which has been mining oil in the community for over 30 years to assist them provide social amenities and stop the pollution of the environment. Shell immediately wrote the federal government for assistance; the next evening two lorry loads of armed police descended on the community and killed many villagers including a government recognize Royal Highness, and destroyed houses and valuable properties worth millions of naira.

The report went on to say,

the mobile police men, attacked Umuechem village, like an invading army that has vowed to take the last drop of the enemy's blood. They threw all human reasoning to the wind, shot people and razed a total of four hundred and ninety-five houses in the village with blast grenades, personal effects in all these houses were consumed by the fire that burnt the houses.

The preponderant share of this responsibility rests on the shoulders of the Mobile Police Force, who forget that their duty was to protect life and property and not to destroy them (Tell Magazine, January 31, 1994:13).

In October, 1990, the youths from Umuechem in Etche Local Government Area carried out a peaceful demonstration at Shell's facility, demanding the provision of essential social amenities, and to protest the degradation of their environment by Shell. This led to the police killing some eight unarmed demonstrators and destroying 495 houses. This incident was the first to bring the situation in the Niger Delta to international attention, and remains the most serious loss of life directly involving oil activities (The Price of Oil, Human Rights Watch, London, 1999 p. 123). In the views of Ogbakor Etche (2001), within the long period of years Shell has operated in Umuechem, it will baffle you to know that Shell has not ploughed back some of its revenue from the area for its development. The only evidence of Shell in the community is its facilities, exploration activities and its attendant environmental degradation.

As a result of Shell's apparent neglect of the community in the areas of employment, provision of social amenities and alternative sources of livelihood (for those whose farm land had been destroyed due to oil drilling activities), the community conducted a peaceful protest. For the avoidance of doubt, the protesting community installed a large black board at the "Y- junction" leading to Shell pumping station, and boldly wrote the following words: *"peaceful demonstration, no violence of any sort, we want peace and co-operation, Shell give us water, good roads, electricity, jobs and scholarship. God bless you all"*.

Rather than react with good manners and understanding to the genuine and harmless complaints, Shell invited the mobile police and they with their sophisticated weapons caused the unprecedented massacre in the history of the Niger Delta. This genocide comparable to the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki claimed 100 lives including the life of the Onye-Ishi Agwuru, Igboh Agwuru-Asa clan, His Royal Highness, Chief A. A. Ordu. Apart from the gruesome killing of the government recognized second class traditional ruler and others, there were unguided looting and wanton destruction of property worth millions of naira. Alamiyesiegha (2005) in Osin (2017) reported that the community was razed by mobile police men with 100 people killed and 495 houses destroyed.

In the immediate aftermath of the mayhem, in a bid to secure the social license to operate (SLO), Shell built a school, a women's development centre, electricity and a post office. The Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC), the regional development interventionist

agency built a hospital and a water project (Aaron & Patrick, 2008). A close observation of these projects gives credence to the way Christian Aid (2004) described them:

...as well as taps that are dry, this town of about 10, 000 inhabitants also has a hospital that has never treated a patient, a secondary school where no lesson has been taught a post office that has never handled a letter and a women's centre that has never held a meeting.

This confirms the situation in the community till date as there are no reparation, reconstruction or rehabilitation of any kind as recommended by the Conclusions of the Government of Rivers State on the Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Umuechem Disturbances. No good roads, no electricity, no healthcare facility, inadequate scholarship to students, no employment opportunity, lack of administrative block, classrooms, laboratories, perimeter fence, library, toilets, in the secondary school in the community.

Causes of the Conflict

In the view of the various studies cited, the causes of the Umuechem massacre are issues of oil exploration and exploitation, its environmental hazards, lack of compensation, absence of infrastructure, deprivation and neglect of the host community by Shell, but the Federal Government disposition on issues that border on the ownership of natural resources is mostly the remote cause. This is because under the independence constitution, the continental shelf of a region was regarded as part of the area and the area was entitled to 50% of mining royalties and rents derived from that region, but the Federal Government later introduced several obnoxious and draconian laws which dispossessed the people of their natural resources and vested the ownership and control of all oil and gas resources on the central government for and on behalf of the people of Nigeria. These laws include: The Land Use Act, The Exclusive Economic Zone Act, The Territorial Water Act, Oil and Mineral Act of 2004, The Petroleum Decree of 1969, etc. To further alienate oil host communities from resource control and right to the oil wealth, the Supreme Court of Nigeria in the judgment delivered in the locus classicus case in 2002 held that the resource control right is vested exclusively on the Federal Government by virtue of section 44 (3) of the Nigerian constitution.

Consequently, Shell saw the federal government as the sole owner of petroleum resources and therefore refused to acknowledge oil host communities as stakeholders, rather sees them as people who do not stake anything, therefore should not have anything to hold irrespective of the fact that their sources of livelihood has been distorted and dislocated which prompted Umuechem community to write to Shell severally for dialogue for an improved condition of living without any reply to such communications.

To give credence to Shell's stance on its host communities, Mr. E. M. Daukoru, former Shell Divisional Manager was quoted as saying, "an oil company has no statutory obligation to embark on an expensive road construction. It is the function of the Federal Government to ensure that the lives in oil-producing areas are improved". Evidently, in the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) entered into by Shell and its host communities in 2006, provision of infrastructure like roads, bridges, etc are not part of the agreement. Furthermore, the Conclusions of the Government of Rivers State on the Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Umuechem Disturbances posits that the immediate cause of the violent conflict is,

the demonstration of which whether peaceful or violent was misconceived and misdirected considering that the company (Shell) is answerable only to the Federal Government, and does not owe any legal obligations to provide any socio-economic or social amenities to the communities of its operations, except in the area of payment of compensations for lands acquired for oil operations, crop/economic trees on such lands, damage done to farms by oil spillage/blowout, pollution of water/ rivers/streams by oil spillage and such other liabilities as may be stipulated by law.

Persons Responsible for the Disturbances (Massacre)

According to the recommendations of the Conclusions of the Government of Rivers State on the Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Umuechem Disturbance, the Mobile Police Force men, who were sent to Umuechem by Shell on November 1, 1990, were responsible for all the havoc done at the village, and should be saddled with the blame for

all that happened there. They committed acts of homicide, doing grievous harms, malicious damage to property and arson. The law officers should take appropriate legal action against the Mobile Police Force men.

It went on to say,

the Federal Military Government of Nigeria should be called upon to make reparations for all loss of lives, harm done to persons and damage to property (home and personal effects) caused by these agents of the Federal Government. These reparations may be by way of rebuilding the damaged houses for their owners or paying them monetary compensations to rebuild their houses.

Compensations for Losses

The recommendations of the Conclusions of the Government of the Rivers State on the Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Umuechem Disturbances reveals that those whose houses/personal effects were damaged or destroyed, families of person who lost their lives, persons wounded and those whose personal effects with special values like motor-cycles, cars, generators, etc were burnt were recommended for compensation. The Report has it that “1,033 persons from Umuechem made claims for loss of personal property/ personal effects”, and that “the Mobile Police Force that caused the damage and destruction are agents of the Federal Government and the responsibility for the damages and destruction should rest on the shoulders of the Federal Government”. “In view of the high cost of building materials, the owners of the damaged homes should be paid the value of the houses without depreciation” the Report declared.

On the persons who lost their lives including a police man, the Report comments that: many lives were lost and wounded in the disturbances; it was not possible to identify all those that were killed either from bullet wounds or by blast grenades because some of the dead were not indigenes of Umuechem and so had not any one to identify them; many bodies were allegedly thrown into the Otamiri river at Chokocho by the Mobile Police Force men to avoid identification...

Also, the Commission recommended that monetary compensation be paid to the families of those who lost their lives as well as those who sustained various degree of injuries. Lastly, the Commission recommended that; “since the Umuechem villagers must be rehabilitated and given quick relief, Rivers State Government should pay for all reparations for damages and destruction of property, loss of personal effects, loss of lives and harm done to persons, and claim reimbursement from the Federal Military Government of Nigeria”. In addition, the Commission approved the sum of N18, million to be paid to the community by the Federal and Rivers State Governments, absolving Shell of any blame. But it is surprising to note that only N3.5million was paid till date with “dud cheque” (SAGE, 2000).

However, Shell and the Federal Government of Nigeria accepted responsibility for this inhumane act, and agreed to rehabilitate the remaining inhabitants of Umuechem by approving N10 million as compensation for the people. It is painful that the people are still being owed N6.5million out of the N10 million till today (Ogbakor Etche, 2001).

Unfortunately, these sums of money approved and partly paid by either the Federal, Rivers State governments or even Shell were mere reliefs to the victims of the crisis to cushion the effect of the conflict as internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Sadly, the recommendations of the Conclusions of the Government of Rivers State on the Report of Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Umuechem Disturbances has not been implemented. This informs why SAGE in their Memorandum on the massacre of Umuechem community by Shell and the Federal Military Government to the “Oputa Panel” in 2002 demanded as follows:

1. Total physical reconstruction of Umuechem town (provision of good roads, building of good pipe-borne water, erecting of a hospital building and a recreation centre, etc).
2. Payment of the sum of N20 billion to the community as compensation for all who lost their lives and property in the massacre.
3. Provision of employment for the unemployed graduates and other indigenes of the community.
4. Award of scholarship to the indigenes at all levels of education
5. An immediate pull out of Shell from its proposed Toxic Waste Dump Site at Umuakuru-Igboh Etche (five kilometres from Umuechem) among others demands.

Furthermore, the non-implementation of the recommendations of the Conclusions of the Government of Rivers State on the Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Umuechem Disturbances made Ogbakor Etche, on behalf of Etche Nation, to make a presentation to the former Vice President of Nigeria, Professor Yemi Osibanjo on February 13, 2017 when he visited Rivers State. Among the major issues raised in the address was a demand for the reparation of Umuechem community. This move by the people to once again bring the attention of the government to the plight of the people of Umuechem did not get any response till the end of the Muhammadu Buhari administration in May 29, 2023.

Conclusion

Shell corporate operation and Umuechem massacre in Etche L.G.A of Rivers State is a study that assessed the exploration and exploitation activities of Shell in the community since 1957. The study revealed how the people's environment was degraded, and their sources of livelihood diminished, dislocated and distorted without anything in place as an alternative means of earning a living to ameliorate the untold hardship as a result of the destruction of the flora and fauna. No remedial effort of any kind as there are no adequate compensations for lands acquired, pollutions of all kind that exists come with little or no compensation and no remediation of the impacted environment as contained in the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) Report on the Niger Delta, no hospital despite noticeable environmental hazards, employment opportunities are never provided and a complete lack of basic social amenities all of which ought to be in place for the wellbeing of the host community. All of this environmental degradation, marginalization and deprivation of the people of their natural endowment gave rise to health challenges, poverty, hunger, depression, anxiety, anger, etc. Out of their frustration, the community protested peacefully against the inhuman treatment meted against them by Shell after series of unreplied communications for dialogue. In response to the demonstration, the mobile police force on the invitation of Shell invaded, destroyed houses and personal effects, wounded and killed the armless protesters in peace time.

The study also shows how the federal government excluded the host community /communities in the oil wealth through obnoxious legislations. This no doubt has remained the undisputable major cause of oil company/host community and host community/ government conflicts. In all of these, oil companies, Shell in particular is usually treated as a "sacred cow". Little wonder why in the Umuechem massacre, Shell was neither mentioned for any wrong doing or indicted in the Conclusions of the Government of Rivers State on the Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Umuechem Disturbances.

Recommendations

Following the conclusion of this study, this study recommended amongst others that:

1. Shell should carry out an urgent remediation of all impacted sites in Umuechem community.
2. As a matter of emergency, Shell should provide the people with an alternate source of livelihood and float a manpower development scheme in Umuechem community.
3. Umuechem community should be declared a special need area by Shell with the aim of providing them with basic social amenities.
4. The federal and Rivers State governments and Shell should adequately compensate, reparate and rehabilitate Umuechem community accordingly.
5. Also, the federal government should ensure that oil exploration in Nigeria is based on resource ownership or control to avoid incidents of oil related conflicts in host communities.

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KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE OF ORAL HEALTH AMONG CAREGIVERS IN DAYCARE FACILITIES IN GOKANA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between caregiver knowledge and practices in oral health among infants in daycare facilities within Gokana Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. The study aimed to determine if there was a correlation between the level of knowledge caregivers possessed about infant oral health and their subsequent oral care practices. By examining this relationship, the study sought to contribute to the understanding of factors influencing infant oral health outcomes in the region. This cross-sectional study involved 100 caregivers working in all the day-care centers in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. Data were entered and analyzed using SPSS 26.0. While the descriptive statistics which include frequency count, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the socio-demographic data; inferential statistics such as the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse the hypothesis. The F-statistic of 16.980 and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than the significance level of 0.05, suggested that the relationship between caregiver knowledge and practice is significantly related. And that caregivers with a lower level of knowledge about oral health are less likely to implement good practices in caring for the children's oral health. It is therefore recommended that the government and other intervention agencies should organize regular training and workshops for caregivers on oral health care, focusing on practical skills and knowledge.

Keywords: Knowledge, Practice, Oral Health, Caregivers, Daycare Facilities

Introduction

Oral and dental health is an essential aspect of primary health care and is a situation in which the mouth, teeth, and gums are healthy and free from any diseases. This critical aspect of general health needs to be well inculcated right from early childhood, as it has been documented that poor mouth hygiene is one of the risk factors for oral diseases (Adeyemi & Ola, 2020). Parents, especially mothers, are responsible for maintaining good oral hygiene practices and inculcating good oral hygiene habits in children (Suleiman et al., 2020). Maintaining good oral and dental hygiene is also an essential aspect in the prevention of severe infections like infective endocarditis (IE) in children with structurally normal hearts as well as those with congenital and acquired heart defects. Infections of the teeth and gums and interventions for their prevention and treatment can lead to the transfer of micro-organisms from the oral cavity into the bloodstream, which can adhere to endocardial surfaces and cause infective endocarditis (Ezeja, 2019).

Recent guidelines for preventing IE have emphasized the maintenance of good oral hygiene above antibiotic prophylaxis given before specific dental procedures because significant bacteremia can even occur during simple everyday activities like chewing and brushing (Lee, 2019). Also, poor oral hygiene can lead to conditions like gingivostomatitis, which can lead to progressive ulceration (Noma), especially in young and severely malnourished children. Studies have highlighted the critical role of mothers in shaping the oral health practices of their children, emphasizing the importance of maternal knowledge and attitudes toward dental care and indicating that maternal behaviour significantly influences children's dental health outcomes (Ayers, 2019; Ola, 2018). Research demonstrates a direct correlation between mothers' dental health practices and their children's oral health status (Graziano, 2018).

The role of caregivers in oral healthcare of infants in daycare facilities is crucial for promoting healthy habits and preventing oral diseases from an early age. According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), caregivers play a significant role in maintaining the oral health of infants and toddlers (AAPD, 2019). Caregivers establish a routine of oral hygiene practices, such as wiping the infant's gums and teeth with a soft cloth after feeding (Mouradian et al., 2017). This helps remove

plaque and bacteria, reducing the risk of tooth decay and gum disease. Secondly, caregivers can promote healthy feeding practices, such as breastfeeding and offering water after feeding solid foods (WHO, 2018). This also helps prevent bottle tooth decay and ensures the infant's teeth are properly cleansed. Furthermore, caregivers monitor for signs of oral health issues, such as tooth decay, gum inflammation, and misaligned teeth (CASL, 2019). Early detection and referral to paediatric dentist can prevent more severe problems from developing. Caregivers also educate parents on proper oral hygiene practices and provide resources for further information (Holt, et al., 2017). This ensures a collaborative approach to maintaining the infant's oral health.

Despite the importance of oral health in preventing diseases and promoting overall well-being, caregivers in daycare facilities lacks adequate knowledge and practices to provide optimal oral health care for children under their supervision, potentially leading to poor oral health outcomes and related problems. Caregivers in daycare facilities face numerous challenges in handling the oral healthcare of infants. Many caregivers are not equipped with the necessary skills to provide adequate oral care, leading to inadequate brushing and flossing techniques (Holt et al., 2017). Another challenge is the limited resources and facilities available in daycare centers. Many centers lack the necessary equipment, such as toothbrushes and toothpaste, to provide oral care (Okeigbemen et al., 2018).

Additionally, the lack of space and privacy also make it difficult to perform oral care tasks (Suleiman et al., 2019). Furthermore, caregivers also face resistance from infants during oral care routines, making it difficult to establish a consistent oral hygiene practice (Ibrahim et al., 2020). This resistance can be due to the infant's unfamiliarity with the oral care process or discomfort with the sensations involved (Adeyinka et al., 2017). To address these challenges, caregivers need to receive proper training and education on oral health practices. Daycare centers should also invest in providing the necessary resources and facilities to support oral care (Okeigbemen et al., 2018). Finally, caregivers should establish a gentle and gradual approach to introducing oral care routines to infants to minimize resistance and establish a lifelong habit of good oral hygiene (Ibrahim et al., 2020).

By investigating the oral health knowledge and practices of caregivers in daycare facilities, this study aims to identify potential gaps and areas for improvement, ultimately contributing to better oral health outcomes for children in Gokana Local Government Area. In view of the foregoing, the following are the research questions deduce to guide the study:

- i. What is the level of knowledge of the caregivers concerning oral health in daycare facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State?
- ii. What is the attitude of caregivers towards the children concerning the oral health of the children in the daycare facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State?
- iii. What are the challenges faced by the caregivers in providing oral healthcare to infants in daycare facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study is to assess the oral health knowledge and practices among caregivers in Daycare Facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Ascertain the level of knowledge of the caregivers concerning oral health in daycare facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State.
- ii. Examine the attitude of caregivers towards the children concerning the oral health of the children in the daycare facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State.
- iv. Find the challenges faced by the caregivers in providing oral healthcare to infants in daycare facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁ There is no correlation between the level of knowledge of the caregivers and the practice of the caregivers on oral health of the children in the daycare facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on assessing the knowledge and practices of caregivers related to oral health in daycare facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. Specifically, it will explore their understanding of: Oral health concepts; oral hygiene practices (e.g., brushing, flossing); knowledge

of caregivers on oral health education; attitude of caregivers towards children in daycare and barriers to maintaining good oral health practices among caregivers.

Conceptual Review

The oral health of infants is a critical aspect of their overall well-being, and caregivers play a pivotal role in establishing and maintaining good oral hygiene habits. Understanding the relationship between caregiver knowledge and practice is essential for developing effective interventions to improve infant oral health in daycare settings. Research has consistently demonstrated a strong correlation between caregiver knowledge and their subsequent practices in various health domains, including oral health (Akintola et al., 2015). This suggests that enhancing caregivers' knowledge about infant oral care can positively influence their behaviour and ultimately improve the oral health outcomes of infants under their care.

In the context of Nigerian daycare facilities, several studies have highlighted the knowledge gap among caregivers regarding infant oral health. Many caregivers possess limited understanding of the importance of early oral care, the signs of oral diseases, and appropriate oral hygiene techniques (Ojo et al., 2018). This lack of knowledge often translates into suboptimal oral care practices, such as infrequent tooth brushing, improper brushing techniques, and the absence of regular dental check-ups. Conversely, caregivers with a higher level of knowledge about infant oral health are more likely to adopt recommended oral hygiene practices. Studies have shown that caregivers who participate in oral health education programmes exhibit improved knowledge and subsequently demonstrate better oral care practices (Adebayo et al., 2017). This underscores the importance of investing in caregiver education and training as a strategy for improving infant oral health.

Furthermore, the relationship between caregiver knowledge and practice is influenced by various factors, including socio-economic status, cultural beliefs, and access to oral healthcare services (Owolabi et al., 2019). Caregivers from disadvantaged backgrounds may have limited access to information and resources, which can hinder their ability to acquire and apply oral health knowledge. In conclusion, the evidence suggests a strong association between caregiver knowledge and practice in relation to infant oral health in Nigerian daycare facilities. Enhancing caregiver knowledge through targeted education and training programs is crucial for promoting optimal oral health outcomes among infants. Additionally, addressing the underlying socio-economic and cultural factors that influence caregiver practices is essential for achieving sustainable improvements in infant oral health.

Theoretical Framework

The Knowledge-Attitude-Behaviour (KAB) Model was propounded by various scholars in the field of health education and behavioural science. The KAB model suggests that knowledge influences attitudes, which in turn affect behaviours (Glanz & Rimer, 2005). One of the earliest mentions of the KAB model can be traced back to the work of Ajzen and Fishbein, who proposed the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). The TRA posits that behavioural intentions are influenced by attitudes and subjective norms (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973). They argued that knowledge is a precursor to attitude formation, which in turn influences behavioural intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The KAB model has since been widely applied in various health education and promotion settings, including oral health (Kay & Locker, 1998). This theory suggests that knowledge influences attitudes, which in turn affect behaviours. It can be used to examine how caregivers' knowledge of oral health affects their attitudes and practices.

Review of Empirical Studies

Studies conducted in Nigeria have consistently demonstrated a positive correlation between caregiver knowledge and their subsequent practices in infant oral health (Akintola et al., 2015; Ojo et al., 2018). Caregivers with a higher level of knowledge about oral health, including the importance of early oral care, signs of oral diseases, and appropriate hygiene techniques, are more likely to engage in recommended oral care practices (Adebayo et al., 2017). However, the effectiveness of knowledge translation into practice is influenced by several factors. Socioeconomic status, cultural beliefs, and access to oral healthcare services have been identified as mediating variables (Owolabi et al., 2019). These factors can influence caregivers' ability to apply their knowledge in daily care routines. Despite the positive association between knowledge and practice, it is important to note that possessing

knowledge does not guarantee optimal oral health outcomes. Other factors, such as caregiver attitudes, beliefs, and time constraints, also play a significant role in shaping oral health practices. Therefore, comprehensive interventions that address multiple determinants of oral health behaviour are necessary to achieve sustained improvements in infant oral health.

While the relationship between caregiver knowledge and oral health practices has been extensively studied in various contexts, including Nigeria, there is a significant gap in the literature specifically focused on the Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. Most studies on caregiver knowledge and oral health practices in Nigeria have been conducted in urban areas or at the national level (Akintola et al., 2015; Ojo et al., 2018). These studies provide valuable insights into the general trends, but they may not accurately reflect the specific challenges and contexts faced by caregivers in rural or underserved areas like Gokana LGA. Furthermore, the interplay between cultural factors, socioeconomic conditions, and access to healthcare services in Gokana LGA may significantly influence the relationship between caregiver knowledge and practice. These factors have not been comprehensively explored in the context of infant oral health in this specific region.

Study Area

Gokana, a local government area in Rivers State, Nigeria, is deeply rooted in the rich tapestry of Niger Delta history. The region, predominantly inhabited by the Ogoni people, has a history intertwined with the broader Niger Delta struggles. The Ogoni people, known for their resilience and cultural heritage, have faced numerous challenges, including environmental degradation, marginalization, and economic hardship. These historical factors have undoubtedly influenced the socio-economic conditions of the people, which may have implications for healthcare, including oral health, and consequently, the knowledge and practices of caregivers in the area (Alagoa, 1998; Nwilo, 2005).

Methods

This cross-sectional study involved caregivers working in all the day-care centers in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. From a total of 40 day-care centers employing 133 individuals, 100 consented to participate in the study which formed the population of the study. The sample size for the study was 100 respondents. The sample size adopted for the study was census where all the caregivers who consented to participate in the study were chosen for the study. The questionnaire addressed the knowledge, attitude and practice of oral health promoting factors among infants and young children, designed by the researcher with the expert opinion of a paediatric dentist and community dental health specialist in University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital. It had 23 items, and took about 20 minutes to complete. The scoring for knowledge and practice was based on 4-point Likert scale. All aspects of oral health promoting factors in children including oral hygiene, diet and fluoride were addressed. Data were entered and analyzed using SPSS 26.0. While the descriptive statistics which include frequency count, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the socio-demographic data; inferential statistics such as the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse the hypothesis earlier stated in chapter one.

Results and Discussion

Research Questions 1: What is the level of knowledge of the caregivers concerning oral health in day care facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 1 Descriptive Analysis of the Level of Knowledge of the Caregivers Concerning Oral Health in Day Care facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Decision
1	Do you know your teeth are an essential part of your body?	07 (7.3%)	20 (20.8%)	27 (28.1%)	42 (43.8%)	1.91	0.96	Low Extent
2	Do you know children should have their teeth brushed by an adult until they are 7 to 8?	35 (36.5%)	50 (52.1%)	10 (10.4%)	1 (1%)	3.23	0.67	High Extent

3	Do you know that some toothpaste contains fluoride?	23 (24%)	27 (28.1%)	20 (20.8%)	26 (27.1%)	2.48	1.13	Low Extent
4	Do you know that using fluoridated tooth paste is suitable for your children's teeth?	13 (13.5%)	13 (13.5%)	33 (34.4%)	37 (38.5%)	2.02	1.03	Low Extent
5	Do you know that consuming snacks like candies and cookies that stick to teeth will cause dental decay?	1 (1%)	10 (10.4%)	43 (44.8%)	42 (43.8%)	1.68	0.70	Low Extent
6	Do you know that unhealthy oral and dental habits can result in bloodstream and heart infections?	4 (4.2%)	12 (12.5%)	40 (41.7%)	40 (41.7%)	1.79	0.81	Low Extent
7	Do you know that Dentists play an important role in preventing oral diseases?	8 (8.3%)	75 (78.1%)	8 (8.3%)	5 (5.2%)	2.89	0.60	High Extent
8	Do you know that it is necessary to go for dental check-up?	7 (7.3%)	8 (8.3%)	43 (44.8%)	38 (39.6%)	1.83	0.86	Low Extent
Grand Mean						2.22	0.84	Low Extent

Source: Fieldwork Survey (2024)

On the extent of knowledge of the caregivers on issues of oral health of infants in daycare centers in Gokana, the mean total of 2.22 and corresponding standard deviation of 0.84 revealed that there is low extent of knowledge of the caregivers in educating and caring for the infants' oral health in the area. The implication is that majority of the caregivers which fell below the criterion mean of 2.50 agreed that they have less knowledge concerning oral health in daycare centers.

Research Questions 2: What is the practice of the caregivers towards the children concerning the oral health of the children in the daycare facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 2 Descriptive Analysis of the Attitude of Caregivers towards the Children Concerning Oral Health in Day Care facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Decision
9	Encourage children to brush their teeth at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste	8 (8.3%)	8 (8.3%)	42 (43.8%)	38 (39.6%)	1.85	0.89	Low Extent
10	You assist and supervise children during brushing to ensure proper technique	8 (3.8%)	15 (15.6%)	37 (38.5%)	36 (37.5%)	1.94	0.93	Low Extent
11	Providing healthy snacks and limiting sugary or acidic foods/drinks	4 (4.2%)	32 (33.3%)	42 (43.8%)	18 (18.8%)	2.22	0.80	Low Extent
12	Encouraging children to drink water throughout the day	29 (30.2%)	29 (30.2%)	20 (20.8%)	18 (18.8%)	2.71	1.09	High Extent

13	Teaching children about proper oral hygiene and its importance	15 (15.6%)	11 (11.5%)	23 (24%)	47 (49%)	1.93	1.11	Low Extent
14	Scheduling regular dental check-ups for children	7 (7.3%)	11 (11.5%)	43 (44.8%)	35 (36.5%)	1.89	0.87	Low Extent
15	Monitoring thumb-sucking, tongue-thrusting, or other oral habits	37 (38.5%)	47 (49%)	9 (9.4%)	3 (3.1%)	3.22	0.74	High Extent
16	Informing parents about their child's oral health and providing guidance on home care	5 (5.2%)	18 (18.8%)	37 (38.5%)	36 (37.5%)	1.91	0.87	Low Extent
17	Establishing a daily routine that includes oral hygiene practices	6 (6.3%)	12 (12.5%)	40 (41.7%)	38 (39.6%)	1.85	0.87	Low Extent
18	Using toothbrushes, toothpaste, and other products designed for children's sensitive teeth and gums.	15 (15.6%)	20 (20.6%)	30 (31.3%)	31 (32.3%)	2.19	1.06	Low Extent
Grand Mean						2.17	0.92	Low Extent

Source: Fieldwork Survey (2024)

On the table above, the study examined the extent of the practice of the caregivers towards the children concerning the oral health of the children in the daycare facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. The mean ratio of 2.17 and corresponding standard deviation of 0.92 implies that there is low level of practice of the caregivers on issues of oral health in the sampled daycare centres in Gokana. The implication is that the infants in the schools receive less oral healthcare attention from the caregivers in the area.

Research Questions 3: What are the challenges faced by the caregivers in providing oral healthcare to infants in daycare facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 3 Descriptive Analysis of the Measure that can be Taken to Improve the Practice of Caregivers towards the Children in Daycare Facilities in Gokana Local Government Area Of Rivers State

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Decision
19	As a caregiver, I lack specific training in infant oral hygiene, leading to misconceptions and inadequate practices.	42 (43.8%)	47 (49%)	6 (6.3%)	1 (1%)	3.35	0.64	Accepted
20	Overcrowded daycare facilities make it difficult for me to provide individual attention to each infant for oral care.	32 (33.3%)	46 (47.9%)	16 (16.7%)	2 (2.1%)	3.12	0.75	Accepted
21	As a caregiver, I have limited time for oral hygiene due to the demands of other	30 (31.3%)	59 (61.5%)	5 (5.2%)	2 (2.1%)	3.21	0.63	Accepted

	childcare responsibilities							
22	I don't pay attention to oral health of the infants because it is not prioritized in Nigerian society.	37 (38.5%)	57 (59.4%)	2 (2.1%)	3.36	0.52	Accepted	
23	Insufficient government investment in oral health programs and infrastructure hampers the provision of oral care services	45 (46.9%)	50 (52.1%)	1s (1%)	3.44	0.55	Accepted	
Grand Mean					3.29	0.61	Accepted	

Source: Fieldwork Survey (2024)

The data on the table above was used to examine the challenges faced by the caregivers in providing oral healthcare to infants in daycare facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. The data analysis revealed that since the mean ratios of 3.35, 3.12, 3.21, 3.36 and 3.44 and corresponding standard deviation of 0.64, 0.75, 0.63, 0.52 and 0.55 are above the criterion mean of 2.50, the finding therefore revealed that caregivers lack specific training in infant oral hygiene, leading to misconceptions and inadequate practices; overcrowded daycare facilities make it difficult for the caregivers to provide individual attention to each infant for oral care; caregiver, caregivers have limited time for oral hygiene due to the demands of other childcare responsibilities; caregivers don't pay attention to oral health of the infants because it is not prioritized in Nigerian society and that the challenge of insufficient government investment in oral health programmes and infrastructure hampers the provision of oral care services in the study area. The implication is that since the grand mean of 3.29 is above the criterion mean of 2.50, it is concluded that the caregivers faces challenges in providing oral healthcare to infants in daycare facilities in the study area.

Test of Hypothesis

H₀₁ There is no correlation between the level of knowledge of the caregivers and the practice of the caregivers on oral health of the children in the daycare facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 4 Analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the correlation the knowledge of the caregivers and the practice of the caregivers on the oral health of the children in the daycare facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3.845	1	3.845	16.982	.000 ^b
Residual	21.285	94	.226		
Total	25.130	95			

The provided table shows the results of a hypothesis test on the correlation between caregiver knowledge and oral health practices in daycare facilities. The F-statistic of 16.980 indicates a strong positive relationship between the two variables. The p-value of 0.000 is less than the significance level of 0.05, meaning the observed correlation is statistically significant. This suggests that the relationship between caregiver knowledge and practice is unlikely to be due to chance. Based on this analysis, caregivers with a higher level of knowledge about oral health are more likely to implement good practices in caring for the children's oral health.

Discussion of Findings

The Level of Knowledge of the Caregivers on the Oral Health in Day Care Facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State

The objective one of the study aimed to ascertain the level of knowledge of the caregivers on the oral health of children in day care facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State, the mean total of 2.22 and corresponding standard deviation of 0.84 revealed that there is low extent of knowledge of the caregivers in educating and caring for the infants' oral health in the area. The implication is that majority of the caregivers which fell below the criterion mean of 2.50 agreed that they have less knowledge concerning oral health in daycare centers. In corroborating this, a study has identified potential gaps in caregiver knowledge despite a generally positive perception. Research by Khan (2018) in Kerachi Pakistan revealed that while caregivers generally understood the importance of oral hygiene, most of the caregivers lacked knowledge about specific topics like proper brushing technique or the appropriate timing for introducing fluoride toothpaste. This emphasizes the need for targeted knowledge-building interventions in daycare facilities in the study area.

The Practice of the Caregivers towards the Children's Oral Health in the Daycare Facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State

The second objective of the study examines the practice of the caregivers towards the children's oral health in daycare facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. Data analysis revealed that most of the caregivers display poor attitude and practice of oral health towards the children in the daycare facilities. The mean ratio of 2.17 and corresponding standard deviation of 0.92 implies that there is low level of practice of the caregivers on issues of oral health in the daycare centres in Gokana. This finding was contrary to the study conducted by Ayers (2019) and Kumar (2020). Further, the study found that about 80% of caregivers reported regularly assisting the children to brush their teeth, which is higher than the 60% reported in a study conducted in Australia (Ayers, 2019). Similarly, a study in India found that 75% of caregivers reported using fluoride toothpaste for the children (Kumar, 2020). The findings further revealed that caregivers' attitude and practices were significantly influenced by their level of knowledge, with those having lower knowledge scores demonstrating poor attitude and practices towards the children oral health.

The Challenges Faced by the Caregivers in Providing Oral Healthcare to Infants in Daycare Facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State

The analysis of the study objective three revealed that since the grand mean of 3.29 is above the criterion mean of 2.50, it was therefore concluded that the caregivers faces challenges in providing oral healthcare to infants in daycare facilities in the study area. The analysis revealed that caregivers lack specific training in infant oral hygiene, leading to misconceptions and inadequate practices; overcrowded daycare facilities make it difficult for the caregivers to provide individual attention to each infant for oral care; caregiver, caregivers have limited time for oral hygiene due to the demands of other childcare responsibilities; caregivers don't pay attention to oral health of the infants because it is not prioritized in Nigerian society and that the challenge of insufficient government investment in oral health programmes and infrastructure hampers the provision of oral care services in the study area.

The Correlation between the Knowledge of the Caregivers and the Practice of the Caregivers on the Oral Health of the Children in the Daycare Facilities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State

This research examined the connection between the knowledge daycare caregivers have about oral health and how well they actually care for children's teeth in Gokana Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. The results showed a strong link between these two factors. In other words, caregivers who know more about oral health are better at taking care of children's teeth in daycare. This finding is consistent with previous studies conducted in Nigeria, which have also reported a positive correlation between knowledge and practice (Adeyinka et al., 2017; Okeigbemen et al., 2018). Another study conducted in Lagos, Nigeria, found a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.80, p < 0.01$) between caregivers' knowledge and practice on oral health, highlighting the importance of knowledge in determining practice. Furthermore, the study's findings suggest that caregivers' knowledge on oral health is a significant predictor of their practice. This is consistent with a study conducted in Abuja,

Nigeria, which found that caregivers' knowledge was a significant predictor of their practice on oral health (Ezeja et al., 2019). Overall, the study's findings highlight the importance of oral health education for caregivers in daycare facilities, as it can improve their knowledge and practice, ultimately benefiting the oral health of children in their care.

Conclusion

Overall, the study explained the often overlooked, yet significant information about the knowledge and attitudes of oral health caregivers in daycare schools in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. However, the caregivers' knowledge and attitude scores concerning oral health were less satisfactory as compared to the norms with some areas of improvement. In order to improve oral health, caregivers who are less well informed should be advised to participate in training programmes on the importance of preventive oral health services and dental treatments. This is important because the parents of children also look to them for oral healthcare information needed at home. Moreover, preventive techniques concerning oral health must be updated with the continuing advances in research. This will indirectly result in an upgrade of oral healthcare for children in the study area.

Recommendations

The following are the four recommendations on how to improve the knowledge level and attitude of caregivers towards daycare oral health in daycare centers in Gokana Local Government Area, Rivers State:

- i. The government and other intervention agencies should organize regular training and workshops for caregivers on oral health care, focusing on practical skills and knowledge. They should invite dental professionals to lead sessions, covering topics like toothbrushing, diet, and oral hygiene.
- ii. The ministry of education in Rivers State and the country at large should provide caregivers with accessible and engaging resource materials, such as hand-outs, posters, and children's books, to reinforce key oral health messages. Ensure materials are available in local languages to facilitate understanding.
- iii. Daycare schools should encourage peer-led discussions or mentoring programmes among caregivers to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices in oral health care. This approach fosters a supportive environment and promotes knowledge sharing.
- iv. Proprietors of Daycare schools should endeavour to establish partnerships with local dental professionals to provide regular dental check-ups, consultations, and guidance for caregivers. This collaboration ensures caregivers receive accurate and up-to-date information, enabling them to provide high-quality oral health care for children.

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EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN RUMUEME COMMUNITY, OBIO-AKPO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

This study examines the role of education in community development laying emphasis in Rumueme Community, Obio-Akpo Local Government Area, Rivers state. Five research questions and five objectives were formulated which guided the study. The study was anchored on functionalist theory. The study adopted survey method of research design. The population therefore consists of about 545, 116 people (2006 National Population Census). The sample size used for the study is 100 family units or 500 respondents picked from the various enumeration areas (zones). Mean and percentages were used in the analysis of research results. Findings of the study revealed that there is a correlation between educational programmes, processes and activities; and sustainable community development. Thus, the study recommends that since more of these communities in the study area are educationally disadvantaged and lack the necessary and required push for meaningful community development activities, the government, relevant agencies, department and concerned individuals should take it upon themselves to provide and perform these functions as needed to ensure supplying, the required infrastructural amenities.

Keywords: Education, community, development, roles, rumueme, functionalism.

Introduction

Throughout the whole world, including sub-Saharan Africa, where Nigeria rightly belongs, one thing that is no longer in doubt is the importance of educational and its potentials to positively transform the economic, social, physical and political landscapes of communities and their developmental processes, thereby stimulating sustainable development (Ekiamelator, 2010).

According to experts, in Nigeria, the recent and continuing attention towards community development programmes and processes is due to their growing importance as it relates to, not only in improving on material and tangible projects in the communities such as school; roads; water projects; town halls; markets; health centres and the like, but also in terms of the entire development of the individuals thereby increasing the abilities, capabilities and making it possible for him to build up himself and his environment, and the nation at large.

Also, opinion leaders and industry watchers have severally argued that community development is largely dependent on education and, in fact, on community education, in particular. They opined that a person with high level of education holds positive attitude towards community development, while those who are low in the educational ladder hold negative attitude about education and its processes.

Furthermore, community development is seen as worthy efforts aimed at enhancing community development programmes and activities through the introduction of various policies, institutions, agencies and programmes such as poverty alleviation programme, family economic advancement programme, family support programme, youth empowerment scheme, better life for rural women, national directorate for employment, and the like. Through these means, the government reaches out to the people and by so doing helps them to participate in nation building.

Also, education which is seen as the acquisition of knowledge and skill required to adapt to and exploit the social and physical environments in the process of development. In fact, Chuku (2010) remarked that education is a process of training and sustaining the material and intellectual wellbeing of a society, thereby enhancing community development activities

of a society. Chuku (2010), further noted that education may involve systematic instruction such as presently perceived in communities.

The above notwithstanding, the aspirations and yearnings of governments at all levels towards self-reliance and development of the various communities cannot be achieved without a turnaround in the educational backwardness of the citizens of Nigeria, and Rivers State in particular. This call for a dynamic and functional community development policies and programmes, including functional education curricular and programmes that will be in tune with realities of developing society is timely and in the right direction. In other words, community development intervention and educational policies and programmes should be simultaneously targeted at groups and segments within any given community.

Statement of the Problem

Although Nigeria is the most populous African nation and arguably one of the best endowed in terms of crude oil, solid minerals and agricultural products to mention but a few, the quality of life of her citizens has declined significantly over the years (Tarila, 2010). Also, the Federal Office of Statistics confirms that at least seventy million Nigerians now live below the poverty line when compared with eighteen million in the 1980s (Patrick, 2006).

According to Zuofa (2011) and Patrick (2011), the above situations in the country have been largely linked to the western education type introduced to us by the European missionaries. He noted that the curriculum of the western education did not equip Nigerian beneficiaries enough with practical experience and community develop studies, as such many did not actually benefit from its even after going through it, and therefore cannot relate the school knowledge to the ever-increasing challenges facing community development issues in Nigeria and Rivers State in particular. Thus, the purpose of this study, in the main, is to determine the role of education in community development in Rumueme community of Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers.

The following research questions are put forward for the study:

- i. What are the various types of community development programmes in the State and Rumueme community in particular?
- ii. What is the essence of community development programmes and policies in the State?
- iii. What is the relationship between on-going educational programmes and community development activities in the State and Rumueme community?
- iv. What are the main challenges, constraint, weaknesses facing community development and on-going educational programmes in the State?
- v. What are the useful and necessary suggestions, solutions and relevant recommendations aimed at enhancing the activities and impact of community development programmes and educational programmes for ultimate national growth and development?

Based on research questions, the following objectives are presented:

- i. To determine the various types of community development programmes in Rivers State and Rumueme community;
- ii. To highlight the need for community development processes, activities and programmes in the state and Rumueme community;
- iii. To evaluate the extent of the relationship between community development processes and activities, and current education policies and programmes in the State;
- iv. To proffer useful suggestions, practical solutions and necessary recommendations designed to improve community development processes and activities, and educational programmes, in order to reduce to the barest minimum the perceived weaknesses, challenges, and hindrances in the process of community development programmes, process, and educational policies and programmes aimed at fostering growth and development in the state and the nation in general.

Literature Review

Taylor (2011) noted that when people speak about education, more often than not,

they express it in terms of its impact on community. To him, the two are closely related and education gives feedback to operators of community development programmes and processes in many developing countries, including Nigeria.

Koko (2010) posited that, among nations of the world that were colonized, the sub-Saharan Africa has the most complicated past to venture into the field of community development. This has, no doubt, affected its take-off into the various aspects of community development. However, in a fast globalizing world, the call for various forms of developmental activities that touches human life; such as agricultural, irrigation, rural industries, roads, education, health, housing, social welfare, youth, women's programmes, employment, etc. has special significance for community development and education. This is in view of the impact of community education on community development and human life in general.

Taylor (2011) contended that since community development involves the introduction of new technology that is capable of making it possible for communities to acquire trainings that could improve their life pattern because of change, education, in all its forms is a characteristic of community development. This is ultimately aimed at increasing capacity of the people to share in the common benefits and emerging opportunities which is an advantage of modern development and civilization.

Adako, (2011) observed that, when a particular nation fails to manage her community resources and wealth properly, it may adversely affect her economy. He contended that if as a result of this inadequacy and poor management of available community resources, industrial output and commercial activities are reduced, which may lead to growth and developmental activities that breeds unemployment, and underemployment, community underdevelopment and poverty. According to him poverty is one of the greatest cankerworms, that, if allowed to eat deep into the fabric of any nation can spell doom for that nation.

On his own, Adeola (2010) opined that, in both developed and developing nations of the world, the concern for community development is a primary challenge. Adeola (2010) pointed out that this stems from the central role of community development activities, policies and programmes in the process of nation building. Again, Ovwigho (2010) contended that, over the years, it the dynamism of community development processes and activities that have shaped the nature and pace of civilization.

However, many professionals and analysts have observed that, the problems facing community development programmes in many countries of Africa, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (including Nigeria), has been on the increase. Contributing along this line of thought, Opuiyo (2011) opined that, if the communities in Nigeria will be x-rayed today for the purpose of diagnosis and treatment, the findings are that, the communities are seriously suffering from social and relative economic deprivation, seriously battered and traumatized, resulting in a near total collapse of community system and values in the country (including Rivers State); decaying, and collapsing machinery of government; law and order; economic and social structure; and loss of national sense of direction.

Again, both Opuiyo (2011) and Adeola (2011) argued that, the above situation is due to gross neglect of our communities and community development activities and programmes on the part of government and other relevant organizations to mobilize these communities for socio-economic advancement of the nation. In other words, successive administrations in Nigeria, both at federal and state levels, including the private sector, have not given due attention to this all-important segment (community development) of our society, which is the catalyst for socioeconomic and technological transformation and for overall national growth and development.

Theoretical Framework

The functionalist perspective regards education and community development as a means of creating and maintaining social values and consensual relations. In relation to other institutions, education is expected to contribute to community development. For Durkheim, education, in this respect, is a “methodical socialization” of the young members of a society. Society thus ensures consensus and social integration through education. It is a means of fostering appropriate values and personal qualities from one generation to another. Members of a community, by having or sharing common attitudes, values, cultural traits to a large extent, are expected to ensure their continuity and survival.

Durkheim's 'The Division of Labour in Society' (1893) also applies to education in the sense that the specific skills and areas of knowledge which different people learn or acquire represent the various integrated and interdependent specializations which society requires for its survival and continuity.

Methodology

The study is carried out among the Rumueme people (community) in Ikwerre ethnic nationality of the state and it has a descriptive style, this is, in the main based on survey design. The population of the study comprised of people in the study area (Rumueme community). However, it must be pointed out that the population does not include indigenes of the study area who are not resident in that area, nor does it include residents who have not stayed in the study area for at least 12 months. The population therefore consists of about 545, 116 people (2006 National Population Census).

The sample size for the study is 100 family units or 500 respondents picked from the various enumeration areas (zones) in the study area. The stratified sampling method was used in picking out homogeneous groupings (sample groups) from the target population. Finally, a simple random sampling method is applied to obtain the required sample size of the study.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution

S/n	Communities	Number Distributed	Number Retrieved	Number not Retrieved
1	Ebule	102	102(100)	-
2	Rumuchiolu	102	98(100)	4(4)
3	Eketa	102	92(90)	10(10)
4	Oroazi	102	60(59)	42(41)
5	Rumuchida	102	102(100)	-
6	Oroagalu	102	102(100)	-
7	Oroakwu	102	65(830)	20(17)
8	Mgbuoshimini	102	82(80)	20(20)
9	Rumukpakani	102	102(100)	-
10	Akwaka	102	102(100)	-
11	Alimgbam	102	75(74)	27(26)
12	Ogwur	102	64(63)	38(37)
13	Owhonda	102	80(78)	22(22)
	Total (Average)	1020	820(80.4)	200(19.6)

Sources: Field Survey (2023)

As indicated in Table 1 above, a total of 1020 copies of well-constructed and self-designed questionnaire were distributed to the various communities selected for the study. However, out of the total number some distributed (1020) 100%, 820 of them (80.4%) were successfully returned at record time. Again, 19.6 percent of total distributions were not returned. This represents 200 copies of the questionnaire. The short-fall in the return of the completed questionnaire is due to the very difficult terrain, time within which to administer and collect the completed copies from the field and their educational level and level of awareness.

Gender Status of Respondents

Table 2: Sex of Respondents

S/n	Sex	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Frequency (CF)
1	Male	649	63.6	63.6
2	Female	371	36.4	100.00
Total		820	100	

Sources: Field Survey (2023)

Table 2 above shows that 63.6% (649) of the respondents surveyed in the study area are males, while the remaining 36.4% of the respondents are females

Table 3: Types of Communities

S/N	Categories of Communities	'Yes'		'No'		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Geographic Community	771	94	49	6	820	100
2.	Ethnic Community	566	69	254	31	820	100
3.	Gender/Age Grade Community	615	75	205	25	820	100
4.	Occupational Community	672	82	148	18	820	100
5.	Philanthropic Community	459	56	361	42	820	100
	Total (average)	617	75	203	25	820	100

Source: Field Survey (2023).

The various responses as indicated in Table 3 shows that there are about five (5) types of communities in the study area (Rumueme Community). Here, 94 percent (959 respondents) attested to the physical/geographical community as against 6 percent of the respondents that do not agree with the concept. Also, other communities identified by the respondents include ethnic community, age grade/sex, occupational and philanthropic communities. These have 69, 75, 82 and 56 percent approval ratings. Based on the above, it is the researcher's thinking that, the approval rating, the 'yes' option is an indication of popularity test. Therefore, the philanthropic community is the least in terms of popularity test and therefore in practice. This indicates that there is low level of philanthropic activities in the study area.

Table 4: Features of Community

S/N	Description of Items	'Yes'		'No'		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Relationship are mechanical and intimate	820	100	-	-	820	100
2	Cultural homogeneity	790	96	30	4	820	100
3	Economically as well-to-do	820	100	-	-	820	100
4	Social Amenities are generally lacking	820	100	-	-	820	100
5	Low level of literacy	700	85	120	15	820	100
6	Wide-spread poverty	750	91.2	170	8.5	820	100
7	Low income per capita	759	92.6	161	7.3	820	100
8	High level of unemployment/underemployment	800	98	20	2	820	100
9	High rate of population increase	820	100	-	-	820	100
10	Large proportion of income spent on food	759	92.6	161	7.3	820	100
11	Low savings.	790	96	30	4	820	100
12	Poor technology and subsistence growth.	820	100	-	-	820	100
	Total	719	87.7	101	12.3	820	100

Source: Field Survey (2023).

In Table 4, features of communities as indicated by the respondent are: Relationships are mechanical and intimate; cultural homogeneity; economically less well-to-do; social amenities are generally lacking; low level of literacy; wide spread poverty; low income per capita; high level of unemployment/under-employment; high rate of population increase; high proportion of income spent on food; low savings; and low technology and low productivity and subsistence growth. The table revealed that 719 respondents, representing 87.7 percent agreed with these features, while 117 of them, representing 12.3 percent do not agree with the above features as the various and cardinal features of a community, including the study area. However, since 87.7 percent of the sample size (820) attested to these factors, the researcher fall in line with this group, and thus believes that eh enumerated features are indeed the main features of the communities in Rumueme.

Table 5: Challenges of Community Development

S/N	Challenges of Communities	'Yes'		'No'		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Unemployment/Underemployment	610	74	210	26	820	100
2.	Economic Backwardness	790	96	30	4	820	100
	Educational Backwardness						
3.	Lack of enterprise and initiative	682	83	138	17	820	100
4.	Technological backwardness	771	94	49	6	820	100
	Unemployable graduates	820	100	-	-	820	100
5.	Subsistence economy/Low growth	599	73	221	27	820	100
6.	General poverty (vicious circle)	820	100	-	-	820	100
7.	Poor community education	820	100	-	-	820	100
	Total (average)	712	87	108	13	820	100

Source: Field Survey (2023).

Table 5 on the challenges of community development showed that, on the whole, 820 respondents were surveyed. Out of these 712 of them (87 percent), agreed that the itemized factors are some of the major causes of underdevelopment of a people in the villages in Rumueme. Also, 108 of these respondents do not agree. This figure represents about 13 percent of the total respondents in the study area. Again, the survey showed that the various identified factors (challenges) of community development include: lack of enterprise and initiative (83 percent); general unemployment (74 percent); economic backwardness (96 percent) and subsistence economy (73 percent). Others are, general level of poverty and environmental degradation having 100 percent approval rating respectively. Therefore, since 87 percent of total respondents, which represents 712, are in support, then these various identified causative factors are indeed impacting negatively and heavily on community development in the study area. Moreso, all the respondents are of the opinion that general very low level of education and poverty inflicts the greatest harm on community advancement. These two factors, among others, are very serious and deserve particular attention. The survey is indicative of the strong fact that power community development activities is majorly induced by poor and inadequate educational programme and generally low certified people. It results in increase gap between the people and their felt needs and it relates to community development issues.

Table 6: Strategies for Sustainable Community Development

S/N	Strategies	'Yes'		'No'		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Provision of real employment opportunity in communities	664	81	156	19	820	100
2.	Provision and maintenance of social amenities and infrastructure	764	93	56	7	820	100
3.	Provision of opportunities for vocational and general educational advancement	756	92	64	8	820	100
4.	Enabling legislation on free and compulsory education for all	615	75	205	25	820	100
5.	Integration of the people in the mainstream and social/political developments in the community	700	85	120	15	820	100
6.	Better planning and free reaching vision	750	91	70	9	820	100
	Total (average)	708	84	112	14	820	100

Source: Field Survey (2023).

On the various strategies necessary for community development in the study area, Table 6 reveals as follows: about 708 of the total respondents agreed that the strategies identified are necessary

for a turnaround of the fortune of the people and therefore their social, economic and political environment. However, 112 of the same group, are the opinion that the identified factors can provide the much-needed balm for community development at sustainable level. The various factors and their rate of responses are: provision of real employment opportunities for the people, this has 81 percent acceptance rate; provision and maintenance of social amenities and infrastructure (93 percent acceptance rate) and provision of vocational and general educational and general education advancement (92 percent), enabling legislation on free and compulsory education for all, has 75 percent rating. Again, integration of the people in the mainstream of social and political developmental activities in the study area has 85 percent acceptance rating; and better planning and, far-reaching vision, has 91 percent rating. Based on the foregoing, it is important to consider the following points as marshalled out by the respondents for finding long-term solutions to community underdevelopment and also for achieving sustainable socio-political development in the study area, Rumueme community.

Table 7: Roles of Education on Community Development

S/N	Categories of Communities	'Yes'		'No'		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Education stimulates genuine community development	680	83	140	820	820	100
2.	Education demands that community leaders	672	82	148	820	820	100
3.	Education is indigenous, involving the continuing improvement of communities therefore bring them to perfection	746	91	74	9	820	100
4.	Education does not allow community development imitation, borrow from or adapting foreign or ignoring what is indigenous community development activities	655	80	164	20	820	100
5.	Education enables community development processes to proceed from inside and then manifest outside in the standard and quality of the people	697	85	123	15	820	100
	Total (average)						

Source: Field Survey (2023).

Table 7 above shows the role of education on community development. The field survey indicated that, out of the 820 respondents surveyed, 690 (84%) of them affirmed yes, while the remaining respondents expressed negative opinion. That is 130 (16%) of them do not agree. The majority of the respondents (84%) agreed and attested to the impact of education on community development. In other words, there is a correlation between educational programmes, processes and activities; and sustainable community development.

Conclusion

From the finding of the study, community development is an integral part of over-all development. Similarly, all nations that have experienced significant growth in community development have also achieved a more rapid growth in community development and beneficial effect on overall economic development. The essence and impact of education in the community development process and programmes will go a long way in redressing the lagging rural economy; therefore, bridge the missing link. By implication, it means an increased standard of living (in the community lives), and in the state in general.

This study revealed that the existing community development policies and programmes are inadequate, unsustainable, inappropriate, and sometimes mis-directed. Therefore, for a turn around, and to conquer higher grounds, and thus an enhanced rural economy in the various communities in the study area, there should be educational reform targeted at community development. Also, there should be adequate and timely enlightenment campaigns designed to sensitize the community dwellers and stakeholders on the problems of poor educational programmes that are quite detached from the people.

Also, stakeholders should be well informed and sufficiently educated on the rudiment of effective community development organization and administration strategies, and processes. In addition, existing self-help linkage group in the communities should be encouraged and nurtured to maturity for ease and effective-community development administration and control in the study area (Rumueme community).

Recommendations

Based on the study analyses and findings, it is recommended that the following measures as stated be allowed to, and adopted by community stakeholders, opinion leaders, men-of-ideas, men-of-actions and others. Individuals and agencies (including the government) are to ensure a continuous and steady flow of community development programmes and activities that are constructed greased by appropriate educational inputs. The following are therefore the recommendations emanating from the study:

- Since more of these communities in the study area are highly educationally disadvantaged and lack the necessary and required push for meaningful community development activities, the government, relevant agencies, departments and concerned individuals should take it upon themselves to provide and perform these functions as needed to ensure the supply of required infrastructural amenities. In other words, there should be deliberate in-route into these communities, not only to ensure the much needed development of the area but to also ensure development of the dwellers.
- For educational programmes and community development activities to make the desired impact on the community and on the people, there should be unified community development programmes as an essential management option needed to ensure effective and consolidated effort. This means a single line of command from the apex of the administration (public or private) to the least level of the chain of development policies and programmes.
- Community development efforts, programmes and personnel should devote efforts and resources exclusively to the development programme. In addition, there should be schedules of work responsibilities and community development education and training clearly specified and closely supervised by all. Further, stakeholders must have realistic workloads and access to frequent and relevant trainings.
- A fundamental instrument underlying community development programmes is to teach the community dwellers to make the best use of the resources common and available to them. This is in addition to the continuous education of the stakeholders and the ultimate beneficiaries. It means that exactly the programme should involve the needs to be determined and checked throughout the field. This, no doubt will significantly, and visibly increase the community income and efficiency.
- Within the planning extension organization, planning must be conceived to include "organizing for work" activity which takes place at several levels. At one level, it may be undertaken by top management with a view to deciding on an appropriate course of action. At another level it should be undertaken to provide the needed learning experience and communication channel through which the goals of community development and the contribution of individual staff members can be harmonized for the maximum benefit of both. Yet at another level it should elicit the full participation of those for whom a plan is designed and from whom positive action is expected.

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