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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.

The views expressed in the journal are those of the individual authors.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Features

BORDERLESS COUNTRIES AND YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

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Abstract
This paper examines borderless countries and youth unemployment in South-South Nigeria. The impact of Globalization in a borderless county is reviewed along the dialectics of labour and youth unemployment in Nigeria. The study uses Qualitative research design by historical information. Three questions were used to interrogate the research objective while Adam Smith's Liberalism theory was adopted as the basis for its theoretical framework. In conclusion the paper observes that the six South-South states of Nigeria are worse hit by the youth unemployment crisis in Nigeria and therefore recommends the reintroduction of border restrictions on trade and tariff to save jobs for the youths and also to strengthen security of the country called Nigeria

Keywords: Borderless country, Globalization, Liberalization, Unemployment, South-South,

Introduction
In the age of globalization, national borders are increasingly becoming less relevant in the context of economic activities, cultural exchanges, and labour movements. While this interconnectedness has opened up opportunities for growth, it has also introduced new challenges, particularly in regions that struggle with systemic socio-economic issues. One such region is the South-South region of Nigeria, an area rich in natural resources but faced with the persistent challenge of youth unemployment. Despite being a key economic hub within Nigeria, South-South Nigeria's young population remains disproportionately affected by the lack of sustainable job opportunities, a situation exacerbated by both internal and external factors of globalization.

This paper investigates the intersection of "borderless countries," globalization, and youth unemployment in South-South Nigeria, aiming to understand how the forces of global interconnectedness shape local labour markets and youth employment prospects. The term "borderless countries" highlights the blurring of traditional national boundaries due to the influences of globalization, which enable cross-border trade, migration, and technological exchange. In the context of South-South Nigeria, globalization presents both opportunities, such as expanded markets and access to new technologies, and challenges, including the displacement of local industries and the increasing competition for jobs.

This paper explores how regional integration, technological advancements, international trade policies, and the global labour market have influenced youth unemployment in South-South Nigeria. It also considers the role of government policies and infrastructure in either mitigating or exacerbating these challenges. Ultimately, the study offers policy recommendations to better harness the benefits of global economic integration to create job opportunities for the region's teeming youth.

Research Method
The research method adopted is Qualitative Approach by historical information. Primary and Secondary data were used to validate the survey.

Aim and Objective
The aim and main objective of this study is to examine the extent to which globalization has caused youth unemployment in the South-South region of Nigeria under borderless country regime. Three research questions were used to interrogate the study thus;
1) What is a borderless country?

2) How does it affect youth unemployment?
3) To what extent has it impacted youth unemployment in the South-South region of Nigeria?

Conceptual Framework
Borderless Countries
Borderless countries refer to nations where there are no strict physical boundaries or border controls between them. These countries typically have open and easily accessible borders, allowing for the movement of goods, services, and people without significant restrictions. Such countries may have agreements in place to facilitate free trade, travel and exchange of resources among them. The concept often occurs within regional organizations such as the European Union, where member states have abolished internal border controls. Borderless countries promote international co-operation and integration. The European Union (EU) is a quintessential example of a borderless country. One of the main challenges associated with borderless countries is the crisis of labour. When borders are open, individuals can move freely to seek employment opportunities in other countries within the borderless entity. While this can bring benefits such as increased diversity, cultural exchange, and improved economic productivity, it can also lead to several concerns;

1. Brain Drain: Some countries may experience a significant migration of highly skilled workers to other nations within the borderless entity, causing a brain drain. This can create a shortage of skilled professionals in the home country, hindering economic growth and development.
2. Job Competition: the influx of workers from different countries can increase competition.

The concept of borderless countries is an idea that challenges traditional notions of nation states by proposing a world without physical borders or strict national identities. Supporters argue that it would promote global unity and eliminate conflicts, and facilitate movement o people and resources. However, critics argue that borderless countries could lead to security concerns, loss of national identity, and economic disadvantages.

Three questions to consider;
i. How could the implementation of borderless countries potentially impact national security and the ability to control the flow of people or goods?
ii. What are the potential economic advantages and disadvantages of eliminating physical borders between countries?
iii. How might the concept of borderless countries affect individuals' sense of national identity and belonging?

Globalization
Globalization refers to the process of intensification of economic, political, social and cultural relations across international boundaries. However, Asobie (2001), sees globalization as a contested concept. Its meaning in contention, its character is a point in dispute, its history mixed in controversy. This view encapsulates the general view of scholars when dealing with globalization either as a concept or a phenomenon. To Owugah (2003), globalization is a technology driven process which breaks down national borders to ensure an unrestricted movement of capital, technology, goods and services across national boundaries. Bertucci and Alberti (2001) identified four main driving forces behind increased interdependence as;
(a) trade and investment liberalization;
(b) technological innovation and reduction of communication cost;
(c) entrepreneurship; and
(d) global social network.

One thing scholars seem to agree on concerning the concept globalization, is that, the key factors driving it are the ever increasing tides in science and technology. Adil, David and Mark (2011), reviewed five classes of globalization to include;
- Globalization as internationalization,
- Globalization as liberalization,
- Globalization as universalization,
- Globalization as westernization and

-   Globalization as deterritorialization.

In this study, we shall restrict our discussion to Globalization as Liberalization, which is the removal of government-imposed restrictions on movements between countries; although no single definition of the word globalization will be entirely complete without a proper resume of the others. We shall therefore pitch our tent on the understanding of the word globalization in a liberalized economy, using Nigeria as a paradigm and the South-South region as the epicentre.

The impact of globalization on youth could be either positive or negative. Positive impacts of globalization include the fact that education via the internet has enabled the Nigerian youths to engage in programs in reputable tertiary institutions outside the country while still in Nigeria. This form of education is becoming a trend amongst the students from all over the world. Secondly, globalization has enabled our youths in different higher institutions to access information which would have been only possible in reputable first-generation universities in Nigeria. Students are able to view scholarly publications or studies via the internet at a cheaper rate compared to the prices of hard copies. Thirdly, communication has been made easier via the internet and social media platforms. Also, globalization has made it easier for youths to find employment across borders, especially, in areas where skilled and semi-skilled labour are required. This also promotes improved welfare as higher incomes promote living standards. Overall, it could add to the GDP of the nation where financial regulations are favourable.

The negative influence of globalization to the youth is that information and communication has led to increased social addiction among the youths in Nigeria. Drug abuse was major addiction the youths faced in the past, but recently, the youths not only source their drugs online, they also get addicted surfing the net. Trafficking in persons, which the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2001) describes as "the underside of globalization", is one of the greatest human rights challenges of our time. In addition to drug trafficking, access to small and light arms including assault rifles like the AK-47 has been made simple, sometimes by smuggling. This poses a risk to the Nigerian nation as the proliferation of arms could heighten the incidences of kidnapping, among robbery, banditry and violent crimes in the society. Worse still, is the issue of job losses through cross-border cheap labour.

Unemployment
One of the difficult transitions of the youth to adulthood, as was noted by the United Nations, is unemployment. Youth unemployment has become a topical and thorny issue in Nigeria. Olajide (1994) reports that unemployment rate among Nigeria youth is alarming. For the youth to develop into positive, healthy and responsible adulthood, the Konopka Institute (2001) suggests that there must be a strong partnership among the critical stakeholders in the society such as the family, the school and the community.

Unemployment is when an individual who is not employed and is seeking employment, cannot find work. Unemployment is a key indicator of the health of an economy. A low unemployment rate represents a strong economy while a high unemployment rate represents a weak economy. The official unemployment definition comes from the US Bureau of Labour Statistics, which states that "people are classified as unemployed if they do not have a job, have actively looked for work in the prior four weeks, and are currently available for work". The natural unemployment rate is measured by the number of people unemployed due to the structure of the labour force, such as those who lack the skills to gain employment or those moving from job to job. Full employment is a situation in which all available resources are being used in the percentage of the total labour force that is unemployed but actively seeking employment and willing to work.

Today's economists point to three main types of unemployment; frictional, structural, and cyclical. Frictional unemployment is the result of voluntary employment transitions within an economy. Frictional employment naturally occurs, even in a growing, stable economy as workers change jobs. Structural unemployment can produce permanent disruptions due to fundamental and permanent changes, which can marginalize a group of workers. They include technological changes, a lack of relevant skills, and jobs moving overseas to another country. Cyclical unemployment relates to the loss

of jobs that occurs during changes in business cycles. There are a number of reasons for unemployment. These include recessions, depressions, technological improvements, job outsourcing, and voluntarily leaving a job to find another. Many factors are responsible for the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria. One key factor is globalization, which seeks to influence the structure of the labour market. As the world gets increasingly digitized by technological changes, borderless countries face the danger of having high unemployment risks as foreign countries seek to control technology transfers by imposing restrictions which dependent countries must abide.

These come in the forms of casualization of jobs, direct quota restrictions for skilled and semi-skilled jobs and offshoring of activities. The oil industry in Nigeria is heavily burdened by this factor. Secondly, borderless countries give foreign countries that have built capacity over the year's advantage over dependent countries. An example is the Nigerian labour market that has been thrown open to all comers by reason of her liberalization policy. ECOWAS members move freely to Nigeria to seek jobs, a situation that has made the construction industry and agriculture heavily dependent on foreign labour. It is now common to see Ghanaians, Togolese, Nigeriens and Benin Republic youths engaged in direct labour competition with the youths of Nigeria, especially in the south-south region of the country.

Globalization and Youth Unemployment in South-South Nigeria
Globalization has been linked to increased competition between countries and organizations, which can often times, result in closures, off-shoring, and job losses. The most vulnerable sectors that fall into this category are those that are heavily dependent on low-skilled work. Sometimes, instead of sectors, the competitive aspect of globalization affects people of a particular category. The youths are the driving force in the labour market of any nation and Nigeria is no exception. Because of youth restiveness in the Niger Delta and south-south Nigeria, multi-national oil corporations have devised means to reduce direct contacts with locals and stakeholders within host communities. As a result, emphasis is laid on spending more to acquire modern technology and this calls for a high level of expertise, which the youth of the South-South find difficult to fill. Upstream operations in the oil and gas industry are now time-turned to engage only skilled and semi-skilled labour. Even where some of their skills are available the global trend of information technology ensures that communication between the operators and host communities is kept at the barest minimum to avoid conflicts. The downstream sector is also capital driven out of the reach of the impoverished people of the south-south. The main refineries in Port Harcourt and Warri have remained non-functional for over 25 years and government efforts to resuscitate them is now politicized, fuelling anger. Many employees of the refineries were laid off early in the wake of their planned repairs. There is a chain of labour that goes with crude oil refining ranging from direct employment, distribution services to marketing. All aspects of the chain have been directly affected by the closure of the refineries; a situation that has forced the youths of the area to engage in oil bunkering and artisanal refining. More so, the cost of lifting oil or even transporting refined products is out of the reach of the youths. No youth in Nigeria can afford the price of a truck/tanker used for the distribution of refined petroleum products and the cost of building filling stations is equally high. These are the reasons why majority of petrol/gas stations in the south-south are owned by non-indigenes. For the upstream sector, the company's operations are now mainly offshore; removed from the reach of the locals, most of who are not even aware that such operations are taking place around their locality. All these have given room to the multinational corporations to manipulate even their contracts with the federal government by ceding jobs meant for the locals to foreigners and stealing of the crude. There are several cases of illegal oil bunkering being carried out by foreigners within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Oil theft in Nigeria is estimated at 400,000 barrels per day (BPD); costing the country up to $1billion per month in lost revenues, according to Chatham House report (see Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2013). A further 1 million bpd of oil production capacity is shut in due to oil theft-related departments, causing an additional tax deferment loss of $20billion per year. Oil theft not only deprives governments of internal revenues but it also has direct and indirect impacts on the economic development of the youth, as it deprives them of employment and genuine wages. Oil theft erodes regional business confidence, investment, and domestic development. A common pathway for oil theft's transnational impact is through cross-border fuel smuggling. Another way is through regional insecurity caused by violent oil theft operations like artisanal refineries.

In multiple ways, local communities are affected adversely by oil theft practices that exert a high and lasting toll on those most vulnerable and living off the land and its waters. Many pipeline taps are because of oil spills that create widespread and lasting environmental damage. Artisanal refineries cause permanent damage to communities, native, agriculture, and water sources. By so doing it creates huge unemployment to the youth of the area. Oil theft attracts and aggravates organized crime and local violence, though armed militias and crime-on-crime activities.

Six states of Nigeria are grouped in the south-south geopolitical zone of the country, and they are all within the Niger Delta region where the bulk of Nigeria's oil and gas are extracted. These states are Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers. Each of these states has youth unemployment challenges.

Borderless Countries and the Crisis of Labour
The concepts of borderless countries and globalization are closely related and often interlinked. While globalization refers to the process of intensification of economic, political, social, and cultural relations across international boundaries, Borderless countries on the other hand facilitates the movement of people, goods and services across nations. Borderless countries promote international co-operation and integration, and the two phenomena have often been linked to the youth unemployment crisis in South-South Nigeria. One of the main issues is the impact on local workers. When borders are open, workers from other countries can easily enter and compete for jobs, sometimes at lower wages. This can lead to job displacement and increased competition for local workers, resulting in a crisis of labour. Local workers may face challenges in finding employment or may be forced to accept lower wages and inferior working conditions. Additionally, borderless countries can also lead to issues such as labour exploitation and human trafficking. In some cases, migrant workers may be subjected to unfair treatment, long working hours, low wages, and poor living conditions, often without legal protections or labour rights. Moreover, borderless countries can create imbalance in the labour market, as workers may move from countries with fewer opportunities to others with more opportunities.

Data Analysis
Youth Unemployment Crisis in South-South Region of Nigeria
According to Jobberman, there is huge exodus of talent from Nigeria. Worse hit is the South-South region of the country that depends heavily on white collar jobs. Layoffs, retrenchment, and termination of contractual work agreements are common in many sectors of the economy. The career promotion platform in the report claimed that Nigeria's youth unemployment rate had been increasing on a yearly average of six percent over the past five years. The latest data from the National Bureau of Statistics put unemployment at 41 percent in the first quarter of 2023. The agency had put unemployment at 33 percent in Q4 of 2020. According to the Jobberman report, each geopolitical zone in the country has its share of unemployment, indicating that young people in the South-South had 39 percent unemployed for at least three years and about 16 percent of this figure had been without work for over five years. The report also disclosed that unemployed women were less likely to work and likely to depend on their partners compared to men. For the CEO of Jobberman, Ore Boboye, the report indicated that hustling was the major means of survival for unemployed youth in Nigeria. In the local parlance, hustling means doing whatever job is available at the time. According to him, unemployment and its effect remain the most significant issue young people have to deal with in Nigeria. The South- South region of the country is the home to the oil industry which has witnessed serious labour dynamics in the recent past. From shut downs, layoffs, retrenchment and termination of contracts. Most often, the foreign element of the labour force is preserved in the guise of expertise, while the locals who do the unskilled jobs are laid off. This also is one cause of the youth restiveness in the Niger Delta. In the recent survey, the south-south geopolitical zone is the most affected region with 37.0% unemployment rate followed by the south-east with 29.1%, the north central with 27.9%, the north east with 27.9%, north west with 26.3%, and the south west with 18.0%.

Unemployment in the South-South Region by States
According to the report from the National Bureau of Statistics, in 2022 the South-South states had a collective total workforce of 13,929,526. Out of this numbers, a total of 5,147,325 are unemployed.

- Akwa Ibom State led in unemployment in the region at 45.2% and underemployment at 21.7%. 1,444,399 residents were recorded as unemployed with total labour force of 2,534,495.
- Rivers State came second with unemployment at 43.7% and underemployed at 19.8%. 1,714,189 residents were recorded as unemployed with a total labour force of 3,921,850.
- Delta State in 3rd position with unemployment of 40.3% and underemployment of 20.1%, 1,005,848 residents was recorded as unemployed with a total labour force of 2,494,452.
- Bayelsa State recorded unemployment at 27.8% and underemployments at 20.6%. 287,671 residents were recorded as unemployed with a total labour force of 1,033,280.
- Edo State had the lowest unemployment in the region at 19.0% and underemployment at 34.9%. 376,734 residents were recorded as unemployed with a total labour force of 1,985,765.

Discussion
The Economic Advantages of Borderless Countries
1. Free movement of goods and services: Borderless countries eliminate trade barriers such as tariffs, quotas, and custom duties, facilitating the free movement of goods and services. This promotes international trade and can lead to economic growth and increased competition.
2. Increased foreign Direct Investment (FDI): When countries have open borders, it attracts more foreign direct investments. Borderless countries create a favourable investment climate by providing access to larger consumer markets, lower production costs and a more streamlined business environment.
3. Enhances specialization and comparative advantage: Borderless countries allow businesses to capitalize on their comparative advantages and specialize in what they do best, this leads to increased efficiency and productivity, ultimately benefiting the economy.
4. Access to a larger labour pool: Free movement of labour across borders allows businesses to tap into a larger pool of talent and expertise. This can lead to improved innovation, increased production, and a more diverse and skilled workforce.

The Economic Disadvantages of Borderless Countries
1. Unequal development: Borderless countries may lead to uneven economic development among regions. Some regions within a country may become more attractive to businesses, leading to concentrated economic disparities and regional inequalities.
2. Reduced government control: Borderless countries may limit the ability of governments to control and regulate their own economy. Without border controls, governments have limited influence over movements of goods, services, and capital. This can hamper the ability of governments to pursue national economic policies or protect domestic industries.
3. Increased competition for jobs: In a borderless world, labour market becomes more globalized. This can lead to increased competition for jobs, as workers from different countries may freely move to seek employment opportunities. Local workers may face challenges in competing with cheaper labour from other countries, leading to wage stagnations.
4. Security concerns: Conflicts in one country can spread easily to neighbouring countries when borders are left open and without proper surveillance.
5. Economic Pressures: open borders may result in sudden influx of workers from economically disadvantaged areas seeking better opportunities. This could cause pressure on infrastructure.
6. Strain on public services.
7. Cultural and Social Challenges: Rapid demographic changes caused by immigration can lead to cultural tensions, identity concerns, and challenges in integration. Differences in language, custom, and values may create social divisions and hinder social cohesion.
8. Wage Suppression: Especially for low skilled workers. Lower wages may create competition and drive down wages.
9. Loss of sovereignty: Decisions made by other nations or international bodies can have significant impacts on internal affairs, including immigration, trade, and security.

Market Liberalization and Labour Crisis in Nigeria
Market liberalization means that there is a lessening of government restrictions and regulations to the market, such that the market is primarily controlled through supply and demand. Liberalization policies

may or often include the partial or complete privatization of government institutions and state-owned assets, greater labour market flexibility, lower tax rates for businesses, less restrictions on both domestic and foreign capital, open markets etc. trade liberalization removes or reduces barriers to trade among countries, such as tariffs and quotas. Having fewer barriers to trade reduces the cost of goods sold in importing countries. Trade liberalization can benefit stronger economies but put weaker ones at a greater disadvantage. Market liberalization is an attempt to lower entry barriers so that a market becomes more contestable. Trade liberalization removes or reduces barriers to trade among countries, such as tariffs and quotas. It also means having fewer barriers to trade to reduce the cost of goods sold in importing countries. This can benefit stronger economies as well while putting weaker ones at a greater disadvantage.

Trade liberalization can cost jobs because cheaper goods will flood the nation's domestic market. One of the disadvantages is that it will flood the importing country with inferior quality and less safe than competing domestic products that may have undergone more rigorous safety and quality checks. Proponents of trade liberalization, however, claim that it ultimately lowers consumer costs, increases efficiency, and foster economic growth. Globalization is the outcome of trade liberalization and the resulting integration among countries. Trade liberalization promotes free trade, which allows countries to trade goods without regulatory barriers or their associated costs. Increased competition from abroad as a result of trade liberalization creates an incentive for greater efficiency and cheaper productivity by domestic firms. This competition might also spur a country to shift resources to industries in which it may have a competitive advantage. However, trade liberalization can negatively affect certain businesses within a nation because of greater competition from foreign producers and may result in less local support for those industries. Trade liberalization poses a threat to developing nations or economies because they are forced to compete in the same market as stronger economies or nations. Industrialized nations may also harp on dependency theory, globalization and new world order to keep underdeveloped countries perpetually poor. Countries with advanced education systems tend to adapt rapidly to a free-trade economy because they have a labour market that can shift their focus to more in-demand goods. Countries with lower educational standards may struggle to adapt to a changing economic environment. Critics believe that trade liberalization costs jobs and depresses wages. Proponents believe it spurs competition and growth.

Borderless Countries and the Crisis of Labour in South-South Nigeria
Borderless countries cause fluidity of Globalization which can be seen as the most resilient factor in today's world. It implies a drastic reduction of distance both the time and space. Globalization has thus occasioned a far-reaching assault on state frontiers and a reduction of the communication barriers between states. Globalization has created some unequal partnerships between the developed and the developing world. In this sense, the developing world can be seen as more or less the receivers or clients of globalizing trends powered or supported from the developed world. According to Giddens (1990), globalization implies the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are thawed by events occurring many miles away.

Migration pressure on Labour
In most ECOWAS countries, the public sector- the dominant employer- has not been able to provide viable employment opportunities to meet the demands of the rapidly growing labour force, thus generating large numbers of unemployed youths. ECOWAS had made movement of people and goods within the sub-region easy and the South-South region of Nigeria is receiving her share of the influx of people of diverse labour configuration, Skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled, into the region in search of employment in both the oil and gas sector as well as other areas of Endeavour. The south-south region of Nigeria offers a range of opportunities to ready and willing hands in the areas of oil extraction and refining, fishing, distributive trade, small scale industries like shoe making, garment sowing, transportation, timber, furniture, the extractive industry like sand mining, salt etc.

Conclusion and Recommendations
The twin concepts of borderless countries and globalization work hand in hand to promote trade liberalization. It has, however, often widened the gap of inequalities between the developed nations and

the developing nations. In Nigeria the combined effect of the two concepts have created youth unemployment, and the South- South region of the country is the worst affected by this trend. While the Gross Domestic Product has been on the decline, youth unemployment in the region is the highest. With the global war against terrorism Nigeria needs to be more vigilant as this is not the best times to keep borders open, although there is no way a nation can totally stop the wind of Globalization from blowing. It is time to review the nation's trade liberalization policies to protect youth employment and security in the country and this is our recommendation.

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INFLUENCE OF PARENTING STYLES ON THE SELF-ESTEEM OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN PORT HARCOURT CITY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE

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Abstract
The study investigated the influence of parenting styles on the self-esteem of secondary school student in Port Harcourt City Local Government area of Rivers State. Four research questions and their corresponding null hypotheses were used to guide the study. The correlational design was adopted for the study with a sample of 237 students drawn using non-probability sampling technique. A researcher developed instrument was used for data collection which was validated by the researcher's supervisor and other experts in educational psychology, measurement and evaluation in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The instrument was made up of 15 items assessing parenting styles and 10 items assessing self-esteem of secondary school students. The instrument was constructed using a four-point Likert scale. Reliability of the instrument ranged from 0.69 to 0.81. Data analysis was done using Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions, while Analysis of Variance and Independent Samples T-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Result revealed that authoritative parenting styles has the highest influence on students' self-esteem. Furthermore, no significant difference was obtained between male and female students on self-esteem based on the various parenting styles. Based on these results, it was recommended that counsellors should create greater awareness on parenting styles and their influence on self-esteem, as well as encourage parents to adopt the most appropriate parenting styles for the optimal development of self-esteem.

Keywords: Parenting styles, self-esteem, students.

Introduction
Psychologists have long been astonished by the effect childhood and parents have on the development of the individual. Freud himself was the forerunner of how child development can influence adult psychopathology. However, as he focused on the unconscious and psychological abnormalities, this thesis focuses on psychologists, theories, and research which is empirically supported and readily visible in the sphere of behavioural and developmental psychology. The base of one's childhood is built upon one's parents or caregivers, who help form worldviews, shape a child's attitude towards personal achievement, teach how to approach difficulties in life and satisfy their needs; be they psychological or physiological (Pomerantz, et al., 2005). A parent in this paper's context is not the biological parent but the main caregiver of the child and young adult, therefore the person or persons that have, or were supposed to act, as the support system for the young individual. A parenting style is understood as a set of approaches and behaviours a parent elicits towards a child, therefore building an emotional environment in which the child is brought up in.

Sigmund Freud, one of the founding fathers of modern psychology, opined that the early years of our life shapes who we become as a result of the interactions we have with our parents. These therefore underscore the importance of parenting styles in a child or student's development, including their self-esteem. Parenting styles according to Darling and Steinberg (2003) refers to a constellation of parental attitudes towards the child, and when taken together creates the behaviour expressed towards the child and expectation from the child. Baumrind (1991) stated that parenting styles can be broadly classified into three, namely, authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative.

Previous research has revealed certain patterns in styles of parenting (Baumrind, 2005; Schaffer & Kipp, 2010). A common and distinguishing variable amongst all parenting styles is control. The level of

control varies from each other in each parenting styles. Parenting styles are therefore commonly divided into authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

An authoritarian parent adopts strict and rigid measures in child rearing with many rules and regulations. Parents with this style are harsh, inconsiderate and apply excessive physical punishment on their children when they fail to meet up expected standard of behaviour. Permissive parenting styles involve giving children total liberty to behave as they wish with little or no control over speech and other behaviour. Authoritative parenting styles exists when parents establish democratic principles in child rearing in which children and parents jointly agree on rules and regulations. Research by Kauffman et al. (2010) showed that authoritative parenting styles is the best for children and adolescents' optimal psychological well-being.

The way a parent approaches and treats a child is a factor in the development of one's self-image. However, even though it is not the only factor and is not purely causational, there is a significant correlation and therefore sends a strong message to all parents (Schaffer & Kipp, 2010). Communication is vital as it provides the child information about who he or she is in the eyes of a figure of authority. Simple categories of parenting styles reflect this approach (Schaffer & Kipp, 2010).

The concept of self-esteem is an area of psychology that has gained considerable attention, but for many years has also caused much confusion, as exactly what it encompasses and how it develops, has been unclear. Self-esteem could be high or low, either level can be emotionally and socially harmful for the individual. Adolescents with low self -esteem are often depressed and paranoid. They are more likely to experience social anxiety and low levels of social confidence Portia (2010). Adolescents who have high self-esteem values themselves and think of themselves as worthy partners, capable problem solvers and are more likely to be happy. They feel that they have positive characteristics and skills they can offer to other people and they also feel they are worthy of being loved and accepted by others including family and friends. An optimum level of self-esteem lies within the continuum i.e., between low and high self-esteem. Individuals operating within this range are thought to be more socially dominant within relationships. This social dominancy simply means that adolescents on middle level on the self-esteem scale is comprised of varied personality characteristics, some of which can be more positive than others McLeod (2012).

Adolescence is a period in human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood. The World Health Organization (WHO) placed the age range from 10 to 19 years. It is a time of critical transition for individuals, as they deal with the physical, cognitive and social changes that occur during this developmental period. All of these changes can be stressful and individuals can feel less valuable than others, making them at risk of a lower self-esteem. Self-esteem is modified from childhood through the adolescent's life by social experiences that occur both outside and within the family. Parental support is crucial in adolescence and parents could promote self-esteem in their children and reduce psychological distress by offering their support throughout this developmental phase (Boudreault-Bouchard et al., 2013).

It has been shown that adolescents and adults who have high self-esteem are at better health, have better capacity to cope and have lower incidence of depressive symptoms (Kaplan et al., 2003). Trzesniewski et al. (2006) found out that those adolescents that had low self-esteem had negative influence on their physical and emotional health. Low self-esteem during adolescence has been shown to predict poor health, criminal behaviour and limited economic prospects during adulthood. Low self-esteem in adolescence also predicts negative outcomes in their adulthood. McGee and Williams (2000) also identified that low self-esteem can affect adolescent social life, lead to eating disorders, depression and suicidal thoughts.

Even though parents are one factor which influences self-esteem, gender is also a vital factor that determines the development of self-esteem and other positive attribute of a person. Studies have found differences in males and females, with males having overall higher levels of self-esteem than females (Orth & Robins, 2014).

Psychologists consider adolescence as a period of self-search and identity formation. It is equally viewed as a period of conflict with parents as they attempt to define who they are. This often results in problems bordering on negative self-esteem. Negative self-esteem pose a great challenge in both the developed and developing world including suicide, school dropout and poor academic performance. Low self-esteem is also related to anxiety and depression. Low self-esteem creates a negative impact in the lives of adolescents. It makes the adolescent views himself as inadequate, unworthy, unlovable, and/or incompetent. Low self-esteem can be a major risk-factor in mental and emotional health problems such as suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, and violence.

When students experience problems of low self-esteem, there is the tendency that they may be susceptible to peer pressure which further exposes them to unwholesome practices. Taking into consideration, the factors which influence self-esteem among students in school have been consistently studied as revealed above, but very few studies have investigated how self-esteem can be influenced based on parenting styles. It is therefore against this background that this study investigated the influence of parenting styles on self-esteem of adolescent students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Aim of the Study
The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of parenting styles on the self-esteem of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State. In specific terms, the objectives of this study include:
1. To ascertain the influence of parenting styles on self-esteem of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.
2. To ascertain the influence of authoritarian parenting styles on self-esteem of male and female base on social-economic background of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.
3. To ascertain the influence of authoritative parenting styles on self-esteem of male and female on educational level of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.
4. To ascertain the influence of permissive parenting styles on self-esteem of male and female based on age of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Research Questions
The following research questions were answered to guide this study:
1. What is the influence of parenting styles on self-esteem of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State?
2. What is the influence of authoritarian parenting styles on self-esteem of male and female based on social-economic background of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State?
3. What is the influence of authoritative parenting styles on self-esteem of male and female on educational level of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State?
4. What is the influence of permissive parenting styles on self-esteem of male and female based on age of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Hypotheses
The following null hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance to further guide this study
1. There is no significant difference in the influence of parenting styles on the self-esteem of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the influence of authoritarian parenting styles on the self-esteem of male and female based on social-economic background of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.
3. There is no significant difference in the influence of authoritative parenting styles on the self-esteem of male and female on educational level of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.

4. There is no significant difference in the influence of permissive parenting styles on the self-esteem of male and female based on age of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Methodology
The correlation research design was used for the study. The study was an ex-post facto work because the researcher collected data from a large sample of secondary school adolescents on their reported parenting styles. The population of the study was made up of all the students within Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State. A sample of 237 students was drawn from the population for the study. The instrument for data collection was a non-cognitive, multivariate instrument titled *Correlates of Adolescents' Self-Esteem Inventory* **(CSEI).** The instrument was divided into three sections labeled A-C. Section A of the instrument was aimed at collecting demographic information from the respondents such as their gender, age, family type etc. Section B of the instrument was a 15-item questionnaire developed in a 4-point modified Likert scale of Always (A), Sometimes (S), Rarely (R), and Never (N) to assess the three identified parenting styles, with five items each tailored towards one parenting style. Section C is a 10-item questionnaire developed to assess students' self-esteem. This section contains both positive and negative items. This section is constructed in a modified 4-point likert scale of Strongly Agree (A), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), scored as 4 points, 3 points, 2 points and 1 point respectively. To ascertain the validity of the instrument, face and content were established. For face validity, draft copies of the instrument were submitted to the researcher's supervisor to determine if the appearance of the instrument - measure what it claims to measure. The suggestions were integrated before the instruments were content validated. In content validation, draft copies of the instruments along with the objectives and research questions of the study were submitted to two experts in Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counseling to evaluate the instrument on item content, relevance, comprehensiveness, clarity, and literacy demand. Test-retest technique was used to assess the reliability of the instrument. The 30 students who served as respondents for the pilot testing were administered with the same instrument after a two-week interval. Values from both administrations were correlated using Pearson product moment correlation. For the Section B, correlational coefficients of 0.81 was obtained for patenting styles. This indicated that the instrument possessed sample reliability for use. The instrument was administered using the direct delivery method. For answering the research questions, mean and standard deviation were used. For testing hypothesis one, one-way analysis of variance was used, while the remaining null hypotheses were tested using independent samples t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results
Research Question 1: What is the influence of parenting styles on self-esteem of secondary school students in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State?
Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the influence of parenting styles on the self-esteem of secondary school Students in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State.
Table 1: Influence of parenting styles on self-esteem of Students.

Parenting styles	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Authoritarian	63	25.6825	4.33971
Authoritative	128	27.2578	4.12453
Permissive	46	25.7391	3.63584
Total	237	26.5443	4.15014

Table 2: One-way ANOVA of the influence of parenting styles on Students' self-esteem.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	141.772	2	70.886	4.228	.016
Within Groups	3923.013	234	16.765		
Total	4064.785	236			

From the result shown in Table 1, it can be observed that when the self-esteem of students from different parenting styles were compared, those from authoritarian homes had a mean rating of 25.68 (SD =

4.33), those from authoritative parenting homes had mean rating of 27.25 (SD = 4.12), while those from permissive parenting homes had mean values of 25.73 (SD = 3.63). On the basis of the mean values reported, it can be stated that authoritative parenting styles had the highest influence on the self-esteem of students in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State.

As shown in Table 2, result yielded $F_{(2, 234)} = 4.228$, $p = 0.016$, which was greater than the chosen alpha level of 0.05. This result suggest that parenting styles has a significant influence on the self-esteem of students in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of authoritarian parenting styles on self-esteem of male and female secondary school students in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State?
Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the influence of authoritarian parenting styles on the self-esteem of male and female secondary school students in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 3: Independent sample t-test of authoritarian parenting styles on Students' self-esteem

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	T	p-value	Decision
Male	20	26.70	5.32	61	1.27	0.207	Retain
Female	43	25.20	3.77				HO_2 (p>0.05)

From Table 3 above, it can be seen that male respondents (N = 20) from authoritarian parenting styles had a mean value of 26.70 (SD = 5.32), while female respondents (N = 43) had a mean value of 26.70 (SD = 3.77). From the mean values presented above, it can be observed that authoritarian parenting styles had a higher impact on the self-esteem of male students than female students. To ascertain if the difference in male and female response on self-esteem from authoritarian homes was significant, the independent sample t-test conducted yielded a t-value of 1.27 with a p-value of 0.207 at 61 degrees of freedom. From this analysis, it is clear that the obtained p-value was greater than the chosen alpha of 0.05. This therefore indicates that there is no significant difference in the extent to which gender influences the self-esteem of male and female adolescents from authoritarian homes in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State

Research Question 3: What is the influence of authoritative parenting styles on self-esteem of male and female secondary school Students in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State?
Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the influence of authoritative parenting styles on the self-esteem of male and female secondary school Students in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 4: Independent sample t-test of authoritative parenting styles on Students' self-esteem

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	T	Sig(2-tailed)	Decision
Male	45	27.80	4.48	126	1.096	0.275	Retain
Female	83	26.96	3.91				HO_3 (p>0.05)

From table 4 above, it can be seen that male respondents (N = 40) from authoritative parenting styles had a mean value of 27.80 (SD = 4.48), while female respondents (N = 84) had a mean value of 26.96 (SD = 3.91). From the mean values presented above, it can be observed that authoritative parenting styles had a higher impact on the self-esteem of male students than female students. To ascertain if the difference in male and female response on self-esteem from authoritative homes was significant, the independent samples' t-test conducted yielded a t-value of 1.096 with a p-value of 0.275 at 126 degrees of freedom. From this analysis, it is clear that the obtained p-value was greater than the chosen alpha of 0.05. This therefore indicates that there is no significant difference in the extent to which gender influences the self-esteem of male and female students from authoritative homes in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Research Question 4: What is the influence of permissive parenting styles on self-esteem of male and female secondary school students in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the influence of permissive parenting styles on the self-esteem of male and female secondary school students in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 5: Independent sample t-test of permissive parenting styles on Students' self-esteem

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	T	Sig(2-tailed)	Decision
Male	22	26.27	3.64	44	0.952	0.346	Retain
Female	24	25.25	3.63				HO_4 (p>0.05)

From table 5 above, it can be seen that male respondents (N = 22) from permissive parenting styles had a mean value of 26.27 (SD = 3.64), while female respondents (N = 24) had a mean value of 25.25 (SD = 3.63). From the mean values presented above, it can be observed that permissive parenting styles had a higher impact on the self-esteem of male students than female students. To ascertain if the difference in male and female response on self-esteem from permissive homes was significant, the independent samples' t-test conducted yielded a t-value of 0.952 with a p-value of 0.346 at 44 degrees of freedom. From this analysis, it is clear that the obtained p-value was greater than the chosen alpha of 0.05. This therefore indicates that there is no significant difference in the extent to which gender influences the self-esteem of male and female students from permissive homes in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Summary of Results
From the results obtained after the collation and analysis of results, the major findings are summarized below.

1. Authoritative parenting styles had a greater influence on the self-esteem of students in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area, followed by authoritarian and then permissive parenting styles.
2. Authoritarian parenting styles had a significantly greater influence on the self-esteem of male students more than female students. However, there was no statistically significant difference in the self-esteem of male and female students from authoritarian homes.
3. Authoritative parenting styles had a significantly greater influence on the self-esteem of male students more than female students. However, there was no statistically significant difference in the self-esteem of male and female students from authoritative homes.
4. Authoritarian parenting styles had a significantly greater influence on the self-esteem of male adolescent more than female students. However, there was no statistically significant difference in the self-esteem of male and female students from authoritarian homes.

Discussion of Findings
The result from the study revealed that parenting styles has a significant influence on the self-esteem of secondary school students in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area, with authoritative parenting styles having the highest influence on the self-esteem of students, followed by authoritarian parenting styles and then permissive parenting styles This result was not surprising because when a student is from a home where rules are laid and discipline enforced, the student is more likely to feel loved and appreciated. More so, the student is properly guided to refrain from defeating behaviour. Finally, the result that authoritative parenting styles has the highest influence on the self-esteem of students might be attributed to the love and acceptance that is common in authoritative homes. This result is similar to that obtained by Israel (2012) who found out that authoritarian parenting styles is a significant predictor of self-actualization and study engagement among secondary school students in Spain.

The second result of the study showed that there was no significant difference in the self-esteem of male and female students from authoritative homes. This result is expected and not surprising because the parenting styles of authoritativeness does allow students, irrespective of their gender to be committed to their studies as well as expend whatever resource possible to achieve the goal. Also, these students do not indulge in behaviours that are inimical to their optimal development. Students who are from homes with high authoritativeness are fully committed to their studies and long-term goals. It is therefore not surprising that this study found out that authoritative parenting styles is a strong determinant of self-esteem among the students that were studied. This result is similar to that of Andreas

(2014) who found out that authoritative parenting styles is a strong predictor of achievement motivation among students in California.

The third result of the study showed authoritarian parenting styles did not adequately differentiate between the self-esteem of male and female students. This result implies that students who are from homes where there is a high level of authoritarian parenting styles engage more in behaviour of self-acceptance and self-understanding. This result is not surprising to this researcher because when a student or any individual gets satisfaction from the home, that student is likely to enjoy interaction with people and not believing in themselves which is the hallmark of self-esteem. This result is in agreement with that obtained by Israel (2012) who found out that self-esteem has a strong relationship with authoritarian parenting styles among Spanish secondary school students.

Conclusion.
The conclusion drawn from the study is that parenting styles is a significant factor in the development and sustenance of positive self-esteem among secondary school students in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area. However, not all parenting styles contribute equally to the development of self-esteem. While some like authoritative parenting styles has the highest contribution to self-esteem, permissive parenting styles has the least influence on self-esteem of the students. Furthermore, the result showed that gender is not a significant determinant of self-esteem among the students.

Recommendations
From the results obtained, the following recommendations were made:
1. Counsellors should create greater awareness on parenting styles and its influence on self-esteem, and encourage parents to adopt the most appropriate parenting styles for self-esteem.
2. The school should endeavour to collaborate with the home to ensure and promote a holistic development of the child's personality which in turn will foster a positive development of self-esteem.
3. Effort should be made by school authorities to identify students with low self-esteem and provide them with the needed help through appropriate intervention strategies
4. Despite their difficult financial situation, parents should endeavour to provide adequate parental care for their children from infancy so that they would not grow up to be lacking belief in themselves.

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STRATEGIES FOR MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OPOBO/NKORO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT

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Abstract
This paper is on strategies for meaningful contribution of women in community development in Opobo/Nkoro Local Government Area of Rivers State Nigeria; Implications for Perceived Social Support. The researcher used survey method. This study was carried out in Opobo Town in Opobo/Nkoro Local Government Area of Rivers state. It is located within longitude 0.6º52ºE and latitude 07º24ºN, in Rivers South-East Senatorial zone. Opobo town as a community in Opobo/Nkoro local Government Area of Rivers State is made up sixty-seven war canoe houses within a fourteen sections configuration. The population of this research work is the entire members of the Women Groups in Opobo. But 10% of this original proportion that made up our study population was 12,000. The sample size constitutes the position of the entire population of study, which has been taken for this research work. The sample size for this study is 120 respondents. The simple random sampling procedure and the availability sampling procedure were adopted in the research work. Based on the research work, the method of data analysis collected from the questionnaires was recorded on frequency table and analyzed using the frequency distribution and percentages. The percentages was used to show the demographic statistic and formular of the responses using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 13, data collected were subjected to chi- square statistical analysis for testing the study hypothesis. The result shows no significance, since the chi-square value is 48.000 at degree of freedom 5 and the obtained significance level of .000 which is less than 0.5. Then it can be argued that there is a relationship between women groups and the objectives of their group. It was recommended among others that Community development workers with the government should make more meaningful policies in favour of the women groups to help them contribute to community development.

Keywords: Women, Community Development, Social Support,

Introduction
The cultural beliefs that the education of a woman ends in the kitchen, makes it almost impossible for males to see the immense contributions of women groups to the community development . For example, through picture books, girls are taught to have low aspirations because there are so few opportunities portrayed as available to them. It is believed that men's work is outside the home and women's work is inside the home. For example we see women at home washing dishes, cooking, cleaning, yell at the children, takes care of babies, and does the shopping, while men are store keepers, house builders, storytellers, monks, preachers, fishermen, policemen, fighters, soldiers, adventurers, judges, farmers and pilots. They were also the king and the gods. Within the traditional African society, women from almost all the ethnic group were excluded from performing certain activities, especially those that concern leadership and other hand and significant activities like construction works and clergy roles, these were considered as men's domain. The exclusion of women from some of these activities are due to the socio- cultural factors constraining them from participating in activities that were considered to be exclusively for men (William, 1973). Furthermore, gender inequality contributes to the low contribution of women to community development. Many a times, we hear the men ask, "Don't you know you are a woman? This question is due to the systematic gender bias in customs, beliefs and attitudes that confine women mostly to the domestic sphere and not in certain matters expected to be in the men's domain. Also, the economic and domestic workloads deprived women of time to contribute to community development.

Finally laws and customs also impede women's access to credit, productive inputs, employment, education, information and politics. These factors affect women's ability and incentives to contribute in economic and social development activities in the community. The purpose of this research is to find out the contributions of women's groups to community development, since it is believed that "what a man can do, a woman can do better". The challenges facing them in their bid to contribute will also be reviewed.

Research Question
What are the ways in which Women Groups could been courage to contribute to community development?

Objective of the Study
To identify strategies for meaningful contribution of women groups to community development.

Research Hypothesis
There is a relationship between women groups and the objectives of the groups.

Women in Community Development in Nigeria
For the past three decades, women have been major participants in community organisations Usman A.H. (1996). In the 1960s and 70s community Women advocated for control of local services and neighborhood preservation. In the 1980s, they were among the few forces pursuing neighborhood preservation in the face of uncontrolled downtown growth. Religious congregations, particularly those formed by women have been an integral part of community development during the same period and his connection has clearly been a factor in attracting talented women to the field. Hundreds of community development organizations began life in church basement while national councils and local congregation have supplied millions of dollars, staff, services and on-going support. This spiritual dimension is usually among current social reform initiative. The faith-based legacy, stressing a holistic view of community revitalizing, is compatible with the approach many women embrace. The willingness of faith based grass roots groups to accept women as leaders offers a valuable proving ground, and many women have gone to apply those lessons, and the resources of their organization to strengthen their communities.

For the past 20years, organizations with strong women's leadership have resisted the narrow definition of community development as construction of affordable housing and economic development (Agency for International Development, 1974). These organizations have always defined community development issues as those responding directly to the needs of women, children, and families, even in the absence of funding for such broader concerns. Foundation and governments have only recently began to recognize the wisdom of the approach. The current emphasis in public policy initiative and foundations funding on comprehensive community initiative (CCIS) affirms the long term commitment of many women-led organizations and the role women play as catalysis for social changes. Women build social capital through leadership, community participation, and network. There is a continuum of women's leadership styles ranging from an inclusive, collective, "feminist" model to a more traditional-hierarchical model.

As in previous gender specific research in other fields, women community development leaders describe themselves as open, consultative and supportive of staff both in the community and within their organization they are committed to participation process, and internal democracy, many women reported a Preference for consensus-building and this approach to seeking peaceful resolution of issue contributes to participating styles of leadership. Women also focused on social change as a goal. The desire to create social change is at the core of much of women's community development work. Women's vision of change is broad aiming to change people's lives, deepen their personal investment in their neighborhoods and increase their access in resource to improve the quality of life in the community (Kurubo, 1993). Many women measure organizational success in terms of the health of their communities and empowerment of residents in addition to more traditional, quantifiable measures.

Women have created a pattern of activities designed to create an environment where changes can happen in communities. Not every women-led organization offers arrange of comprehensive services, but they are all characterized by their degree of awareness of the interconnection between personal, social and economic issues affecting community residents.

Review of Relevant Theories
The Social Planning Model
The social planning model makes a different set of assumption thus: that society or any local community is very complex and as a result of that, to change the environment requires expert planners who can exercise technical ability and who can manage change. The main aim of this approach is to establish, arrange and deliver goods and service to people who need them. "Social integration" is not the social conditions of people to modify the equality amount and range of services provided for the community. The social planning model brings meaningful solution to substantive community problems. It gathers facts about identified problems and decides on the most rational way of providing solutions to them.

System Theory
Quade (1979) observed that system theory analysis "is not a method or technique, nor is it a fixed set of techniques; but a concept or a way of looking at a problem". Quade (1979) also noted that objectives are often "multiple, conflicting and obscure" which make analysis even more essential. Successful analysis depends upon a continuous cycle or formulating the problem, selecting objectives, building better need, etc. until constraints of time, man power and money compel a cut-off.

Warren (1977), observed that system theory has come to be used not only in the analysis of small groups and formal organization, but also in analysis of the less agglomeration allied communities which constitute the area of operation of many communities or organization workers. System theory provides answers to certain vital question, such as the nature of the community, the wards, tension and boundary. It affords a means of grouping and analyzing the complex multi-structured network of social relationships involved in the community concept. System theory creates room for autonomy. It gives room for greater involvement and participation, as well as decision-making process in community development activities. Therefore, creating chance for meaningful changes to take place in the community.

Research Methodology
In the design of the study, the researcher used survey method. This study was carried out in Opobo Town in Opobo/Nkoro Local Government Area of Rivers State. It is located within longitude $0.6^{o}52^{o}E$ and latitude $07^{o}24^{o}N$, in Rivers South-East Senatorial zone. Opobo town as a community in Opobo/Nkoro Local Government Area of Rivers State, is made up sixty-seven war canoe houses within a fourteen sections configuration. The population of this research work is the entire members of the women groups in Opobo. But 10% of this original proportion that made up our study population was 12,000. The sample size constitutes the position of the entire population of study, which has been taken for this research work. The sample size for this study is 120 respondents. The simple random sampling procedure and the availability sampling procedure was adopted in the research work. Opobo as a community, is made up of fourteen *polo* otherwise known as sections with a total of sixty-seven war canoe houses therein. The self-administered questionnaire was adopted here, using the closed ended question pattern. The questionnaire consists of two parts A and B. Part A focused on the personal demographic characteristic of the respondent, such as name, sex, age, etc while part B borders on substantive issues of the research work. Based on the research work, the method of data analysis collected from the questionnaires was recorded on frequency table and analyzed using the frequency distribution and percentages. The percentages was used to show the demographic statistic and formular of the responses using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 13, data collected were subjected to chi-square statistical analysis for testing the study hypothesis.

Data Presentation and Analysis
Marital Status
Table 1: Marital Status of Participants

Gender	Frequency Participant	Percentage
Married	91	75.8
Single	14	11.7
Widow	11	9.2
Divorce	4	3.3
Total	120	100.00

Table 1 shows the marital status of the participants. The highest percentage (75.8%) was the recorded number of participants of marital status as married, while the least percentage of 3.3% was the divorce women.

Research Question: What are the ways in which women groups are encouraged to contribute to community development?

Table 2: Ways in which women groups could be encouraged to contribute to community development.

Ways of Encouragement	Mean	Standard Deviation
Women empowerment	1.5333	.50098
Financial support	1.4417	.49867
Co-operation	1.4417	.49867
Equal educational opportunity	1.5333	.50098
Creating enough time for women	1.4417	.49867
Socio-cultural inequality	1.4417	.49867

The above table shows the mean score of various ways in which women could be encourage contributing to community development. The table indicates that both women empowerment and equal educational opportunity with mean score of1.5333 respectively, are the highest in the table. While the least mean scores of 1.4417 were recorded for the four remaining factors in the study. The important observation in the study is the fact that the two strong identified factors (women empowerment and equal educational opportunities) are good ingredients for women capacity building.

Test of Hypothesis
Hypothesis: There is a relationship between women groups and objectives of their group.
Table 2: Chi-Square Tabulation

Observed	Expected
5	17.1
21	17.1
42	17.1
23	17.1
24	17.1
6	17.1
23	17.1
120	

DF=5,P $\leq$0.5, $\times^2$ =48.000,Significant level=.000

The above table is a chi-square analysis testing the hypothesis which states that there is a relationship between women groups and the objectives of their groups. The result shows no significance, since the chi-square value is 48.000 at degree of freedom 5 and the obtained significance level of .000 which is less than 0.5. Then it can be argued that there is a relationship between women groups and the objectives of their group.

Implications for Perceived Social Support

Social support is generally perceived differently among male and female. Studies have reported higher levels of psychological distress among women than men (Boudreault-Bouchard et al, 2013). In regard to the sources of support, women perceive more social support than men did (Bokhorst, Sumter & Westenberg, 2010). Women find more support from close friends than any other sources, whereas men perceive less from all (Rueger, et al, 2018). Female adolescents as compared to male adolescents are more oriented toward peers for social support and are also more satisfied with the support gained from their peers. Although studies on perceived social support have consistently shown to be associated with reduced stress and improved physical and mental health, re-search on received social support is inconclusive at best (see Haber et al., 2017, for a comprehensive review). Prior research indicates that in general, perceived social support is associated with improved physical and mental health (House et al, 1988; Lakey & Cronin, 2018; Uchino, 2019), and that perceived support is more essential than received support in predicting adjustment to life stress (Wethington & Kessler, 1986). However, many studies have reported that specific supportive behaviours either have no positive effect on well-being (Barrera, 1986; Bolger, Foster et al, 1996) or may even be detrimental to the recipient (Bolger & Amarel, 2017; Bolger, Zuckerman, et al, 2010; Martire et al, 2012).

Recommendations

i.   Also, women groups should make their interest in community development high. The finding recorded an average interest, but high interest is needed for meaningful interest.

ii. Community development workers with the government should make more meaningful policies in favour of the women groups to help them contribute to community development.

Summary and Conclusion

The researcher having completed the research work on the contributions of women groups to community development, observed that out of the 130 questionnaires distributed to respondents, 120 were collected and analyzed with the aid of one research question. The researcher made use of frequency distribution and chi-square tables in analyzing the data collected. In marital status, those married were the major group. The researcher observed women empowerment and equal educational opportunity serve as the major ways of encouraging the women groups to contribute meaningfully to community development. Finding on the test of hypothesis shows that there is a significant relationship that exists between them and their strategies for meaningful contributions to community development. A significant relationship exists between them and their perception of strategies for income generation in community development. Also a significant relation exists between the women groups and their group objectives. In each of the analysis, the significant level is lessthan0.5resultingto significant relationship in each case.

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SPORT BETTING AND UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUTHS IN NIGERIA. A STUDY OF PORT HARCOURT CITY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA.

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Abstract
This study explores sport betting and unemployment among youths in Nigeria with reference to Port Harcourt City Local Government Area. The descriptive survey method was employed for the study with 400 respondents sampled from four communities in the study area. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Albert Bandura's social learning theory was adopted for the study; whereby sport betting is seen as a form of behaviour that is highly subject to reinforcement and reward. Findings from the study revealed a correlation between perceived dangers of sport betting and high rates of youth unemployment. And that despite low unemployment, sport betting has a discernible impact on youth by exacerbating financial insecurity and unstable economic conditions. Based on these findings, the study recommends concerted awareness campaign aimed at espousing the hazards and consequences of gambling in order help to reduce its impact on young people as well as promote behavioural change. Regulators and promoters are urged to put up mechanisms and safeguards including setting betting limits, giving self-exclusion options, and ensuring that operators provide aid services for gambling addicts.

Keywords: Sport Betting, Unemployment, Youths, Gambling,

Introduction

Youth are seen as the future leaders and are widely accepted as the foundation upon which society is built. They are potentially and fundamentally the most valuable asset for a country's growth (UN 2007). As a result, any community or country that prioritises the welfare and development of its youths risks its future and existence (Alanine 2003). Unfortunately, in Nigeria, youths have not only been abandoned and left to their fate, but they have also suffered from a variety of afflictions, including spiralling unemployment and abysmal poverty.

In fact, it is an understatement to say that Nigerian youths today have no future because there are no serious social programs or economic policies to cater for their interests and needs, despite the existence of some agencies in Nigeria, such as the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Economic and Empowerment Development Scheme (NEEDS), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), and so on, to alleviate the suffering of the youths. Still, in Nigeria, youths are confronted with challenges of poverty, illiteracy, drug misuse, juvenile delinquency, crime, prostitution, and fraudulent activities, all of which are related to unemployment (Freedom, 2008).

The passion of sports has recently taken on a new dimension with the introduction of sports betting companies, most likely as a means of connecting sports lovers and supporters. Sport betting is the action of forecasting and predicting the outcome of sports matches or events and placing a monetary stake or reward on it. Today, online betting is popular among youngsters aged 15 to 40, and even older people participate. The primary reason is that it provides quick and simple income. However, online betting is still betting. It is not a job, but rather a way to wreck the lives and futures of young people.

Sport betting games have taken on a new dimension in Nigeria and other countries. The most popular betting sites in Nigeria include Naira Bet, Bet9ja, Sure Bet, Winners Golden Bet, 1960 Bet, Merry Bet, Bet Colony, and Stackers Den. Foreign betting games include, but are not limited to: Bet 360, Bet365, lx Bet, 24H Bet, 368 Bet, Apollo Bet, and Bet-at-Home. Typically, all of the aforementioned betting organisations provide an open platform for interested parties to forecast the outcome of an event—football, basketball, car racing, hockey, dog racing, virtual, among others.

For example, according to Statistical Portal (2015), while it may be difficult to accurately estimate the total value of global sports betting due to inconsistency in the regulatory and financing environments, responsible surveys estimate the value of the sports betting industry (at between 700 billion and 1.000 billion US dollars), while illegal betting may only be as high as 500 billion US dollars. Some bookies think that sports betting is currently worth more than one trillion US dollars. It is important to note that any figure relating to the betting procedure is merely an indication of official gambling.

Currently, there is no law governing the activity, nor is there any government policy against sports betting. However, the reality is that our youth's lives and futures are at stake. The majority of the youngsters in this game come from low-income families or are subjected to negative social influences. This group does not include children from wealthy houses who are under the supervision of their parents. It is evident that the future of many young people is in jeopardy if spot betting continues to increase at its current rate.

Statement of the Problem
Ideally, the fact that sport betting provides quick and easy money does not excuse the reality that the kids interested in the game are gamblers, and a gambler only makes a livelihood off hope. They are usually poor and pitiful individuals. When fans lose at sports betting, they become agitated and, in some cases, violent. These young people tend to believe that they will one day become millionaires. This is a delusion that only leads to mental pain, insanity, and suicide.

Losing a bet causes depression, frustration, and rage. The game is quickly erasing the characteristics of a true Nigerian youth, who are full of vitality, dedication, and inner strength to excel, and replacing them with sloth. Sport betting causes family tension. Vanguard Newspaper (2017). It undermines one's objectives, creativity, and ingenuity. Many successful people, including Bill Gates of Microsoft, Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook, and Dangote, were not active gamblers. Many young people have been duped into thinking that there is life in betting.

Unemployment has emerged as one of the most important socioeconomic concerns plaguing Nigeria's youth. Similarly, the disastrous effects of unemployment include a large increase in poverty, inflation, and insecurity in society. The higher the unemployment rate in an economy, the greater the poverty level and attendant welfare concerns (Salami, 2013). Nigeria's unemployment rate is currently expanding at a pace of 16% per year, with youth being the most affected and accounting for three times general unemployment (Doreo, 2013). Poverty remains prevalent in Nigeria, as indicated by the area under study.

According to World Data Lab (2019), different programs implemented in Nigeria over the years have had little influence on reducing poverty in the country since a larger number of Nigerians continue to live in extreme poverty. As a result, because unemployed people do not receive government unemployment benefits, the vast majority, if not all, are unable to support themselves. Many people have resorted to sports betting as a means of livelihood.

However, it is becoming clear that the implementation of sports betting could be one of the most powerful tools for addressing socioeconomic concerns among adolescents in Rivers State and Nigeria as a whole. More than 80% of Nigerian youth are unemployed. The anticipated 10% of employed people are stressed and depressed since they rely solely on low-income family members and relatives. The study's problem is to explore the influence of sports betting on unemployed Nigerian youths.

Previous research on sport betting in Port Harcourt (Tade, 2014; Ifeduba, 2011; Omobowale, 2009) has looked at the acceptance of sport betting, young gambling behaviour, and the spread of football betting among Nigerian youths in general. Furthermore, many of the studies were simply theoretical discussion papers that did not collect data from any specific local government or state to establish the perceived value of sports betting among young people. As a result, there is a knowledge gap on sports betting among adolescents in the Port Harcourt local government area. As a result, this study would look into sports betting among Rivers State youths in Port Harcourt.

Objective of the Study
The main objective is to investigate sport betting and unemployment among youths in Nigeria, focusing on Port Harcourt City Local Government Area. However, the specific objectives are:
1. To examine the impact of sports betting on youths unemployment in the study area.
2. To examine the risk associated with sports betting on youths unemployment in the study area.

Research Questions
The following research questions are raised to guide the study:
1. What are the impact of sports betting on youths unemployment in the study area?
2. What are the risk associated with sports betting on youths unemployment in the study area?

Hypotheses
- The more the impact of sports betting on youths , the more unemployment in the study area
- The more the risk associated with sports betting, the more the high level of youths unemployment in the study area
1. Sports betting does not have a significant impact on youth unemployment in the study area.
2. There is no significant relationship between the risks associated with sports betting and the high levels of youth unemployment in the study area.

Review of Related Literature
According to Tade (2014), sport betting is a form of gambling in which individuals profit from sports by correctly predicting the outcome of numerous sporting events in a competition, tournament, or league. For example, in most nations where it is practiced, football betting is quickly becoming a popular area for resource exchange inside the capitalist sphere. This is because fans expand their fandom through an expressive economy for benefits and losses in the context of Marxian survival of the fittest in capitalist-moderated environments.

Palmer (2013) defined sports betting as putting a financial bet on the outcome of a sports match as well as on events that occur within the larger match or fixture. Omobowale (2009) stated that sports are often intended for pleasure and recreation, although their relevance varies by society. Similarly, Obiyemi, Ajeigbe, Ibraheem, and Mohammed (2012) believe that sports meet both social and therapeutic demands in a variety of social settings, including male and female domestic interactions. This illustrates that sports, such as football, have varied charms and are multi-functional in their purposes and expressions (Tade, 2014).

According to Olayinka and Fageyinbo (2015), sports betting primarily consists of fan-made predictions for game results. Fans who predict correctly are rewarded, while those who predict incorrectly are penalised financially. This is increasingly becoming the order among several youths in Nigeria, as supporters go above and beyond to "stake" on the higher degree of being a fan and competence in football comprehension.

Unemployment is one of the developmental issues confronting any emerging economy around the world. This has become a global worry, with more immediate effects for the youth, who would have been the next generation of potentially productive economic actors, as well as a threat to many countries' political and socioeconomic fortunes, peace, and stability. Despite the fact that Nigeria is Africa's most populous country, the dreadful state of unemployment is well known to all Nigerians, and the

government at all levels, non-governmental organisations, and well-meaning Nigerians are currently grappling with a strategy to reduce unemployment in Nigeria.

Based on this, unemployment rates in most emerging countries, including Nigeria, continue to rise and pose a concern (Mathew & Victor, 2018). Similarly, the International Labour Organisation (2021) defined unemployment as a state of joblessness that occurs when individuals are unemployed and actively seek work within a month. Unemployment is computed as a percentage by dividing the number of jobless people by those who are currently in the labour force. Udu and Agu (2005) define unemployment as "a situation in which persons capable and willing to work are unable to find suitable paid employment."

Theoretical Framework

The work employs social learning theory. Albert Bandura originated the idea in the 1960s, when he conducted the now-famous Bobo Doll experiment, which resulted in his official paper on social learning theory in 1977. The social learning hypothesis proposed that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modelling and is impacted by elements such as attention, motivation, attitude, and emotions. The social learning hypothesis proposes that people can learn from one another through observation, imitation, and modelling. Albert Bandura, a psychologist, theorised the concept, which blended elements from the behaviourist and cognitive learning approaches.

Critically, the social learning theory is relevant to this work. The social learning model of sport betting proposes that sport betting is a form of behaviour that is highly subject to reinforcement and reward. The theory proposes that as an individual engages in sport betting and such sport betting yields a high return in terms of money, such individual is motivated and reinforced to participate in more of the behaviour. This reinforcement tends to increase the link between sport betting and the outcome of such betting (reward).

The reinforcement creates a sense of physiological arousal, which serves as motivation or enforcement for an individual to participate in sports betting in order to increase profits. In other words, when the rate of return from sport betting increases, such individuals will be more likely to engage in sport betting and may potentially develop a sport betting addiction. According to the idea, there is a strong link between reward and sport betting, which predisposes individuals to engage in more sport betting activities.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used in this investigation. The researcher used the descriptive survey method because it focused on important facts, persons, and other characteristics. Hence the study used Data sources include both primary and secondary. The study population is the estimated population of the Port Harcourt City Local Government Area (170,939) (City Population Projections, 2022). The geographical coverage is limited to youths from four (4) Port Harcourt communities. The selected communities' names are Amadi-ama, Nkpolu, Abuloma, and Diobu. Taro Yamene's formula was used to calculate the sample size. The sample size for this study is 400. Hence, the study used primary and secondary source of data. Convenience sampling techniques was adopted in the study, descriptive statistics was to analyze research questions and T -test was used to test our hypotheses.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: What are the impacts of sports betting on youth unemployment in the study area?

Table 1: Impact of Sports Betting on Youth Unemployment

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Sports betting increases unemployment rates among youths.	3.65	0.70	40 10%	60 15%	160 40%	140 35%

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Sports betting reduces job opportunities for youths.	3.52	0.75	32 8%	80 20%	152 38%	136 34%
Youths involved in sports betting face fewer job prospects.	3.60	0.73	48 12%	72 18%	140 35%	140 35%
Grand Mean	3.59	0.727				

Research Question 2: What are the risks associated with sports betting on youth unemployment in the study area?

Table 2: Risks Associated with Sports Betting

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Sports betting causes financial instability among youths.	3.78	0.68	35 9%	48 12%	152 38%	165 41%
Sports betting increases the likelihood of gambling addiction.	3.85	0.62	28 7%	40 10%	144 36%	188 47%
Youths involved in sports betting face significant social stigma.	3.70	0.72	44 11%	60 15%	136 34%	160 40%
Grand Mean	1.030	0.673				

Hypothesis 1: Sports betting does not have a significant impact on youth unemployment in the study area.

Table 3:

Item	N	Mean	SD	Df	t- value	P- value	Descision
Sports betting impact	150	1.8	0.50	398	6.1	0.000	
Youth Unemployment	250	0.2	0.45				

Table 3 shows that sports betting has a considerable impact on youth unemployment. The p-value of 0.000 is substantially below the commonly used alpha level of 0.05, indicating that the observed effect is statistically significant. The t-value of 6.1 is fairly high, indicating a significant link between sports betting and teenage unemployment. The mean score for the impact of sports betting is 1.8, with a standard deviation of 0.50, indicating that respondents believe sports betting has a significant impact on youth unemployment. The mean for youth unemployment is much lower (0.2), with a standard deviation of 0.45, demonstrating that, despite low unemployment rates, sports betting has a perceptible effect.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between the risks associated with sports betting and the high levels of youth unemployment in the study area.

Item	N	Mean	SD	Df	t- value	P- value	Descision
Risk associated to sports betting	150	2.8	0.55	398	7.1	0.000	
High level of unemployment	250	2.9		0.40			

From 4, the t-value of 7.1 and the p-value of 0.000 show a strong and statistically significant link between sports betting risks and high levels of teenage unemployment. The p-value is significantly lower than the generally accepted alpha level of 0.05, indicating that the observed link is extremely unlikely to be attributable to chance. The average score for the risk associated with sports betting is 2.8, with a standard deviation of 0.55. This shows that respondents believe sports betting carries a moderate to high level of risk. On the other hand, the mean score for high levels of unemployment is 2.9, with a standard deviation of 0.40, showing that respondents have a strong perception of unemployment. Given that both mean scores are close and statistical tests provide significant findings, there appears to be a

strong link between perceived hazards of sports betting and high levels of unemployment. This means that when perceptions of risk connected with sports betting increase, so does the perception of high youth unemployment.

Discussion of Findings

The examination of sports betting and its association with youth unemployment yields important information. Both hypotheses investigated show that sports betting has an influence on youth unemployment and that there is a significant link between perceived dangers of sports betting and high rates of youth unemployment. This discussion explains the findings in light of previous empirical research and theoretical frameworks. Table 3 shows a significant association between sports betting and teenage unemployment (p-value = 0.000, t-value = 6.1). This implies that, contrary to the theory, sports betting has a considerable impact on youth unemployment.

The p-value is substantially below 0.05, indicating that the link is statistically significant. This finding is consistent with previous research, which demonstrates that gambling, particularly sports betting, can influence employment outcomes. The mean impact score for sports betting is 1.8, with a standard deviation of 0.50, indicating that respondents believe sports betting has a significant effect on unemployment. The low mean score for youth unemployment (0.2) with a standard deviation of 0.45 demonstrates that, despite low unemployment, sports betting has a discernible impact. This is consistent with the findings of Williams et al. (2011), who stated that gambling-related concerns could contribute to broader socioeconomic problems, including unemployment. DellaVigna and Malmendier (2006) discovered that gaming can cause financial troubles and unstable economic conditions, potentially contributing to increasing teenage unemployment.

Table 4 shows significant results for the association between perceived hazards of sports betting and high rates of teenage unemployment, with a t-value of 7.1 and a p-value of 0.000. The p-value of 0.000 implies a substantial and statistically significant link between the risks of sports betting and high rates of youth unemployment. The mean perceived risk of sports betting is 2.8, with a standard deviation of 0.55, indicating that respondents assess these risks moderate too high.

Similarly, the mean score for high unemployment is 2.9, with a standard deviation of 0.40, indicating a strong impression of unemployment. The close proximity of these mean scores, together with strong statistical results, suggests a significant link between perceived hazards of sports betting and perceptions of high unemployment rates. This result is consistent with Harrison and Davies (2019), who found that gambling-related risks can have a negative influence on several facets of life, including employment. Rosenblum and Kiser (2015) discovered that gambling-related concerns frequently result in economic problems, including unemployment. Their findings indicate that perceived risks connected with gambling can increase unemployment by contributing to financial insecurity and fewer job options.

The results of both hypotheses show a substantial relationship between sports betting and youth unemployment, as well as a link between perceived hazards of sports betting and high levels of unemployment. These findings emphasise the need for additional study and intervention measures to address the economic and societal consequences of sports betting. The empirical support from current research strengthens the validity of these findings and proposes practical methods to attenuate gambling's negative effects on adolescent unemployment.

Recommendations

1. Launch educational campaigns to raise knowledge about the consequences of sports betting and its impact on employment and financial stability. These programs should address both young people and the larger community. The data show that sports betting has a considerable impact on adolescent unemployment, as well as a high degree of perceived risk. Educating people on the hazards and consequences of gambling can help to reduce its impact.
2. Enhance and expand support programs for people with gambling addictions, such as counselling and financial advice. This could entail increasing financing for gambling support organisations and incorporating their services into current mental health and employment assistance systems. The

strong link between gambling risks and young unemployment shows that those impacted by gambling may encounter financial insecurity and job-related difficulties.

3. Collaborate with sports betting operators to encourage responsible gambling behaviours and take measures to reduce the dangers associated with betting. This could include establishing betting limits, giving self-exclusion options, and ensuring that operators provide aid services. Because the data demonstrates high-risk perceptions associated with sports betting, it is critical for betting operators to implement and enforce responsible gambling policies. Effective regulation and responsible gambling programs can lessen the negative consequences of betting.

4. Launch and support new studies into the complicated relationship between gambling behaviours, financial instability, and employment results. This research should look into how diverse gaming practices affect employment and economic stability, particularly among young people. The new findings highlight the need for more inquiry into how sports betting affects teenage unemployment and the mechanisms that underpin this link. More research can provide more detailed insights and assist in developing targeted remedies.

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OIL THEFT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN EMOHUA LGA OF RIVERS STATE

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Abstract
With the emergence of oil in commercial quantity, various deviant attitudes have been identified or exhibited. This attitude that emanates through oil theft which found to impact negatively on community development in the study area. Given this led to this paper that examined oil theft and community development in Emohua LGA of Rivers State. Three research questions and objectives were guides to the work. Also, the work adopts Emile Durkheim anomie theory of 1893 to explain the nexus between oil theft and community development. The study found that the reasons for the occurrence of oil theft in Emohua LGA of Niger Delta appear to be webbed in grim complexity as corruption amongst others was a factor. The paper concludes and recommended the adoption of transparency and accountability, as measures for combating oil theft/bunkering as this can help in ensuring community development.

Keywords: Oil Theft, Community Development, Corruption, Emohua LGA.

Introduction

Crude oil is one of the main sources for world energy supply (Wu and Chen, 2019). Nigeria has a large deposit of crude oil, with proven reserves of 28.2billion barrels, making it one of the largest oil producers in Africa (Reuters, 2014; Elwerfelli & Benhin, 2018). Crude oil was discovered in Nigeria in 1956 and the first commercial oil well was drilled in Oloibiri, a town located in Bayelsa state, in the Niger Delta. The region currently houses oil fields, comprising 355 located onshore and 251 offshore (NNPC, 2019). Although crude oil has been discovered in other parts of Nigeria, such as Lagos state (Premium Times, 2016), and oil wells have been drilled in the Chad Basin, the Niger Delta is currently the sole destination for commercial production of crude oil in Nigeria. As such, the oil extracted from the Niger Delta accounts for practically all of Nigeria's oil exports (NNPC, 2010).

Asuni (2009); Katsouris and Sayne (2013) posited that there are three operational methods of oil theft and they include: (1) a minor and small-scale pilfering of condensate and petroleum product destined local market; (2) direct hacking into pipelines or tapping with a hose from wellhead through practical removal of the 'Christmas tree'; and (3) excess lifting of crude oil beyond the licensed amount, using forged bills of lading. Thus, the continuous theft of oil has the tendency to destroy or influence community development.

Community development means the process of helping local communities to become aware of their needs to assess their resources more realistically, to organize themselves and their resources in such a way as to satisfy some of their needs and in so doing acquire attitude, experience and cooperative skills for repeating this process again. This explanation sees community development as a dynamic process which when set in the community through their own effort are enable to more steadily toward the goal of self-government and improvement. To achieve more community development, especially the rural communities there is need to fight against insecurity that can emanate through oil theft. In fact studies showed that people who involved in oil theft equally exchange it or purchase arms that can be used to raise tension in the community (Onua, 2019; Emeodu & Elem, 2021; Emeodu, 2019).

As the insecurity persist induced by oil theft, development becomes a challenge and this have led to problem of underdevelopment in communities in Rivers State. This background led to the study on oil theft and community development in Emohua Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Rivers State has experienced several environmental changes resulting from many causes but specifically the illegal oil activities. This has affected the environment and health of the people. Recently, it was observed that black soot have emitted the environment; other occurrence includes oil spillage,

deforestation and vehicular pollutant, which effects are negative to the human health. The relevance of the oil region such as Emohua LGA of Rivers State to Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. It is the metaphorical goose that lays the golden egg. This is because more than 75% of the country's national income is generated from oil exports (OPEC, 2019). Also, the quality of the different types of crude oil found in the region makes it attractive for exploration by foreign investors, as they are characterised by low sulphur content, low salt composition and low soil to water ratio (Dickson & Udoessien, 2012).

These qualities make the crude oil easy to transport through pipelines and have informed tagging the crude oil sourced from the Niger Delta, light sweet crude oil blends. In addition, the oil production activities in the region necessitates the location of foreign and local oil companies in the region, therefore providing accommodation to drilling equipment, transportation fleets, and technological devices, that aid the extraction of crude oil from land or sea within and bothering the Niger Delta.

Despite the significance of oil production in the Emohua LGA and other oil regions, the area grapples with the challenge of oil theft, in addition to poor living conditions in many oil-producing communities (Ebegbulem et al., 2013). This however, led to some youth's involvement into illegal oil theft as means of survival without being considerate of its impact on the people or community development. As studies by various scholars on this issue have been carried out, but the researcher found that only few studies was done that considered the nexus between oil theft and community crisis in Emohua LGA of Rivers State. The paper therefore, identifies the following research questions as guide to the study.

1. What are the economic implications of oil theft in Emohua LGA?
2. What are social impacts of oil theft in the Emohua LGA that affects community development?
3. What are the reasons for oil theft in Emohua LGA that affects community development?

Objectives of the Study
i. To find out what the reasons for oil theft in Emohua LGA that affects community development?
ii. To identify the economic implications of oil theft in Emohua LGA
iii. To examine the social impacts of oil theft in the Emohua LGA that affects community development?

Theoretical Framework
This work adopts Emile Durkheim anomie theory in 1893. Anomie means the lack of normal ethical social standard. It is also a state of lawlessness and normlessness. The theory assumes that anomic situation is a product of industrialization. Theft in such circumstance, industrialization usually brings in a new method of economic relation, thus resulting to social upheaval. As aresults weaken collective conscience, previous norms and social control mechanism. By this oil economy is a new economic activity which supplanted traditional economic activities. That is each time a new economic production emerges, it occasions social disintegration, weaken collective conscience or norms. However, Robert Merton cited in Emeodu (2021) elaborated this theory and pointed that in some circumstance individual no longer find meaning in the society's rules, therefore, opt for or tend to substitute or legitimize their own norms to achieve the society's accepted goals or values. When this occurs, development is stagnated and underdevelopment will continue to prevail.

Linking the theory to the situation in the area of study which is Emohua LGA, oil theft is a crime and a result of failure of societal norms and values. Oil theft is a deviant act and cannot bring about progress and development.

Conceptual Clarification
Oil Theft
Oil theft started around late 1970s to early 1980s under military rule. It was carried out under the command of top military personnel for the purpose of enriching themselves and forcefully maintaining political stability (Katsouris & Sayne, 2013). Oil theft can be referred to as illegal bunkering. It involves the act of hacking into pipelines to steal crude which is later refined or sold abroad (Ugwuanyi, 2013). It is an illicit trade that involves the theft of crude oil and its derivative products through a variety of mechanisms. In a related view, Asuni (2009) refers to oil theft as oil taken from pipelines or flow

stations, as well as extra crude oil added to legitimate cargo that is not accounted for. In support of the above positions, it is imperative to posit that "illegal oil bunkering" in Nigeria is a generic term surrounding not only illegal loading of ships but also all acts involving the theft, diversion and oil smuggling".

The illegal activity however, took a new turn with the advent of agitation for resource control by Niger Delta indigenes and the emergence of youth militancy (Ikelegbe, 2005 and Katsouris & Sayne, 2013). Given this, Adegbite (2013) posited that oil theft is carried out at different levels and quantities; hence there are various methods in which oil theft operations are carried out in the Niger Delta. The most popular method for stealing the crude oil is to puncture the pipeline conveying the product from one point to the other and tap it at the point where it had been punctured or ruptured.

At the outset of the agitations in the Niger Delta, the objective was primarily political with the citizens of the region demanding for an increase in the derivation fund (a specific percentage of oil rents accrued to the federal government), but when the government was unable to meet all their demands, many of the youths in the community took up arms against the government and engaged in criminal activities such as oil theft, kidnapping, destruction of oil facilities and sea piracy (Ikelegbe, 2005; Katsouris & Sayne, 2013). According to Ikelegbe (2005), the involvement in oil theft by youths were at first limited to providing security for oil thieves, an activity from which they were able to enrich themselves and acquire weapons, but after a while they were able to engage in oil theft autonomously and this led to escalation of the illegal activity in the region.

However, oil theft further occurs when it is carried out without requisite statutory licenses or valid documents, or in violation of the Nigerian maritime sector (Odalonu, 2015). In this sense again, oil theft is considered to be the illegal appropriation of crude or refined oil products from the pipelines of multinational oil companies. The act is facilitated by the pragmatic cooperation between security forces, militia organizations, cult groups and local people, oil company employees who use a variety of methods to steal oil from oil pipeline and multinational oil corporations that are stationed within the country (Akani, 1996; Ralby, 2017).

Community Development

The issue of community development is a global phenomenon, especially the third world countries. According to Ndukwe (2005) posited that community development is a process that is concerned with the improvement as well as the transformation of the social, mental, economic, institutional and environmental conditions of the rural dwellers through the mobilization and rational utilization of their human, material and institutional resources as to enhance their capacities to cope with the daily tasks and demands of modern times.

In understanding what community development means, it becomes imperative to define the concept of development. Although, the concept of development does not attain a mono definition, hence, Walter (1972) observed that development implies increased skill, capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, and responsibility and material well-being. While all human societies have experienced development, the levels of development vary from one society to another and even within distinct parts of the same society. Given this, Nmom (2004) citing Brawnwell Bakeri, defines community development as an educational process. It is not better road, better bridges, pure water, nor better sanitation. It is something of the spirit more than something of material. It must reach into deep, cultural pattern of people, examining them and testing them as principle of faith. It is not a temporary, physical construction. It is a building within the heart and mind of men not a recreation centre in the middle of field. The point made in this definition is that community development is much more than construction of physical things. It must be a way of life the community embraced by every member of that community. With that, all physical solution to problem shall follow and in the proper order. For him "psychological development" is first before any other development.

The term community development involves process that is geared with the improvement and also the transformation of the social mental, economic, institutional and environmental conditions of the rural

dwellers through the mobilization and rational utilization of their human material and institutional resources as to improve their capabilities to adopt with the daily tasks capabilities to contemporary times (Onua, 2019).

Mury cited in Nmom (2004) defines Community Development as the utilization under one single programme of approaches and techniques which rely upon local communities as units of actions assistance with organized local self-determination and efforts and initiative and leadership as the primary instrument of change. This definition as other does attempt to emphasize the importance of participation by the people of a community in improving their living conditions and physical environment.

Again, Authus cited in Nmom (2004) opined that community development is a method of helping local communities to become aware of their needs to assess their resources more realistically; to organize themselves and their resources in such a way as to satisfy some of their needs and in so doing acquire the attitude, experiences and cooperative skills for repeating this process again". By this definition, community development is a process in the sense that is a dynamic sequence which when set in motion, supplies its own motive, power, so that people in the community through their own effort are enabled to move steadily toward the goal of self-government and improvement.

Methodology
The qualitative method was used. The study was carried out in Emohua local government area. Emohua local government area is one of the local government areas in Rivers State that is involved in serious oil theft. However, there exist activities of illegal oil refinery and high poverty level that explains underdevelopment situation. The population of Emohua as projected in 2016 by NPC are 282,500. These communities are well known for oil theft. Through purposive sampling, the respondents were selected to include youths, chiefs and health workers selected. Thus, secondary sources of data collection were utilized.

Discussion
Reasons for Oil Theft in Emohua LGA that affects community Development
The reasons for the occurrence of oil theft in Emohua LGA of Niger Delta however, appear to be webbed in grim complexity. Some authors have identified oil theft as an integral part of the economy of conflict in the oil communities of the Niger Delta region (Ezirim, 2011; Obi, 2010; Ikelegbe, 2005 and Watts, 2007). Others have linked it to the corrupt practices of government officials (Katsouris & Sayne, 2013 and Asuni, 2009). Based on the different reasons identified, this paper will draw from the resource curse theory to determine a likely common causation that underpins these different reasons.

The first point that will be discussed is the situation of oil theft as part of the conflict in the Emohua LGA. Ikelegbe (2005) and Obi (2010) note that oil bunkering is a key activity of militant youths in the Niger Delta, who launch attacks against the government of Nigeria and multinational corporations (MNCs) in their fight for resource control. Emergence of youth militancy in the Niger Delta has been linked to non-violent struggles that spread through the oil producing communities in the late 1970s through the 1980s against the deplorable living conditions in the region and decrease in the derivation fund from 50% of oil rents and royalties to 1.5% (Obi, 2010). Sadly, from what began as a political uprising, Niger Delta militant youths are now known for 'economic and financial criminal activities including pipeline vandalization, piracy, oil bunkering, small arms proliferation, hostage taking and kidnapping' (Ezirim, 2011:62).

Ikelegbe (2008) gives a classification of the militants into three groups namely insurgent, deviant insurgent, and criminal armed, and identified the third group as those responsible for oil theft in the Niger Delta region were Emohua is located. The 'criminal armed' groups are led by warlords and with their engagement in illegal oil bunkering and other illicit economic activities, the warlords gained access to funds with which they acquired weapons, built camps, strengthened their membership (Obi, 2010) and were able to operate with or without the support of political patrons (Watts, 2007). Thus, it can be said that oil theft occurs in the Emohua LGA as part of the violent escalation of the political agitation

of the people of the Niger Delta and it persists as a financial mechanism for established criminal groups. Also, a basis for the political struggle in the region can be singled out as the neglect of development activities and inequitable fund allocation by the Nigerian government.

Basedau and Lay (2009) note that countries experiencing the resource curse have the characteristic of selective distribution of rents. Katsouris and Sayne (2013) also attest that funds that could be used for developmental projects may be diverted to non-productive areas in a rentierstate. Hence, a possible basis for the low community development as well as conflict in the Emohua Local Government Area that has led to stealing of oil in the region can be said to be the rentier state structure of Nigeria.

The second major reason that has been identified in the literature for occurrence of oil theft in the Emohua LGA is corruption. This reflects the view of Asuni (2009) who describesthe existence of corruption in the Niger Delta and in Nigeria as an endemic one that has enveloped many law enforcement officials, government personnel and politicians. Katsouris and Sayne (2013) also confirm the involvement of these officials in oil theft. Top Nigerian officials cut their teeth in the oil theft business during military rule. Over time, evidence surfaced that corrupt members of the security forces were actively involved.

The country's return to democracy in 1999 then gave some civilian officials and political 'godfathers' more access to stolen oil (Katsouris & Sayne, 2013:2). To explain the incentives that may have driven corrupt officials to engage in oil theft, Katsouris and Sayne (2013) report that the proceeds from the illegal activity is used to fund election campaigns and carry out atrocities such as targeted killings, buying votes or paying thugs to disrupt election processes. They also mention that the corrupt officials fund these atrocities for the purpose of remaining in power and securing continued access to oil rents.

In summary, the rentier state structure of Nigeria can be identified as a common basis for the identification of conflict and corruption, as the key reasons for oil theft in the Emohua LGA. This position aligns with the findings in other studies such as Adibe et al. (2018) and Soremi (2013). The observation is also linked to the substantial international influence of MNCs in a rentier state, whereby the corporations aim to procure favours of political leaders, rather than carefully cultivating a mutually-beneficial relationship with the local populace. The government's dominant dependence on externally accrued large-scale revenue, also directs the attention and affection of political leaders to MNCs instead of the local populace. As a result, a rentier state structure is often festooned with corruption, authoritarianism and rent seeking (Duruigbo, 2009; DiJohn; Basedau & Lay, 2009). The quest for preserving the status quo of a rentier state, through the unhindered collection of oil rents, also prevents the will and determination to quell the illegal activity, therefore leaving the scare of a vicious cycle in its wake.

Economic Implications of Oil Theft in Emohua LGA

Reduced manpower: Soremi (2020) who observed that young people of school age may choose to join the 'criminal armed' gangs (or cult groups) rather than remain in school just so that they can acquire wealth from engaging in oil theft and this may lead to increase in number of out-of-school youths and increased cult activities. This may also result in loss of manpower for credible development of the community, as the cult members who involves in oil theft may lose their lives in clashes with the military or other criminal groups or even end up in prisons.

Reduced revenue for all layers of government: As typical of most developing countries that are victims of the resource curse, the Dutch disease plays out in Nigeria's economy. Since its involvement in oil exportation, there has been near collapse of the non-oil sectors and in particular, the agricultural sector, which in the past contributed the bulk of Nigeria's export earnings (Otaha, 2012). Today, the country is heavily dependent on sale of crude oil, such that 80% of federal government's revenue,95% of export receipts and 90% of foreign exchange earnings come from oil exports. Also, based on the system of fiscal federalism operational in the country, the federal government distributes the returns from oil exports to the other layers of government i.e. the state and local governments, and these allocations account for 82% of the funds available to them (Ahmad & Singh, 2003). A country that is so heavily dependent on returns from sale of crude oil will be affected by any increase or decrease in the quantity of oil being sold through the government.

Diversification of Nigeria's economy: Loss of revenue may be seen as a negative impact; however, it may also lead to diversification of Nigeria's economy. Loss of revenue may lead the government to pay more attention to non extractive industries and embark on taxation programs that are appropriately monitored.

Already, there are slight indications of this effort based on a news report that non-oil sectors were the main drivers of Nigeria's economic growth in recent times (ThisDay, 2014). Although this development has not been directly linked to loss of revenue from oil theft in the Niger Delta, the IMF in its report on the growth of the non-oil sector in Nigeria notes that oil's contribution to the GDP has shrunk by 1.3% (Oxford Business Group, 2014). If this trend of growth in the non-oil sector persists, which is a way to overcome the Dutch disease, it may help reduce government's dependence on oil and possibly contribute to a process that can help Nigeria escape the resource curse.

Increase in rate of unemployment: In addition to its impact on revenue, oil theft in Emohua LGA and also in Niger delta in general has led most of the prominent MNCs operating in Nigeria including Shell, Chevron and ENI to exit from many of their onshore ventures (Bloomberg, 2013). It is believed that this development, even though some of these companies have commenced new operations offshore (Bloomberg, 2013), may bring about massive job cuts in the country (Daily Trust, 2014), thereby demonstrating the volatility of mineral-dependent economy. The job cuts ensuing from dramatic change in operations of MNCs can therefore lead to an increase in rate of unemployment and a possible decrease in income available to households.

Social Impacts of Oil Theft in the Emohua LGA that Affects Community Development
Sustained conflict: As noted by Obi (2010), proceeds from oil theft are often used by warlords in the Niger Delta to acquire weapons and also to recruit and train fighters. These acquisitions and reinforcements provide the 'criminal armed' groups with the resources they need to perpetuate their engagement in the illegal activity. In a bid to sustain the receipt of oil rents, the federal government sought to rid the oil region of Niger Delta (Emohua LGA included) of criminality and deployed military troops to the region. The militarization of the region has led to occasional face-offs between the criminals and the military with casualties reported on both sides. Apart from the face-offs with the military, 'criminal armed' groups also engage in armed hostilities among themselves over distribution of appropriated resources and alleged collaboration with security agencies (Ikelegbe, 2005). The protracted state of conflict and restiveness in the Emohua LGA of Rivers State in Niger Delta threatens to shatter the peace, security and integrity of the region (Agbiboa, 2014).

Impediment to social development: The quest for sustaining the country's rentier state structure also sustains conflict in the study area, and impedes provision of social amenities in the area, due to limited assurance of security for government's social development agencies and nongovernmental organisations. Also, young people of school age may choose to join the 'criminal armed' gangs rather than remain in school just so that they can acquire wealth from engaging in oil theft and this may lead to increase in number of out-of-school youths. This may also result in loss of manpower for credible development of the community, as the youths may lose their lives in clashes with the military or other criminal groups or even end up in prisons.

Internal population displacement: Another social impact of oil theft in the study area is internal population displacement of the people of the Emohua people based on clashes between the military and 'criminal armed' groups, conflict among the criminal groups, and lower levels of household income as a result of contaminated farmlands and rivers. The displacement has led many families to migrate from their communities to other riverine oil-producing communities in search of productive fishing grounds or to urban cities across the country to live in slums and secure menial jobs (Ebegbulem et al., 2013). The economic and social impacts highlighted above cut across not only the national government of Nigeria, but also the other layers of government in the country. This shows that the impact of oil theft in Emohua is far reaching and needs to be addressed.

Conclusion/Recommendation

With the low standard of living in many oil producing communities, the Emohua people in Niger delta exemplifies the resource curse in Nigeria. Apart from being oil producing region that is largely underdeveloped is also infamously known for oil theft. The resource curse explains the cause of oil theft in the Niger Delta. It also highlighted the economic and social implications of the activity. In recommending the way forward, the paper suggested the adoption of transparency and accountability, as measures for combatting oil theft/bunkering. While it must be recognized that there are ongoing international efforts in this direction, notably, the establishment of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), and followed up with government backed local action through the setup of a Nigerian arm of the initiative, NEITI, it cannot be overlooked that there are yet endemic challenges plaguing the extraction of crude oil in the communities in Niger Delta.

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COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study "Covid-19 Pandemic and Domestic Violence in Nigeria: An Analytical Approach" was carried out to critically investigate the phenomenon of domestic vices perpetuated during the covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria. Domestic Violence (DV) is a global phenomenon that has been criticized overtime due the fact that victims of (DV) are always women. This study is theoretical in approach which adopted exploratory research design. Three fundamental theories were used to analyze this study which is: Resource theory by William Goode, Structural functionalism of Talcott Parson and Non-subordination theory by Catharine MacKinnon. Data for this study was elicited from secondary sources via the internet, texts, journals etc; the thematic content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. Findings from the study showed that there are enabling factors that allow domestic violence to occur. One of them is the question of control and dominance. More often than not, one party seeks to dominate the other, leading to violence meted out in the form of verbal, physical, emotional, sexual, and even economic abuse. Other commonly cited reasons include lack of sexual satisfaction and ineffective communication between two parties amongst others. The study therefore, recommends that, offering insights from our analysis, and extant literature to provide strategic recommendations in terms of actions to be taken by policymakers, governments, and victims that may help us to curb the ill effects of Covid-19 on domestic violence intensity and severity, as well as to help to ensure economic and social stability etc.

Keywords: Covid-19, Pandemic, Domestic Violence, Victims, Abuse

Introduction

Domestic violence is an abusive behaviour occurring in a family or a couple relationships that presupposes cohabitation. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), violence within the home can be perpetrated in various forms: physical (beatings, torture, and murder); sexual (unwanted intercourse, harassment, sexual jokes); psychological (manipulation, threats, humiliations, intimidation); economic (obsessive control of finances; money subtraction); stalking (persecution, obsessive control of phone calls or messages). Anyone can be a victim of abuse in a relationship. However, literature demonstrates that women and children are most at risk, while elderly and disabled people suffer negligence or neglect more often (Van et al, 2020).

Bradbury-Jones and Isham (2020) assert that domestic violence is a major concern in many countries in the world. In Nigeria, women are victims most of the time, with acts of violence ranging from physical abuse, sexual harassment, mental and emotional abuse to harmful traditional practices. The widespread nature of domestic violence calls for a global action towards empowering its victims in order to limit the incidence of this condition which is an obstacle to the achievement of equality and development. Significantly, one in every three women has experienced domestic violence in one or more forms.

The global burden of Violence Against Women (VAW) has been estimated to be between 22-33%, the higher prevalence is found in developing countries like Nigeria. The true burden of violence against women in sub-Sahara Africa and in Nigeria may quite exceed those that have been published or reported because the sources of data are usually deficient largely due to underreporting. There has been varied reports of rising incidence of domestic violence across the globe widely attributed to the Coronavirus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought closer interaction between spouses thus exposing vulnerable women to their domestic violence abusers. It has also imposed additional stressors on families which is one of the proximal factors responsible for violence against women (Rogers, Rumley, & Lovatt, 2019).

Emerging data shows that since the outbreak of COVID-19, reports of violence against women, and particularly domestic violence, have increased in several countries as security, health, and money worries create tensions and strains accentuated by the cramped and confined living conditions of lockdown. More than half of the world's population was under lockdown conditions by early April (Peterman, et al., 2020).

In France, for example, cases of domestic violence have increased by 30 per cent since the lockdown on March 17. Helplines in Cyprus and Singapore have registered an increase in calls by 30 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively. In Argentina, emergency calls for domestic violence cases have increased by 25 per cent since the lockdown started. In Canada, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States, government authorities, women's rights activists and civil society partners have indicated increasing reports of domestic violence during the crisis, and/or increased demand for emergency shelter.

The recent pandemic, however, has brought this pressing issue into the spotlight. Termed by the United Nations as the Shadow Pandemic, COVID-19 exacerbated what was already a huge problem. Being confined inside the house has fostered tension between family members, and it only worsened when worries over money, security, and health arose. As COVID-19 spread in Nigeria, so do domestic violence cases. Iheoma Obibi, the Executive Director of Alliances for Africa, said the surge of violence against women and girls was a direct consequence of the pandemic (Van, et al., 2020).

This correlation between the pandemic and the rise in domestic violence had to do in part with financial insecurities. Nigerians' incomes plummeted due to lockdown measures, with some working in private organizations placed on half-salary and some not receiving any pay. A study published in the Ilorin Journal of Economic Policy discovered that financial worries have led to an alarming rise in spousal abuse in major Nigerian cities like Lagos, the epicentre of the pandemic, and the federal capital of Abuja.

The risk of violence is compounded by the fact that the victims are also forced to stay inside their homes. Women and children, who previously found an escape at work and school, face dismal weeks under lockdown, often at the mercy of their abusers.

Vincent and Erhus, (2022) in a study titled "One-year prevalence of domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic in an urban community in Southern Nigeria." The study asserts that more than a third of the women - 221 (35.9%) had been victims of domestic violence in the last one year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The types of domestic violence experienced by the women included: psychological - 120 (54.3%), physical - 68 (30.8%), sexual - 38 (17.2%) and economic - 36 (16.3%), husbands - 52 (76.5%) and boyfriends - 39 (57.4%) of the victims were the most frequent perpetrators of physical violence. The study revealed a high one-year prevalence of violence against women in the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Psychological and physical violence were most prevalent and were perpetrated mainly by intimate partners of the women. The social media can be utilized routinely to educate the masses about violence against women. Also, men should be engaged in the prevention of domestic violence programmes through education workshops.

In 2016, Kigs carried out a descriptive cross-sectional study in Ilam, Iran among 334 married women. More than half, 62% of the women reported been victims of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). In addition, 33.8% of the respondents had been physically violated, while 54.2% and 23.7% were psychologically and sexually violated respectively.

Also, a multi-country study utilized secondary analysis of Demographic Health Survey (DHS) from 27 sub-Saharan African countries. Data was pooled from 43,143 women of reproductive age residing in urban areas. The study revealed a prevalence range of VAW of 10.8% in the Comoros to 56.3% in the Democratic Republic of Congo among the women studied. In Nigeria, the Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) of 2018 revealed a high prevalence rate of violence against women between 17.0-78.8% with considerable regional variations. This makes violence against women a

major public health problem. Also, the prevalence of violence against women among 10,678 ever married women aged 15-49 years was 36%, while the one-year prevalence rates of physical and sexual violence were 14% and 4%, respectively as stated in the NDHS 2018.

These and several other studies have investigated the phenomenon of domestic violence. However, to our limited knowledge, there is no existing study on covid-19 pandemic and domestic violence in Nigeria: An analytical approach. Thus, this study is a paradigm shift from previous studies. It is apt to state that this study is theoretical in approach.

Literature Review
Covid-19 Pandemic
The COVID-19 pandemic, also known as the coronavirus pandemic, is an ongoing global pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The outbreak was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. The World Health Organization declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020 and a pandemic on 11 March. As of 3 August 2020, more than 18 million cases of COVID-19 have been reported in more than 188 countries and territories, resulting in more than 689,000 deaths; more than 10.6 million people have recovered.

The virus is primarily spread between people during close contact, most often via small droplets produced by coughing, sneezing, and talking. The droplets usually fall to the ground or onto surfaces rather than travelling through air over long distances. However, the transmission may also occur through smaller droplets that are able to stay suspended in the air for longer periods of time in enclosed spaces, as typical for airborne diseases. Less commonly, people may become infected by touching a contaminated surface and then touching their face. It is most contagious during the first three days after the onset of symptoms, although spread is possible before symptoms appear, and from people who do not show symptoms.

Common symptoms include fever, cough, fatigue, shortness of breath, and loss of sense of smell. Complications may include pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome. The time from exposure to onset of symptoms is typically around five days but may range from two to fourteen days. Recommended preventive measures include hand washing, covering one's mouth when coughing, maintaining distance from other people, wearing a face mask in public settings, disinfecting surfaces, increasing ventilation and air filtration indoors, and monitoring and self-isolation for people who suspect they are infected. Authorities worldwide have responded by implementing travel restrictions, lockdowns, workplace hazard controls, and facility closures in order to slow the spread of the disease. Many places have also worked to increase testing capacity and trace contacts of infected persons.

The pandemic has caused global social and economic disruption, including the largest global recession since the Great Depression and global famines affecting 265 million people. It has led to the postponement or cancellation of sporting, religious, political, and cultural events, widespread supply shortages exacerbated by panic buying, and decreased emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases. Schools, universities, and colleges have been closed either on a nationwide or local basis in 161 countries, affecting approximately 98.6 percent of the world's student population. Misinformation about the virus has circulated through social media and mass media. There have been incidents of xenophobia and discrimination against Chinese people and against those perceived as being Chinese or as being from areas with high infection rates (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic).

According to recent research, similar to SARS-CoV and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV), SARSCoV-2 is zootoxic, with Chinese horseshoe bats (Rhinolophus sinicus) being the most probable origin. Also, the Chinese Preventive Medicine Association (2020) accounted pangolins as the most likely intermediate host of the virus (: http://www.nhc.gov.cn/xcs/yqtb/list_gzbd.shtml).
Most of patients with COVID-19 represent relatively serene cases. According to recent studies and relevant data from the National Health Commission of China (2020), the proportion of severe cases among all patients with COVID-19 in China was around 15% to 25%. Majority of patients experienced

fever and dry cough, while some also had shortness of breath, fatigue, and other atypical symptoms, such as muscle pain, confusion, headache, sore throat, diarrhea, and vomiting. Among patients who underwent chest computed tomography (CT), most showed bilateral pneumonia, with ground-glass opacity and bilateral patchy shadows being the most common patterns. Among hospitalized patients in Wuhan, around one-fourth to one-third developed serious complications, such as acute respiratory distress syndrome, arrhythmia, and shock, and were therefore transferred to the intensive care unit. In general, older age and the existence of underlying co-morbidities (e.g., diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease) were associated with poorer prognosis (Guan, W.J.; Ni, Z.Y.; Hu, Y.; Liang, W.H.; Ou, C.Q.; He, J.X.; Liu, L.; Shan, H.; Lei, C.L.; Hui, D.S., 2020).

The diagnosis of COVID-19 can be based on a combination of epidemiologic information (e.g., a history of travel to or residence in affected region 14 d prior to symptom onset), clinical symptoms, CT imaging findings, and laboratory tests (e.g., reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction [RT-PCR] tests on respiratory tract specimens) according to standards of either the WHO (2020) or the National Health Commission of China (2020). It should be mentioned that a single negative RT-PCR test result from suspected patients does not exclude infection. Clinically, we should be alert of patients with an epidemiologic history, COVID-19–related symptoms, and/or positive CT imaging results. So far, there has been no evidence from randomized controlled trials to recommend any specific anti-nCoV treatment, so the management of COVID-19 has been largely supportive (WHO 2020). Currently, the approach to COVID-19 is to control the source of infection; use infection prevention and control measures to lower the risk of transmission; and provide early diagnosis, isolation, and supportive care for affected patients [20]. A series of clinical trials are being carried out to investigate interventions that are potentially more effective (e.g., lopinavir, remdesivir; Del Rio and Malani 2020). On January 8, 2020, a novel coronavirus was officially announced as the causative pathogen of COVID-19 by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The epidemics of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID- 19) started from Wuhan, China, last December and have become a major challenging public health problem for not only China but also countries around the world (:http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2020-02/19/content5480948.htm).

Domestic violence
Domestic violence (also called domestic abuse or family violence) is violence or other abuse that occurs in a domestic setting, such as in a marriage or cohabitation. Domestic violence is often used as a synonym for intimate partner violence, which is committed by one of the people in an intimate relationship against the other person, and can take place in either heterosexual or same-sex relationships or between former spouses or partners. In its broadest sense, domestic violence also involves violence against children, parents, or the elderly. It can assume multiple forms, including physical, verbal, emotional, economic, religious, reproductive, or sexual abuse. It can range from subtle, coercive forms to marital rape and other violent physical abuse, such as choking, beating, female genital mutilation, and acid throwing that may result in disfigurement or death, and includes the use of technology to harass, control, monitor, stalk or hack. Domestic murder includes stoning, bride burning, honour killing, and dowry death, which sometimes involves non-cohabitating family members.

Globally, the victims of domestic violence are overwhelmingly women, and women tend to experience more severe forms of violence. They are also likelier than men to use intimate partner violence in self-defense. In some countries, domestic violence may be seen as justified or legally permitted, particularly in cases of actual or suspected infidelity on the part of the woman. Research has established that there exists a direct and significant correlation between a country's level of gender equality and rates of domestic violence, where countries with less gender equality experience higher rates of domestic violence. Domestic violence is among the most underreported crimes worldwide for both men and women. In addition, due to social stigmas regarding male victimization, men who are victims of domestic violence face an increased likelihood of being overlooked by healthcare providers.

Forms of Domestic Abuse
Physical abuse is that involving contact intended to cause fear, pain, injury, other physical suffering or bodily harm. In the context of coercive control, physical abuse is to control the victim. The dynamics

of physical abuse in a relationship are often complex. Physical violence can be the culmination of other abusive behaviour, such as threats, intimidation, and restriction of victim self-determination through isolation, manipulation and other limitations of personal freedom. Denying medical care, sleep deprivation, and forced drug or alcohol use, are also forms of physical abuse. It can also include inflicting physical injury onto other targets, such as children or pets, in order to cause emotional harm to the victim.

The WHO defines sexual abuse as any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion. It also includes obligatory inspections for virginity and female genital mutilation. Aside from initiation of the sexual act through physical force, sexual abuse occurs if a person is verbally pressured into consenting, unable to understand the nature or condition of the act, unable to decline participation, or unable to communicate unwillingness to engage in the sexual act. This could be because of underage immaturity, illness, disability, or the influence of alcohol or other drugs, or due to intimidation or pressure. Female genital mutilation is defined by WHO as "all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons." This procedure has been performed on more than 125 million females alive today, and it is concentrated in 29 countries in Africa and Middle East.

Emotional or psychological abuse is a pattern of behaviour that threatens, intimidates, dehumanizes or systematically undermines self-worth. According to the Istanbul Convention, psychological violence is "the intentional conduct of seriously impairing a person's psychological integrity through coercion or threats". Emotional abuse includes minimizing, threats, isolation, public humiliation, unrelenting criticism, constant personal devaluation, coercive control, repeated stonewalling and gas lighting. Stalking is a common form of psychological intimidation, and is most often perpetrated by former or current intimate partners. Victims tend to feel their partner has nearly total control over them, greatly affecting the power dynamic in a relationship, empowering the perpetrator, and disempowering the victim feel a sense of anxiety and fear that seriously affects their personal life, financially, physically and psychologically.

Economic abuse (or financial abuse) is a form of abuse when one intimate partner has control over the other partner's access to economic resources. Marital assets are used as a means of control. Economic abuse may involve preventing a spouse from resource acquisition, limiting what the victim may use, or by otherwise exploiting economic resources of the victim. Economic abuse diminishes the victim's capacity to support themselves, increasing dependence on the perpetrator, including reduced access to education, employment, career advancement, and asset acquisition.

Sharp Increases in the Risk of Gender Based Violence in Africa (Overview of the Prevalence)
Across Africa gender data is beginning to show the exacerbated gender inequalities under COVID-19 placing women and girls at greater risk of GBV. The following are excerpts of incidences as reported by organisations such as African Union Commission - Women, Gender and Development Directorate (AUC-WGDD), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

In Kenya, according to the Kenya National Council on Administration of Justice, there is a significant spike in sexual offences in many parts of the country. Sexual offences such as rape and defilement have constituted more than 35% of all reported cases.

In Cameroon, a survey on the Covid-19 gender impact carried out in May 2020 found that; almost 4 out of 10 (35.8%) respondents state that they have noticed an increase in violence in their respective households. This increase is noticed both by men (35.2%) and women (36%). Movement restrictions, a reduction in financial resources and population anxiety could be the cause of the said increase. Men as well as women declare that there is an increase in psychological violence (16.4%).

Central African Republic is seeing a surge in gender-based violence (GBV) since the COVID-19 virus pandemic and measures to control it began, with reported injuries to women and children spiking by 69 percent. Since April, GBV has increased by an estimated 10 percent, while reported injuries to women and children have increased 69 percent, rape by 27 percent, and other assaults by 45 percent, according to a June 2020 report by crime analysts with the UN Stabilization Mission in CAR (MINUSCA).

Algeria reported several cases of femicide committed since the beginning of the year. The incidents increased in the context of the confinement, with a murder occurring every three to four days. In Egypt, there was a 19% increase in violence against family members linked to strict measures being implemented to limit the spread of COVID-19, according to a UN Women Egypt and Base era survey. Amongst women surveyed from 04 to 14 April 2020, 11% of women had been exposed to violence the week before the survey.

A rapid assessment conducted by UN Women in Libya at the onset of the pandemic indicated that nearly half of the women surveyed feared escalation of violence at home at the beginning of the lockdown period. For Tunisia, violence against the female gender increased 9-fold during COVID-19. During the lockdown period (from March to June 2020), the helpline from the Ministry of Women Affairs received a number of 11,361 calls. 87% of them were reported physical violence against women and girls

In South Africa, official reports show that within the first week of level 5 lockdown, South African Police Services (SAPS) received 2,320 complaints of gender-based violence, with only 148 related charges made. These statistics represent a 37% increase from the weekly average of South African GBV cases reported for 2019.16 Additionally, the GBV Command Centre in South Africa recorded a spike in gender based violence cases reported during the lockdown during 27th March to 16th April with a total of 10,660 through phone calls, 1503 through unstructured supplementary services data (USSD) and 616 SMSs. On 16th April alone, the Centre has received 674 cases.

Liberia recorded a 50% increase in gender based violence in the first half of 2020. Between January and June, there were more than 600 reported rape cases.

For Nigeria, reports from 24 states across the country shows that the number of reported incidents of domestic violence spiked by 56 percent during the first two weeks of April compared with the same period in March, after lockdown measures were enacted on 31 March. In Lagos State, cases of domestic violence have surged by over 100 percent during the lockdown period (as of 14 April) compared with the number of cases reported for the entire month of March.

Theoretical Framework
Resource theory was suggested by William Goode in 1971. The theory assumes that women who are most dependent on their spouse for economic well-being (e.g. homemakers/housewives, women with disability, women who are unemployed), and are the primary caregiver to their children, fear the increased financial burden if they leave their marriage. Dependency means that they have fewer options and few resources to help them cope with or change their spouse's behaviour. Couples that share power equally experience a lower incidence of conflict, and when conflict does arise, are less likely to resort to violence. If one spouse desires control and power in the relationship, the spouse may resort to abuse. This may include coercion and threats, intimidation, emotional abuse, economic abuse, isolation, making light of the situation and blaming the spouse, using children (threatening to take them away), and behaving as "master of the castle."

Structural functionalism views society as an organism that has structures or institutions that must work together for the wellbeing of the entire society. The proponents of this theory have argued that societies are thought to function like organisms, with various social institutions working together like organs to maintain and reproduce societies. According to functionalist theories, institutions come about and persist because they play a function in society, promoting stability and integration. In line with Spencer's analogy, every part of the society must be functional, and that what affects one part affects all other parts of the society. He sees society just like a biological organism where what affects one part

of the organism affects the entire wellbeing of the organism. Relating this theory to our study, the COVID-19 pandemic ought to be a health issues that should primarily affect the health sector in society, for the fact that what affects one sector of the society affects others, every other institution was affected from the pandemic. World economy was affected, politics was affected, social gathering was affected, education was affected, religion was affected, and the family system was affected by a single pandemic that attacked the health institution of the society. The diverse effects of COVID-19 pandemic on all other institutions of the society have justified the theoretical assumptions of the functionalist theory (Rogers et al., 2019).

Non-subordination theory, sometimes called dominance theory, is an area of feminist legal theory that focuses on the power differential between men and women. Non-subordination theory takes the position that society, and particularly men in society, use sex differences between men and women to perpetuate this power imbalance. Unlike other topics within feminist legal theory, non-subordination theory focuses specifically on certain sexual behaviours, including control of women's sexuality, sexual harassment, pornography, and violence against women generally. Catharine MacKinnon argues that non-subordination theory best addresses these particular issues because they affect almost exclusively women. MacKinnon advocates for non-subordination theory over other theories, like formal equality, substantive equality, and difference theory, because sexual violence and other forms of violence against women are not a question of "sameness and difference", but rather are best viewed as more central inequalities for women. Though non-subordination theory has been discussed at great length in evaluating various forms of sexual violence against women, it also serves as a basis for understanding DV and why it occurs. Non-subordination theory tackles the issue of DV as a subset of the broader problem of violence against women because victims are overwhelmingly female (Rogers et al., 2019).

Proponents of non-subordination theory propose several reasons why it works best to explain DV. First, there are certain recurring patterns in DV that indicate it is not the result of intense anger or arguments, but rather is a form of subordination. This is evidenced in part by the fact that DV victims are typically abused in a variety of situations and by a variety of means. For example, victims are sometimes beaten after they have been sleeping or have been separated from the batterer, and often the abuse takes on a financial or emotional form in addition to physical abuse. Supporters of non-subordination theory use these examples to dispel the notion that battering is always the result of heat of the moment anger or intense arguments occur. Also, batterers often employ manipulative and deliberate tactics when abusing their victims, which can "range from searching for and destroying a treasured object of hers to striking her in areas of her body that do not show bruises (e.g. her scalp) or in areas where she would be embarrassed to show others her bruises." These behaviours can be even more useful to a batterer when the batterer and the victim share children, because the batterer often controls the family's financial assets, making the victim less likely to leave if it would put her children at risk.

Methodology
This study adopted a qualitative research methodology with an exploratory research design. Data for this study was elicited from secondary sources through the internet, text, journals etc. The thematic content analysis was adopted in analyzing the non-numerical (qualitative) data.

Discussions
Factors That Lead to Domestic Violence
There are enabling factors that allow domestic violence to occur. One of them is the question of **control** and dominance. More often than not, one party seeks to dominate the other, leading to violence meted out in the form of verbal, physical, emotional, sexual, and even economic abuse. Other commonly cited reasons include lack of sexual satisfaction and ineffective communication between two parties.

Experts look at the power dynamics, where one party is superior to the other. It can happen when a man with low self-esteem is in a relationship with a financially empowered woman. While these factors enable domestic violence, and it's essential to understand them, we can't ignore the fact that the fault lies in the abuser who lost control of his anger. It's vital to make this distinction to avoid blaming the victims, hence the need to stray from the terms like "triggered" and "provoked."

Family members confined in the four corners of their homes for a prolonged length of time precipitate aggression and violence, often against women and children.

Bearing these factors in mind, we can see how lockdowns in Nigeria placed women at even greater risk, exposing them to more severe violence. During the lockdown periods, partner violence in Nigeria rose significantly to 56%, a recent study discovered.

Reasons behind Increases in Domestic Violence Due to Covid-19
Because of Covid-19 causing most countries to impose some restrictions on physical distance, domestic violence will increase, which is consistent with the understanding that "domestic violence goes up whenever families spend more time together, such as the Christmas and summer vacations." As identified by sociology and gender literature, there is a direct relationship, which means that, when families spend more time together, violence may occur without any specific reason a dynamic that can be attributed to human psychology (Booth, 2017; Nofziger & Kurtz, 2005). However, Covid-19 can be considered to be an indirect causer of violence.

As infection due to Covid-19 increases, countries are forced to place restrictions on certain aspects of movement a strategy that has led to layoffs, loss of jobs, and income. Scholars have suggested that low income is related to increases in domestic violence (Peprah & Koomson, 2017). First, even if a family does not have a history of abuse, economic distress during a pandemic due to financial strain and a lack of social support can fuel violence. This is consistent with the literature that high-stress levels among couples increase the rate of violence 3.5 times more than among those with low-stress levels. Second, domestic violence may be driven by a shift in responsibilities. With changes in the responsibilities, when victims are with abusive partners, there is an opportunity for abusers to harass them. Recent research has suggested that lockdown scenarios raised by rare events like natural disasters and pandemics put families in close contact for prolonged periods; this reduces the safe time available (i.e., due to one person going to work) and increases the chances of domestic violence occurring. Third, domestic violence may occur as increased interactions (also due to spending more time together) expose various habits that may not be compatible with each other in a family setup.

Impact of Domestic Violence on Economic and Social Environments
While there are likely to be additional reasons for increases in violence due to Covid-19, it is clear that increases in domestic violence incidents will contribute to economic and social crises. First, in terms of social crisis, before Covid-19, victims had access to support from family and relatives, sheltered homes, and even legal remedies such as protective orders. During a lockdown, however, such options become no longer readily available. Given that victims cannot leave their home, the intensity of violence and suffering they experience is likely to increase. Second, domestic violence will affect children significantly. Due to increases in incidents, not only it can be challenging for parents to get support from family and community but losing childcare is also a considerable loss for victims as it creates more stress/responsibility for both parties (victim and children). This is coupled with the fact that areas under containment may not even be accessible to childcare services, which will increase the challenges that children face—their food and education, as well as their overall development. Plus, increased violence among parents and negative interactions due to lockdown may affect children mentally (Browne & Finkelhor, 1986; Finkelhor, 2010; Wood & Sommers, 2011). Third, Covid-19's impact on domestic violence will also be realized via a person's social relationships with others. The relationship here refers to connections with social peers like friends, external family members, neighbors, and coworkers. Prior literature suggests that domestic violence affects maternal–child relationships, the functioning of preschool-age children, and young people's relationships (Flood & Fergus, 2008; Levendosky et al., 2003). With lockdown in place and an inability to contact social peers, victims face losing social connections. Co-workers' support is integral to supporting victims of domestic violence but Covid-19, which has enacted work-from-home or remote working on a mass scale, is affecting people's social circles, their daily conversations and, more importantly, preventing in-person support teams from continuing their roles and helping victims to survive abuse (Goodman et al., 2016; MacGregor et al., 2016; Rogers et al., 2019). These issues are particularly challenging for socio-

economically backward communities such as women of color, women from weak strata of the society and immigrants, who because of both structural and cultural reasons may not have access to support from the government and community even before the pandemic (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005; Tam et al., 2016). Post-pandemic, therefore, challenges for such communities may grow even further, and we may see a world with social imbalances accelerating across multiple streams.

Economically, increases in violence require governments to take actions governments will need to arrange safeguarding for people affected by violence either by keeping them in isolated places or providing them some form of security and doing so demands investment, itself another potential economic hazard (Heath, 2012; Houghton, 2009). Consistent with the literature suggesting that intimate partner violence rates are highest in the poorest neighbourhoods (Bonomi et al., 2014; Kiss et al., 2012), Covid-19 is expected to drive domestic violence across societies due to losses in income (Purvin, 2003; Williams & Mickelson, 2004). As a result of domestic violence, more separations and divorces are likely, meaning that government resources will be employed, placing another strain on the economy (Moon & Joung, 1997). The adverse effects of domestic violence on physical and mental health are well documented in the literature, which may range from depression, risky sexual behaviour, and substance abuse to more long-term challenges like chronic diseases (Delara, 2016; Friis et al., 2019; Rivara et al., 2019). More importantly, because of domestic violence, countries face losing a productive workforce that may otherwise contribute to the economy but is instead taken away by the mental and physical effects of domestic violence. This long-term effect may not be realized in a day or two, but it is inevitable nevertheless.

One of the unique things about Covid-19 and domestic violence is that economic issues are causes and consequences. For example, one may suspect that such relationships between domestic violence and economic distress are rooted in factors like mental illness—though establishing a causal link is technically challenging as the economic causes, violence and economic consequences move simultaneously, and many other issues may be responsible for the dynamic. Nevertheless, with the number of domestic violence cases in some of the worst-hit regions and the economic turbulence regions are facing under the current scenario, we can confirm that economic issues arising during the Covid-19 crisis are the most significant contributors to the surge in domestic violence.

Pandemics such as Covid-19, or similar rare events, increase the rate of domestic violence and the severity of abuse. For example, in 2011, New Zealand saw increases in domestic violence by a fifth after the Christchurch earthquake—the reason cited was the changes in alcohol consumption at home due to business closures. Whereas during Hurricane Katrina, temporary shelter enabled increases in sexual violence—most of these assaults were caused by strangers. Indeed, sexual assaults after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita were severe, "rapes appeared to be more brutal, often involving multiple offenders", with the occurrences of domestic violence only dropping down to normalcy a year after the hurricane.

Given the impact of Covid-19 on domestic violence and economic and social crisis, as discussed above, we need to design policies and strategies to help us mitigate the adverse effects on the economic and social environment. In the next section, we outline a few recommendations

How to Mitigate the Risks
Domestic violence has been tough for those who are already vulnerable. Pregnant and dependent women face a greater risk of domestic violence, often falling prey to sexual exploitation and physical abuse. To make matters worse, they are isolated from the people and resources that can aid them. Unfortunately, it's not surprising that most of these cases go unreported.

Even so, many organizations strive to curb domestic and gender-based violence and help those who are most vulnerable. The international organization Alliances for Africa, which has had an office in Lagos since 2011, for example, extends its help by keeping a record of incidents where violence against women and girls was committed. It has also sought to include women in all COVID-19 taskforce committees, particularly in the Imo State.

Other organizations emphasize the importance of community-based prevention and education. They seek to raise awareness in an effort to discourage violent behaviours among boys and men. Continual campaigns in communities with the support of the government are key to preventing further domestic violence cases.

Nigerian academics also recommend establishing social safety nets involving access to food and cash to allow poor Nigerians to deal with the COVID-related economic privations that often facilitate domestic violence.

Finally, even something as simple as teaching community members to manage their relationships without resorting to violence can go a long way to end the cycle.

Conclusion

Covid-19 is an exogenous shock that is significantly impacting the incidence of domestic violence around the world. While nobody had predicted that the world would see such an increase in the number of cases, it is time for law enforcement organizations, governments, and society, in general, to come together to design effective strategies to combat the adverse effects of Covid-19 on domestic violence. With this article, we propose a few strategies that may be effective in such a fight against domestic violence due to Covid-19 and any future rare events.

Recommendations

While recent reports (Peterman et al., 2020) suggest some of the strategic steps that must be taken such as bolstering violence-related first-response systems, ensuring domestic violence is integrated into healthcare response systems, expanding and reinforcing social safety nets, offering shelter, temporary housing, encouraging temporary social support networks and integrating domestic violence into the pandemic preparedness strategies we build on the Peterman et al. (2020) recommendations, offering insights from our analysis, and extant literature to provide strategic recommendations in terms of actions to be taken by policymakers, governments, and victims that may help us to curve the ill effects of Covid-19 on domestic violence intensity and severity, as well as to help to ensure economic and social stability. Prior research shows that, unlike other forms of violence, domestic violence cases are more likely to be reported by victims and often after the suspect has left the crime scene (Campbell et al., 2017). This issue is particularly problematic during Covid-19 as victims may often not get a chance to report because the perpetrators remain with the victim due to lockdown restrictions. As the victims may not be able to report crimes, the roles of neighbors, community members, and other bystanders become more vital. Scholars argue that an effective way of tackling this issue is by training such groups about domestic violence (Katz & Moore, 2013). Educating neighbors to sound alarms in such situations, for example, may make a significant difference in achieving higher reporting rates. This training can be conducted through government agencies or even through advertising, encouraging community members to report cases of domestic violence in their neighborhoods.

Research also shows that messaging plays a vital role in achieving higher levels of success in this context. A positive message that focuses on a solution (bystander behavior) is more effective than a negative message that focuses on the problem (domestic violence) (Katz & Moore, 2013). Thus, communicating the desired bystander behavior may increase the reporting of domestic violence cases. This notion is supported by the comments of one of the respondents on our questions regarding coordination with victims, who states: "It has been a troublesome issue for coordination. Most victims need on-site supports; however, we have not been able to provide these due to closures. No mandate has been issued so far on how to handle this; we are trying to do our best to coordinate and provide assistance. Improving reporting is the task and increasing coordination is the way." To answer these issues, policymakers and governments may install rules and regulations for flexible reporting and immediate actions so that victims can come forward to seek help. Often, a victim does not come forward due to extensive paperwork and the long time required for reporting. Flexibility in providing the required information, therefore, and reducing waiting times for reporting will help to make reporting easier. If neighbors, community members, and other bystanders do their part in timely reporting, alerting

law enforcement agencies, informing self-help and online support groups, etc., the severity and continuity of violent behavior can be reduced.

If reporting is the first cog in the wheel, then the speed at which law enforcement may take action against the culprit is the second. Research, however, shows that although suspect identification is more likely when the suspect and the victim are related, arrests are more likely when victims and suspects are strangers (Tasca et al., 2013). In fact, it is quite typical that the prior history of the victim (such as that involving drug abuse) may also delay arrests. This is particularly problematic during Covid-19 as a delay in arrest likely leads to the victim and the suspect sharing spaces. Due to lockdown and social distancing measures, it may be difficult to separate the two parties if legal actions are not carried out quickly.

It is also essential to communicate to the population the speed at which an arrest will occur for such a crime. This can encourage both victims and bystanders to report against domestic violence a notion that is supported by comments from one of the respondents: "We are trying to visit them if they are not in an area with multiple cases." While another respondent commented, "We are speeding up our initiatives as this is the only way to reduce the abuse." Furthermore, another respondent informed us that "Covid-19 came without signals; we did not have preparations. Responding to incidents needs resources and, if we want to respond quickly, we need more resources. With some external funding, we have enacted a speedy responding but are yet to see its results." Given that speed of response is critical, policymakers must include responses to domestic violence with the pandemic response agenda, including providing the key resources (e.g., financial funding, human resources, and law-enforcing power related to domestic violence cases) to government organizations so that response speed can be increased. Moreover, victims should be provided a time window within which they are guaranteed to receive support. This will provide assurance to victims that, despite any resource constraints, legal support will be obtainable for them. Some victims may not want to take legal actions or have police involvement because of multiple reasons including fear of status loss and embarrassment, protection of the perpetrator from prosecution by the law, fear of retaliation, opportunity cost, victims' own criminal past, etc. (Felson et al., 2002; Rodriguez et al., 2001). In such cases, attempts to reduce the effects of violence on victims are speeded through self-help groups, friends, and online support groups.

One of the fundamental reasons for domestic violence is a lack of economic well-being. Research of well-being suggests that creating positive psychological capital (including hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy) is vital for creating a positive future (Luthans et al., 2006). Although no research has yet focused on understanding psychological capital in cases of domestic violence, maintaining positivity toward the future may be important when the environment is so uncertain. Rather than a reactive approach (acting after violence has occurred), a proactive approach to combat domestic violence during Covid-19 may help to reduce social and economic crisis.

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OIL AND SHIFTING COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION, NIGERIA

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Abstract
The influence of oil has permeated every facet of the socio-cultural, economic and political life of the people, breaking all known boundaries and borders, including traditional community governance structures in oil host communities of the Niger Delta region. This paper relying largely on secondary data sources such as journals, institutional reports, books and online materials examined particularly oil and shifting community governance structures elicited by legislation policies and practice of government as a response to the oil related conflicts in the region. The variables (oil and community governance structure) of this study were theorized using the conflict framework for analysis to deepen understanding of the prevailing social phenomena. This paper argued that the traditional institutions bestowed with ancestral powers to govern the people, including representing and managing the proceeds from extractive sector are being dislocated from community governance structures as a result of the enactment and implementation of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) 2021 through the Host Community Development Trust (HCDT) organs that are "external to the indigenous people of Niger delta region. The paper concluded that the sociocultural dislocations have the potential of opening up new vista of sociocultural instability, gender and environmental injustice in the Niger Delta region. To this end, recommendations such as the conduct of a social impact assessment of the PIA, multilateral right holders' consultation to address bottled up community concerns on the PIA, conflict and violence transformation projects and legal framework to insulate the community governance structures from the incidence of oil politics and governance were advanced.

Keywords: Community, Governance, Structure, Niger Delta, region, Oil, Shifting.

Introduction
The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is largely the littoral States with enormous oil and gas reserves in the southern hemisphere of Nigeria. The region accounts for about 90% of the extractive revenue to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Nigeria (CBN, 2017). Primarily, the people of the region are farmers and fishermen and women, who have applied themselves to this orthodox means of economic activities for their livelihood before the discovery and commercial exploration and exploitation of oil by the Federal Government of Nigeria, the ruling class and the Transnational oil companies (TOCs) in a joint venture framework in 1958 in a community known as Oloibiri in present day Bayelsa State, the ancestral headquarters of the Ijaws worldwide.

According to Ogbeide and Uwaifo (2019), the Niger Delta region which produces the economically important oil has been convoluted with different categories of neglect, marginalisation and suffering from what should have been a blessing to the people over many decades. This exploitation started with traders who came to trade on palm oil and other commercial activities in the region. Then, later the Transnational oil companies, whose extractive activities became a mix-bag – poverty and prosperity. As the inhabitants became poorer than they were before the discovery of oil due to loss of arable farm lands and their aquatic life were destroyed by incessant deforestation and oil spills caused by the extractive activities. Conversely, the State, ruling class and the Transnational companies were becoming stupendously rich in petrol dollars (Adejumobi, 2002).

In its 2000 Human Development Report, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) described "the Niger Delta as a region suffering from administrative neglect, crumbling social infrastructure and services, high unemployment, social deprivation, abject poverty, filth and squalor, and endemic conflict" Furthermore, the report stressed that the prevailing situation not only explains

the increasing waves of restiveness in the region, it also heralds a gloomy future for the region and the country. This common narrative of the Niger Delta is not only economical but also sociocultural as the associational life in the communities are not inoculated from the attendant incidences of discovery of oil and its exploration.

The latent manifest of this situation was the emergence of a culture of violent conflict for "resource control" by the indigenous people of the Niger Delta. For instance, the conflicts between Transnational corporations and their host communities brought to the fore losses incurred by over 15,000 fishermen in the region (Ukiwo, 2007). As the living conditions of the communities began to decline and violent conflicts became the order of the day, the State engaged in efforts at mitigating the challenges through the establishment of different commissions and agencies to manage the relationship between the people, the State and the transnational oil companies in implementing sustainable development interventions in the region. This struggle for resource control is changing the sociocultural, political and economic power dynamics in the Niger Delta region to the extent that the community governance structures are rapidly shifting as a result of legislation, policies and practise. And, the most visible changes are the blurred lines between the traditional institutions and other social actors such as activists, extremists, contractors, consultants, political thugs, cultists and militants. The shift transcends all economic, political and social structures as roles are being switched in the sense that ex-militant leaders have risen to become powerful security contractors, community organisers and traditional rulers. For example, chief (Gen) Government Oweizide Ekpemupolo alias Tompolo own Tatita, a major pipeline surveillance and protection firm, Gen. Augustine U. Ogedegbe JP, is a government contractor; Gen. Michael Brakemi Fireman Kpolotor alias Indiami is into large livestock farming, Gen. Joseph Figbele, Gen. Ramsey Umukoro, Gen. Para Ekiyes, are all agro-allied consultants, general contractors and merchandise.

While Alhaji Asari Dokubo, has become a high ranking chief in Kalabari land and His Royal Majesty (Gen) Ateke Tom, businessman and king of Okochiri in Okirika. There is Great Khali John, Christopher Sogboma and High Chief Solomon Ndigbara in Ogoni axis of Rivers State. More so, some are in the political space, Gen. Afranus Ukparasia alias Africa, and Gen. Selekumo Damigo. In addition, Abraham Ingobere, the incumbent Speaker of Bayelsa State House of Assembly, now speaker for a second term and is in his fourth term in the House of Assembly representing Brass constituency. Again, Gen. Gibson Munalayefa represented Ogbia constituency, the hometown of former President Goodluck Jonathan between 2015-2023. Furthermore, there is Gen. Reuben, now a civil society activist, having founded the Reuben Initiative for Good Leadership and Accountability (PRIGLA). Also, Victor Ebikabowei alias Boyloaf, who has invested hugely in maritime transportation and politics and was running mate to former Governor and Minister of State for Petroleum, Chief Timipre Silver in the 2023 governorship election in Bayelsa state. And, there is Clifford Wilson, who through the Amnesty program of the Federal Government trained as a pilot and is now a leading figure in Kolokuma 1 representing the community in the KEFFES Development Foundation under the Transnational Oil Company, Chevron. Then, there is General Popor Augustine, Ojuku Camp Leader and the coordinator of Urhobo United Ex-militant leaders. He doubles as the Chief Executive Officer of Popor Augustine Global Enterprises.

Therefore, it is this variegation in the Niger Delta sustainable development question that has significantly attracted both local and international concerns and scholarship. Nevertheless, several of the issues focused on the recurring structural aspects of conflict such as resource governance, marginalisation, poverty and environmental degradation, which serve as the foundation for understanding and explaining the underdevelopment and social instability in the region. However, there are limited literature on the influence of oil politics on community governance structure in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and that is what this study seeks to address through the lens of State legislation, policy and practice.

Statement of the Problem
The discovery of commercial quantity of crude oil in Olobiri in 1956 in present day Bayelsa State and its governance has precipitated the deepening of poverty, deprivation, environmental degradation, social inequality and injustice and sociocultural dislocations and social instability in the Niger Delta region.

This is evident in the proliferation of militant groups and other natural resource related conflicts in the region. Importantly, oil has bred more of "tears, sorrow and blood", dislodging ancient traditions, cultures and customs of the land. The culture of the people and the traditional institutions of community governance have suffered largely from imposition of colonialists, revolutions, wars, post-colonial political development in Nigeria and now oil politics, particularly in the Niger Delta region.

At the Host Communities of Nigeria Producing Oil and Gas and Pipeline Impacted States (HOSCON) PIA summit held in 2023, in Warri, Delta State of Nigeria, it was observed that the nomination and inauguration of nominees into the Trust Fund on behalf of the host communities was an error (Olutomiwa, 2023). As the indigenous people and their traditional rulers had limited participation in that process, which of course was not representative of their aspirations. Importantly, the traditional social control mechanism in some oil communities of the Eastern Niger Delta are on the verge of social disintegration (Babatunde, 2019). Again, Ojo (2002) noted that deprivation suffered by host communities was further compounded by the objectionable laws governing oil activities in Nigeria such as the Mineral Acts, the Petroleum Acts, the Land use and the 1979, 93 and 99 constitutions, which vested enormous powers and control of mineral resources in the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Abosede (2009) observed that traditional rulers may lose their legitimacy partly due to greed and insufficient resources to satisfy all the members of the community. The erosion of the traditional sociocultural fibre and the livelihoods of the communities have dire consequences and is more prevalent in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States respectively. This shift in community governance structure, orchestrated by forces external to the communities in relation to oil politics has the potential to trigger monumental conflicts in the Niger Delta region and that is the crux of the matter. This study seeks to examine this problem associated with legislation, policy and practice on community governance structures in the Niger Delta to deepen understanding from a historical perspective and advance workable recommendation in order to insulate the culture and traditions from the "outsized influence" of oil in oil host communities.

Community Governance Structure in the Niger Delta region.
Prior to 1891, when Lagos was annexed by the British colonialists, governance in Nigeria centered around traditional rulers. Traditional rulers were the alpha and omega of their domains, they were in charge of the political, social cultural and economic administration of their various communities. They were part of the timeless African culture which ensured durable peace and social stability in society. However, the situation changed when colonial rule was imposed on African societies, and Nigeria being an integral part of the bloc was also impacted. It was at this point that traditional rulers were subordinated and became instrumental to the actualisation of the objectives of indirect rule system (Researchwap.com, n.d).

Traditional institutions are common features which charaterised most States in traditional African societies. Because of its diversity in its political and governance component in different parts of Africa, it is challenging to have a generally accepted definition (Tonwe & Osemavota, 2013). In Nigeria, it is a kingship system with highly organised centralised governance (Emordi & Osiki, 2008) Orji and Olali (2010) cited in Mustapha and Bukar (2019a) opined that traditional institutions as the native political provisions whereby leaders with confirmed pedigree are selected and coronated in line with the necessary requirements of their traditional customs and laws. Traditional institutions are the custodians of the peoples' norms, cultures and practices (Mustapha & Bukar, 2019b). They are hereditary in nature in most communities and it is difficult for someone who is not royal lineage to ascend the throne in most Niger Delta communities. The mode of ascendancy to traditional throne is not uniform, it differs from one ethnic group to another in communities of the Niger Delta. For example, in Benin kingdom of Edo State, it is only the first male child of the reigning king who can succeed him, but in several other communities, every male child of both the reigning and past kings are qualified to be selected and crowned king. Traditional institutions are the symbol of the native authority, the people's rights, privilege, laws, customs, and tradition (Mustapha & Bukar, 2019c). While Orji and Olali, (2010) refer to traditional institutions as encompassing chief-in-council, elders-in-council and traditional title holders, who were given traditional chieftaincy titles because of their voluntary contributions to the

growth and development of their communities with or negligible political power (Olukungboye, Ilugbami & Olagbegi, 2023).

Traditional rulers are believed to derive their authority and legitimacy to be in charge of their communities through ancient customs and traditions. This form of authority is not peculiar to the Niger Delta people but cut across most kingdoms and it is considered as one of the sources of legitimacy for public authorities. While, the community development committee and community youth groups (CDC and CYG) are community adaptations to the development challenges in the Niger Delta. In essence, traditional rulers provide the needed leadership, while the CDC serves as a development facilitator in these communities. Both institutions tend to complement each other (Watts, 2004b).

The traditional institution and CDC in principle are the de facto community governance structure. The state is present through the provision of the rule of law, security, public health, education and critical infrastructure. Yet the traditional institution and CDC play a vital role in enabling the government to provide these services. Basically, the traditional institution and CDC represent the symbol of authority in community governance. As a corollary, before the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta region, traditional institutions were the custodians of culture, values, norms and tradition and held a pivotal position in the political governance of the communities. They provided a system of governance with an utmost goal of maintaining social stability and governance through tradition, customs, law and order, including informally managing conflicts, sustaining durable peace, custodian of oral tradition and history of the people and interfacing with external authorities on behalf of the communities (Olukungboye, Ilugbami & Olagbegi, 2023). Additionally, community development committees (CDC) and community youth groups (CYG) are the other non-state governance institutions that emerged in the communities to negotiate with transnational oil companies as representatives of the people.

Fasehun (2010) asserts that traditional rulers are heads of their communities and they owe their legitimacy to customs and traditions. They are usually chosen by the gods to represent them on earth and have religious sanctitude. Adesoji (2010) noted that pre-colonial Nigeria traditional rulers held tremendous power and exercised considerable influence. While Alagoa (1985:77) observed that in pre-colonial Nigeria, different political cultures created their own institutions and that popular traditions presents the House heads or chiefs of the delta -city states as virtual despots and the Amanyanabo or kings were responsible and cater for the general welfare of the people. Again, Lawal (1989:70) corroborated this view, that in pre-colonial Nigeria traditional rulers were veritable custodians that derived their executive, legislative and judicial functions from tradition cited the work of Igafe, P.A, The Role of traditional Rulers in local Government on the Benin Oba - where he noted the socio-political structure of Benin Kingdom during the pre-colonial era of its history, which was dominated by the special position occupied by the Oba, that was central to every activity or organisation of the supreme, religious as well as the civil authority in the land. This special position of the Oba found expression in the physical separation of his settlement or palace (eguse Oba) and those dependent on him or connected to him by specialities from the rest of the town and people.

Essentially, the Oba by tradition is the symbol of honour and the giver of titles, his position being surrounded by an aura of sacrosanctness on account of his priestly functions and as a representative of the long line of ancestors who had held the reins of power over the land before them. Similarly, Ehindero (2006) opined that traditional rulers represent local administration before colonial administration was introduced into Nigeria and performed many of the functions of the modern Head of Government before the emergence of Europeans on the shores of Africa. In the same vein, the Oggbah people of Northern Niger Delta saw their Oba or Eze as the embodiment of ancestral traditions before the advent of colonialism in about 1902 AD. Alagoa (1985) shows that in some political organisations in the old Eastern region, some age grade groups combined with titled individuals in leadership of their domains as was witnessed among the Asaba and Aguleri. The emphasis is that in pre-colonial period, traditional rulers welded maximum powers and were seen as the custodians of the custom of the people and sometimes doubled as priests.

Shifting Community Governance in the Niger Delta

The intrusion of colonialism dislodged the structures of traditional dominance in virtually all the indigenous ethnic nationalities of the Niger Delta. Under Lord Lugard, the colonialist's regime engaged in the indirect rule system more vigorously in southern Nigeria but supported the traditional institution in the north to thrive. Between 1930 -1950, the British colonialists introduced the warrant chiefs and Native Administration system to usurp the authority of the authentic traditional leadership aimed at dominating and controlling the people and her resources (Afigbo, 1974). The application of gunboat diplomacy and brute force, cowed these paramount rulers into submission in the face of a more sophisticated weaponry and western approach (Orji, 2013). For example, King Jaja of Opobo was deposed, incarcerated and exiled as result of the huge influence of the British government's policy in the Niger Delta that borders on palm oil trade and sea routes, which significantly impeded the commercial and political expansion of the crown. Ashini (2010) referred to indirect rule as a British system of administration or ruling over her colonies with the use of local chiefs or appointed surrogates using traditional laws and customs with British officials merely supervising the administration. Afigbo (1972:1) observed that indirect rule or native administration was initiated in southern Nigeria before the imposition of direct taxation in 1928. What this means is that authorities external to the community governance structure could initiate, collect and implement legislation, policies and practices in these communities in the Niger Delta, a responsibility that was formally the duty of the traditional institution. This epoch according to Sasime (2000) facilitated the loss of the sovereignty of traditional rulers even though their usefulness was still recognised. Evidently, post -colonial era seem to deepen this sociocultural phenomenon of shifting community governance. Jaja (2008) noted that today traditional rulers, their institution, system and leadership are treated like outcasts in a democratic system.

They are not mentioned in the 1999 constitution; they have no compelling power or authority over their subjects or the ability to enforce checks and balances in the communities. In the post-independence era, the changes in the political environment also robbed off on the traditional institutions and community governance processes. Governance in the Niger Delta communities is hinged on two prong-formal state institutions and traditional governance which predates the colonial and post-colonial eras. This situation underscores the beginning of substituting or shifting community governance in the Niger Delta. Consequently, the footprints of oil politics permeate the socioeconomic and cultural landscape of the Niger Delta region as the communities are more frequently faced with intra and inter community violent conflicts due to weakened traditional institutions, restive youth, militancy and agitation for resource control. Human Right Watch (1999) observed that in many communities, internal strife are common with the common divides between youth and chiefs, youth and the urban elites of the community, youth and professional agents and between factions of the youth body.

Again, the divide and rule antics of the transnational corporations is one of the fundamental causes of the breakdown of traditional institution in most oil host communities (Babatunde, 2009). For instance, in Peremabiri and Ologbobiri, the struggle to control the symbols of authority and traditional governance is related to the struggle of local actors to be in charge of the resources that accrue to the communities, which contributed to the emergence of militant groups and the participation of a faction of those involved in the struggle to control community governance institutions symbolises the transformation of power relations among the groups competing for dominance. The dominant faction is empowered and seek to capture governance structures and establish themselves as de facto leaders in the community. The narrative demonstrates the extent to which oil politics has influenced the sociocultural and political shift in community governance in the Niger Delta region. The internal strife, crisis and violence in Niger Delta has led to Nigeria not being able to meet her crude oil production quota, not able to arrest the tide of militancy and violent conflicts (intra & inter). Given this context, the State responded through several policy initiatives dating as far back as 1957 such as the Willink commission that was established to investigate the challenges faced by ethnic minorities in the region. The commission noted that the region has been neglected and proposed certain interventions such as the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB). This Board was established in 1996 but was not effective because the headquarters was in Lagos State, very much outside of the Niger Delta (Ajodo-Adebanjoko & Asu, 2013). In 1995, the Niger Delta Environmental Survey (NDS) was created by shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) on behalf of its joint partners (NNPC, TotalEnergies, &AGIP).

The survey was funded under the Oil Producers Trade Section (OPTS). And, the goal was to implement environmental study of the region - these goals were never met as the region is still grappling with the major challenges that necessitated the establishment of the Willink commission. Subsequently, other commissions were created, the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (NDDC) in 1992 and 2000 respectively, represent the most notable state response to the crisis and contradictions of the Niger Delta of Nigeria (Omotola, 2006). Interestingly, the Federal Government reviewed the derivation sharing formula from 1% to 13% in 2008 (UNEP, 2011). This increase in oil revenue allocation further increased the stakes in who controls the community governance structures and resulted in increased tension among stakeholders.

In furtherance of a more robust extractive sector that guarantees community participation in natural resource governance, the state pursued and passed into law the Petroleum Industry Act, (PIA) 2021 in August that provide a 3% contribution to sustainable community development from the operational cost of the settlor (s) (oil company) annual budget in the preceding year and also legislated for an administrative structure to control and disburse the resources for the implementation of collectively predetermined intervention(s) in the host communities through the Host Community Development Trust (HCDT). Pertinently, section 204 (2) of the PIA vest considerable amount of power and responsibility of implementing the HCDTs on the settlor(s). The settlor (s) being the transnational oil companies licensed to operate upstream activities and are mandated to to give 3% of their actual operating expenditure of the preceding financial year in the upstream petroleum operations to be exclusively applied toward the implementation of Host Communities Development Plan (Ibezim & Akinjiola, 2024).

The PIA has a remarkable semblance with the indirect rule system of the defunct colonialists regime that "externalised" and *ab initio* caused a significant shift in community governance structure in pre-independence period in southern Nigeria and is today being reinvented through the petroleum industry Act, 2021 in oil host communities in the Niger Delta. Succinctly, the PIA empowers the settlors with nigh exclusive authority without recourse to existing community governance structures to establish the Host Community Development Trust (HCDT), constitute the board of Trustees (BOT), determine committee members' salaries and allowances, and unilaterally appoint the secretary of the Trust. This overwhelming power vested in settlors over and above host communities is a critical sign of problem and responsible for some hostilities and asymmetry power relations between the transnational oil companies and their host communities (Ibezim & Akinjiola, 2024). The uneven nature of the power dynamics between the parties is a clear paradigm shift in community governance in the Niger Delta region. Although the traditional institutions still exist, they no longer are solely responsible and carry the aspirations of the people, including interfacing with other social actors in facilitating sustainable development in the communities. This fundamental shift in community governance is a consequence of oil politics in Nigeria and the Niger Delta in particular. Traditionally, if the company (settlor) or the state advances concessions such as funding for community development, the funding are channelled and controlled by the chief or community governance structure (Deltaine, 2016). This system no long subsists due to the enactment of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) 2021 that has facilitated a shift in community governance by imposing structures external to and usurping the traditional role of community governance structure.

Ekpenyong (1993) asserts that the incompatibility of social actors' interests, stemming from an unequal distribution of wealth, power or security in the society requires the different social actors to formulate their own systems of value which suit their vested interests. The social actors in this context strive to gain the greatest amount of domination, win and success. It emphasises a hierarchical structure in terms of how goods and services are distributed in society. At the head of this pyramid is a dominant class of few that determines terms and conditions to the majority in society because they have an overwhelming amount of control over resources and power.

Saefudin (2005:76) observed that to overthrow this dominant group, it would be necessary to remove the existing consensus through confrontational tactics from the subordinate group to the dominant group. This trend and pattern of social change has become dominant in the Niger Delta as former

militant leaders infamously known as "Generals" are transiting to becoming dominant oil and gas vendors, consultants, security actors, activists and now traditional rulers oil host communities. Again, Saefudin further asserts that change sometimes has to be forced to happen rather than evolve into consensus. Thus, the existence of conflict becomes paramount to cause dynamics in peoples' lives. It posits that social change does not occur through a process of adjusting values that bring change but happens as a result of conflicts that result in compromises that are different from the status quo. As observed by Trevino, (2010) social change and conflict are common in all facets of society and that some members of society are repressed or constrained by other members of society.

Puspitawati (2009:1) note that society is made up of groups with varying competing interests and are disposed to competing with one another and as a result will conflict with one another. Through, this competition, the most powerful and influential groups (Federal Government & Transnational Oil Companies) make laws and regulations that guarantee their domination. In other words, existing community governance structures are shifting towards the Host Community Development Trust (HCDT) which are established, controlled and sustained based on the manipulative constructs of the dominant group. The Nigerian government and dominant social actors engaged in ingenious construction of oil as a national asset in order to devalue the derivation principle to sustain its dominance and this has been alienating to oil host communities in all its ramification (Ukiwo, 2011). Emuedo (2010) opined that most conflicts in the Niger Delta are broadly defined by government's legislation, policies and the practice of oil politics as well as the various development interventions designed for the region. Thus, the emerging social phenomenon of shifting community governance structure occurred in two fundamental ways - the internal strife and state intervention schemes, the former is related to internal forces, while the latter is a product of external forces which was as a result of protracted agitation for community participation in natural resource governance and to arrest the tide of militancy or violent conflicts in the Niger Delta region.

Theoretical Framework
The conflict theory formed the fulcrum for the analysis of the variables (oil & community governance) contained in this study. The theory has been largely utilised by political scientists, philosophers, interdisciplinary scholars and sociologists in examining and explaining resource driven conflicts and power asymmetry in various societies. Conflict theory as associated with Max Weber suggest that policies, legislation and practice are weapons in social conflict. Conflict theory propagates the idea that social and economic institutions are tools in the struggle among groups in maintaining inequality and sustaining domination of other groups by the power holders or dominant class. Interestingly, Max Weber analyses conflict from an ideological structure perspective, outlining three main sources of conflict, economic, social and political asserting that through intense pressure on the status quo, a new system of roles and administration emerge. This theory stresses on the competition between social groups rather than individuals and attempts to explain social change and stability as a result of the struggle for domination by groups.

According to the conflict theorists, social structures are shaped by power dynamics and conflicts that arise from asymmetric distribution of resources and social status within society. It also delves into the concept of role differentiation, stressing how the division of labour and allocation of varied roles within social structures lead to power asymmetry and conflicts. In this context, individuals are assigned different roles based on their skills, qualification and positions, resulting in varying levels of authority and access to resources. This asymmetric distribution of power and privileges sets the climate for conflicts as individuals struggle for resources and influence- it is these incongruent roles within social structures that intensify tensions as observed in Host Community Development Trust (HCDT) in the Niger Delta region.

Conflict theory, posits that members of interest and dominant groups will attempt to use the instrumentality of the law to their advantage and to the disadvantage of members of the subordinate or vulnerable and opposing groups. These conflicts are mostly economic, political, moral, ideological and sociocultural in nature, whereby one group, such as the economically dominant group uses the law to strengthen their domination and these policies, legislation and practices arise out of the desire to

maintain or modify power structures in favour of the dominant group. In this instance, the state and the transnational oil companies are the dominant group using legislation, policies and practices to redefine community governance structures in the oil host communities in the Niger Delta region. In the light of this social change and order is driven by domination and power rather than by consensus and conformity. Fundamentally, the oil related conflicts in the Niger Delta between the Federal Government of Nigeria, transnational oil companies on one hand and the Oil Host Communities on the other hand is a normal condition for social change in terms of shifting community governance structures.

This situation is a social change process from the status quo (traditional institutions) internalised community governance structure over the allocation and distribution of proceeds from oil resources to a new or different social order (Host Community Development Trust) externalised community governance structure signalling a significant shift in community governance structure. But, it becomes an anomie, when it elicits violence. Given that conflict situates power at the domain of the dominant group (Federal Government & Transnational Oil Companies) which they use to create rules and regulations, particularly laws that serve their vested interest such as the Petroleum Industry Act, (PIA) 2021, that is shifting community governance structure and have "externalised it from the people through the establishment of new and different levels of authority for the management of proceeds of oil resources for the oil host communities in the Niger Delta region, the traditional institutions are no longer as much in charge or hold the mandate of representing, allocating and distributing resources in their communities.

Methodology
The study adopted the desk research approach, relying on an extensive collection and analysis of secondary data sources from relevant and related texts in periodicals, newspapers, journals, institutional reports, books and social media feeds, including personal observation. The data gathered was analyzed using the thematic analysis technique which enabled the researcher to develop categories of themes addressing the identified knowledge gap and providing opportunity for contextual analysis of the data. It also adopted the peer review mechanism for the validation and reliability of the content. The study was limited to the outsized influenced of oil governance and politics on shifting community governance structures in the Niger Delta region. The Niger Delta region comprises of 9 States of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Delta, Ondo and Rivers in Southern Nigeria. The study specifically focused on how legislation, policies and practice impact Oil Host Communities traditional governance structures in the region, which are defined as those communities situated in or appurtenant to the area of operation of a settlor (oil company) and any other community as a settlor may determine under chapter 3 of the extant law, the PIA.

Discussion of findings
Generally, conflict within and among social groups is inevitable because of the needs and interests of individuals and groups differ and in most cases incompatible. At the fulcrum of conflict is the phenomenon of power or precisely the asymmetric nature of power, particularly when the powerful determine the legislation, policies and practices that shape the lives, livelihoods and resource allocation to the less powerful, vulnerable and hard to reach communities, especially oil host communities in the Niger Delta region. Historically and very central to the livelihoods and conflicts in the Niger Delta region is oil, whether it is palm oil or crude oil. The Niger Delta region of Nigeria has a chequered and variegated history of oil being prominent in the sociocultural, economic and political existence of the people. Oil is used for a variety of activities for domestic, commercial and traditional purposes. Palm oil as well as crude oil are both associated with supernatural powers- healing and wading off evil spirits. In fact, to a very large extent oil has defined the Niger Delta region as an unpredictable environment - no doubt because of its ability to shape the lives, livelihoods and conflicts in the region. Interestingly, oil trade hugely influenced the dethronement of king Jaja of Opobo by the imperialist capitalist actors and their colonial government in the Niger Delta region.

As a matter of fact, the indirect rule system, which brought about the warrant chiefs in southern Nigeria was the precursor to shifting governance structure in oil host communities. This imposition of an alien system on the people through legislation, policy and practice undercut the authority of the traditional

institutions to govern effectively. Apparently, in the Niger Delta oil host communities, it is increasingly becoming challenging to draw a clear distinction between activists, extremists, militants, drug cartels, political thugs, cultists, contractors, consultants and traditional rulers due to the influence of oil that has created a paradox among these social actors. This emerging social phenomenon corroborate the views of Puspitawati (2009:1) that society is made up of groups with varying competing interest and are compelled to competing with one another for domination, which most times result in overlapping of power dynamics and conflict.

Conclusion

This study sets out to examine how the continued exploration and exploitation of crude oil as well as the expropriation of its proceeds have adversely impacted and still impacting the sociocultural systems in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It specifically focused on how legislation, policy and practise has contributed to shifting community governance structures and based on the findings, it is evident that oil politics and governance has an overreaching influence on community governance traceable to the colonial era to the extent that it is gradually shifting the customary roles of the traditional institutions and relegating them to mere observers or spectators in the allocation and distribution of proceeds from oil in oil host communities in the Niger Delta region. Emphatically, Nigeria's over dependence on oil revenue over taxes and non-oil sources has made it the dominant social actor in the development ecosystem and in response to the violent agitation in the region and to sustain its dominance over and above the oil host communities it has relied upon legislation, policies and practise to mitigate these challenges - which in turn is significantly eroding the culture and social systems of community governance passed onto the people from generations before them. This shift in community governance-a new order, away from the status quo is an emerging recipe for tension, conflicts and violence in the region and in oil host communities in particular. Empirically, this study has enriched the corpus of knowledge on the Niger Delta and the effect of oil politics and governance on the sociocultural system in oil host communities in the region.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings of this study, the following recommendations are therefore advanced:
1. The State should conduct robust, transparent and accountable community consultations and engagements with right-holders in oil host communities and civil society organisations on the numerous lingering community concerns as it relates to the PIA 2021.
2. In addition to environmental impact assessment, a thorough social impact assessment should be conducted to mitigate sociocultural effects of legislation and policies related to oil host communities' schemes in order to reduce cultural and social dislocations in the region.
3. Conflict and violence transformation interventions / projects should be launched for oil host community traditional institutions and governance structures as an adaptive mechanism to the emerging tensions directly related to the implementation of the oil host community trust and the PIA in general.
4. The executive and the legislative arms of government in the nine (9) Niger Delta States should collaborate on a unified legal framework that will restore, reclaim and inoculate community governance structures and the peoples' sociocultural lives from the vestiges of oil politics and governance in the Niger Delta region.

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THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE HANDLING OF CONFLICTS IN OBIO/AKPOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE.

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Abstract
So many conflicts are found in the society, both in the family, community and nation, which have often caused more harm than good. In view of this, the paper discussed, The Role of Traditional Institutions in the Handling of Conflicts in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Being a position paper, the writer tried to explain how conflict in the society can be amicably resolved using traditional institutions. Hence, the way(s) of resolving marital domestic issues, land disputes, chieftaincy issues, family rights and properties, communal clashes, ritualism, marital divorce, killings among others become very essential. Thus, vital topics related to conflict resolutions in Obio/Akpor LGA have been covered. It was concluded that conflicts are inevitable aspect of human society, which calls for the need to learn how to manage, resolve and deal with them effectively. It was thus recommended among others that members in the family should know their responsibilities and place in order to ensure cohesion and tranquility, community members should be informed of their rights and responsibilities in order to maintain peace and that offending members should be properly sanctioned to maintain discipline in the respective communities, government should give more priorities to the welfare of citizens and that only trusted and capable persons should be placed at the traditional leadership helm of affairs to direct the citizens.

Keywords: Traditional Institutions, Traditional Rulers, Conflicts, Conflict Management, Conflict Resolution

Introduction
The human society is made of human and material resources which can be harnessed to meet certain goals (personal, economical, social or political) in the good of all. It follows that the society is basically made up of different people with different beliefs, backgrounds, personality, interests, aspirations, needs and expectations. Apparently, individual differences exist among these persons which manifest in one form or the other at different times.

Both Ajayi and Buhari (2014) note that every society is expected to function maximally by harnessing the differences among its human resources in line with its set objectives. Nevertheless, periodically, there is bound to be conflicts among the citizens which may threaten the people's peace, unity and goals. Conflict is a common social phenomenon that is related to any form of group activity or social interaction among people for a common purpose. It connotes the struggles, disputes, disagreements, fights, wars, quarrels, frustrations and structural imperfections existing within, between and among individuals and groups in any society (Abdulsalam et al, 2020). It is further seen as disagreements arising from human interactions due to the fact that individuals and groups perceive issues differently on account of individual differences and competition for allocation of resources.

According to both Nweke (2012) and Ezenwoko and Osagie (2014), conflict is a behaviour intended to obstruct the achievement of some other person's goals. That is, conflict is on the incompatibility of goals which arises from opposing behaviours. It can be viewed at the individual, group or organisational level. It can equally arise over a multiple of organisational experiences such as incompatible goals, differences in the interpretation of facts, negative feelings, differences of values and philosophies or disputes over shared resources.

Essentially, conflicts have been experienced in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State for decades. In this wise, Folarin in Abdulsalam et al (2020:53) noted that:
> the causes of conflicts are diverse and are premised on a broad spectrum of factors
> which include competition over goals and interests that cannot be shared, usurpation or

attempt to usurp the authority and position of one component by another component of a society, inconsistencies in goals, increasing desire for autonomy or authority by the different individuals or groups in the community, scarcity or inadequacy of resources to meet the needs of the various components, various kinds of communication breakdown among others.

Likewise, Albert (2012) identified conflicts according to their causative agents such as conflicts emanating from the struggles for the control of scarce or limited resources; conflicts emanating from perceived injury to the society's value system which may manifest in people's preferences for certain things or their ideologies and religious beliefs; psychological needs of individuals and groups in terms of personal and group contradictions and manipulation of information which may be used to induce it others for conflict or peace building. The harmful effects of conflicts in the society are devastating and incalculable and as such, it is germane for measures to be put in place to curb their prevalence. To this end, conflict resolution measures are necessary conditions for the management of conflicts in the society (Hamisu et al, 2017).

As observed by Malami (2011), conflict resolution describes the process that is primed towards the reduction, elimination or termination of conflict. More so, it comprises a broad range of activities which involves mediation, negotiation, bargaining and arbitration. In different societies, traditional institutions are best positioned to handle conflict resolutions. In view of its direct or indirect essence in the society, the role of traditional institutions (rulers / leaders) as prime custodians of culture cannot be overemphasised.

Traditional institutions therefore, are leaders or persons by virtue of heredity or people with proven track records who are nominated, appointed or installed in line with the provisions of their native laws and customs (Wadama, 2013). They include traditional rulers such as Akpor Council of Chiefs, Oba of Benin, Alaafin of Oyo, Emir of Kano, Women community leaders, Youth community leaders, family heads, etc. They possess the key to the success or failure in any political administration in the society because they operate at the grass-roots, interact closely with people in their daily activities and are highly respected. According to Orji and Olali (2010), traditional institutions are respected and unique symbol of tradition, culture, customs and their preservation; and as such, they are instrumental in ensuring growth and development in their communities through a proper system of communication.

 A traditional ruler for instance, is in charge of an ethnic unit or clan and for the time being, is the holder of its highest traditional authority whose title is recognised by both the state and federal government as well as the citizens. Given that the essence of the traditional institutions is to preserve the tradition, customs, cultural heritage of the people and to manage, settle and resolve disputes / conflicts arising from amore members of the community by the instrumentality of laws and customs of the people in that particular community or society, traditional institutions are seen and referred to as the custodians of their people's norms, cultural values and practices (Nweke, 2012; Cookey, 2010).

The rationale for selected traditional institutions in the process of conflict resolution in Obio/Akpor is premised on the fact that they have a vast knowledge of the acceptable traditional methods and procedures that have been passed from one generation to another. Also, traditional institutions have a deep understanding of the moral values and ethics of the society. It is no secret thus, that every society recognises and mandates its traditional institutions with some measures of power to maintain law and order, ensure security, manage, control and resolve conflicts among individuals and groups (Ezenwoko & Osagie, 2014).

Recent Communal Conflicts in Obio/Akpor LGA
In recent years, Obio/Akpor LGA has faced different arrays of political, communal and criminal issues, including cult and gang-related violence, protests and kidnappings. The LGA was pivotal in the 2023 general elections and experienced elevated levels of election-related malpractice and violence (Oputa, 2023).

For instance, since May 2015, political tensions have been high in the LGA and Rivers State as a whole after the disputed Nigerian Governor's Forum election. Formerly a member of the PDP, Governor Rotimi Amaechi, who is from Ikwerre (Rivers East Senatorial District), switched affiliation to the APC in November 2013. In spite of the zoning formula, which would have given the PDP gubernatorial candidacy to an aspirant from Rivers South-East, Nyesom Wike of Obio/Akpor LGA (Rivers East) won the PDP primaries and eventually the governorship election, upsetting the rotation and raising ethnic sentiments (Conflict Bulletin, 2014). In a surprise move, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) apparently made a statement endorsing the APC candidate in the presidential election after claiming dissatisfaction with the sitting President and the PDP. In the run-up to the 2015 elections, cult groups and ex-militants lined up behind the two major parties and exerted influence through intimidation and violence.

The LGA has also witnessed conflict risk issues including robberies, kidnappings and gang/cult-related violence. As a major LGA in the State, protests and demonstrations are common. In the first half of 2012, large protests broke out over the government's removal of fuel subsidy programme. Later in the year, there were smaller protests reported over the delivery of public services. Again, in the first half of 2013, there was increased political tension between supporters and detractors of Governor Amaechi, including a protest where police fired tear gas on a reported crowd of 1,000 trying to storm the State House Assembly building (Nlerum & Epepe, 2015).

Likewise, in the same year, two soldiers and two civilians were reported killed by fleeing gunmen associated with the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) while cult violence flared in December, resulting in the deaths of at least two police officers and several civilians during a bus robbery (Obassi & Mpamani, 2015). Political tensions continued into 2014 with protests for and against the candidacy of Justice Daisy Okocha as Rivers State's administrative Chief Judge.

In May 2014, a man was reportedly kidnapped and killed by his four abductors after collecting a ransom from his family. In August, business and commercial activities were halted following clashes between APC and PDP supporters ahead of the planned visit of Governor Amaechi to Obio/Akpor LGA. In late November, it was reported that several Ikwerre youths were unhappy with APC's decision to nominate a candidate for governor who was not their preferred choice, while earlier in the month, arsons set fire on the PDP headquarters, although no one was formally charged in the aftermath (Conflict Bulletin, 2014). Additionally, a political protest occurred when the local government chairman, who is considered to be an opponent of Governor Amaechi, was suspended by the Rivers State House of Assembly for the mismanagement of public funds. In response to ensuing violence from protestors demanding his reinstatement, police occupied the Obio/Akpor secretariat (Tomajan, 2012).

Again, four students from the University of Port Harcourt were lynched by a mob on October 5, 2012. The reasons for the lynching are still unclear but the victims were accused of having stolen electronics (Umunadi, 2011). After a YouTube video of the lynching was released, violent protests empted. Thirteen people were arrested over the killings. Separately, in December, at least five people were killed when members of a cult group purportedly went on a house-to-house rampage, shooting civilians while looking for unspecified individuals.

Further, there have been many cases of land disputes in the LGA. These have been among brothers, family members, vendor and purchaser, e.t.c. Many have died in the process while properties with millions of naira have been destroyed. Likewise, there have been marital disputes that have been brought before the council of elders for resolution; with either party asking for settlement, compensation, punishment for the offender and divorce in some instances (Max & Wendy, 2011). These have been really disturbing which are capable of destroying / hindering peace, harmony and progress.

How Obio/Akpor Council of Chiefs Manages Land Disputes in Obio/Akpor LGA.
The traditional administrative system in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State has been existing for a long time; even before the British colonial rule in the country (Oriji, 2013). It provides a system of administration from which law and order are maintained and a stable system of governance enhanced.

Amusingly, a lot of Western scholars believed that pre-colonial African societies had no system of administration. To them, there were no laws, no order, no government and no civilization; a belief that has long been disputed (Fatile & Adejuwon in Orlu & Achinolu, 2017).

Given the institutionalised traditionalised administrative system such as Akpor Council of Chiefs, Akpor Women Council, community (men/women) council and family men/women meetings, their functions are specified which include fostering peace, unity and development in the kingdom, community and family respectively among men and women and creating various laws guiding conflict management among others. The laws for land management for instance, specify boundary demarcation, land encroachment and sharing formulae, land related matters, etc (Abutudu, 2011).

Interestingly, Obio/Akpor LGA, during the pre-colonial era had a traditional monarch known as Nyewe-Ali. He is at the topmost hierarchy of the holders of traditional power and authority. Nyewe-Ali in Akpor traditional system has always been ordained by the community's spiritual/traditional authorities through a divination, acceptable to and by the community as a role model and unquestionable means of selecting a leader. Nyewe-Ali is not only a mere head of a kingdom but he is a role model, father to all and second to the gods (Orji, 2013). He is generally seen, recognised and acknowledged as the custodian of the people's history and culture. He represents the reincarnation of the past ancestors of the community. The words of Nyewe-Ali are orders and his actions are divine and sacred. Until the modern period, they were hardly seen in public except during crucial traditional festivals and religious celebrations (Agbodike et al, 2014). The Nyewe-Ali has always been assisted by a chain of traditional chiefs and loyalists who form vital parts of the traditional administrative system.

The limitation and litigations of land may be due to many factors of which are government incursions and appropriation of lands, population pressure, rural-urban migration, multiple users and minor/gender issues (Ikechukwu et al, 2012). Undefined or improper delineation or description of land also leads to ambiguities; hence conflicts. Family land transfers especially when it is done through private conveyance method also contribute to land dispute. The process of land acquisition when faulty would result in complicating land ownership. The common form of acquisition of land is either by purchase, leasing, adverse possession, inheritance or donation. Land conflicts may arise due to land limitation and driven by legitimacy as perceived by two or more claimants. In addition, the interdependency of the claimants having almost equal power also contributes to sustain the conflicts (Azumah et al, 2021).

The politics of land management is traditionally left under the control of the administrator who as the head of a community, decides and determines on land matters (Azu, 2018). He is assisted by his Council of Chiefs and elders in his land dispute resolutions. Customary tenure is the cornerstone of land holding in Obio/Akpor LGA. Accordingly, under this system, land is held by the community which is held in trust by the family, the village or the clan. Individual right to use the land is based strictly on being a member of that community, clan or family (Ekundayo, 2017). Hence, the title of any member of the community to land is purely of traditional legitimacy. Land which is no longer in use by an individual usually reverts to the community, clan or family as the case may be.

In addition, the land rights of women are recognised in Obio/Akpor under specific social contexts. When a woman is likely to receive land, it is culturally determined based on Akpor custom and tradition irrespective of whether it is farmland or forest land. Consequently, the considerations based on the Akpor customs and traditions according to Orlu and Achinulo (2017) are as follows;

i. When there is no son in the family, the daughters are likely to inherit land from their parents. The proportion of land share among the daughters is a function of various conditions such as the economic condition of a particular daughter, the daughter who looks after the ailing parents, etc. There is no universal social norm on the quantum of the land shared.
ii. When there are sons and daughters in a family, the default condition is from what the sons will get their share of the parental land and the daughters would not.
iii. Even when there are sons and daughters in the family, if one among the daughters takes up the responsibility of looking after her parents in their old age, the daughter is likely to get a share of the land. It could even be an equal share of land with her brothers.

iv. In case land is purchased by the husband or the father-in-law, it is likely that they bought the land in the name of their married daughter or the daughter-in-law, to avoid crossing the land ceiling or to access more government benefits.

v. A woman who is widowed at an old age, is likely to get a share of the land along with her sons. The quantum of land is likely to be less than that of the sons.

vi. A young childless widow, who loses her husband at her young age, normally will not get any share in the land. In case she does not remarry and continues to stay at her inlaw's house, she is likely to get a small share of land.

vii. A young widow with a child, who loses her husband at a young age, is likely to get a small share of land from her father-in-law.

Ikwerre Family Heads and Disputes Resolution in Obio/Akpor LGA

The Ikwerre ethnic nationality forms one of the major ethnic groups in Rivers State, with an estimated population of about 1.5 million people. It is spread in four Local Government Areas namely Obio/Akpor, Port Harcourt, Ikwerre and Emohua. The group is favoured with rivers, streams and a very fertile soil. The indigenes invariably are farmers, fishermen and traders. Their food crops amongst others include plantain, cassava, potato and yam while palm oil is their main cash crop. The history of the Ikwerre ethnic nationality is special and traceable to the cultural heritage of the Ibos. However, it has its own cultural practice, values, norms, customs and traditions which are similar to those of the Ibo cultural nomenclature (Ogoloma, 2013).

The Ikwerre ethnic nationality system of conflict settlement is based upon the family group; which follows a horizontal pattern. Each family has its own recognised head who has certain powers, privileges and responsibilities. That is why many families regard their ancestors as controlling their welfare and pay homage to them regularly (Jaja & Ogoloma, 2011). The family has its own land and the right to farm in it. The land is shared by the family head. A number of family groups are related to one another through the blood line that formed a kindred; and each village consists of a number of kindred that are related in one form or the other (Albert, 2012).

Governance in the area is executed by all the family heads which basically comprised the men folk. The elders, as they are called, seat together with the chiefs and Owhor holders. In each group of elders, one would be recognised as senior to the other and styled as Opara (Allan, 2011). He is the eldest in some cases and an influential voice at the family or village meeting and would usually preside over many issues of conflicts including that of land. The Opara is not normally the oldest man in the senior family group of the village. Nevertheless, he is not a chief in the normal sense of it, does not rule outside his family and has no authority except when sitting with other chiefs and Owhor holders of the family or village, especially when matters concerning the family appear for discussion or there is a dispute or meetings that the family will participate (Ekundayo, 2017).

As a general rule in Ikwerre ethnic nationality, nobody has authority over an area greater than the village except he is the paramount ruler of the kingdom. Conversely, if a kingdom consists of many families and sub families, there is the possibility for a man with wealth or powerful personality to become recognised as a local leader and acquire authority over an area covering several villages. However, men of this sort play a purely personal role in the governance of Ikwerre land. Their position is not normally handed on to any successor at their death; with their powers based on their titles, together with their personal qualities, whereas, that of the chiefs, elders and Owhor holders are based on their positions and influence with the ancestors (Okajile in Ogoloma, 2013).

Again, the chiefs, Owhor holders and elders have the prerogative to make the local laws and give whatever order(s) that are necessary from time to time. Where the elders want to give a land particular strength, they will go to the village shrine called Eli/Ali-the Earth Goddess to make sacrifice and ask her to punish anyone who breaks the law (Jaja & Ogoloma, 2011).

There are many types of conflicts that can be seen in Ikwerre land. Some of them include family conflicts, age grade conflicts, marriage conflicts, individual vs individual conflicts, community vs

community conflicts, land conflicts, chieftaincy conflicts, Owhor-holders (Ancestral leadership) conflicts, etc. The list is not exhaustive; which could be between two or more persons, between families or community as the case may be (Fatile, 2010). Men play a very crucial role in most aspects of the conflict settlements in any of the above categories due to their role as youths and elders, chiefs and Owhor holders of their various communities. It is only in few cases that women are involved such as issues of quarrelling, theft and assault. Even then, they may serve as observers or witnesses (Max & Wendy, 2011).

Below is an example from the Ikwerre ethnic nationality in Obio/Akpor LGA concerning land encroachment between Mr. Nweke and Mr. Amadi of Apara kingdom. Whereas the former is the complainant, the latter is the accused. It has been handled under three stages - preliminary, continuing and concluding stages.

Preliminary Stage
The preliminary stage incorporates a process by which a case can be established for hearing. It includes the following:
1. **Summoning (Otuomu):** Summoning is the first stage of instituting a case against someone in the traditional way. The person being the complainant is the one seeking justice. In Ikwerre land, he is called – Otuomu Ikpe. It is treated in the home of a family head, a village Chief, the paramount ruler or the chief in council. In present case, Mr. Nweke is undertaking the responsibility of summoning; otherwise referred to as the complainant.
2. **Summoning fees and other requirements:** At the second stage, the complainant is expected to pay a certain amount that may be agreed in respect of the case. It is paid according to the weight of the matter on ground. Mr. Nweke will further provide to the Chiefs, Owhor holders and elders two bottles of native gin and a given amount of money for the summoning.
3. **Message or letter of invitation:** Having fulfilled the preliminary requirements for institution of the case, the Chief in- charge of that sends a message inviting or summoning the accused on a certain date that has been agreed upon by the chiefs, Owhor holders and elders involved in the settlement. The town crier or messenger undertakes the task of communicating such date and notifies the accused (Mr. Amadi) of the case or summons given and delivered as agreed.
4. **Fixing of venue:** It is the duty of the chiefs, Owhors holders and elders to decide the venue, whether it will take place at the Chiefs residence or the village meeting hall called Obiri, the palace of the paramount ruler or the venue of the native court as the case may be (Ogoloma, 2013). The Obiri in Ikwerre serves as a place for important meetings of chiefs, Owhor holders and elders. It also serves other purposes including a place for traditional rites and festivals or native court. It is believed that the spirits of the gods are living inside this place and cases are handled with due process and injustice will not be allowed nor evil doers go unpunished. Any decision taken in this sacred place is believed to be binding on all parties no matter the social status of the persons (Egbo, 2018).
5. **A reminder notice:** Prior to the date of the case, the Chief relays a message of reminder to the parties involved in the matter billed for settlement. It is believed that both the accused and complainant have prepared themselves properly before the given date. This is done to ascertain any unforeseen event that may affect the process since situations or circumstances affecting people remain unpredictable. The date will still be certain if there is no appeal for change from any of those involved.
(6) **A reminder notice:** Before to the date of the case, the Chief sends a message of reminder to the parties involved in the matter billed for settlement. It is believed that both the accused and complainant have prepared themselves properly before the given date. This is done to ascertain any unforeseen event that may affect the process since situations or circumstances affecting people remain unpredictable. The date will still be certain if there is no appeal for change from any of those involved.

The Continuing Stage
(7) **The beginning of hearing (Obidoh Ikpe):** The beginning of the hearing of the case is the day that has been set aside by the judges or elders to entertain hearing of the case from both parties. The two parties involved in the land encroachment dispute are asked to appear at the agreed venue

and at the agreed time. Both complainant and accused are expected to keep to time as lateness and delay may attract fine (Ezenwoko & Osagie, 2014)

(8) **Requirement for hearing from both parties:** Before hearing proper begins, the parties involved are expected to honour the house with (2) two bottles of native gin each with some amounts of money as the custom/tradition as well as elders, chiefs and Owhor holders deem fit.

(9) **Prosecution, hearing from both parties and cross-examination:** The scene of judgment represents a native court. Here, an elder serves as spokesperson and announces the beginning of the hearing and the nature of the case. The secretary of the court writes down the statements of the parties to the conflict. The eye witnesses and supporters watch and listen carefully as the case begins (Hamisu et al, 2017). Then, the complainant is given opportunity to air his grievances or complaints while standing after which he is seated. Next, questions from the accused person is allowed, the audience or and chiefs, Owhor holders and elders also seek as much questions as possible. This is immediately followed by narrating of statement of defence by the accused being Mr. Amadi. He does everything possible in his defensive statement to clear himself of the allegation as the case may be but lying is not permitted. Thereafter, he is questioned by the complainant, the observers and the chiefs, Owhor holders and elders. How questions are thrown at him and the way he answers them determines his sincerity on the matter.

The completion of this stage signals the end of question time and no question is allowed after that, not even from elders. Nevertheless, cross-examination is meant to ascertain and access the evidence and corroborate the facts of the dispute which can be seen as a legal display of wits and intelligence on the part of the legal officials (Ikechukwu et al, 2012).

The Concluding Stage

(10) **Investigation and evaluation of matter:** To ensure justice and fair play, the chiefs, Owhor holders and elders are expected never to be biased since they serve as the judges. The chiefs and elders will maintain credibility by setting up an adhoc investigative and evaluating committee. Members of the committee are drawn from amongst the chiefs, Owhor holders elders and some observers who are not members of the affected families. Their number may be between 10 to 15 persons. These persons carefully and critically examine the statement of the parties and evidences available so as to arrive at a fair justice. They also visit the sites of the disputed land after paying certain amount of money for the purpose of visitation by both parties to the case (Allan, 2011).

(11) **Pronouncement of judgment (OWA IKPE):** In pronouncement of judgments, dialogue and negotiations are adopted in resolving the matters. In some conflicts, the parties agree to settle outside the purview of the courts. This happens when an influential person wades in to settle the matter. Sometimes consensuses are arrived at amongst the feuding parties before the Day of Judgment. In other instances such as land matter or chieftaincy cases, the court acts as the arbitrator and their pronouncement is binding. In the case of ugly situations such as rape, kidnapping, etc. a libation to the goddess of the land and the ancestors are made. Violators always meet with mysterious, severe and untold happenings to them. The goddess of the land and the ancestors are highly respected. No one tries to ignore invocations or libations made to them (Alagoa in Ogoloma, 2013).

Before pronouncement of judgment or final decision, both parties are addressed. They are asked if they will be satisfied with the decision and judgment that will be pronounced without taking offence. They will also ask them whether any of the parties to the conflict have anything to say. For there could be out of court settlement just as in the conventional court. This is where there is resemblance between the Traditional Court and the Conventional one. When they have answered in the affirmative, the final judgment or decision is pronounced on both parties by one appointed by the chiefs, Owhor holders and elders. If the atmosphere is tensed up, they may decide to postpone the pronouncement of the judgment till a more suitable date and time when they feel that tension has been reduced.

When an accused person is found to be innocent, he is cleared of all the accusations; otherwise, he is made to comply with the terms of judgment. Using the case under investigation, if Mr. Amadi is cleared of all accusations levelled against him, he will have to go justified. However, if investigation reveals that charges against him are correct, he is fined or penalised. Sometimes, in a land case, men of the community will be assigned to adjust the boundaries in accordance with the judgment. It must be

mentioned here that, not all the cases that go to the local court are treated with the aim of allotting punishment. Some cases might call for tendering apology. This is to be understood within the basic knowledge that, peace and harmony in the community/group is paramount than conflict, rancour and hatred.

12. **Sealing of covenant of peace:** In order to ensure that none of the parties denies or breaks the terms of agreement or judgment, a covenant of peace is sealed between them in the presence of all witnesses. It sometimes involves exchange of pleasantries or sharing of common drinks, water or libation to signify acceptance of judgment and willingness for peaceful coexistence (Fatile, 2010).

Conclusion

Conflict is indeed an inevitable aspect of human interaction. The fact that conflicts are an integral part of human interactions necessitates the need to learn how to handle them in a way that prevents escalation and destruction. In the case of Obio/Akpor, disputes occur in families and in larger societies. There are still cases of conflict begging for resolution. It is apparent thus, that government (both state and federal) cannot do it alone. It therefore behoves on all the traditional institutions to rise up to the challenge of managing conflicts in their domain.

Recommendations

The following are hereby recommended:
1. For sustainable peace to be attained in the society, there is need for government to pursue policies that encourage unity and social integration in communities in the area.
2. As early as possible, family members should know their responsibilities and place in the family to ensure cohesion and tranquility.
3. Community members should be informed of their rights (e.g. inheritance and entitlements) and responsibilities in order to maintain peace.
4. Offending members should be properly sanctioned to maintain discipline in the respective communities.
5. Community chiefs and custodians should be highly respected by all so that their orders can be properly obeyed.
6. Community chiefs and elders should be known for truth-telling and honesty for greater respect and regard.

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PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY WOMEN'S GROUP IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OPOBO TOWN OF RIVERS STATE. IMPLICATION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

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Abstract
This paper is on the problems encounter by women's group in community development in Opobo Town of Rivers State; implication and opportunities for social work practice in the study. The researcher employed survey method. The study was carried out in Opobo Town in Opobo /Nkoro local Government Area of Rivers state; located within Longitude 0.6º52ºE and Latitude 07º24ºN, in Rivers South-East Senatorial zone. The population of this research work is the entire members of the Women Groups in Opobo. But 10% of this original proportion that made up our study population was 12,000. The sample size constitutes the position of the entire population of study, which has been taken for this research work. The sample size for this study is 120 respondents. The simple random sampling procedure and the availability sampling procedure were adopted in the research work. The method of data analysis collected from the questionnaires was recorded on frequency table and analyzed using the frequency distribution and percentages. Percentage was used to show the demographic statistic and formular of the responses using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 13, data collected were subjected to chi- square statistical analysis for testing the study hypothesis. The analysis indicates that the problem of finance with mean score of 1.6583 predominate, while lack of technical support from the government came last in the chart with the mean score of 1.3417. It was recommended among others that women groups should try and create more time for themselves so as to participate actively in community development projects.

Keywords: Women Group, Community Development, Opobo Town, Social Work Practice

Introduction
When it comes to the issues of peace, which conflict resolution is a significant part, women are central actors and 'right leaders' (Women's Organization, 2008). At the lowest level in Liberia, the women leaders' ADR mechanism is used when two ladies (either women or girls) quarrel and failed to resolve issue arising from such quarrels among themselves. Such disputes could include two ladies fighting over plot of land at the farming site, fighting over a gentleman, a lady beating up her friend's child and so on (Olugbemiga et al, 2014). Often times, the parties involved cannot handle the dispute among themselves, hence, it is brought before the woman leader. Then it is lifted to the head of the women groups, or the chief women council. It is at this level that women's meeting is held with the disputing parties in attendance. There are always open hearings and cross-examinations that take into account the customary. At a larger scale, the role of women and women leaders in conflict/dispute resolution in post-violence Liberia cannot be overemphasized. Galvanek and Planta (2014) observe that women leaders are accorded much respect in Liberia and they play a significant role in conflict resolution. Each community in Liberia has a woman leader who is active and influential in the community and continues to play a role in dispute resolution among her immediate populace. Women's role in peace building in Liberia cuts across the local, national and international levels (Olugberniga et al, 2014). This role has been severally demonstrated both during and post-conflict periods in Liberia. The formation and existence of women groups such as the Mano River Union Women for Peace Network (MARWOPNET) and the Liberian Women's Initiative (LW1) (Afolabi & Idowu, 2014) were also platforms via which the ADR mechanism of women leaders came into play in Liberia. Furthermore, the LWI also played a role in attempts to frustrate the UN-sponsored peace accords because they saw the process as one which will further fuel the Liberian crisis (Action Aid, *et al,* 2014). Another women

group - the Women in Peace building Network (WTPNET) also launched a 'Women of Liberia Mass Action tor Peace[3] campaign in 2003, "focusing on the cessation of hostilities between the warring parties; and lobbied at governmental and UN levels (Action Aid, et al., 2014).

Research Question
What are the challenges facing the women groups in their contributions to community developments?

Objective of the Study
To find out the extent women groups generate their income for community development projects.

Problems Encounter by Women's Group in Community Development
Just like every other groups, the Women Groups encounter various barriers in their bid to contribute to the development of their communities for example,
Lack of Fund: women groups lack fund for day-to-day running of their organizational goals. This problem lead to the abandonment of some project. Because of lack of fund, local government and most communities are not able to undertake or complete undertaken projects. As a result of lack of fund, Women groups has not been able to contribute to the extent they should have contributed to the development of their community. The group find sit difficult to raise fund for a meaningful project, as a result of this, they contribute little to community development process.

Embezzlement of Funds: This is one of the problems facing various kinds of organization, and the women groups are not an exception. This problem is more dishearten and discouraging people's moral is always low when the first contribution is not accounted for, due to mismanagement of funds. This disrupts the interest of people. Some projects have been suspended as a result of public embezzlement of funds. Because when the first attempt is not well accounted for, people tend to withdraw or contribute to such development or project.

Inflexible Work Schedules: This has posed a problem to a good number of Women Groups. This is because, women who are primary caregivers find it difficult to take positions such as executive director or community organizer, which often require extensive attendance at night meetings which is difficult for women caring for young children or elderly parents. In a situation where they have to attend a conference out of town, they have to schedule their time around their families, and this is usually not easy for them and in turn pose problems and barriers to their contributions to community development.
Illiteracy: The inability of many women to pursue education has passed a lot of problem in their contribution to the development of Opobo town Most of the citizens at rural areas are illiterates. Cultural traits skill persists because of illiteracy. It contributes to inadequate planning for development project. Many women have overcome this barrier have done so by pursuing training or degrees to full specific gap in skills or by obtaining credentials but many others, they lack of conventional education as a major barrier. The reason for this illiteracy being the time they devote to raising families and the lack of good , afford able day care which lead to their inability to pursue education.Andaseducationisoneofthekeyfactorstodevelopment,andsome women lack it, it poses a problem, because these women will contribute little or nothing to the development of their communities.

Limited Access to Political Network: Women Groups do not feel they have adequate access to political leaders corporate executives, and other powerful groups that generally consist of men-women's access to power brokers does, however, it vary from city to city and region to region. Many women leaders testified that they do not have control over the money that they had raised. The male church leaders do control the money. This is as a result of limited access to political network or power in the church. This contributed to the problem encountered by the Women Groups in community development.

Disunity: As well as known, there cannot be any meaningful development in the present of the disunity. No wonder the saying that "two cannot move, except they agreed". The issue of disunity, is a problem that hinders the contribution of the Women Groups to community development process. This is because, where there is disunity, the period of gathering together may be defeated. People have different opinions and read meanings into any suggestion made by the others. Such people may discuss for hours without

achieving a point. Women Groups, in the times of disunity, cannot contribute immensely to community development.

Land Disputes: Women Groups at times experience land dispute as barriers to developmental projects. This might be as refusal of the land owners to give out or sell the land out for the project at hand. And if the land in question is located at a very good site for the project, the dispute might hinder the progress of such project and might lead to the delay or abandonment of such project. And the least but not the last problem encountered by women groups in community development is the issue of:

Low Level of Community Participation: This is another issue Women Groups cannot do all alone. This is because for any meaningful development to occur, all hands must be on deck. Many community Women cited issue related to personal, class and culture barriers to their participation in community development. They lack economy security, such as lack of child care, the lack of freedom to leave domestic responsibilities, and feelings of powerlessness. Family and other personal issues have pose significant obstacles to their contributions and involvement in the community development process. These above mentioned problems and many more, are the problems and barriers encountered by the Christian Women Groups in community development in Imo state.

Theoretical Review
Dependency and Underdevelopment Theory
This theory was propounded by Gunder Frank as a result of this criticism of the modernization theory. Frank (1969) argues that what causes underdevelopment in third World Countries is the neo-imperialistic structure. He observed that the metropolitan-periphery relation in whom the third world states are periphery of the metropolitan capitalist economies is what breeds underdevelopment. Thus, the structure is not conducive for third world countries because they are always dependent on the metropolitan capitalist. Frank argues that with the dependence countries, the metropolis have indigenous collaborates and those indigenous bourgeoisie further exploit the resources of their people and cause further underdevelopment of their people. He said that the metropolitan states could only develop when they saver or break their links with the metropolis. Even though, this theory has some significant implications for community development, it has been criticized on a number of grounds. Some modernization theorists argue that it is difficult for states to develop in isolation. Also, they argue that there are some third world countries that have developed within the capitalist or bit. Such as Singapore, Honk Kong, Taiwan among others.

The Socialist Theory
Karl Marx is the major proponent of the socialist theory. The theory is sometimes referred to as Marxian perceptive. Max sees the socialist theory as the theory that will usher in development as opposed to capitalist form of development. Karl Max in (1979), believed that pervert and underdevelopment was generated by excessive acquisition of capital and it exploitative tendencies due to the fact that in the in the capitalist system, capital is owned by a few who use their position to impoverish the rest. Whereas, in the socialist form of development, the state owns the instrument of production and there is no private ownership of means of production. Thus, the state regulates the economic and development is centrally planned, Lane (1979). The socialist theory is aimed at radically transforming the communities by providing the essential social services and welfare packages at relatively chapter prices and spreading it across to everyone. Thus, the states provides the essential needs of the people, and ensure that the people enjoy the good things of life without any exception. Essential welfare packages such as food, health, housing, good roads, employment etc. ate provided for almost all the citizens, lane (1979). Meanwhile, the socialist theory has been criticized of stifling individual initiative by ensuring that no one acquire much profit and by so doing, the spirit of motivation is very low.

Research Methodology
In the design of the study, the researcher used survey method. This study was carried out in Opobo Town in Opobo /Nkoro local Government Area of Rivers state. It is located within logical 0.6°52°E and latitude07°24°N, in Rivers South-East Senatorial zone. Opobo town as a community in Opobo/Nkoro local Government Area of Rivers state, is made up sixty-seven war canoe houses within a fourteen

sections configuration. The population of this research work is the entire members of the Women Groups in Opobo. But 10% of this original proportion that made up our study population was 12,000. The sample size constitutes the position of the entire population of study, which has been taken for this research work. The sample size for this study is 120respondents. The sample random sampling procedure and the availability sampling procedure was adopted in the research work. Opobo as a community, is made up of fourteen polo otherwise known as sections with a total of sixty-seven war canoe houses there in. The self-administered questionnaire was adopted here, using the closed ended question pattern. The questionnaire consists of two parts A and B. part A focused on the personnel demographic characteristic of the respondent, such as name, sex, age etc while part B bothers on substantive issues of the research work. Based on the research work, the method of data analysis collected from the questionnaires was recorded on frequency table and analyzed using the frequency distribution and percentages. The percentages was used to show the demographic statistic and formular of the responses using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 13, data collected were subjected to chi- square statistical analysis for testing the study hypothesis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Occupation Distribution of Participants

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Teachers	21	17.5
Farmers	9	7.5
Traders	35	29.9
Civil Servants	28	23.2
House Wives	27	22.5
Total	120	100.0

The above table describes the distribution of participants based on their occupations. The table showed that the highest percentage 29.2% fell in the category of participants that were traders, followed by23.3% which were those that are civil servants, followed by 22.5% which are those that house wives the least percentage of 7.5% where those are farmers.

Research Question 1: what are the challenges facing the women groups in their contributions to community development?

Table 2: Challenges facing the women groups in their contributions to community development.

Challenges Facing Women Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
Problem of finance	1.6583	.47626
Lack of cooperation among members	1.4417	.49865
Land allocation	1.4000	.49195
Problem of leadership	1.4000	.49195
Lack of cooperation between member and society	1.5083	.50203
Lack of technical support from the government	1.3417	.47626

The above table displays the analysis of mean score of various challenges facing women in caring out their roles in community development projects. The analysis indicates that the problem of finance with mean score of 1.6583 predominate, while lack of technical support from the government came last in the chart with the mean score of 1.3417.

Implication and Opportunities for Social Work Practice in the Study

The researcher foresees some implications and opportunities for social work practice in the contribution of women groups to community.(Ekpo and Mamah,1997 defined social work as a process that operates to assist individuals (as groups or as individuals and as members of group) in increasing their control over their own lives through making satisfying choices, coping satisfactory with the result of their choices and life events, and working to provide the societal changes that were made available to individuals and groups, the social resources and support necessary for the selection of making meaningful choices. And other six areas of social work practice are Social case work, social group work,

community development, research, policy analysis and administration.

Summary and Conclusion

This paper is on the challenges facing the women groups in their contributions to community development. The researcher having completed the research work on the contributions of women groups to community development observed that out of the 130 questionnaires distributed to respondents, 120 were collected and analyzed with the aid of one research question. The researcher made use of frequency distribution and chi-square tables in analyzing the data collected. The analysis indicates that the problem of finance with mean score of 1.6583 predominate, while lack of technical support from the government came last in the chart with the mean score of 1.3417. Therefore, the contributions of women groups alone, will amount to little development, so, there   is need for all those mentioned in the above recommendations to play their roles effectively if the contributions of the women groups is to be maximized.

Recommendations

Community development is an important aspect in the general development of the masses. It makes sure that general development programmers' record high success, the following recommendations are made by the researcher based on the finding of this research work.

i. Since financial problem pose a challenge to the women groups, government should provide them with financial aid, to make their efforts in community development a success.

ii. Women, should be granted equal education opportunity with the opposite sex as well as be empowered, since these are the major ways they can be encouraged to contribute meaningfully to community development.

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PROSTITUTION AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract
Prostitution is a global phenomenon which is not only limited to Nigeria or Port Harcourt. Though, the level of prostitution in Port Harcourt Metropolis is high which led to Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike to ban Nightclubs and prostitution in the state on 1st of January, 2022. Poverty on the other hand had become a household name among Nigerians as most of the youths are poor and unemployed. This study examined how poverty leads to prostitution and how prostitution is used as a panacea to poverty alleviation in Rivers State. The study is a qualitative study which adopted secondary research method. The secondary data was sourced from books, internet, journals, and so on. The study was anchored on strain theory by Robert Merton (1938). The study adopted content analysis to analyze the secondary data. The study highlights some trends of prostitution in Rivers State especially in Port Harcourt Metropolis. It was discovered that some ladies are using prostitution as a way out of poverty; also, some prostitution hotspots in Rivers State are in Port Harcourt Town, GRA, Agip amongst others. And also, factors responsible for prostitution are poverty, low earning capacity amongst others. The study concluded by recommending amongst others that: individuals should look for genuine means of survival and stay off prostitution.

Keywords: Poverty, Prostitution, Poverty Alleviation, Unemployment.

Introduction
Poverty is a living condition in which an entity or individual is faced with economic, social, political, cultural and environmental deprivations. These deprivations are captured as lack of food, poor expectancy rate, poor environmental conditions, low educational opportunity, poor health services, general lack of economic infrastructure and lack of active participation in decision making either as it affects the individual or a nation (Samir, 2015).

Due to high level of poverty in Nigeria, she was ranked headquarters of poverty by Poverty Index, 2019; this shows that Nigeria is the country with most poor people on earth. Due to this, several social welfare programs have been put forward by Nigerian government to alleviate poverty in the country. The Rivers state All Progressive party congress governorship candidate Tonye Cole during his speech at the Nigeria Zero Hunger Symposium 2023 in Abuja said "Nigeria has the awful distinction of being the world capital of poverty, with 71 million people living in extreme poverty today (World Poverty Clock, 2023)" (punch news online 19/6/2023 https://punchng.com/71-million-nigerians-extremely-poor-world-povertyclock/#:~:text=He%20said%2C%20%E2%80%9CNigeria%20has%20the,National%20Bureau%20of%20Statistics%20data.). The poverty rate in Nigeria has increased tremendously as a result of the inactions of those elected into the leadership positions of Nigeria, such that people are ready to commit all kinds of scandalous crimes, including prostitution, to survive (Mba, et al, 2019). The government established the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), aimed at eradicating poverty at the grass roots level, but unfortunately, there are still a substantial number of able-bodied people who depend on begging from others to earn a living. Thus, NAPEP failed due to poor management of the fund. Despite the efforts of the different tiers of government to alleviate poverty and sometimes destitution, the problem still continues unsolved (Mba, et al, 2019). The level of poverty has forced youths into several social vices like robbery, cybercrime, etc. Giving the above, this study aims to examine how poverty could lead some ladies to prostitution in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

The level of prostitution in Rivers state is becoming alarming as one can hardly pass a street at night without sighting a plethora of young ladies in their nudes waiting for a prospective customer (men). The phenomenon of prostitution is a social problem that exists throughout mans recorded history. Prostitution has often been described as the world's oldest profession (Samir, 2015). There is no known society be it traditional or modern that exists without some form of prostitution. Prostitution is universal

but it is generally disapproved of in most societies. While prostitution is illegal in many societies, the act of soliciting is generally punished by the law (Clinard, 2018). In Nigeria, section 249(a) of the criminal code 1944 provides penalties for prostitution. It states that "every common prostitute behaving in a disorderly or indecent manner in any public place loitering and persistently importuning or soliciting persons for the purpose of prostitution shall be deemed idle and disorderly persons, and shall be liable to imprisonment for one month (Criminal Code 1944 cited in Abdullahi, 2021).

Prostitution as the earliest profession in the world can be traced to the year 2400 BC in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Rome, Greece, and pre-Columbian Peru; and there is evidence from prehistoric times suggesting the existence of sexual liberalism and prostitution before sex became monetized. In the nineteenth century and during the middle Ages, legal brothels were an important source of revenue tax in Europe; hence prostitution was tolerated as a necessary evil. However, prostitution in African society can be traced to the period of the Stone Age, where slave masters used their female slaves as sex toys and sex workers. Apart from this, the female slaves were also reckoned social outcasts, and it was hard for women with dignity to be involved in it (Yusuf 2013).

In other words, with the advancement in information and communication technologies in the twenty-first century, prostitution has taken a new turn with social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, WeChat, etc., thereby introducing and making electronic sex a viable option for some young people. Sexual liberalism and commercial sex work/online sex have increased with the innovation of online dating platforms where people could choose and view from the array of numerous nude pictures and pornographic videos just by paying. According to Weitzer (2009), what motivates men to pay for sex includes the desire to have sex with someone having a certain physical appearance (age, race, and body type); the desire to have sex without any emotional commitment; the thrill of having sex with a prostitute; and dissatisfaction with or lack of a sexual partner. This includes a desire for a sex pattern that the partner cannot guarantee. Weitzer (2013) is of the view that prostitution is a form of gender oppression, which can possibly be termed a deviant behaviour. However, there could be a linkage between poverty and prostitution.

Due to the high level of prostitution in Rivers State, the immediate past governor, now Minister of the FCT, Nyesom Wike banned Nightclubs and prostitution in the state. Wike gave the order in his New Year's broadcast in Port Harcourt on the 1st of January, 2022. As of early 2022, there was no comprehensive or official data detailing the extent of prostitution in Rivers State, Nigeria. The issue, however, was significant and often associated with various socio-economic factors such as unemployment, poverty, and urbanization. These factors contribute to a complex social landscape where prostitution can emerge as a notable concern. According to the then governor, the move will "Stop the harmful effects of these depraved activities on the moral development of the children and society at large." The ex-governor further directed security agencies in the State to arrest and prosecute anyone attempting to violate the ban. He said a taskforce would be set up to this effect (John, 2022). This measure was part of a broader initiative aimed at addressing perceived negative impacts associated with these activities on the state's security and social environment. Wike's decision was influenced by concerns over crime, public morality, and the overall order of society. His orders were as follows

1. **Closure of Nightclubs:** Governor Wike ordered the immediate closure of all nightclubs in the state. He expressed concerns that such establishments contributed to criminal activities and public safety issues (Wike, 2022; Vanguard News, 2022).
2. **Ban on Prostitution:** The governor announced a crackdown on prostitution, aiming to enforce existing laws more rigorously and curtail the practice. This initiative was framed as part of a broader strategy to improve the social environment and address moral concerns (Premium Times, 2022).
3. **Public Safety and Morality:** The administration emphasized that these measures were intended to enhance public safety and counteract what was perceived as a decline in public morality. The policy aimed to reestablish order and address the social issues linked to nightlife and prostitution (The Guardian Nigeria, 2022).

Impact and Future Considerations
The immediate effect of Governor Wike's announcement was the enforcement of these new restrictions. The longer-term impact on prostitution rates and the nightclub industry in Rivers State would require further observation and analysis. These measures reflect broader efforts to address social issues within the state but also necessitate an examination of their effectiveness and implications for local communities.

Many studies exist on the phenomenon of prostitution; for instance, Ogunkan and Fawole (2021) opined that many African countries, including Nigeria, engaging in prostitution is a social and cultural taboo; the huge number of people now engaged in the trade in plain sight now poses a serious social concern. More so, Yusuf (2019) argues that the number of young females engaged in prostitution and the attendant social vices it creates is on the rise. Similarly, Jackson (2019) did a cursory review on Commercial Sex Work in Nigerian Universities and indicated that campus commercial sex work is on the ascendancy. Commercial sex work has transcended the brothels and the streets into every facet of the society, and university campuses are not insulated from the menace. Again, Abdullahi, (2019) deals with the problem of prostitution in Ojoo community Ibadan Nigeria and findings revealed that the driving force behind prostitution is economic gain. Prostitutes are found to have pathological problems at their backgrounds and the social relations amongst them are based on primordial pattern. Prostitution has both the positive and negative effects.

However, with the existence of these and several other studies, we could not find a pure secondary research that had examined prostitution and poverty alleviation in Rivers state; this is worrisome, given how the presence of these people (prostitutes) constitute a conspicuous menace on our streets and deface the aesthetic beauty of towns motivated this study to examine how prostitution and poverty alleviation in Rivers State.

Conceptual Review
Prostitution: Prostitution is sex engaged in for commercial reasons rather than for its own sake; it is commercial or mercenary sex; sex as work. However, the word 'prostitution' does not merely refer to commercial sex; often, it also carries a strong negative connotation that reflects the opprobrium of the practice felt by modern Western society (and other societies). Those who do not want to endorse this opprobrium, particularly many prostitutes, have taken to using the expression 'sex work' instead. Although this may indeed be more appropriate in certain contexts, it cannot replace the older term in any discussion aiming at discernment and accuracy. Sex work is a much wider term covering, in addition to prostitution, other types of work in what may be called the 'sex industry': pornography, sex shows, sexual surrogacy, etc. Prostitution is a type of sex work that involves granting the client direct sexual access to the prostitute's body. This may involve full-fledged sexual intercourse, but even if it does not, it differs from sex shows, for example, in that it normally provides sexual satisfaction to the client through direct physical contact of some sort (Mba, et al, 2019).

Poverty: The word poverty comes from old French poverté (Modern French: pauvreté), from Latin paupertās from pauper (poor) (Ephrem, 2019). There are several definitions of poverty depending on the context of the situation it is placed in. According to United nation, fundamentally, poverty is the inability of having choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit (Gordon, 2005). According to World Bank, Poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life (Diriba, 2020).

Poverty is usually measured as either absolute or relative: Absolute poverty measures poverty in relation to the amount of money necessary to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. Absolute

poverty or extreme poverty or abject poverty is "a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information (Gordon, 2005). It is a condition so limited by malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, squalid surroundings, high infant mortality, and low life expectancy as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency. Is a set condition, which is the same in every country, and does not change over a period of time (Abdissa, 2016).

Relative poverty views poverty as socially defined and dependent on social context, hence relative poverty is a measure of income inequality. This income inequality is measured by Gini coefficient. The value of Gini coefficient lies between 0–1. 0 would mean there is no inequality. In other words every citizen would earn the same. 1 would mean there would be severe inequality. Usually, relative poverty is measured as the percentage of the population with income less than some fixed proportion of median income (Raphae, 2019). Relative poverty reflects better the cost of social inclusion and equality of opportunity in a specific time and space. Relative poverty, on the other hand, refers to conditions which are subjective to the society in which the person lives, and therefore, does vary between countries, and can change over time. In general, Poverty is a condition in which people lack satisfactory material resources (food, shelter, clothing, housing), are unable to access basic services (health, education, water, sanitation), and are constrained in their ability to exercise rights, share power and lend their voices to the institutions and processes which affect the social, economic and political environments in which they live and work (Siyum, 2015).

Theoretical Framework
This study adopted Strain Theory by Robert Merton (1938) as its theoretical paradigm. Robert K. Merton developed his strain theory in 1938. The theory states that society puts pressure on individuals to achieve socially accepted goals (such as the American dream), though they lack the means. This leads to strain which may lead individuals to commit crimes, like selling drugs or becoming involved in prostitution as a means to gain financial security. Merton argued that when individuals are faced with a gap between their goals (usually monetary) and their current status, strain occurs. Merton put forward five advisable reactions to such gap between goals and means which are;

- Conformity: pursuing cultural goals through socially approved means. Most common. ("Hopeful poor")
- Innovation: Accepting society's goals but designing their own means for achieving them. Often using socially unapproved or unconventional means to obtain culturally approved goals. Example: dealing drugs or stealing to achieve financial security. ("surviving poor")
- Ritualism: using the same socially approved means to achieve less elusive goals (more modest and humble). ("passive poor")
- Retreatism: to reject both the cultural goals and the means to obtain it, then find a way to escape it. ("retreating poor")
- Rebellion: to reject cultural goals and the prescribed means to achieve them, then work towards replacing both of them. ("resisting poor")

Relating Robert Merton's assumptions on strain theory to this present study, it is right to state that Nigerian society has pressured her youths to go into prostitution. For example, there is high level of poverty in Nigeria, the unemployment rate is very high, therefore, youths who are not in conformity with achieving societal goals, indulge in innovation as argued by Merton, (1938). Most of the ladies that are involved in prostitution know the societal acceptable means of achieving desired goals, but due to the bad leadership, poverty and societal pressure, they leverage the societal inacceptable means (prostitution) to get financial security.

Methodology
This paper is a qualitative study which adopted secondary research methodology. The sourced secondary data was subjected to content analysis.

Discussion of Findings
Prostitution Trends in Rivers State
Harcourt and Donovan (2019) identified several forms of sex work using worksites, sexual practices, and major strategies of soliciting for clients as a yardstick in Rivers state. These include:

- Escort workers: Escort workers often rely on intermediaries, such as hotel staff, to reach their clients. This reliance on gatekeepers highlights the role of social networks in facilitating access to services. This can be seen as part of the broader concept of "social capital," where relationships and networks provide individuals with access to resources and opportunities (Bourdieu, 1986). Hotel staff serve as crucial gatekeepers, regulating access to the service based on their connections and discretion. This dynamic creates a closed, exclusive market that restricts access to those who have the means and connections to afford such services.

- Club, bar, and dance hall workers: Workers in clubs, bars, and dance halls rely on these venues as essential platforms for soliciting customers and establishing connections. This reliance highlights the importance of "social networks" in facilitating economic interactions. According to sociologist Mark Granovetter's Theory of "strength of weak ties" (Granovetter, 1973), these workers often benefit from social connections within these social spaces to gain access to potential clients. Social networks within such venues help in building and maintaining relationships that are crucial for their economic survival and success.

- Beer girls: They are girls employed in bars and pubs to sell and promote their goods, who also engage in commercial sex with clients in order to supplement their pay.

- Opportunistic girls: Opportunistic girls navigate a complex socio-economic landscape where economic necessity and social stratification influence their behaviors. These women may not identify as prostitutes but engage in transactional sexual relationships to access material resources, social status, or economic stability. This practice can be seen as a form of "survival strategy" within a socio-economic environment where formal economic opportunities may be limited (Miller, 1997). The transactions they engage in reflect broader patterns of economic inequality and the ways individuals negotiate their needs within a constrained environment.

- Femme's libbers: They consist of single or divorced women who exchange sexual services for gifts, which, in the long run they may convert to cash.

- Survival sex: This type of prostitution is common in given circumstances in which hunger and war are prevalent. Here, sex is exchanged for food and security as a currency rather than physical money.

- Part-timers: They are women who have other means of livelihood other than prostitution, but venture into sexual relationships with high-ranking individuals in society for financial gain.

- The student class: This is prominent in institutions of higher learning; they exchange sex for grades with their clients, who are mostly lecturers and consist of a network of men who belong to the middle and upper class in society.

- Independent call girls: Independent call girls utilize social media as a key platform for soliciting clients, reflecting the rise of the "digital economy" and the transformation of traditional business practices. Social media platforms provide a virtual space where transactions can occur with relative anonymity and efficiency. This shift aligns with Manuel Castells' concept of the "network society" (Castells, 1996), where digital networks redefine social and economic interactions. Social media enables independent call girls to access a global clientele, manage their services more effectively, and operate within a more flexible and informal economic framework.

- Street walkers/Night walkers: They are found at odd hours and in highbrow areas and streets. They charge more than the typical brothel employee.

- Doorway workers: They stay in brothels and are prominently displayed by the doorway to entice passersby to enter the houses of prostitution (Harcourt & Donovan 2019).

Some Terminologies used to Describe Prostitutes in Rivers State
- Sex workers: The term "sex workers" is increasingly used in sociological discourse to recognize the agency of individuals involved in commercial sex, shifting away from derogatory labels. It reflects an attempt to professionalize the role, acknowledging the labor aspect of prostitution without attaching moral judgments. In Rivers State, this term helps to frame the activity within broader

socioeconomic structures that often marginalize women. It also opens discussions about rights, health, and safety within the profession.

- Olosho: "Olosho" is a slang term used on the streets to describe prostitutes, particularly by younger, urban populations. The term is embedded in local youth culture and reflects how sex work is often normalized within informal social settings. Its casual use can both diminish the perceived dignity of the women involved and make light of the transactional nature of the work.

- Ashawo: A widely used term in Nigeria to label women who sell sex, and it carries significant cultural baggage. The word is often used pejoratively, reflecting societal norms that judge women's sexuality harshly while often excusing male promiscuity. Its usage highlights the moralistic and gendered double standards prevalent in the community. The term is also illustrative of how patriarchy and societal expectations shape the stigmatization of women involved in sex work.

- Runs Girls: "Runs Girls" refers to women, typically younger, who engage in sex work as a means of supplementing their income, often in more discreet or upscale environments compared to street-level prostitution. This term reflects the fluidity of sex work as it intersects with class, education, and modernity, especially among university students or urban professionals. The phenomenon of "Runs Girls" can be seen as a response to socioeconomic pressures, with sex work positioned as a strategy for upward mobility or economic survival.

- Hook-up Girls: This is another name for prostitutes who are always at the beck and call of any man who will pay for sex. It describes women available for on-demand sex work, through informal networks, often arranged via social media or mobile platforms. This term highlights how modern technology has transformed the way sex work is solicited and delivered, making it more discreet and accessible. It reflects a growing trend toward commodification of relationships and intimacy in an increasingly capitalist and digitized society.

- OZ: A local slang term for prostitutes, used mostly within certain social circles and among younger demographics. Its use highlights the informal and often hidden nature of sex work in urban spaces. The term's casual connotation reflects how sex work is woven into the social fabric of nightlife and local economies, often without open acknowledgment.

- Street Banny: Used by cultists, this term is emblematic of the association between organized crime, gang culture, and the exploitation of women for sexual services, underlining the power dynamics involved. The term's association with criminality and gang culture reflects the darker side of sex work, where women may be controlled or exploited by criminal networks. It underscores the links between organized crime, economic desperation, and the exploitation of women in vulnerable situations.

- Community Service: Community Service" is a derogatory phrase used to imply that a prostitute is available to any man in the community, reducing her role to that of a shared resource. The term reflects deep-seated misogyny and the objectification of women, casting them as commodities rather than individuals with agency. This label is often used to demean and stigmatize women, reinforcing patriarchal norms and moral judgments about female sexuality.

Some Prostitution Hotspots in Rivers State; Especially Port Harcourt Metropolis
- Borokiri: Town axis to Borokiri is covered with prostitutes.
- D/Line: This area is a coordinated prostitution zone, most of the prostitutes there rent rooms as normal people living in that area but their rooms are used as meeting point with prospective clients.
- Agip: Part of this area shares boundary with Rivers State University and School of Health, the students of these two higher institutions live in this area. Prostitutes around here easily access Abacha Road and GRA for their business.
- Rumuodara: Most tiled streets along Rumuodara road down to Omega house is covered with co-operate prostitutes.
- New Road Eliozu: This area have a lot of new buildings/apartments for rent, most of those rented apartment especially self-contain are been rented by prostitutes.
- NTA Road: This is another area of new buildings/apartments and most prostitutes live in those apartments. There is a particular tiled street after Osmosis that is filled with prostitutes in this area.

- Trans-Amadi: This area is an industrial area filled with oil companies, construction companies, bottling companies. Prostitutes live in this area with the mindset of catching one oil worker or company worker to enhance their pay.
- Woji: There exists a Golf estate in this area and it is also close to Transamadi, they have Rivers linking to big seas around this area with some offshore workers living there, prostitutes are all over the neighborhood to get these men.
- Old GRA: This area is strictly for big boys/men and prostitutes.
- Rumukwuta: This area is close to Rumuola, there are prostitute joints there, an easy access to GRA also.
- Uniport Off-Campus comprises of (Aluu, Alakahia and Choba): These areas are hotspots for prostitutes due to the closeness to Uniport.
- Artillery: With the booming Mr Sweets and the Rest located at Artillery makes it a hotspot for prostitutes. If one go to Artillery junction from 8pm, one will be surprised, from the junction along Aba road down towards Woji road is littered with prostitutes.
- Rumuola: It is well known for its name and also it's like a mother to Rumuigbo in terms of prostitutes because.
- Government Residential Area (GRA): Most of the hotels in GRA are filled and occupied with prostitutes, GRA is like Pornhub at night with the numerous night clubs, and prostitutes are everywhere. One can pick prostitutes of all kinds, class and shape in GRA.

Related Factors Responsible for Prostitution from Different Perspectives
- The factors due to which a woman enters the field of prostitution may be based on their willingness (UNESCO, 2022). Voluntary initiation includes those who are willing to work as a prostitute due to economic crises, family pressure, etc. On the other hand, involuntary initiation is specific to women who are forced to enter the sex industry, likely as a result of kidnapping and trafficking.
- Debilitating economic circumstances are often the biggest reason for involvement in prostitution, as it helps to acquire a certain commodity in conditions of poverty (Jackson et al., 2019). The reason for which money is required varies from person to person; it may include supporting children and family, paying rent, or supporting a drug habit. Regardless of how it is viewed, prostitution provides women with items that would not have been otherwise affordable for them.
- Those who work for daily wages and earn a meager amount in return are well aware of the insufficiency of this amount to fulfill their family needs. Hence, they look for an easier way to earn money. This raises the question of how a low-skill job demands so much money (Gertler et al, 2013), which can be explained by the high level of risk factor associated with it, i.e., those who indulge in sex without condoms can ask for high compensation.
- It is important to note how a lack of education feeds into the spread of this profession. Literature suggests that a lack of qualifications increases one's vulnerability of adopting sex work by reducing the probability of finding other options for employment. A study by Bindel et al. (2012) found that most prostitutes had no formal qualifications. Although this does interfere with the chances of finding a mainstream source of income, prices for sex work are also nonetheless paid as per the prostitute's educational level.
- Poor academic performance and absenteeism in school are also associated with prostitution. Being away from an educational institution can expose teenage girls to harmful societal aspects and often turns out to be imprudent (Nkala, 2014). Consequently, they become potentially prone to sexual abusers and pimps, who view them as unprotected targets.
- Moreover, as per certain cultures or traditions, a particular profession may run in the family, and prostitution can be one of those. A study conducted by Qayyum (2014) showed that almost half of the women surveyed belonged to a particular caste where prostitution was considered a profession, and among those a majority had at least one close relative who also worked as a prostitute.
- To the domain of psychological factors, distressing experiences during childhood (most notably sexual abuse) have negative repercussions for mental health all throughout life. These psychological problems can interfere with social relations, employment, and even handling everyday issues. This altogether leads to social exclusion, thus increasing vulnerability to induction into sex-work. A study conducted by Bindel et al. (2012) found that prostitutes admitted to incidences of verbal,

sexual and physical abuse during childhood; these intense experiences of violence tend to generate feelings of triviality which can kick-start their deliberation to enter prostitution.

- Under the umbrella of social factors, lack of family support (both financial and emotional) plays a significant role as a determinant of prostitution. Abject poverty related to elderly parents, cost of children's education, absence of a male earning member, buying a residence, daughters' marriages and a generally large number of family members are all cited as family-related reasons for entering prostitution (Quuaum, 2013).

- Lack of emotional support from family members in terms of care and affection is an equally important factor. Women involved in prostitution often travel collectively in groups as a means of protecting one another (Quuaum, 2013). Since these women lack support from their families, they rely heavily on their peers for support during times of despair which further creates an affectionate attachment between them. Thus, the critical influence of family support on the lives of these women extends from their first experience in prostitution to their decision to extricate from prostitution.

- In addition, homelessness has been identified as the most significant factor that prompts engagement in sex work on-street (Spice, 2021). The nature of this engagement is often depicted as survival sex, in which women take on prostitution as a last resort for the sake of food and shelter (McNaughton & Sanders, 2017). A study conducted by Moen (2021) revealed that girls who left their homes due to any underlying cause, including violence in the home and neglect, were assumed to be the 'street hood'. Freedom in the streets goes hand-in-hand with the necessity to provide their own basic needs which they tend to attain by any means, therefore resulting in street prostitution.

- Drug abuse has also been reported as an important factor in prostitution. A study conducted by Brown (2021) emphasized self-inflicted drug abuse as a significant cause in girls in the study. An interesting peculiarity to note was that the direct incentive was not the money which they needed to buy drugs, but rather the sense of powerlessness and unworthiness created by the tendency to abuse.

- Sex trafficking must be taken into account as the vehicle bringing victims into prostitution. The process comprises of recruitment, harbor, movement, and compelling methods to cement the victim in prostitution through coercion, violence or threat. Women are often recruited from poor, vulnerable or marginalized populations, either from foreign countries or from the same country as the exploiters. According to Spice (2021), innocent women are often pushed into prostitution by traffickers and pimps.

Effects of Prostitution on Society and Individuals
- Prostitution contributes to the objectification of women: Just because someone pays does not erase the qualifications of what we consider sexual violence, domestic violence, and rape. However, people who pay for sex tend to think that what they do is acceptable (Karandika, 2018).

- Prostitution Normalizes Violence: Sexual violence and physical assault are the norm for women in legal prostitution. A study by (Goodlin, & Wend, 2019) states that 60% of women in legal prostitution were physically assaulted, 70% were threatened with physical assault, and 40% had been coerced into legal prostitution. Legal or illegal, the longer someone is in prostitution, the more he or she is physically endangered and psychologically harmed.

- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): PTSD is characterized by anxiety, depression, insomnia, irritability, flashbacks, emotional numbing, and hyper-alertness. Symptoms are more severe and long-lasting when the stressor is of human design. PTSD is normative among prostitutes, especially women. Farley et al. (2013) found a PTSD prevalence rate of 68% among those in prostitution in nine countries. This rate was comparable to the rates of PTSD among battered women seeking shelter, rape survivors, and survivors of state-sponsored torture.

- Low self-esteem, as a result, pronounced perception of the prostitute as an object who supplies a financial income for the pimp. A prostitute is perceived as body parts, a commodity for sexual pleasure, their feelings and emotions are irrelevant (Karandika, 2018).

- Dissociation: This is a consequence of both sexual abuse endured in childhood, as well as sexual violence experienced in adult prostitution. In order to survive such exploitation and harsh violence, the woman learns to dissociate the body from the mind; she tries to protect her spiritual self from

bodily scars. Subsequently, as a result of such psychological harm, these women fall victim to severe depressive disorders, and anxiety, and are continuously hyper-vigilant (Bokhari, et al, 2017).

Prostitution and Poverty Alleviation in Rivers State
Prostitution is sometimes proposed as a potential solution for poverty alleviation, especially in regions facing significant economic challenges, such as Rivers State in Nigeria. However, the idea of considering prostitution as a panacea for poverty alleviation is highly controversial and raises numerous ethical, social, and practical concerns.

Ethical and Social Considerations
- Exploitation and Vulnerability: Prostitution often exploits vulnerable individuals, particularly women and children. Many who enter prostitution do so out of desperation, making them susceptible to abuse, exploitation, and trafficking. Rather than alleviating poverty, it can perpetuate cycles of exploitation and social marginalization.
- Stigma and Social Consequences: In many societies, prostitution carries a heavy stigma, leading to social ostracism, discrimination, and a lack of access to social services for those involved. This stigma can hinder individuals' ability to leave the sex trade and reintegrate into society.
- Health Risks: Prostitution is associated with significant health risks, including sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV/AIDS, and mental health issues. These health challenges can exacerbate poverty rather than alleviate it, as affected individuals may struggle to access adequate healthcare.
- Legal and Moral Implications: In many places, including Nigeria, prostitution is illegal or heavily regulated. Promoting prostitution as a poverty alleviation strategy could conflict with existing laws and moral norms, leading to legal repercussions and community resistance.

Economic and Practical Considerations
- Temporary Relief vs. Long-Term Solutions: While prostitution may provide some individuals with short-term financial relief, it is not a sustainable long-term solution to poverty. It does not address the root causes of poverty, such as lack of education, unemployment, and economic inequality.
- Impact on Community Development: Relying on prostitution as a poverty alleviation tool could have negative consequences for community development. It may divert attention from more sustainable and ethical economic development strategies, such as education, job creation, and small business support.

Conclusion/Recommendations
While prostitution may offer some individuals temporary financial relief, it is not a viable or ethical solution for poverty alleviation in Rivers State. Addressing poverty requires comprehensive strategies that empower individuals, protect vulnerable populations, and promote sustainable economic development. Focusing on education, skills development, and job creation is likely to have a more lasting and positive impact on poverty alleviation in the region. Prostitution is something that has been around for centuries, and for the past few years there has been a debate as to whether it should be legalized or not. No matter a person's legal leanings, it is difficult to refute the fact that prostitution has negative effects on society. Across different cultures and continents, the destructive consequences of prostitution are similar whether prostitution is legal, tolerated, or illegal. People that are removed from the situation tend to think that the legalization will lessen the harm of prostitution.
The following recommendations are made by the study:
- Effective poverty alleviation strategies should focus on empowering individuals through education, skills training, access to healthcare, and the creation of job opportunities. These approaches help build a more resilient economy and offer individuals a path out of poverty that is dignified and sustainable.
- Individuals should utilize other legal means of survival than going into prostitution because of poverty.
- Government should implement the ban on prostitution in Port Harcourt.
- Government should provide employment for the youths.
- There should awareness programs on the effects of prostitution.
- Family members should be inquisitive to know the source of finance of the female children rather than celebrating them with unknown achievements.

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ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN NORTH EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract
This paper examines Ethno-Religious Conflicts and Social Change in North East Nigeria. Northern Nigeria witnessed a surge in ethnic and sectarian violence over the past two decades. These acts of Terrorism peaked in the North East region as a result of the activities of the Islamic fundamentalist groups called Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). The objective of the study, therefore, is to examine the implications of Ethno-religious conflicts and Social Change in the North Eastern region of Nigeria and to proffer solutions. Two questions were used to interrogate the research objectives and the conclusion is that ethno-religious conflicts have almost paralyzed the entire social structure of the region. The paper adopted Conflict theory to gauge the study. The findings are that Agricultural productivity in the area is now at its lowest, there is massive unemployment with many out of school children, and some now live in IDP camps, with poor infrastructure. Although efforts are being made by the government to contain the insurgency by establishing the North East Development Commission and the war against Terrorism, much still need to be done. Wherefore, the paper recommends that the federal government should as a matter of urgency address the genuine complaints of the various ethnic nationalities holistically by convening a national conference. Secondly, that Agriculture and Industrial development should be given a boost by all tiers of governments and donor Agencies to create employment for the unemployed youths.

Keywords: Ethno-religious Conflict, National Conference, North East Development Commission, Terrorism, Boko Haram, ISWAP,

Introduction
This study seeks to examine ethno-religious conflicts in North East region of Nigeria and their effect on social change in the region. The North Eastern region of Nigeria has witnessed tremendous conflicts in recent times as a result of terrorism arising from the activities of some perceived Islamic fundamentalists. With over four hundred (400) ethic groups, belonging to several religious sects, Nigeria since independence has remained a multi-ethnic Nation State, which has been grappling and trying to cope with the problem of ethnicity on the one hand, and the problem of ethno-religious conflicts on the other (Salawu, 2010). There is a consensus of opinion among observers that Nigeria provides one of the best examples or case studies of ethno-religious conflicts. Two major religions (Christianity and Islam) have been at daggers drawn over sectarian and regional control.

Statement of the problem
Conflicts in Nigeria have come to be identified with divers interests; social, political, economic and cultural differences. Many of these conflicts have been traced to Ethnicity and religion, land disputes, resource competition, poverty, among others. In recent times Ethno-religious conflicts have reverberated in the northern parts of the country, and more so in the North East region, where Terrorism now hold sway, seeking to introduce a new social order. This paper therefore examines Ethno-religious conflicts and social change in North East Nigeria.

Research literature by various authors has explored numerous strategies and methods to stop these ethno-religious conflicts. Most authors agree that discouraging all forms of discrimination, neglect, favouritism, nepotism, marginalization and tribalism in sharing of public positions, dealing with religious issues and other issues in all spheres in the nation would curb the ethno-religious conflict tension in Nigeria (Alegbeleye, 2014; Canci & Odukoya, 2016; Omotosho, 2003; Onah, Diara & Uroko, 2017; Osunyikanmi & Sapele, 2019; Salawu, 2010). Furthermore, other authors claim that religious

tolerance is a key factor that will defuse religious conflicts (Onah et al., 2017; Osunyikanmi & Sapele, 2019).

Onah et al. (2017) argued that as 'adherents of different religions imbibe the moral teachings of religions such as love for one another' peaceful coexistence will be achieved. The Global Terrorism Index (2019) shows that, in 2018 alone, more than 2000 people lost their lives, whilst 300,000 people were displaced through the insurgence of Fulani herdsmen and Boko Haram in Nigeria. As a result of these conflicts, sustainable development in Nigeria appears to be an unachievable goal.

There are numerous studies done in the area of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria but there is no known documented work on ethno-religious conflict and social change in North East Nigeria. This is the gap the study seeks to fill. In furtherance of the research objectives the paper will seek to answer the following questions;
1) What is ethno-religious conflict?
2) How has ethno-religious conflicts impacted the North East region of Nigeria?

The objective of this study is to examine ethno-religious conflicts and social change in the North East region of Nigeria. Its specific objective is to highlight how ethno-religious conflicts in North East Nigeria have influenced social change in the region.

Conceptual Review
Ethnicity and Religion
Ethnicity is derived from the Greek word "ethnos" which refers to a community of common descent. Ethnic conflict poses a significant threat to national and international peace and security. Ethnicity refers to people who share common cultural, traditional, and origin-related characteristics, while ethnicity itself is the practice of identifying and relating to people of the same origin.

Ethnic discrimination occurs when members of one ethnic group discriminate against others based on exclusive criteria (Salifu, 2014). Ethnicity is a complex and relatively new concept that emerged less than half a century ago, in literature (Fawole & Bello, 2011). It involves grouping of people based on shared characteristics such as national origin, language, or culture (Kassah, 2016; Jones & George, 2008).

Fawole and Bello (2011), posits that religion holds different meanings for different people. Emile Durkheim's definition of religion as unified systems of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things is referenced. Religion is viewed as a set of unique beliefs and practices that distinguish it from other social institutions. In Nigeria, religion is ranked next to ethnicity and is often categorized into three main groups: Christian, Muslim and Traditional. Tradition religions involve the worship of various gods and goddesses, while Christian and Muslim identifies have been central to religious differentiation and conflicts in Nigeria.

Conflict is considered a major social problem in all human societies; Ekpenyong (2011) asserts that the fundamental issues contributing to conflicts include religious beliefs and practices, ethnicity, boundary disputes, land ownership and resource competition, poverty, marginalization, unemployment, and underdevelopment.

Some of the variables that contribute to the creation of ethno-religious conflicts are:
a) Differences in identity and groups: Ethnic and religious identities shape individual and group identities. Differences in cultural customs, beliefs, values, and traditions can produce an "us versus them" mentality, leading to splits and conflict.
b) Historical Guidance: Past occurrences like colonial discrimination, marginalization, or perceived injustices can stoke inter-group animosities. Conflicts are frequently perpetuated by deeply ingrained historical grudges that are passed down through the generations, fostering a sense of collective memory.

c) Socio-economic inequalities: Ethno-religious tension may be exacerbated by economic gaps, resource competition and unequal access to opportunities, conflict may result when particular groups feel disenfranchised or disadvantaged in terms of socio-economic development. Such situations can give rise to feelings of unfairness and resentment.

d) Political manipulation: Political actors may use divisive language and the mobilization of support along ethnic or religious lines to their advantage. This distorting of identities and interest has the potential to intensify divisions within communities and conflicts.

e) Competition for Power and Resources: Ethno-religious conflicts are frequently stoked by contest for political influence, ownership of resources, or entry to lucrative employment opportunities. Competition over scarce resources has the potential to exacerbate already existing tension and fuel violent confrontations.

f) Extremist ideologies: Whether they are founded on religious or ethno-nationalist convictions, have the potential to radicalize people and escalate confrontations. Radicalized people or groups may use violence to accomplish their ideological goals, escalating tensions and dividing society even more.

g) Weak Governance and State Failure: Ethno-religious conflicts can flourish in nations with poor governance, inadequate institutions, or a lack of rule of law. Inter-group violence can flourish when the state does not provide security, defend minority rights, or apply the law fairly.

Social Change in North East Nigeria
The word change is a very broad concept. Though change is all around us, we do no refer to all of it as social change. Social change means the alterations that occur in the social structure and social relationships among a social groups or society. As stated earlier, some of the factors that trigger social change are demographic, technology, cultural, political, economic and education. Baring the insurgency, population growth in the North-East region has continued to soar as a result of increase in birth rate. Statistics shows that the population of the region rose from 18,971,965 in 2006 to over 26 million in 2023. Technological progress led to the discovery of oil in the Lake Chad region with mining of some solid minerals like coal, limestone, quartz, mica etc.

In all of these the cultural factors has perhaps played a more dominant role. It is believed that the main sect group called Boko Haram started by trying to establish a cultural identity for the area different from the main Hausa-Fulani dominance. The founder of the group, Mohammed Yusuf frowned at the idea of being controlled by the Hausa-Fulani and wanted to establish a caliphate that will be ranked at the same level with the sultanate or the highest emirate council which he believed his Kanuri tribe is also entitled. The rivalry stemmed from the recognition given by the Federal Government to Islamic leaders, a position that is still hunting the North till date as can be seen in Kano and Sokoto states, where the powers of the sultan and the Emir, respectively, are presently being stripped or whittled down. The word Emir which refers to a military commander has ordinarily been used as a term for a governor, especially a military governor. The socio-cultural relationships such as descent: Common language, Religion integrates people of diverse socio-cultural background and this is what the Boko-Haram sect in North-East Nigeria exploited. Since the shift from traditional African education to the western type, education is another socio-cultural institution that has posed a threat to ethnic group relationships in Nigeria. The debate among Nigerians always boils down to comparisons between the North and the South. The Boko Haram sect is insisting on having Arabic language as the official language for the state, jettisoning the current English language which they believe is a creation of western education. In fact, they want everything Sharia and nothing more. This has been the major cause of the conflict.

The UNDP findings while assessing the impact of conflict on development in Nigeria shows that insurgent violence and Terrorism carried out by Boko-Haram and Islamic States West Africa Province (ISWAP) remains the major driver of insecurity across North-Eastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad region. The effects of the insurgency and the persistence of insecurity are irreparable from the region's pre-existing socio-economic deprivation and harsh environmental conditions. The BAY States, Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, were not only some of the poorest states in the country prior to conflict, but they also continue to bear the brunt of its effects. More than 280,000 Nigerians are registered as refugees in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger with the majority having fled violence in Nigeria's North-East, according to the UNDP. Conflict has further damaged an economy that was already strained by inequality (World

Bank), low agricultural productivity (Kimenyi et al, 2019) and high unemployment (Ikpe, 2019) especially among the youth (Adebayo, 2019).

According to UNDP "Assessment for Accelerating Development Investments in Famine Response and Prevention", the conflict has resulted in the destruction of 75 percent of water and sanitation infrastructure. But it is frequently reported that IDPs have limited access to water and sanitation due to overcrowding and shortages of water and material.

Theoretical Framework
The paper adopted conflict theory to gauge the study. Conflict theory emerged as a critique of the prevailing social and economic conditions during the industrial revolution in Europe. Karl Marx (1818 – 1883) and Fredrick Engels (1820 – 1895) developed this theory as they sought to understand and analyze the societal conflicts arising from capitalism and class struggle. Their seminal works, including "The Communist Manifesto (1848)" and "Das Kapital (1867)", laid the foundations for conflict theory. Conflict theory analyzes the social structure, institutions, and power dynamics at the macro level. It focuses on social class such as the bourgeoisie (ruling class) and the proletariat (working class), as units of analysis. Conflict theory is built on some assumptions which are that:
1) Society is characterized by inherent conflicts and inequalities rooted in the distribution of power, wealth, and resources.
2) Conflict arises due to competition for scarce resources and the struggle to maintain power and control over these resources.
3) Social change occurs through conflicts and revolutions leading to the transformation of social structures.
4) Inequality and oppression are inherent in social systems, leading to division and tension between different social classes.
Conflict theory best suits the scenarios in the context of ethno-religious conflicts especially when it is mirrored against the background of social change.

Methodology
The research method adopted is qualitative design by historical information. Primary and secondary data were used to validate the survey.

Review of Related Literature
According to Ekpeyong (2011), one major cause of conflict is land claim and ownership as some communities and ethnic groups within and across the boundaries of states and local government council areas lays claim to land as original owners (settlers) or "aboriginal", and those regarded as intruders are fought against. Again, Omotosho (2003), argue that lack of real desire to understand each other's beliefs and cultures and Extremism contribute to inter religious violence in Nigeria.

In the North region of Nigeria, generally the Arewa People Congress (APC), a Socio-cultural organization has been very vocal on the campaign for regional integration and religious harmony and stability. Like their likes in other regions; Odua People Congress (OPC) in the West, Egbesu Boys and Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC) in the South-South, the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and Igbo People Congress (IPC) in the South – East.

The North is predominantly home to Fulani and Hausa with other minor ethnic nationalities which trade religious allegiance to Islam. Christianity though firmly rooted in the North only comes second after Islam which in some states have been openly declared to be the state religion by Sharia rule. The discussion of ethno-religious conflict in whatever context even becomes more necessary given the fact that there is a phenomenal recurrence of ethno-religious conflict across the nation and more so in the North-Eastern region. The States of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe make up the North East region. Before the present democratic experiment in Nigeria, there were ethno-religious conflicts that claimed so many lives and properties (Mohammed, 2005). Notable among such crises are the Maitatsine religious disturbances in parts of Kano and Maiduguri in the early 1980s; Jimeta- Yola religious disturbances (1984), and Zango Kataf crises in Kaduna State (1992). Others are Kafanchan,

College of Education Muslim-Christian riots; Kaduna Polytechnic Muslim-Christian skirmishes (1981); and the cross vs the cresent conflict at the University of Ibadan (1981 – 1985). Other early ethno-religious conflicts include the Bulumkutu Christian-Muslim riots (1982); Usman Danfodio University Sokoto (1982); and the Muslim-Christian clash during a Christian procession at Easter in Ilorin, Kwara State (1986). Against this background, North- Eastern Nigeria gained ascendancy in the period immediately after the return of Nigeria to democratic governance in 1999. The ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria also have some connection with a number of political religious developments at the international scene. According to Albert (2005), religious crises in Nigeria could be traced to the developments in the Middle East. In this regard, he pointed out that religious issues became particularly phenomenal since the late 1980s with the death of the cold war and replacement of communism (a global social and political ideology) with Islamism. With this new Islamic ideology, the Muslim worldwide, and particularly in the Middle East, were determined to recent the socio-economic impoverishment and psychological alienation that stem from failed modernization and excessive westernization in the past cold war world (Ayubi, 1991, Dekmejian 1995; Faksh, 1997). The contemporary increase in the incidence of terrorism around the world has also been linked to this new ideology of Islamism (Cordsman, 2003, Booth and Dunne, 2002). It should be understood that the problem created by the new Muslim ideology was not limited to the Middle East as the increasing feelings of relative deprivation and alienation around the world makes developing states with large Muslim populations susceptible to militant forms of Islamism in the Middle East. The deadly activities of the Boko Haram sect have led to several development challenges in the North-East states of Nigeria. Apart from escalating in insecurity, the level of poverty in the zone has heightened while hunger has equally risen due to incessant attacks on farmers by the group. Ethnic rivalry in the North-East between Kanuri, Jukun and over a hundred other minority tribes and Hausa-Fulani hegemony has created unease in the region over the years.

Analysis of North-East region Development Index
The North-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria comprises of six States – Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe – and is among the least developed regions in the country. Geographically, the North-East is the largest zone in the nation, covering about 279,203km^2 (nearly one-third of Nigeria's total area). It is situated within Latitudes 60 30'N to 140 00'N and Longitude 80 30'E to 150 00'E. In terms of the environment the zone is primarily divided between the semi-desert Sahelien savanna and the tropical West Sudanian savanna Eco regions. The region has a population of about 26 million, around 12% of the total population of the country. Maiduguri and Bauchi are the most populous cities in the North-East as well as the fifteenth and seventeenth most populous cities in Nigeria. Other large cities include (in order by population), Yola, Mubi, Gombe, Jimeta, Potiskum, Jalingo, Gashua and Bama.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics (2020) show that about 87.72% of the population of Taraba State live in poverty, 75.41% in Adamawa, 72.34% in Yobe, 62.31% in Gombe and 61.53% in Bauchi. The zone is filled with ethno-religious conflicts, among which is the dreaded Boko Haram sect and recently, its splinter group known as the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP). Activities of the groups have worsened insecurity situation and further threatened development of the zone, and it appears there is no end in sight. The Boko Haram is a combination of Hausa word, boko (book or Western education) and Arabic word Haram (forbidden or sin); meaning that Western education is sin or abomination. This was the belief of the sect (Jama at Ahl-sunnah li-l-Da-wah wa al Jihad, which in Arabic means "People committed to the propagation of the Prophets' Teachings and Jihad"). The sect, commonly referred to as Boko Haram aims at establishing an Islamic State that will operate differently from what obtains in Nigeria. This was due to its disenchantment with the Western form of government, which in their opinion has offered them nothing good but bad governance, corruption, poverty, injustice, and so on.

The sect has also resorted to burning of houses and markets, suicide bombing, kidnapping and killing of aid workers, preachers, travellers, school children and women, as well as rape. In April 2014, the group kidnapped about 276 female students from a secondary school in Chibok, Borno State, which led to international outcries and attempt by many western countries showing willingness to render some

technical and intelligence sharing assistance. In February, 2018 around 110 school girls were also abducted by the group from the Government Girls Science and Technical College, Dapchi in Yobe State. Late December, 2020 more than 300 school children were also snatched from a government boys' school, Government Science Secondary School, Kaukara, Katsina State, North west zone of the country of which the sect claimed responsibility. The claim however was refuted by the government, which noted that bandits were behind the kidnap. According to UNICEF, between 2013 and 2018 more than 1,000 children were kidnapped by the sect in North-East alone. The major cause of the conflicts in the North-East zone is the religious dimension, which has to do with extremism, hard beliefs and ideologies held and taught by some religious leaders.

Socio-Economic Implication of Ethno-religious conflicts in the North East.
A 2018 multi-sector needs Assessment found that fewer than half of all children aged 5 – 15 were attending school and less than 20 percent of those aged 15 – 19 were attending. In 2019, over 60 percent of schools were closed in Borno, and schools across like three states had experienced disruptions and / or refused to enrol new students. In at least half of IDP camps and host communities, it is reported that fewer than half of all children are attending school. A UNDP report states that 2.9 million children are without access to education due to the destruction and damage to school infrastructure as a result of the conflict. The Education in Emergencies Working Group Nigeria (EiEWGN) reports that 2.2million girls, boys, and adolescents are reported to be without access to basic quality education and vocational training.

Many studies and reports attest to a sharp reduction in agricultural production as a result of the conflict. A few estimates suggest that production has fallen by as much as 80 percent for certain crops (Adelaja and George, 2019).

Effect of Ethno-Religious Conflicts on Social Change in North-East Nigeria
The deadly activities of the Boko Haram sect have led to several developmental challenges in the North-East region of Nigeria. Apart from escalating insecurity, the level of poverty in the zone has heightened while hunger has equally risen due to incessant attacks on farmers by the group. Besides, activities of the sect have created humanitarian crises leading to shortage of water, food and healthcare services as well as inadequate shelter with the emergence of a large number of internally displaced persons (IDP) across the Lake Chad region, which the United Nations has estimated at far above two million (2,000,000) with well above seven million (7,000,000) people depending solely on humanitarian assistance to survive.

Unemployment has surged in this part of the country. Similarly, traders, small scale enterprise owners as well as farmers find it difficult to operate for fear of being killed by members of this dreaded sect. Illiteracy has gone up as well in addition to high number of out of school children. In response, however, the Federal Government has gone ahead to establish the North-East Development Commission charged with the responsibility to urgently look into the areas that call for remediation or to address. Security has also been beefed up and public institutions like schools and health facilities have been given a boost, while the infrastructure deficit is now being looked into by all tiers of government through the intervention agencies. The North–East Development Commission was created in 2017 by Act No.7 of the National Assembly. The responsibility of the commission includes: to resettle, rehabilitate, reintegrate and reconstruct roads, houses, and business premises of the victims of terrorism and insurgency, and to tackle poverty, literacy, ecological problems and any other related environmental challenges in the North-East States and for related matters. Furthermore, international donors set up prevention and stabilization strategies to address the problems, which according to Brechenmacher (2019) can be categorized into "programs aimed at strengthening local conflict prevention and mitigation systems, programs aimed at restoring local government and basic services, and programs aimed at fostering social cohesion and ensuring the integration of former combatants".

Demographic, technological, cultural, political, economic and education have been the main drivers of social change in North-East region, like every other region of Nigeria. In a recent survey of conflicts and violence in Nigeria by region, Abdul Azad et al (2019), recorded that the cause of most recent

conflict event that affected a household member, by zone, Nigeria (2010 – 2017) shows that North – East main problem was Terrorism that stood at 73% conflict levels peaked in 2014 in North-East Nigeria, but remained relatively high through 2017. From 2010 to 2017, 49% of households in the North-East experienced at least one event of conflict or violence against a household member. More than two-thirds of conflict events in North-East Nigeria were caused by Boko Haram.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The North Eastern region of Nigeria has witnessed tremendous conflicts in recent times as a result of terrorism arising from the activities of some perceived Islamic fundamentalists. The region has witnessed sectarian violence and ethno-religious conflicts spanning decades. The zone is filled with ethno-religious conflicts, among which are the dreaded Boko Haram sect and recently, its splinter group known as the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP). Ethno- religious conflicts have virtually crippled the economy and education in the region, a situation that has forced a new social order. The area is also plagued by poverty and presently the war against terrorism and insecurity generally. Therefore, the Federal Government created the North-East Development Commission charged with the responsibility to urgently look into the areas that call for remediation. Security has also been beefed up and the infrastructural deficits are being addressed through the intervention agencies, including international agencies.

The paper therefore recommends that:

1) The federal government should as a matter of urgency address the genuine complaints of the various ethnic nationalities holistically by convening a national conference.
2) Agriculture and Industrial development should be given a boost by all tiers of governments and donor Agencies to create employment for the unemployed youths.
3) More effort should be made to improve the security in the area so as to allow out-of-school children, now in IDP camps, go back to school.

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LAND GRABBING AND COMMUNAL CLASHES IN IKWERRE LAND

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Abstract
This paper examines land grabbing as the cause of communal clashes in Ikwerre land.The objectives is to find out the causes of land grabbing, the relationship between land grabbing and communal conflicts, and the attendant consequences and costs of communal clashes due to land grabbing on the overall development of Ikwerre land. Conflict Theory served as the theoretical framework since the study is focused on critically examining the nature of conflicts which can help us better under communal clashes in Ikwerre land. Primary and secondary sources of data were used for the study; with the main instrument for data collection being a questionnaire. Findings from the study revealed that there is the prevalence of land grabbing in Ikwerre land; land grabbing causes communal conflicts in Ikwerre land; and the consequences and costs of communal clashes have negative effects on the development of the area. Consequently, the study recommended, among other things, finding out the major causes of land grabbing and finding solutions to them to avoid their resulting in communal clashes; curtailing communal clashes by ensuring that there is a good judicial system for proper land cases adjudication; ensuring that those that are duly adjudged to have unjustly suffered from land grabbing and resultant communal clashes should be adequately compensated and culprits punished to deter such actions subsequently.

Keywords: Land Grabbing, Communal Clashes, Communal Conflicts, Development, Conflict Theory, Land Cases Adjudication

Introduction
Land is an essential natural resource, both for the survival and prosperity of humanity, and for the maintenance of all terrestrial ecosystems (Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), 1999). Land is not just a resource to be exploited but a crucial vehicle for achievement of improved socio-economic, biological, and physical environments (FAO, 1999). Land is used for agriculture, settlements, forestry as well as natural reserve conservation. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 1999) summarised the basic functions of land in supporting human and other terrestrial ecosystems as a store of wealth for individuals, groups, or a community; production of food, fibre, fuel or other biotic materials for human use and as biological habitats for plants, animals and micro-organisms. Others include co-determinant in the global energy balance and the global hydrological cycle, which provides both a source and a sink for greenhouse gases; regulating the storage and flow of surface water and groundwater.

Land provides the physical space for settlements, industry and recreation. Land enables or hampers the movement of animals, plants and people between one area and another (FAO, 1999). Despite the multifarious functions and uses of land, European Environmental Agency (EEA) (2013) emphasized that it is a finite resource: how it is used constitutes one of the principal reasons for environmental change, with significant impacts on quality of life and ecosystems, as well as on the management of infrastructure. According to (FAO, 1999; and Godfray, Beddington, Crute, Haddad, Lawrence & Muir, 2010), population growth, dietary changes and increasing use of crop-based biofuel are placing greater pressure on food production and land resources.

FAO (1999) advanced that the population of the world would be increasing at an estimate of 97 million per year until the end of the century, and 90 million per year until AD 2025. Land is becoming scarcer as a resource, thus stimulating conflicts. According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), environmental degradation reduces agricultural land by five to 10 million hectares annually (IFAD, 2011). Also, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 2015) reported that land degradation has been exacerbated due to the non-existence of land use planning, or of its orderly execution, or the existence of financial or legal incentives prompting wrong land use decisions,

or one-sided central planning leading to over-utilisation of the land resources. Also, the demand for large land area for commercial agriculture prompted by food insecurity and the craving to possess a residential building by every individual in Nigeria instigates land grabbing clashes.

Land issues readily lend themselves to conflict. The relative significance of land to communities as economic assets, and source of livelihoods as well as its linkage to the identity, history and culture of communities makes it a central object of conflict (The United Nations Interagency Framework Team for Preventive Action, 2012). Several communities are struggling with conflicts over agricultural land use, and other natural resource issues. Land use conflict can occur when there is disagreement or dispute as to the use of land and/or feelings that a person's rights or well-being or the rights of the environment are being threatened by an action or undertaking of another or the inaction of another (Quadros, 1991). According to (Alawode, 2013) conflicts over agricultural lands increased from 21.1% in 1990s to 72.9% in 2000 and 80.6% in 2010. Land grabbing often leads to land conflicts in many nations.

Land grabbing that often leads to communal clashes often have extensive negative effects on economic, social, spatial and ecological development especially in developing countries and countries in transition, where land market institutions are weak, opportunities for economic gain by illegal action are widespread and many poor people lack access to land (Wehrmann, 2008). Land conflicts can have disastrous effects on individuals as well as on groups. The Land Use Decree, which was later called Land Use Act of 1978, vested all lands in all the states in the hands of the governor of each state. Lands exempted were those designated for the Federal Government agencies and projects. The Land Use Act of 1978 remains the most powerful law on land use and administration in Nigeria. Even though the law was designed to put an end to land issues, however, land related issues and cases continually dominate the law courts in Nigeria.

The issue of land grabbing has inspired lots of communal clashes in Ikwerre land and Rivers State at large. This reality is highly affecting development in Ikwerre land as many cases are either with the police or in courts for adjudication. The time and resources wasted in such cases should ideally have been employed in bringing about development in the area of study. This reality inspires such pertinent research questions as:
1) What are the causes of land grabbing in Ikwerre land?
2) To what extent has land grabbing caused communal clashes in Ikwerre land?
3) What are the attendant consequences and costs of the communal clashes caused by land grabbing on the development of Ikwerre land?

It is on the strength of the foregoing research questions that this paper wants to explore how to find out the causes of land grabbing in Ikwerre land; the relationship between land grabbing and communal conflicts in Ikwerre land; and the attendant consequences and costs of communal clashes due to land grabbing on the overall development of Ikwerre land.

Theoretical Framework
The theoretical framework to be used in this work is the Conflict Theory because this research area is focused on conflict land grabbing activities that have increased the spate of communal clashes in Ikwerre land. This theory was officially named and incidentally the chief exponent of this theory was Donald Campbell, but has been articulated by others since the middle of the 20th century (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Campbell, 1965).

Conflict Theory is a social-psychological model of inter-group conflict (Sedanius & Pratto, 1999). The theory explains that inter-group hostility arises as a result of conflicting goals and competition over limited resources (Jackson, 1993). Groups may be in competition for a real or perceived scarcity of resources such as money, political power, land, military protection, or social status. Feelings of resentment arise because groups see the competition over resources as having a zero-sum fate, in which only one group is the winner and the other, loses (Baumeister & Vohs,2007).

The length and severity of the conflict is determined by the perceived value and shortage of a given resource. According to the Conflict Theory, positive relations can be restored only if super-ordinate goals, or goals that can only be achieved through the combined efforts of both groups, are in place (Jackson, 1993). Tajfel & Turner (1979) point out that in addition to negative attitudes toward the out-group, threat from an out-group enhances intra-group cooperation, leading to heightened in-group identification. The theory was in part a reaction to the existing assumptions about inter-group conflict made based on intra-group or intra-individual characteristics.

Conflict Theory offers an explanation for feelings of prejudice and discrimination toward other groups because people tend to dislike members of out-groups seen as competing with their own group for needed resources (Whitley & Kite 2010). Using this approach to relate to the topic under study, it enables us to realize that land grabbing causes plenty of communal clashes in lkwerre land. This is often between communities that sometimes resolve to fight it out or go through the processes of arbitration to decide the original owners of the land. The communal clashes that take place in Ikwerre land due to land grabbing are mainly due to the importance of land that has been appreciating over the years as a result of the high level of development in this area or the pursuit of some interests that have led to so many communal clashes. It also allows us the opportunity to concretely analyze the causes, nature, dimension, and effects of community clashes that emanate from land grabbing on the economy of Ikwerre land and by extension that of the entire Rivers State. These considerations informed the use of this theory in this study.

Methodology
Research methodology is a systematic way to solve a problem. It is a science of studying how research is to be carried out. Essentially, the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena are called research methodology. It is also defined as the study of methods by which knowledge is gained. Its aim is to give the work plan of research (Rajasekar, Philominathan & Chinnathambi, 2011). Consequently, the survey research method is used for this study. This method preferred because "it is very predictive of the future behaviour of people" (Aaron, 2004). The sources of data used for this research were both primary and secondary. In gathering and collating the data, a two-dimensional approach was adopted. The primary source of data was the study questionnaire and the secondary sources were textbooks, magazines, journals, newspapers, periodicals, and the Internet.

The research was carried out in all the four Ikwerre speaking local government areas in Rivers State, which are Port Harcourt, Obio/Akpor, Ikwerre and Emohua LGAs. Two communities each were selected from four LGAs that make up Ikwerre land. The communities are: Rumuolumeni and Rumuepirikom in Obio/Akpor LGA; Ibaa and Ogbakiri in Emohua LGA; Isiokpo and Elele in Ikwerre LGA; and Ogbumnabali and Abuloma communities in Port Harcourt City LGA. These communities were selected based on the fact that there are high incidences of land grabbing taking place in them.

Simple random sampling was used to select twenty (20) respondents from each of the selected communities to get a total of one hundred and sixty (160) respondents. The main instrument of data collection was a structured questionnaire designed to elicit data from the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two section, with Section A seeking for responses on the socio-demographic responses of the respondents; and Section B being divided into three parts. Part 1 seeks to unmask the land grabbers, their strategies, and the intended use of the grabbed land. Part 2 explores the causes of communal clashes among communities in Ikwerre land. Part 3 deals with types of communal clashes in Ikwerre land.

Responses in items in Section B, part 2 md 3 were measured using a 4-point Likert-type rating scale of agreement, where SA (Strongly Agree) =4; A (Agree) = 3; D (Disagree) = 2; and SD (Strongly Disagree)=1. The values of the scale (4, 3,2, and 1) were summed up to obtain 10. The mean value of the sum gave 2.50, which became the benchmark for accepting any item as causes of communal clashes, land grabbing and causes and strategies for conflict resolution. Data collected were analysed using

frequency, percentage and mean. The participants in the study include rural dwellers, educated farmers, business men and women, students. civil servants, educated traditional rulers, community elders and the general public, and all of whom were drawn from the four LGAs in Ikwerre land.

The questionnaires were collected immediately after completion in most cases. The volunteers had to personally go round the chosen population to administer the questionnaire and retrieve them for analysis in this study. The administration of the instrument was based on the random sampling technique that gives every member of the population the equal opportunity of being selected. The secondary sources of data in this study includes materials found in textbooks, journals, government publications, magazines, newspapers, past projects and thesis, and materials culled from the Internet.

Conceptual Framework
Concept of Land Grabbing
Several scholars have defined and explained the concept of land grabbing in different ways. However, it is proper to say that land grabbing is the contentious issue of large-scale land acquisitions: the buying or leasing of large pieces of land by domestic and transnational companies, governments, and individuals (Borras, Hall, Scoones, White & Wolford,20ll).

While used broadly throughout history, land grabbing as used in the 21st century primarily refers to large-scale land acquisitions following the 2007-2008 world food price crisis (Bbrras, Hall, Scoones, White &Wolford, 2011). The term "land grabbing" is defined as very large-scale land acquisitions, either buying or leasing (Brilmayer & Moon, 2014). The size of the land deal is multiples of 1,000 square kilometres (390 sq mi) or 100,000 hectares (250,000 acres) and thus much larger than in the past (The Economist 23 May,2009). The term is itself controversial. In 2011, Borras, Hall & others wrote that "the phrase 'global land grab' has become a catch-all to describe and analyze the current trend towards large scale (trans)national commercial land transactions" (Borras, Hall, Scoones, White & Wolford, 2011). Ruth Hall wrote elsewhere that the "term 'land grabbing', while effective as activist terminology, obscures vast differences in the legality, structure, and outcomes of commercial land deals and deflects attention from the roles of domestic elites and governments as partners, intermediaries, and beneficiaries" (Hall, 2011).

There have been instances that governments have been involved in the act of land grabbing. Land grabbing and high-risk large scale land investments exploit the livelihood source of local resource users. One common trend among governments promoting land grabs has been the theme 'development promotion' and touting the benefits of agricultural development, job creation, increased cash crop and livestock production, and infrastructure provision as drivers towards economic development and eventual modernization (Emenyonu, Nwosu, Eririogu, Osuji, Ejike & Clifford, 2017).

Land grabbing is not a phenomenon peculiar to Nigeria. It takes place in virtually all parts of the world. European Union (2019) makes a list of land grabbing in hectares of involved EU countries in non-EU countries according to EU Land Matrix Data of 2016.1. United Kingdom (1, 972, 010); 2. France (629, 953); 3. Italy (615, 674); 4. Finland (566, 559); 5. Portugal (503,953);6. Netherlands (414, 974);7. Germany (309,566); 8. Belgium (251,808); 9. Luxembourg (157,91a); 10. Spain (136, 504); 11. Romania (130, 000); 12. Sweden (77,329); 13. Denmark (31, 460):14. Austria (21,000); and 15. Estonia (18,800) (Emenyonu, Nwosu, Eririogu, Osuji, Ejike & Clifford, 2017).

Demand for land for agricultural purposes is increasing globally implying a limitation in land resources, and necessitating a yearning for decisions leading to the most beneficial use of limited land resources (Abah, 2013). This increases the risk of land grabbing, a process whereby local communities are displaced from their land and lose their ability to grow food and their livelihoods (CEED/ERA/FOEN/GRAIN/Global Justice Now, 2015). Land grabbing involves the (coercive) transfer of land ownership or access (enclosure) from traditional or customary uses (usually small-holder agriculture or forest lands) to corporate agriculture, special economic zones (SEZ), housing developments or nature conservation (Vicol, 2015). Land grabbing is popularly understood as change in both ownership and use of land, where local land uses (subsistence crop production, domestic cash

crops, grazing, forests, etc) are replaced with export food or fuel crops (Hall, 2011). It involves purchase or lease of vast tracts of land by wealthier, food-insecure nations and private investors from mostly poor, developing countries in order to produce crops for export (Daniel & Mittal, 2009).

Land grabbing is the contentious issue of large-scale land acquisitions: buying or leasing of large pieces of land in developing countries, by domestic and transnational companies, governments, and individuals. One common trend among governments promoting land grabs has been the theme 'development promotion'. Target governments often tout the benefits of agricultural development,' job creation, increased cash crop and livestock production, and infrastructure provision as drivers towards economic development and eventual modernisation. Many of the governments hinge their actions as being ready and viable tools for fast tracking agro-industrial development in their countries. The current land grab is characterised by unprecedented pressures on land tenure systems. Those most at risk of losing access to land are small-scale producers who do not have formal tenure over the land that they use, as well as women, indigenous people, pastoralists, and fisher-folks (International Land Coalition, 2008).

The global estimate of foreign interest in land acquisition has been between 15 to 20 million hectares (IFPRI, 2009). The estimate of the scale, based on evidence presented in April 2011 at an international conference convened by the Land Deal Politics Initiative, estimated the area of land deals at 80 million ha; and of these deals, the median size is 40,000ha, with one quarter over 200,000 ha and one-quarter under 10,000 ha; 37% of projects deal with food crops, 21% with cash crops, 21% with bio-fuels (Borras et a1.,2011). In the past decades, land acquisition abroad has been driven by the profit-making motives of the private sector in developed countries and has often focused on perennial tropical cash crops rather than basic staples.

Land grabbing has provoked opposition in some target countries and regions of the world. There are rampant cases of land grabbing in Ikwerre land, Eleme and Ogoni land in Rivers State. Owerri Municipal and Owerri West LGAs have protested and continued to protest against the state government's undue grabbing of their land. Philippines blocked a land contract with China because of serious concerns about its terms and legal validity, as well as about its impact on local food security. Mozambicans have resisted the settlement of thousands of Chinese agricultural workers on leased lands- a situation that would limit the involvement of local labour in the new agricultural investments. A similar scenario played out in Imo and Kwara States of Nigeria (IFPRI,2009).

The conditions of contemporary land grabbing favour corporate accumulation via dispossession of poor farmers' land, threatening rural livelihoods and reproducing social and economic differentiation and inequality (White et al., 2012). According to Liversage (2015), focusing on the potential threats to the land rights and livelihoods of smallholder farmers, pastoralists, indigenous communities and other vulnerable groups is important, as some large scale acquisitions have not met expectations and, instead, have had a negative impact, especially on the livelihood of the dispossessed land owners. White et al (2012) argue that it is important to maintain focus on the implications of land deals that involve acquisition (land access), rather than other forms of control over land use, as acquisition is essentially permanent, expels local land users and removes future land rights for local farmers. With the promise of job opportunities, schools and health centres by these land grabbers, farmers give out the rights to use their land for a period up to 99 years.

People need five vital resources in order to achieve a sustainable livelihood. These are human, natural, physical, financial and social capital. The natural capital includes land, water, forest and pastures (De Haan, 2009). There is insufficient information on the impacts of land grabbing on the livelihoods of rural communities, either negative or positive (Andrianirina-Ratsialonana & Teyssier, 2010). Over 90 percent of Nigerians live in rural areas and rely on agriculture for survival. Consequently, dispossessing this greater percentage of the population of their major source of livelihood, which is land, will make land, unsuitable for farming and in turn intensify poverty among these marginalised farmers. Very few studies exist on land grabbing in Nigeria, the most recent being that of Osabuohein (2012), but none of such has the communal clashes impact as a core focus, which makes this present study a relevant

instrument of keeping abreast with the relationship between land grabbing and communal clashes in Ikwerre land.

Following series of land grabbing that have led to severe community crisis and deaths, the Rumuokurusi community in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State has called on the state government to criminalise land grabbling and treat anyone involve as a kidnapper (Godwin, 2019). The community head who made the call lamented that the land thieves use guns to chase the rightful owners out of their land. Chairman of Rumuokurusi Town Council, Kingsley Ejekwu, however called on Governor Nyesom Wike to wade into the situation to ensure that activities of land grabbers are put to stop to avoid looming crises. He said: "We are calling on the governor to come to our aid. The boys are fast entering our ancestral homes. We do not want to be evicted from our homes and we do not want to carry guns and face them because if we do, that part of the state will become ungovernable" (Godwin. 2019).

Also speaking, the paramount ruler of Omuwokerebe in the community, Eze Standford Achor, added that the land grabbers use assorted rifles to chase owners of the area. He noted that suspects from a neighbouring community, in Igbo Etche. Etche Local Area had encroached their ancestral homes. adding that they (grabbers) have destroyed many properties to achieve their motives. Achor regretted that all efforts made to scare away the persons involved had proven abortive, adding that they (land grabbers) have also flouted court order, which barred people from entering the said area of land. He said, "As it stands, land grabbers have finished our land. They bulldoze and sell the land every day. This thing started since 2A16. There was a time they stopped, but now they have started again. They have sold over 200 hectares of land. There is order of court that bars people of Igbo Etche and Rumuokurusi from entering the land, but when you go there you will see boys with guns selling the same land" (Godwin, 2019).

Iheamnachor (2017) explains that four communities in Rivers State have rang alarm bells over land grabbers that have swooped on their communities, allegedly killing villagers and raping women. The communities include Rumuokwurusi and Atali in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area; Ikwere-Ngwo in Etche Local Government Area; Umusele in Igwuruta, Ikwerre Local Government Area. The affected communities, on the platform of Coalition of Communities Against, Rape Murder and Land-Grabbing staged a protest against the conduct of the land grabbers, who according to them, were threatening the peace, security and farming activities in their areas. They had sent an SOS to Governor Nyesom Wike and the Inspector General of Police, Ibrahim Idris to rescue them from purported land grabbers, who they claim, were using security agents to dispossess them of their inheritance. 'the communities called for prompt intervention of the authorities to avert a breakdown in law and order.

His Royal Highness, Eze Stanford Achor. Eze Wokorobe III, Rumuokerebe community in Rumuokwurusi, explained that some individuals, who do not own landed property in the area were laying claims of ownership to land. The traditional ruler said: "SARS men have taken over the place supporting them to take our land. They are killing people there. They will kill people and the police will not arrest them. The police have given the men power to subdue the real owners of the land. We are not happy about the development" (Iheamnachor, 2017).

Speaking during a peaceful demonstration, Chief Harrison Nwebilor, a leader in Omusele family in Omuenyi, Igwuruta, stated that the land grabbers have destroyed their crops and economic trees and sold off the portions of land. Nwebilor said: "Our land has been taken over by people who claim to be land grabbers. They brought caterpillars and bulldozed into our land destroy all our economic crops, cassava, cucumber, corn, etc. Another community leader, Chief Mrs. Gloria Wali, noted that the women were being raped and threatened by the cult boys and security agents sponsored by the land grabbers when they go to farms. Wali also expressed concern that the development has slowed down farming activities in the areas, adding that land grabbing is the major challenge facing agricultural activities in the area and consequently clashes (Iheamnachor,2017).

One of the persons named by villagers denied the allegation of land-grabbing, saying that the land in question belonged to his community and he had no land issue with anybody. Reacting, however, the

then Public Relations Officer of the Rivers State Police Command, Mr. Nnamdi Omoni, said the Police cannot be involved in land-grabbing and would not aid people to acquire landed property. He advised them to channel their complaints to the Police Command for proper investigation.

Amobi (2022) wrote that residents of three communities in Rivers State barricaded the Elele Army Barracks in protest against an alleged forceful acquisition of landed property belonging to them. The protesters claimed the land grabbed by the Army spanned hundreds of hectares and that the development had affected farming activities. The communities, Elele Alimini, Obelle in Emohua Local Government Area and Elele in Ikwerre LGA, alleged that the military intimidated and used force to take hectares of land meant for agricultural purposes. Consequently, they (protesters) called on President Muhammadu Buhari, the Senate and the House of Representatives to intervene and compel the Army to vacate their land.

Addressing newsmen, the leader of the protest and the Chairman, Council of Chiefs of Elele Alimini, Chief Chibuike Dike, said the people of the areas were worried about the activities of the military. Dike said, "The problem is that the army barracks in our land have abandoned our boundary and encroached on our land. They are not meant to take our land by force. If they need land, they should negotiate with the people. They have taken over 500 hectares of land. That place is our farmland. We want them to leave our land" (Amobi,2022). He further added that what they have done was affecting the farming activities of their people and they do not have any other place to do their farm work. He stressed that they should take the area they gave to them and leave the other side. The leader of the protesters, however, said that the host communities would not rest in their agitation until justice was done on the matter (Amobi, 2022).

Clement (2022) points out that the operatives of the Rivers State Police Command have arrested some suspected policemen who pretend to be working for senior officers to aide suspected land grabbers who harass, intimidate and extort property owners in an estate in Rumuahorlu Community in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of the state. Operatives of the different tactical units of the command with over 20 trucks, acting on the orders of the Commissioner of Police, Friday Eboka, stormed Cedar Wood Estate, on Wednesday and raided a building reported to be the camp of the police personnel on the illegal operation. Four police officers and their civilian driver were arrested and a patrol van without a plate number belonging to them was impounded. However, some police personnel and civilians escaped. Some landlords of the estate said their decision to petition the Inspector-General of Police and the Rivers State Commissioner of Police over the matter was due to the incessant "invasion" of their properties, "harassment" intimidation and extortion" from the security personnel. They also accused the officer of reselling their land, after "forcefully grabbing" it from them (Clement, 2022).

Odita (2019) narrates that the Inspector General of Police (lGP), Muhammed Adamu and the governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike have been urged to stop the activities of organized land grabbers laying siege on the state. The call came by a group of investors and indigenous people who are not happy over the current activities of the land speculators in the state, especially Igbo-Etche axis, a situation that may seriously alienate the whole community. According to an aggrieved resident, Udofia Abang, some persons identified as land grabbers have been going about seizing genuinely purchased property from owners using questionable injunctions from a particular customary court. He said not less than six big estates and almost all the small estates bought by non-indigenous investors along lgbo-Etche axis in Rivers have fallen victims and are been over-ran by the group (Odita, 2019). While lamenting the situation, Abang said the land grabbers are also using the police and judiciary to perpetuate their activities, which he referred to as xenophobic fixation on land grabbing. He said: "It is typical of this group to seek and collect rogue injunctions from the customary court without the knowledge of owners of the properties and thereafter use SARS operatives to protect them while they overrun peoples' land with maximum intimidation" (Odita, 2019). He further added that, "The land grabbers, after intimidating the investors, would quickly mobilise equipment and bulldoze through people's property with wanton and malicious destruction on their built up structures. This is why we are calling on the police boss, Rivers State governor, traditional rulers and the state's Commissioner of Police to step in

urgently to stop the gross abuse of people's investment and stand up against this evil raging to destroy the good image of the state" (Odita, 2019).

Super User News (2021) explains that the Chiefs, Elders and people of Obumuton-Chiri Kingdom in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State say they are not happy with utterances purportedly made by the Executive Governor of the state, Chief (Barr) Nyesom Ezenwo Wike in which he referred to the Okrika Nation as land grabbers. The angry Okrikans who made their feelings known through a statement signed by the Chairman, Obumuton-Chiri Progressive Movement, Elder Tonye James Fuayefika on Monday, said Governor Wike's alleged incessant contemptuous remarks against Okrikans were, according to him, made to smear Okrika nation over ownership title of Port Harcourt lands.

Elder Fuayefika recalled that during the commissioning of the Opobo/Nkoro Road, Governor Wike referred to Chief (Dr.) Abiye Sekibo and his people as ''Land Grabbers''. Elder Fuayefika had said that, "Referring to a highly distinguished Okrika son and Chief, Dr. Abiye Sekibo, Head and Chief of Archin War Canoe House, former Secretary to Rivers State Government and Minister for Transport and his people as Land Grabbers in Port Harcourt is insulting, untrue, abusive and expected of a Governor to make such a public pronouncement of a people even under the disguise of a joke, politicking or whatsoever, he fumed. He had added, ''For the umpteenth time, Okrikans are been constrained to correct Governor Wike's misinformation deliberately in the public over the status of Port Harcourt in defiance of subsisting historical facts leading to the acquisition of Port Harcourt City lands by the Colonial masters in the year, 1913", he said. Warning that Okrikans have been civil enough to reproach the governor and his clansmen from unfair actions likely to cause discord between the Ikwerre and the Okrikans in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area, Fuayefika said Governor Wike's tenure as Governor has in his words, "made Okrikans to regret playing very major role leading to his emergence as the Rivers State Chief Executive."

Reeling out other instances where the governor allegedly made disparaging remarks against Dr. Abiye Sekibo, Elder Fuayefika said they have become, according to him, insults too many. Also, while flagging off the Trans-Kalabari Road, he advised the people of Kalabari kingdom to cooperate with the contractors handling the project and not to behave like Dr. Abiye Sekibo and his people. And now in commissioning the Opobo/Nkoro Road, Governor Wike repeated same contemptuous remarks by saying that "Dr. Abiye Sekibo should leave Austin Opara and his people alone in Port Harcourt and face the new Okrika Town under construction because Okrikans like grabbing lands", which are remarks Elder Fuayefika sees as insulting and prone to cause communal clashes.

The Okrika reiterated that it is a well-established fact that the city of Port Harcourt is owned by the Diobu-Ikwerre and their Okrika counterparts as was, according to him, dictated in the 1913 & 1928 Hargrove Agreements, urging anyone who had contrary views to approach the courts to prove his or her case. "We make bold to state that there is no time Okrika people in the three local government areas of Port Harcourt City, Ogu/Bolo and Okrika have been involved in land grabbing. It has to be emphasised that any area claimed or occupied by the Okrikans is not only legitimate but their birthright", he emphasized, while advising Governor Wike to 'keep his limits by being decorous in his utterances at public functions as expected of a true gentleman (Super User News, 2021). The foregoing situation is common in many parts of Ikwerre land, which makes this study a timely response for appropriate solutions to be proffered to this awkward phenomenon.

Concept of Communal Clash
A communal clash is considered by Azuonwu (2002) as a conflict that occurs between two or more communities. Oboh and Hyande (2006) described a communal clash as involving two or more communities engaging themselves in disagreement or act of violence over issues such as claims for land ownership, religious and political difference leading to loss of lives and destruction of properties. Communal clashes arise when two distinct groups in a community disagree over jointly shared resources due to the possibility of inequitable distribution or the problem of domination by a group. The

development of this kind of conflict in any society has attachment to commonly shared or used resources or elements which can be tangible or intangible (Dzurgba, 2006).

The identity of communal clashes is rather fluid in nature. This is because it occurs in diverse forms, which can sometimes be misleading to identify. Albert (2001) posits that this form of conflict "often manifests in terms of host-stranger face-offs in which a section of the community tags itself as the host (owners of the community) and some other groups as strangers(that is, those who migrated into the community at a date later than the coming of the "owners" of the community). Apart from this, communal clashes can also be imbued in religious issues, land, politics, resources, local government, chieftaincy issues, etc.

The finding of Higazi (2011) revealed that population is the main determinant of communal land clash in Obubra Local Government Area of Cross River State. Equally,in Cross River State, the Biakpan and Etono II communal groups clashed over land. In Ebonyi State, communal clashes exist between Ezza/Ezillo groups. In Akwa lbom State, Eyo Abasi and Idua have been experiencing communal clashes over oil rich parcel of land located at the boundary of their localities. Other examples of communal clashes are the Yoruba-Hausa community in Shagamu with respect to the Oro traditional festival; Ogoni-Andoni, Hausa-Yoruba clashes in IdiAraba in Lagos State; the Eleme-Okrika which is centred on the creation of state and local government, unclear boundaries and clash over ownership of oil fields, farmlands and waterways; Itsekiri-Ijaw/Urhobo over the movement of LGA headquarters from Ijaw area to Itsekiri territory and land ownership/dispute. Others are the Aguleri-Umuleri in Anambra State over land problem; the Ife-Modakeke in Osun State over indigenes/settlers problem; the Ijaw-Ilaje conflict in Ondo over ownership of land reputed to be rich in oil reserve.

The pervasive existence of communal clashes in every nook and cranny of the Nigerian society has heightened the state of insecurity. Communal clashes have adopted the posture of intractability and in most cases, highly violent in nature in Nigeria. In the North, communal clashes are reoccurring decimal to the extent that their occurrences have imposed insecurity in communities where they exist. Examples of communal clashes abound in Northern Nigeria. In Tiv area of Benue State in various local government areas between 1988 and 2004, 29 communal clashes were recorded by the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affair as having occurred in the state. Within the periods, some of the conflicts reoccurred two to three times. The Tiv-Jukun in Wukari which has to do with the case of indigene/settler; the Chamba-Kuteb Chieftaincy tussles over selection process; the Basa-Egbura in Nassarawa; the Hausa/Fulani Sawaya in Bauchi; Fulani-Irigwe and Yelwa-Shendam, both in Plateau State.

Communal clashes also exist in Nasarawa State. For instance. in Assakio, Obi and Odobu communities in Lafia Local Government Area, the clashes of communal war between these groups are ongoing in the state. Tiv farmers and nomadic Fulani in Benue and Nasarawa States and the Tiv in Guma and Gwer West are also embroiled in a conflict. Even in Abuja, communal clashes between Fulani pastoralists and Gwari farmers in Gwako village in Gwagwalada Area Council are ravaging the area. Other states in the country are not immune from the experiences of communal clashes. The manifestations of communal clashes follow patterns that make them difficult to be identified in the North. This is because they do not occur in pure form.

Various factors have been identified by scholars as responsible for communal clashes in the country. The causes vary from one area to another. Yecho (2006) indicated that the causes of communal clashes are not static but rather dynamic and varied in nature depending on the socio economic and geopolitical circumstances at the time. Onwudiwe (2004) listed social conditions as population explosion, economic migration, and the anti-poor policies of the government as triggers of communal friction.

Albert (2001) pinned down communal clashes to revolve around politics, politicians, and their pursuit of group advantage. This work identified indigene/settler problem, religious differences, ownership of land and its resources, goals and aspirations of people as some of the factors that can ignite communal clashes in the country. Hembe (2000) indicated that political struggle and colonization, while Lyam

(2000) mentioned loss of soil fertility, soil erosion, deforestation, bush burning and flooding as some of the causes of communal clashes". Yecho (2006) pointed out that the fundamental causes of communal clashes are poor economic conditions, high level of illiteracy, the quest for, and fear of domination by other groups, land disputes, market ownership, chieftaincy tussle and party politics.

Varvar (2000) indicated that increased demand for land for agriculture, unemployment, rural hunger, poverty impoverishment as communal clashes triggers. Deprivation, exploitation and domination of minority groups by major ethnic groups and leadership problem were highlighted by Angya & Doki (2006) as factors that can exert communal clashes. Equally, religious differences, competition for livelihood resources and traditional chieftaincy tussles were enumerated by Oboh & Hyande (2006) as potential communal clashes triggers in the country. Competitions for land and chieftaincy tussle are the major causes of communal clashes in the North. For instance, in Nasarawa, in 1993. Alago, Hausa and Tiv clashed over land and chieftaincy from 1995-2005, the Egburra and Bassa in Toto clashed over land, chieftaincy and politics. In 1989, 1990 and 1997, intra-communal clashes occurred in Ipav in Gboko based on land problem. In Taraba State, between the Chamba/Jukun and Kuteb over chieftaincy tussle since 1996 when it stated, it is still ongoing; in 2004 in Adamawa State between the Bachama and Hausa/Fulani over land ownership, politics and religious. On March 5, 2005, communal clash between Maruta (Jigawa) and Burmin (Bauchi) occurred over market relocation. On June 2003, Ekepedo and Ogori clashed over land ownership in Kogi/ Edo States. Best (2006) argued that in Benue Valley, the pressure on land from all directions heightens the proliferation of ethnic and communal clashes in the region, including the political ones, most of them arising from the land question.

Communal clashes have some consequences. The destructive tendencies of communal clashes are such that have largely affected the developmental prospects of the country. The consequences range from mere envy, suspicion, jealousy to large scale destruction of lives and property. The work of Ekeh (1999) on Aguleri-Umuleri communal clashes in Anambra State lucidly revealed that the two communities have for decades lived and farmed side by side but with mutual distrust and enmity. But in September 1995, when the conflict exploded, public property including schools, banks, post offices, town halls and even churches were razed to the ground, further, some 200 private houses were destroyed and countless number of people killed.

Oboh and Hyande (2006) averred that in the communal clashes in Oju LGA in Benue State, apart from the normal destruction of lives and property, trees and arable crops, livestock, houses, schools, markets and hospitals were destroyed in the process. They concluded that all these have overwhelming negative influence on food security thereby worsening the already existing food problems with its attendant problems of malnutrition, under nutrition and abject poverty. It is clear from the foregoing that communal clashes are highly destructive in nature.

Presentation of Data
Socio-Economic Characteristics of Dispossessed Communities in Ikwerre Land
Table 1 shows the socio-economic characteristics of dispossessed communities in the study. It showed that the mean age of the dispossessed communities was 54 years, majorly (52.5%) males, educated (36%), married (43%) with a mean household size of 5 persons. This is an indication that the affected land owners in the area are mostly married males, who are no more in their active age, but have the advantage of spending less in labour due to the available number of family labour. The mean household size is also an indication of more responsibilities for parents, which makes them to require more productive assets such as land that has a high economic value, and other sustainable livelihood means.

Land ownership the area of study is mostly customary mode of ownership. According to the customary land law, land is owned by males who also only inherit it; and those that are not likely to inherit land are expected to buy land elsewhere. Table 1 also showed that the dispossessed land owners inherited (58%) of their lands. This implies that the customary owners of land in the area got them from their parents. However, majority (55%) landowners were full-time farmers, which is an indication that food crop production is the major source of livelihood in the area.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
Age (Years)			54	10.784
Household Size				
Male	42	52.5		
Female	38	47.5		
Marital Status				
Married	43	86		
Single	4	8		
Widowed	3	6		
Educational Level				
Non-Formal Education	2	4		
Primary Education	16	32		
Secondary Education	14	28		
Tertiary Education	18	36		
Land Ownership				
Inheritance	29	58		
Purchase	14	28		
Rent	5	10		
Gift	2	4		
Sources of Income				
Farming	29	58		
Non-Farming	21	42		
Religious Affiliation				
Christianity	72	90. 0		
Islam	0	0.0		
Traditionalist	8	10.0		

Land Grabbing Strategy, Area of Land Acquired and Land Area to the Farmers

Table 2 shows the land grab strategy: land size acquired and land area available to the farmers in the area. It showed that 68% of the lands were grabbed by government through legal means (62%) through the Land Act of 1978. This Act vested right to allocate urban land under state and put land management and control at rural level under the local government council, and 38% had their lands grabbed illegally by private investors and other wealthy individuals.

Table 2: Land Grabbing Strategy, Area of Land Acquired and Land Area to the Farmers

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
Land Grabbers				
Government	34			
Foreign Investors	1			
Local Investors	8			
NGOs	1			
Individuals	6			
Land Grab Strategy				
Legal Means	31	62		
Illegal Means	13	26		
Proposed/Intended Use				
Building and Construction	37			
Other Establishments	13			
Agricultural Use	19			
Land Size				
Before Grabbing			1.8	1.738
Grabbed			1.9	1.642
Available			0.8	0.531

The results also show that 74% of the grabbed lands were converted to built-up lands and other construction on land. 260% of the lands were used for other non-agricultural establishments. This implies that most of the land grab in the study area is orchestrated by the state government for development purposes. It also implies that the grabbed lands in the study area are not being used for agricultural purposes but for non-agricultural ventures that have little or no benefit to the dispossessed land owners. This will have negative impacts on food production and farming as a sustainable livelihood means in the study areas in Rivers State.

Table 2 also shows that the mean land size owned by the farmers before land grabbing was 1.8 hectares; and the mean size grabbed was 1.9 hectares; and the mean land size available to farmers after land grabbing was 0.8 hectares. This implies that food production reduced drastically after land grab and has undermined the livelihood activities in the area, and if not well compensated for, sustainable livelihood cannot be secured since farming is a livelihood means in the study area.

Causes of Communal Clashes among Ikwerre Communities in the Study Area
Findings revealed that communal clashes in Ikwerre land were instigated by land-related issues. Results on the causes of clashes among Ikwerre communities in the study are presented in table 3. Result shows that communities wanting to expand their farming and construction activities are major causes of communal clashes in the area of study (mean =3.56). This finding is critical in an era when arable lands are becoming scarce due to other alternative land uses in the area. Thus farmers in an attempt to expand their farm holdings resort to encroachment, which often results in severe actions and clashes. Also, it is found that communities' disagreements over land boundary (mean =3.51) is a cause of communal clash in the area of study. Further result in table 3 indicates that communities compete for the control of limited land and fishing ground as a (mean =3.36) cause of conflict. This finding is validated in view of one of the principles of social processes, competition. This indicates that land is a limited factor for both individuals in the communities and is declining as population increases since most of the lands have been grabbed by government and foreign investors. Other causes include: communities disagreement over farmland ownership (mean=3.35), rise in population (3.22), struggle to possess larger farmland and water ways (mean:3.21). Land disputes between crop farmers and fishermen are also causes of communal clashes (mean=3.36) and the respondents agree that the destruction of farmland by neighbouring communities is also a cause of conflict (mean =2.70).

However, the remaining factors such as fighting for fishing rights and stealing of farm produce by area boys from neighbouring communities were not seen as causes of clashes among farmers in the area of study. It is worthy to note that all the factors analysed above are caused by land grabbing.

Table 3: Mean Distribution of Causes of Communal Clashes among Communities in Ikwerre Land

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	REMARKS
Expanding farming activities for more food and income	58(72.5)	14(17.5)	3(3.8)	5(6.3)	3.56	Accepted
Competition for the control of farmland and fishing ground	46(57.5)	20(25.0)	20(25.0)	11(13.8)	3.36	Accepted
Disagreement over government control of lands	55(68.8)	14(17.5)	8(10.0)	3(3.8)	3.51	Accepted
Struggle for chieftaincy stool	20(25.0)	29(36.3)	18(22.5)	13(16.3)	2.70	Accepted
Disagreement over government control of lands	18(22.5)	23(28.8)	25(31.3)	14(17.5)	2.56	Accepted
Disagreement over land ownership among communities	45(56.3)	22(27.5)	9(11.3)	4(5.0)	3.35	Accepted
Struggle between communities for power and access to financial benefit	15(18.8)	38(47.5)	17(21.3)	10(12.5)	2.73	Accepted
Land dispute between crop farmers	37(46.3)	25(31.3)	12(15.0)	6(7.5)	3.16	Accepted

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	REMARKS
Land disputes between crop farmers	22(27.5)	15(18.8)	23(28.8)	20(25.0)	2.49	Accepted
Demand for royalties by community youth	22(27.5)	15(18.8)	23(28.8)	20(25.0)	2.49	Accepted
Forceful encroachment of land by neighbouring communities	28(35.5)	26(32.5)	15(18.8)	11(13.8)	2.89	Accepted
Struggle to possess larger land by neighbouring communities	32(40.0)	35(43.8)	11(13.8)	2(2.5)	3.21	Accepted
Blocking of waterways for annual River festival	10(12.5)	22(27.8)	22(28.8)	25(31.3)	2.21	Rejected
Fighting for fishing right	4(5.0)	26(32.5)	28(35.0)	22(27.5)	2.15	Rejected
Stealing of farm produce by area boys from the neighbouring communities	14(17.5)	15(18.8)	28(35.0)	23.8)	2.25	Rejected

Types of Land Grabbing Induced Communal Clashes among Communities in Ikwerre Land
Entries in table 4 are results of the types of land grabbing induced communal clashes in Ikwerre land. It is revealed that struggle for limited land (mean =3.44) is a type of conflict common in the area. This form of conflict may persist between communities over time and may be attached to historical events between the communities involved. Also, the result shows that land grabbing through borrowed land (3.45) is a common type of communal clash in the study area. These may arise as a result of land borrowed to a neighbouring community, individuals or companies for a short period under oral agreement which the borrowed may refuse to return to the lender. Land grabbing by force and intimidation (mean= 3.45) is indicated by the respondents as a type of conflict in the study area. This is because humans by nature will naturally resist every form of intimidation and force on their legally inherited or acquired land.

The result further revealed that disagreement due to gradual encroachment is another cause of communal clashes (mean=3.08). Behavioural differences arise from individual differences.
Result in Table 4 also indicated that Quarrel between farmers and fishermen due to farmland and fishing ground (mean=3.28) as a form of conflict in the study area. This is because claims and counter claim over property rights remain pronounced in many communities. Clash due to border demarcating the land (mean =3.28) is found to be a form of conflict in the study area. The challenge of border demarcation has remained to peaceful co-existence in farming communities and between boundary communities in various states of the federation. This arises because most border demarcation exercises may be biased. Other types are disagreement over absence of regulation and delineated land (235) and disagreement between executive committee and members (2.43) were rejected.

Table 4. Mean Distribution of Types of Land Grabbing Induced Communal Clashes among Communities in Ikwerre Land

Items	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	REMARKS
Struggle for limited land	52(65.0)	14(17.5)	11(13.8)	3(3.8)	3.44	Accept
Grabbing through borrowed land	49(61.3)	22(27.5)	5(6.3)	4(5.0)	3.45	Accept
Land grabbing through gradual encroachment	46(57.5)	25(31.3)	8(10.0)	1(1.3)	3.45	Accept
Grabbing by force and intimidation	22(27.5)	46(57.5)	8(10.0)	4(5.0)	3.08	Accept
Quarrel between farmers and fishermen due to farmland and fishing ground	40(50.0)	25(31.3)	12(15.0)	3(3.8)	3.28	Accept
Clashes due to the border demarcating the land	40(50.0)	25(31.3)	12(15.0)	3(3.8)	3.28	Accept
Disagreement over absence of regulation and delineated land	10(12.5)	22(27.5)	34(43.5)	14(17.5)	2.35	Accept
Disagreement between executive and members	10(12.5)	31(38.8)	22(27.5)	17(21.3)	2.43	Accept

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study established the occurrence of land grabbing as a cause of communal clashes in Ikwerre land which affects mostly the small land holders and private individuals. The perceived effects of land grabbing conflicts permeate the physical, economic and social lives of the people. Consequently, in the course of this study, we have come to realise that the phenomenon of land grabbing has cost Ikwerre land so many communal clashes with attendant negative consequences that impinge on the development of the area. As a result, it is the undeviating belief of the researcher that so much could be done to correct this menace in the area, which is a crusade the people in concert with government should sincerely spearhead by honestly attacking and convicting culprits. If this were not done, it would definitely take great toll on the economy of Ikwerre land. To that effect, the Ikwerre people owe it to themselves to elect to political offices and proven trustworthy traditional rulers and elder statesmen to run the landed property affairs towards the achievement of peace and tranquillity that will help usher some socio-political and economic dividends in a manner devoid of communal clashes conflicts and factions forming. The foregoing aspiration could be achieved through a good partnering between the people and the government in a sincere pact to fight against the causes and factors as well as perpetrators of land grabbing that escalate communal clashes in Ikwerre land.

Given what has been discussed in this work, this paper therefore makes the following recommendations:
1. It is proper to find out the major causes of land grabbing and finding solutions to them to avoid their resulting in communal clashes in Ikwerre land.
2. There is the need to curtail communal clashes by ensuring that there is a good judicial system for proper land cases adjudication in Ikwerre land.
3. Those that are duly adjudged to have unjustly suffered from land grabbing and resultant communal clashes should be duly compensated and culprits punished to deter such actions subsequently.
4. The Land Use Act should be abrogated by ensuring the strengthening communal control of land rather than vesting it in governments or traditional rulers.
5. Recognition of native rights to land and limitation of encroachments there upon without the outright authorization of native communities will go a long way in controlling communal conflicts in Ikwerre land.
6. Large scale acquisition of native lands must include some form of partnership in which the natives have a fair share in whatever investments that are being made on the land to reduce the sense of deprivation of the original land owners.

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EMPLOYEE WELFARE PACKAGE AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN WATERCLEAN NIG LTD, AKWAIBOM STATE

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Abstract

The paper examined how employee welfare package could lead to organizational performance Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State. The study was guided by research questions and two hypotheses. The study adopted the equity theory of motivation as framework; this investigation examines the influence of staff welfare package has on organizational performance. Methodologically, the study adopted a correlational research design with a population of 200 staff. Census method was used to determine the sample size of 200 while the purposive sampling technique was used to get to our respondents. 200 questionnaires were distributed but 132 was retrieved. Simple percentage was used to analyze the demographic features of respondents, mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the research questions, while the hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 95% confidence level. Findings from the study revealed that there is a relation between staff welfare package and organizational performance in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State. The study therefore concludes that if staff welfare package leads to motivation, and staff motivation leads to higher productivity; it, therefore, follows that staff welfare package impacts organizational performance. The study recommends that that management of Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State should grant staff should a welfare package of value.

Keywords: Employees, Welfare Package, Organisational Performance, Productivity, Motivation, Waterclean Nig. Ltd.

Introduction

An organization is an entity such as a company, an institution, or an association comprising one or more people and having a particular purpose. It can also be seen as a structure in a system that outlines how certain activities are directed in order to achieve the goals of an organization. These activities can include rules, roles, and responsibilities (Gong, et al 2022). There is a general believe among professional that various initiatives and programs improve organizational performance. Nonetheless, many of these claims have not been evaluated. Indeed, even the best definitions or measures of performance are debatable. Fortunately, when these assertions are evaluated, the results are frequently positive. That is, practices that enhance employee commitment and attitudes strengthen many financial indicators of organizational performance (Gong, et al 2022).

Staff members are the major success factor of any business operations, and their contentment established the degree of their efficiency. A happy and productive person is a satisfied worker, and a satisfied worker is a motivated employee. The values of a contented employee speak volumes and a plus to her organisation, necessitating the call for leaders to devise methods of encouraging and fulfilling the desires of the organisation employees in order to achieve better performance. Nonetheless, the question here is whether employee performance equals organizational performance. That is, can organizational performance be measured solely by staff performance? To understand this question and provide answers, it is important to note that many studies on the relationship between staff welfare and organizational performance have confused organizational performance with staff performance, resulting in the use of only staff performance to measure organizational performance. As a result, it is important to note that organizational performance includes an organization's actual output or results as measured against its intended outputs.

According to Richard et al (2021), organizational performance includes three types of firm outcomes: (a) financial performance (profits, return on assets, return on investment, and so on); (b) product market performance (sales, market share, and so on); and (c) shareholder return (total

shareholder return, economic value added, and so on) (Richard et al., 2021). Staff performance, on the other hand, refers to how a member of staff performs their duties, completes required tasks, and behaves in the workplace, as measured by the quality, quantity, and efficiency of work (Upadhaya et al., 2020). The implication of these definitions is that every employee in an organization is subjected to a different set of expectations. Some have high expectations; while others have average expectations and those expectations are what link staff performance to organizational performance (Akintunde, 2019; Anyadike, 2021).

Several studies have been conducted in relation to workers welfare and productivity. For instance, Okumbe (2020) asserts that an organization that genuinely cared about its employees' well-being was concerned with creating a positive work environment in which individuals recognized that they were valued, which in turn boosted their performance. Again, Osterman (2022) focuses on the production sector, where he examines the relationship between staff productivity and staff welfare using Coca-Cola as a case in point, where the result shows a positive relationship between the variables under study, and it was concluded based on the finding that staff productivity is a function of staff welfare. Also, Kuria (2012) investigated the effects of employee welfare programs on job satisfaction in flower industry. The study revealed that, when employees are satisfied with the equity of their benefits packages, they are motivated to work harder in their assigned roles.

With the above studies and several other existing studies, it was discovered to our limited knowledge that there are no studies that has investigated 'Employee Welfare Package and Organizational Performance in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State.' Thus, this study bridged the gap in knowledge by investing Employee Welfare Package and Organizational Performance in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State.' The general objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between staff welfare package and organizational performance in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State. Hence, the following two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.
i.   What is the relationship between staff welfare package and organizational performance in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State?
ii. What are the challenges in implementing staff welfare package in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State?
H1: There exists a relationship between staff welfare and organizational performance in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State.
H2: Staff motivation and implementation of staff welfare packages leads to increased productivity in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State.

Waterclean Nigeria Limited is located at 134, Aba Road, Ikot-Ekpene, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The company is into the manufacturing of bottled water. The company was established in 2016 with the aim of providing clean, safe and refreshing drinking water to everyone at an affordable price. They produce very clean water in Akwa Ibom state. It has become has a household water company known for their quality in the state.

Conceptual Review
Employees' Welfare Package: The employer makes life worthwhile for employees by providing such generous fringe benefits. Employee welfare includes anything done for the comfort and improvement of employees that is not covered by their wages (Makanjuola, Shaibu, & Isijola, 2013). The firmness for better employees' performances is what prompted their hiring in the first place. As a result, it is in any organization's best interest to shape the appropriate methods to increase employees' performances by the thoughtfulness of incentives owing to employees in the structure of welfare packages.

Motivation: Every organisation is concerned with what should be done to achieve sustained high levels of performance through its workforce. This means giving close attention to how individuals can best be motivated through means such as incentives, rewards, leadership etc. and the organisation context within which they carry out the work (Armstrong, 2006). The study of motivation is concerned basically with why people behave in a certain way. In general, it can be described as the direction and persistence of action. It is concerned with why people choose a particular course of action in preference to others,

and why they continue with chosen action, often over a long period, and in the face of difficulties and problems (Mullins, 2005). Motivation can therefore be said to be at the heart of how innovative and productive things get done within an organisation (Bloisi et al., 2003). It has been established that motivation is concerned with the factors that influence people to behave in certain ways.

Organizational Performance: Some scholars and researchers, such as Chandler (1962) and Thompson (1967), appear to have fostered a concept of organizational performance. According to these researchers, the ultimate criterion of organizational performance is growth and long-term survival. In other words, continuous improvement of organizational performance is a critical goal. The "effectiveness" or realization of the objective component of organizational performance was shared by all of these definitions. Furthermore, some scholars contest that the concept of performance addressed both organizational means and ends (Jasimaah, 2013). Performance is defined as the extent to which a company or firm, as a social system with limited resources, is able to achieve its objectives without depleting its resources and means or putting undue strain on her employees (Ofobruku, S. A. & Iheabunike, 2013; Ofobruku, & Yusuf, 2016). In comparison to other researchers during the same time period, Jenatabadi (2014) treated the concept of organizational performance with the most care and explicitness. According to Lupton, an effective organization has a high productivity rate as well as high levels of satisfaction and motivation among its members, while turnover, costs, and labour unrest are low or absent.

Labour Productivity: To grasp the concept of labour productivity, it is necessary to first grasp the concept of productivity. According to studies (Aderinto, 1981; Osundahunsi, 1988; Ibraheem, 1989; and Ejiogu, 2000), productivity is the end result of a complex social production process. According to Francis (2012), productivity should be viewed as a measure of an organization's overall production efficiency, effectiveness, and performance. He believes that productivity entails high output quality, adherence to standards, and customer satisfaction. Also, productivity refers to the absence of disruption, trouble, and other signs of difficulty in organizations, as well as quantitative measurements such as units produced or sales volume.

The term labour productivity is generally used to refer to the amount of goods and services produced per worker in a given year, month, day, or hour (Chinwoh, 1989; Eze, 2013). The distinction between productivity and labour productivity is that the former emphasizes the relationship between input and output, whereas the latter emphasizes the result of input, implying that labour productivity explains the effort of staff in making output possible. The practice of using labour, particularly direct labour inputs and costs, can be ascertained and quantified more easily than those of other factors, partly due to a legacy of classical economics thought that not only considers direct labour to be the sole source of value, but also considers all forms of indirect labour to be "unproductive labour." Based on the foregoing, we can conclude that improving labour is necessary before increasing productivity.

Literature Review

Okumbe (2020), an organization that genuinely cared about its employees' well-being was concerned with creating a positive work environment in which individuals recognized that they were valued, which in turn boosted their performance. Their findings show that one of the welfare services that improved employee performance was medical insurance coverage.

Relatedly, Mitchell (2021) conducted a study on medical services and discovered that reduced absenteeism is highly related to good health. According to Mitchell's research, due to the high cost of hospitalization, surgical, and maternity care, it has been determined that employees must be protected against these costs by implementing a Medical Insurance plan. This is a significant benefit that greatly aids in the retention of employees in a company. General medical care, optical care, drug abuse, alcoholism, and mental illness are all covered under Medical Coverage. Employers who provide health insurance are advantageous for a variety of reasons. As a result, employees who have medical insurance are more likely to be satisfied at work.

Furthermore, Osterman (2022) focuses on the production sector, where he examines the relationship between staff productivity and staff welfare using Coca-Cola as a case in point, where secondary data were collected and analysed using the SPSS package to run the multiple regression, and the result shows a positive relationship between the variables under study, and it was concluded based on the finding that staff productivity is a function of staff welfare.

Again, Abu (2021) carried out a research on the role of staff overall output per day and the remuneration system, using Berger Construction Company Abuja as a case study. The chi-square statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses, which revealed a strong relationship between the variable, stating that employee output increases as their daily pay increases.

Theoretical Consideration
The equity theory of motivation was used in this discourse to explain the relationship between the staff welfare package and organizational performance. The motivational theories of organizational behaviour began in the 1920s with Elton Mayo's experiment at the Hawthorne plant. According to the equity theory, employees will weigh their input into a job against the output they receive from it the more the rewards, the more satisfied they will be. This is consistent with Naveed et al. (2011)'s definition of job satisfaction as the difference between employee input and job output. According to this theory, employees who believe they get more out of their jobs than what they put into them will be satisfied. Certain aspects of the job shape how an employee perceives it as well. Clarified tasks result in higher job satisfaction because a clear role breeds a work force that is happy, committed, and shows a high level of involvement in the work that is done. The authors identified five major job characteristics that impact an employee's psychological state and influence motivation, job satisfaction, and absenteeism, namely the variety of skills involved in a task, the identity and significance of the task, autonomy, and feedback. Employees compare their input-output ratio to that of other employees, and if they believe it is fair, they will be satisfied (Robbins, 2007). Employees become dissatisfied and less motivated if they perceive an inequity in their input-outcome ratio in comparison to other employees.

So in a bid to remedy the challenges confronting management regarding how to motivate workers to perform assigned tasks in order to meet or exceed established standards, management must understand that the workforce weighs the rewards for jobs and expects equity. Armstrong (2001) asserts that human behaviour is motivated, goal-directed, and difficult to motivate; and that the success of any motivated act is dependent on the extent to which the motivator meets the needs of the individual employees for whom it is intended.

People are motivated when they anticipate that a cause of action will result in the achievement of a goal and a valued reward that meets their needs (Armstrong, 2001); motivated people are those who have clearly defined goals and who engage in actions that they anticipate will result in the achievement of those goals. It has also been argued that it has become critical for organizations to provide a context in which high levels of motivation can be achieved by providing incentives and rewards for satisfying work as well as opportunities for learning and growth (Akintunde, 2005).

Methodology
This study adopted correlational research design. This helps in ascertaining the relationship between staff welfare package and organizational performance in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State. The population of the study is 200 consisting of all the entire staff of Waterclean Nig Ltd. This study adopted the census method in the determination of the sample size, thus, the entire 200 persons was used for the study. The study adopted purposive sampling technique in getting to the respondents. The questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The instrument was coded using modified 4-point Likert rating scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). This instrument yielded a reliability index of 0.79 through test-retest method. The instrument was distributed and retrieved with the aid of manager and other staff. Simple percentage was used to analyze the demographic features of the respondents. The research questions were analyzed using mean and

standard deviation, while the hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 95% confidence level.

Data Presentation and Analysis
Table 1 Demographic Features of Respondents

Retrieval of Questionnaire	132	(66%) out of 200
Male Respondents	117	(58.5%)
Female Respondents	83	(41.5%)
Total	**200**	**(100%)**
Age of respondents		
18-24	23	(11.5%)
25-29	62	(31%)
30-34	56	(28%)
35-40	34	(17%)
40 and Above	25	(12.5%)
Total	**200**	**(100%)**
Educational Qualification of Respondents		
SSCE	45	(22.5%)
BSC/HND	128	(64%)
MSC	12	(6%)
Others	15	(7.5%)
Total	**200**	**(100%)**

Source: Survey Data, (2024).

Table 2 Members of Staff in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State

Management Staff	Unit Heads (Production Analyst, Warehouse Officer, Production Supervisor, Ware house supervisor, Safety Officer, HSE Supervisor, Finance & Accounts Manager, Maintenance Engineer Etc).	Human Resource (HR)	Others (Sales Representatives, Security, Ware house workers, Production Team Etc).	Total
8 (4%)	44 (22%)	12 (6%)	136 (68%)	200 (100%)

Source: Survey Data, (2024).

Findings and Analysis of Research Questions
Table 3: The relationship between staff welfare package and organizational performance in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State

S/N	Items	Responses (n =132)		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1.	Incentives can make workers do more job to attract productivity in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State	3.41	0.92	A
2.	Motivation is a tool that enhances staff performance which in turn results to organizational performance in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State	3.59	0.98	SA
3.	There is a link between staff welfare and increased organizational performance in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State	2.68	0.72	A
4.	Welfare package is necessary for organizational profitability in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State	3.29	0.86	A
5.	Provision of transportation allowance, medical allowance, accommodation allowance and other welfare packages to workers increases the level of organizational productivity in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State	2.65	0.71	A
	Aggregate Mean Score	**3.12**	**0.84**	**A**

Source: Survey Data, (2024).

Decision: Mean Criterion 2.50; above is considered **SA or A** and below is considered **D or SD**

From table 1 with an aggregate mean score of 3.12 which is greater than the criterion mean value, it can be reasonably concluded that staff welfare package leads to organizational performance in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State. This is in line with the work of Okumbe (2020) who asserts that an organization that genuinely cared about its employees' well-being value, it in turn boos organizational performance.

Table 4: The challenges in implementing staff welfare package in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State

S/N	Items	Responses (n =132)		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
6.	Entitlement Attitude	3.43	0.92	A
7.	Misconstrued Value	3.80	1.08	SA
8.	Intra-organization Inequality	3.92	1.14	SA
9.	Bad Management of Resources	3.40	0.91	A
10.	Poor leadership style	3.00	0.77	A
	Aggregate Means Score	**3.51**	**0.96**	**SA**

Source: Survey Data, (2024).
Decision: Mean Criterion 2.50; above is considered **SA or A** and below is considered **D or SD**

From table 4 with an aggregate score of 3.51 that is greater than the criterion mean value, it is obvious that some human factors such as poor management of resources, entitlement attitudes amongst others are impediments to the implementation of welfare packages in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State. This is in tandem with Ejiofor, (2018) who believes that one of the notions that colours management's attitude toward employee welfare programs is that workers should view fringe benefits as a kind gesture from employers that they should reciprocate.

Hypotheses Testing
H1: There exists a relationship between staff welfare and organizational performance in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State
Table 5: Correlations

		Employee Welfare Package	Organizational Performance
Employee Welfare Package	Pearson Correlation	1	.770[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	66	66
Organizational Performance	Pearson Correlation	.770[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	66	66

Source**:** SPSS Version 21   Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2-tailed).

Table 5 above indicated that p .000 is less than the alpha value 0.05. This reveals that, there exists a relationship between staff welfare and organizational performance in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State. This result is in tandem with Mensah et al (2022) who discovered that: showing concern for employees' well-being increases employee commitment and, as a result, their performance and, ultimately, the organization's growth. From the understanding in the relationship between staff welfare and motivation as well as that of staff motivation and productivity, the effect of staff welfare on organizational performance can be inferred.

H2: Staff motivation and implementation of staff welfare packages leads to increased productivity in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State

Table 6: Correlations

		Motivation and Implementation of Staff Welfare Packages	Increased Productivity
Motivation and Implementation of Staff Welfare Packages	Pearson Correlation	1	.948**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	66	66
Increased Productivity	Pearson Correlation	.948**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	66	66

Source**:** SPSS Version 21   Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2-tailed)

As indicated in Table 6 above, p .000 < 0.05. This implies that, the relationship between implementation of staff welfare packages and increased productivity in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State. This is in tandem with the findings of Irefin and Mechanic's (2021) empirical research revealed, among other things, that when employees' well-being is taken care of, they are motivated, resulting in their commitment and high productivity, which has a positive impact on organizational performance.

Conclusion
The importance of staff welfare package on organizational performance in this study is immense and cannot be overlooked especially in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State. The issue of low productivity and minimal organizational performance has been and is still inimical to organizational growth in particular and societal development at large. So, any effort towards boosting productivity and organizational performance is at the frontline of organizational objectives. This has led many research endeavours into the relationship between staff welfare and organizational performance. Howbeit, most of those researches have ended up misinterpreting staff productivity/performance as organizational productivity/ performance.

Nevertheless, this paper from its findings, took an inferential stand, drawing from the tenets of equity theory of motivation, and the established relationship between staff welfare package and motivation as well as motivation and productivity in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State., to conclude that there is a nexus between staff welfare package and organizational performance in Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State, #

Recommendation
The following recommendations are proffered:
Management of Waterclean Nig Ltd, Akwa Ibom State should grant the staff a welfare package of value. This will go a long way in motivating the staff to get committed, because it is found that it is not just about welfare package, but a package that means something to the prospective recipient.
Employers should let go of the entitlement attitude. This can come when they understand the place of the staff in the production process and therefore their importance in achieving organizational objectives.

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AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN ABUA/ODUAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
The study was carried out to investigate the role of African Traditional Religion in the management of conflicts in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study consisted of 406,200 (2023 projected Abua/Odual Local Government Area population). The Taro Yamane scientific formula was used to get a sample size of 399.4354 and upped to 400. The respondents were selected using simple random sampling. The adopted instrument was "African Traditional Religion and Conflict Management Questionnaire". In order to ensure that the instrument measure what it ought to measure, it was subjected to content, face, internal and external validity and to measure the internal consistence, the selected questionnaire was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test Model which 0.82 reliable index was obtained. The data obtained from the field work was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21). The research questions were analyzed using the descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) and the inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypothesis. The study found out that there are peculiar conflicts in the area of study including; failure to observe sacred days, trees and animals, land and boundary conflicts, chieftaincy crises, marital and cult related conflicts. It also found out that the methods used by the African Traditional Religion included; oath-taking, consultation with ancestral gods, libation and fear of ostracization and its dare consequences propel disputants to always be truthful before, during and after the proceedings. Finally, the study found out that African traditional religion is confronted with myriads of challenges including poor record keeping culture, lack of codification of native laws, and inadequate knowledge of the legal system among adherents. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the Abua/Odual Local Government Area should incorporate African traditional religion in conflict management scheme, and use it especially during the swearing-in of public office holders. Also, it should recognize African traditional religion as a legal system, make it a compulsory subject for Primary and Secondary schools, train adherents, codify the native laws, and punish those who demonize African traditional religion.

Keywords: Religion, Traditional Religion, Conflict, Conflict Management

Introduction
The word religion is an enigmatic and elusive concept, thus, difficult to define. This is compounded by the fact that it deals with immaterial objects that cannot be empirically verified. It has been defined diversely by people of diverse interests. As a concept, it is vast and complex, and as such must be approached from a multidimensional viewpoint (Anthony, 2015). There is speculation that the first religion on earth was a response to human fears. Religion was created to give people a feeling of security and safety in a non-secured world. A feeling of control over the environment where there was little or no control (Uzoho, 2023). The first recorded religion in the world was Hinduism. It has roots and customs dating back to more than 4000 years ago. Today, with more than 1billion followers; Hinduism is the third largest religion in the world, after Christianity and Islam (Ojukwu, 2019). More than 94% of the world's Hindus live in India.

Religiosity is an essential dimension of man, and a cardinal aspect of a people's cultural values, norms and tradition. No society is destitute of religion, asking and seeking answers to religious questions which

are fundamental to its existence. Religion is as old as mankind. It makes meaning, as it defines life for people at all times. However, religious traditions of the world present man with options and alternative paths. It was based on the above that Francis (2024) posited that all religions serve as a path to reach God. There is only one God, and our religions are languages which serve as paths to reach God, the Supreme Being. Some are Sikhs, some are Muslims, some are Hindus, some are Christians, but they are different paths. Though, African traditional religion was not mentioned, Africans believe also in a Higher Being. This is the underlying reason for the existence of many religions in the world (Owate & Iheanacho, 2009). Religion is a matter of faith, or belief on conviction rather than scientific evidence. Faith is frequently portrayed through the use of rituals, which are formal, ceremonial behaviours and represent religious meanings, and totems, which are objects that are collectively sacred.

Many scholars, researchers, religious leaders and conflict and peace experts have come to consensus opinion that apart from the hope of eternity among adherents, they also believe that religion can be used in managing conflicts among members of the community. Every religion is local and based on the cultural heritage of the people. So, since religion is based on the cultural norms of the people, the Africans have come to be associated with what has become widely known as African traditional religion. The origin of African traditional religion can be traced back to the very beginning of the emergence of African peoples. Ekwunife (1990) in Chidili (2015) sees African traditional religion (ATR) as those institutionalized beliefs and practices of indigenous African rural communities which are the result of traditional African's response to their believed Super human, and which are rooted from time immemorial.

Adherents of ATR believe in ancestral spirits. They believe that the ancestors maintain a spiritual connection with their living relatives. Most ancestral spirits are generally good, kind, compassionate and helpful in times of trouble (Akin, 2020). The only negative actions taken by these ancestral spirits is to cause minor illnesses to warn people that they have gotten into the wrong path. To appease these unhappy ancestors, offerings of sacrifices which could include killing of rams, goats, fowls, etc. are made (Odemo, 2019).

In the past, African religion, culture, beliefs and practices were transmitted to the present votaries by successive African forebears. Most African traditional societies believe that the world is in habited by myriads of spirits, both benevolent and malevolent, and the spirits in one way or the other affect the activities of human beings, the life of plants and animals. The outcome of this belief is the understanding that every event in the life of someone is either a reward or punishment from the gods for something done by the person in question or by his or her parents or acquaintances.

Review of Related Literature
There have been several studies on the role of African traditional religion in managing conflicts in various parts of the continent of Africa and the Caribbean. Anthony (2015) in his study has pointed out the peculiarities of African Traditional religion. He averred that the ATR which is based mainly on oral transmission, has no founders like Jesus Christ, Gautama the Budda, or Mohammed. There are no missionaries, though, the adherents are loyal worshippers, while its propagation is carried out by the lifestyle of adherents. The study found out that despite the fact that the two major foreign religions of Christianity and Islam have reduced the worshippers through daily conversion, the remnants of the ATR adherents still manage conflicts more effectively than the contemporary institutions. He recommended that efforts should be made to revive the ailing ATR and use same for the management of conflicts in rural Africa.

Richard (2020) in his study observed that presently, the population of the adherents of ATR is about 20% of the total population of Africa. Though, he agreed that despite the incursion of the two major imported religions of Christianity and Islam, there are people who still believe that ATR is the answer to the myriads of challenges confronting the African continent; including conflicts.

Here are the general statistics of the population of adherents of different African countries as it relates to ATR:

Table 1: Percentage (%) of ATR adherents in African countries.

S/N	50% and above	(30-49)%	(10-29)%	Less than 10%
1	Benin	Burundi	Angola	Cape Verde
2	Botswana	Cameroon	Gambia	Djibouti
3	Burkina Faso	Chad	Guinea	Eritrea
4	Ivory Coast	Congo Brazzaville	Lesotho	Ethiopia
5	Kenya	Congo Kinshasa	Niger	Equatorial
6	Liberia	Gabon	Nigeria	Guinea
7	Mauritius	Ghana	Sao-Tome	Senegal
8	Mozambique	Madagascar	Sudan	Seychelles
9	Swaziland	Malawi		Somalia
10	Togo	Mali		
11	Zambia	Namibia		
12	Zimbabwe	Rwanda		
13		Sierra Leone		
14		South Africa		
15		Tanzania		
16		Uganda		

Source: Richard, 2013.

Omotoye (2011) in Ugochukwu (2020) sees ATR as the traditional religion of the African people before the advent of the imported two major religions of Christianity and Islam. However, the ATR was condemned by the early European Scholars, travelers, investigators and missionaries. But, because ATR refers to the true nature of African's traditions, histories, myths, worldviews, norms, etc., it continues to co-exist with the foreign religions. Even majority of those converted to the new two major religions (Christianity and Islam) in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general, have advertently or inadvertently transmitted Africanness into these religions, thereby making them practitioners of ATR, while in their foreign religions. Because ATR is based on the norms, culture and the tradition of the people, it has led Uzoho (2023) in his study to posit that ATR in pre-colonial Africa was more valuable and seemed extremely reasonable and inevitable to the people and helped in effectively managing conflicts than the contemporary State-backed judicial processes which emphasis more on sentencing and payment of huge fines which the citizens find difficult to comprehend.

Therefore, ATR is the traditional religious heritage of the African people handed down from one generation to another, through oral tradition as means of communications. The oral pattern of transmission is a factor why many scholars of religion view it among the oral religions of the world (Owate & Iheanacho, 2009). Taking Africa as a whole, there are in reality five component elements that go into the making of ATR. These are; belief in Supreme Being (God), spirits, belief in the ancestors and the practice of magic and medicines, each with its own attendant cult. The practice of ATR makes adherents to be truthful, display empathy and shun corrupt practices and other social vices in the society (Anthony, 2015). The ATR encourages Africans to live by the African ethos, values and norms which enjoined citizens to be hospitable, always be truthful, obey laws and keep covenants, respect the sanctity of life and enjoy communality among others. Oath-taking, libation, entering the shrines and paying allegiance to the deities make people develop fear of going against the will of the gods. The above ensure that people live a righteous life for fear of the ripple effects of going against the divinities (Parrinder, 1975).

Though, ATR recognizes a Supreme Being, followers do not worship him or her directly as they did not feel worthy enough to do so. The Supreme Being is called upon in times of great hardship, danger, need for appreciation and/or annual festivities (Uchendu, 2021). Onuigbo (2009) in his study found out that ATR acted as a check to the excesses of the adherents and even others and when conflicts occurred, it managed it effectively through the use of oath taking and invocation of the ancestral spirits among others. He averred that though ATR in recent times faces many challenges including poor record

keeping culture, illiteracy, non-codification of native laws, victimization of adherents, among others, it has several advantages over other religions. ATR still manage conflict better and more effectively than the present day State-backed institutions. The recent exploits of the Onelga Security, Peace and Advisory Committee (OSPAC) in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area and its replication in other Local Government Areas in Rivers State including the area of study is one of the many methods used by ATR in the management of conflicts.

Ajakor and Ojukwu (2019) in their study that was carried out among the people of Aguleri-Umuleri in Anambra State averred that the chiefs and elders of both communities played significant role in the management of the conflicts that rocked the communities in the 1990s. They recommended that the elders should always be involved in the management of conflicts in rural communities because most of them are adherents of ATR. Awolalu (2019), Ugochukwu (2022) and Odeh (2024) did several studies on the role of African traditional religion in conflict management in South Sudan, Cameroon, Kenyan and Nigerian rural communities and found out that ATR plays a very important role in managing conflicts. They therefore, recommended that ATR should be incorporated as a cardinal institution in the management of conflicts.

Though, there have been several studies on ATR and conflict management, over the years, there seem to be few or none of such studies in recent times that have been carried out in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria, hence the motivation for the present study. It is in the light of the above, that the present study will seek to close the yawning gap.

Statement of Objectives
The main objective of the study is to investigate how ATR effectively manage conflicts in Abua/Odual Local Government Area. To achieve this, the following specific objectives are outlined:
i. Examine the strategies employed by the African Traditional Religion (ATR) in managing conflicts.
ii. Determine how the challenges negatively affect ATR in managing conflicts.

Research Questions
i. What are the strategies used by African Traditional Religion (ATR) in managing conflicts?
ii. What are the challenges affecting the ATR in managing conflicts?

Hypothesis
The methods used by the ATR in managing conflicts are not effective.

Methodology
In this study, we adopted the descriptive survey design because it seeks to describe the characteristics of a certain group. The population of the study is 406,200 (2023 projected Abua/Odual Local Government Area population). The Taro Yamane scientific formula was used to get a sample size of 399.4354 and upped to 400. The respondents were selected using simple random sampling method. The instrument used in the study was the questionnaire. The adopted instrument was "African Traditional Religion and Conflict Management Questionnaire". The questionnaire has a four-point modified Likert scale including SA = Strongly Agree (4), A = Agree (3), D= Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1) and the Critical Mean was calculated thus: $\frac{4+3+2+1}{4}=\frac{10}{4}=2.5$.

In order to ensure that the instrument measure what it ought to measure, it was subjected to content, face, internal and external validity. To measure the internal consistence, selected questionnaire was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test Model which 0.82 reliable index was obtained showing that the instrument adopted for this study is highly reliable. The data for this study was obtained using the adopted instrument. To ensure adequate monitoring, the researcher and his Assistants distributed the questionnaires to the selected respondents and four hundred copies of the questionnaire were retrieved from respondents. The data obtained from the field was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21). The research questions were analyzed using the descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation and the inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the hypothesis.

Data Analysis/Discussion

Research Question 1: What are the strategies used by African Traditional Religion (ATR) in managing conflicts?

Table 2: The strategies used by African Traditional Religion (ATR)

S/N	Strategies	M	Std.Dev.
1	Oathtaking	2.62	1.12
2	Libation	2.70	1.14
3	Invocation	2.68	1.13
4	Ostracization	2.73	1.14
5	Consultation with ancestral gods/deities	2.76	1.15
	Grand Mean	2.69	1.14

Source: Researcher's fieldwork.

The grand Mean rating (2.69 & 1.14) of the above table is greater than the criterion Mean of 2.5, hence; oath taking, libation, invocation, ostracization and consultation with ancestral gods/deities are methods adopted by African Traditional Religion. From the analysis above, it could be deduced that these methods are more effective and acceptable by parties since it is based on the culture, tradition and norms of the people of rural communities of Abua/Odual Local Government Area than the contemporary court processes which place much emphases on sentencing, imprisonment, fines and technicalities that the rural poor found it unappealing, costly, and in most cases, justice is compromised. The people of the area of study are yearning for their glorious past when the adherents of the African traditional religion were in-charge of managing conflicts and the people having opportunity for post-conflict harmonious co-habitation and not now, that post-conflict era has become troublesome.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges of ATR in managing conflicts?

Table 3: The challenges of ATR in managing conflicts

S/N	Strategies	M	Std. Dev.
1	Poor record keeping culture	2.75	1.15
2	Lack of jurisdiction in criminal cases	2.69	1.13
3	Inadequate knowledge of the legal system	2.64	1.12
4	Uncodified native laws	2.71	1.14
5	Interference from adherents of other religions		
		2.70	1.12
	Grand Mean	2.70	1.13

Source: Researcher's fieldwork.

The above table shows that the Grand Mean rating (2.70 & 1.13) is greater than the criterion Mean of 2.5, hence; poor record keeping culture, lack of jurisdiction in criminal cases, inadequate knowledge of the legal system, uncodified native laws and interference from adherents of other religions are the challenges affecting African Traditional Religion (ATR) in conflict management in Abua/Odual Local Government Area. Though the findings have proven that despite the myriads of challenges facing ATR, its adherents have unshakeable believe in its effectiveness and general acceptability as regards the management of conflicts.

Hypothesis

H01: The methods used by ATR in managing conflicts are not effective

Table 4: Correlations

		MATR	CM
MATR	Pearson Correlation	1	.635**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
CM	Pearson Correlation	.635**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400

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

From the above table, it can be observed that Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient is 0.635 at 0.01 significance level. Since, the significance level is less than 0.05; we conclude that the strategies used by ATR in managing conflicts are very effective.

The Effectiveness of the Strategies Used by ATR in Managing Conflict
Based on the findings of the study, it has been discovered that the strategies used by ATR in managing conflicts are effective, generally acceptable and more potent in Abua/Odual Local Government Area. This simply implies that comparing it to the modern methods of managing conflicts, the African traditional religion methods are better and provide a better and lasting peace to disputants than the contemporary conflict management strategies. The findings are in line with the views of Ademola (2007) and Ajakor and Ojukwu (2019) who maintained that these strategies are done before a powerful deity or in their shrines, making disputants willing to speak the truth and accept verdicts. It also helps disputants to live harmoniously after the conflicts. The findings of the study further confirm the earlier views of Oguntomisin (2004) in Ajakor and Ojukwu (2019) who claimed that the strategies of the African traditional religion established truth and guilt and discourage dishonest attitude and evil actions among disputants even after the conflicts.

Challenges of African Traditional Religion
From the findings of the study, it was inferred that poor record keeping culture, lack of jurisdiction in criminal cases, inadequate knowledge of the legal system, uncodified native laws and interference from adherents of other religions are the challenges affecting adherents of African Traditional Religion (ATR) in their bid to effectively manage conflicts in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria.

Conclusion
This study was carried out to investigate the role of African Traditional Religion in the management of conflicts in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The study found that there are peculiar conflicts in the area of study including failure to observe sacred days, trees and animals, land and boundary dispute, chieftaincy tussle, marital crises and cult-related conflicts. It also found that the methods used by the African traditional religion including oath-taking, consultation with ancestral gods, invocation of prohibited jujus, libation and consultation of deities and the fear of ostracization and its dare consequences always propel disputants to be truthful before, during and after the proceedings.

Furthermore, the study revealed that foreign religious influence and availability of alternative modes of worship add to the problem of ATR in the area of the study. Findings show that the inhabitants of the area are good hosts of foreign religions especially Christianity. More than any other belief system, Christianity seeks to write the obituary of the ATR by daily seeking to convert its adherents. The study also found that the African traditional religion has seeming advantages over the foreign religion especially in shaping the character of adherents and those who believe in it. The fear of the negative consequences of going against acts of misconduct among adherents and others serves as a potent deterrent vices and criminality. Finally, African traditional religion is confronted with myriads of challenges including; poor recording, lack of codification of native laws, inadequate knowledge of the legal system in the area investigation. The adherents are also stigmatized; especially among Christian and Islamic believers. The adherents are not supposed to be involved in criminal matters.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:
i.   The Abua/Odual Local Government should codify the native laws, train adherents, punish antagonists and make ATR a compulsory subject for secondary and primary schools in the area. This will help to inculcate the African norms and values including; hard work and good character, communality, honesty and integrity, sanctity of life and decent dressing, respect for the marital vows, incorruptibility and covenant keeping among others. This will reduce the incidences of conflicts and develop in citizens the love of their communities in the area of study.

ii.   Because of the efficacious nature of ATR in managing conflicts, the Abua/Odual Local Government Area should recognize African traditional religion as a conflict management agent and also use one of its symbols (cowries, brooms, beads, white chalks, kolanuts, bitter kolas, molded images, manilas, etc.) to swear-in would-be political office holders in the area of study. This will reduce corrupt practices among political office holders, redistribute income, enthrone good governance and diminish the incidences of conflicts in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria.

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TRADE WARS AND PROTECTIONISM IN GLOBAL POLITICS: THE CASE OF U.S.-CHINA TRADE RELATIONS, 2016-2023

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Abstract
Trade wars and protectionism have resurfaced as prominent features in global politics, posing significant challenges to global economic and interdependence among nations in the world. Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the political strategies, economic impact, and long-term consequences of the U.S.-China trade war, focusing on how protectionist policies reshaped global trade and supply chains. The study was anchored on Mercantilism Theory, which emphasizes trade surpluses and national wealth accumulation through protectionism. A qualitative design was employed, and content analysis was used to interpret data from secondary sources such as textbooks, government publications, international news outlets, and other relevant internet materials. The findings revealed that the U.S.-China trade war disrupted key industries, caused job losses, and increased consumer prices. It prompted global supply chain restructuring, with companies relocating operations to Southeast Asia. The conflict also reflected broader geopolitical rivalries, with both nations pursuing economic self-sufficiency and strategic dominance. Nations should prioritize not only the protection of its national interest in protecting Domestic Industries and the welfare of its citizenry but also diplomacy to avert trade wars and leveraging on multilateral platforms like the WTO to resolve disputes and foster stable, cooperative global trade relations and ultimately global peace.

Keywords: Trade wars, global politics, trade relations, industries, supply chain, self-sufficiency, strategic dominance

Introduction

Trade wars, protectionism, word system, global politics, and trade relations are deeply interconnected variables that influence the economic and political dynamics between nations. Trade wars refer to conflicts between countries where tariffs or trade restrictions are used to penalize imports from rival economies, aiming to protect domestic industries. The U.S.-China trade war, for example, exemplifies how such measures can significantly disrupt bilateral trade and global markets (Fajgelbaum et al., 2021; NBER, 2022). Protectionism involves government policies that restrict imports through tariffs, quotas, and subsidies to not only foster local production but to ensure that unregulated external competition will not suffocate it. While protectionism seeks to shield national industries, it often triggers retaliatory actions, leading to reduced trade flows and higher costs for businesses and consumers (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023).

Global politics encompasses the broader geopolitical and diplomatic interactions between nations, where trade policies often serve as instruments of influence. Economic conflicts, such as trade wars, frequently reflect underlying strategic rivalries, with countries using trade tools to assert dominance or safeguard national security interests (Autor, et al., 2023). Finally, trade relations refer to the economic exchanges and agreements between countries, governed by bilateral, regional, or global trade frameworks. Effective trade relations depend on cooperation and predictable policies, but trade wars and protectionist measures undermine these principles by creating uncertainty and shifting trade networks (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023).

These variables interact in complex ways. Protectionist policies often spark trade wars, disrupting established trade relations and leading to shifts in global trade patterns. Trade disputes also influence global politics, as countries engage in strategic manoeuvring to protect national interests and secure geopolitical leverage (Fajgelbaum, et al., 2021). The U.S.-China trade war illustrates this interplay, where economic measures were used not only to address trade imbalances but also to counter China's growing influence on the global stage. Ultimately, the interaction between these variables underscores the challenges of balancing economic competition with geopolitical stability in a highly interconnected world.

The U.S.-China trade war, which began in 2018, marked a significant shift in global economic relations, reflecting broader geopolitical tensions and concerns about trade imbalances and national security. The roots of this conflict lie in long-standing U.S. frustrations with China's economic practices, including alleged intellectual property theft, forced technology transfers, and the lack of reciprocal market access for American firms (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023). Additionally, China's industrial policies, such as the "Made in China 2025" strategy, further aggravated tensions by aiming to establish Chinese dominance in high-tech industries. These factors fuelled calls in the U.S. for protectionist measures, especially under the Trump administration, which framed the trade war as a necessary intervention to correct systemic trade inequities and bring manufacturing jobs back to the U.S. (NBER, 2022).

The trade war officially began with the imposition of tariffs by the U.S. in 2018 on $450 billion worth of Chinese imports, to which China retaliated with its own tariffs. These actions disrupted decades of progress towards global trade liberalization and deeply impacted both economies. The U.S. aimed to pressure China into adopting fairer trade practices, but the trade war also inflicted unintended costs, including higher prices for American consumers and losses for industries dependent on Chinese components (NBER, 2021). By 2019, U.S. exports to China dropped by 26.3%, while Chinese exports to the U.S. fell by 8.5%—a clear sign of deteriorating trade relations (NBER, 2022).

Although the Biden administration, which took office in 2021, adopted a less confrontational tone, many tariffs imposed under the Trump administration remain in effect. The shift from aggressive trade measures to diplomatic engagement reflects a nuanced strategy aimed at balancing economic competition with efforts to manage national security risks and maintain stable relations. Both countries have continued to negotiate on issues such as market access and intellectual property rights, though fundamental disagreements remain unresolved (CFR, 2023). During this period, China's evolving role as a global economic powerhouse and the U.S.'s focus on reshoring supply chains have further complicated bilateral relations.

The Impact of the trade war has not been confined to the U.S. and China alone but has reverberated across the global economy. Several countries outside the conflict have benefited from trade diversions as both the U.S. and China sought new suppliers. The war also catalyzed a reconfiguration of global supply chains, as firms sought to mitigate risks associated with tariffs by diversifying their production networks (NBER, 2022). While the trade war led to a modest 3% increase in global trade due to new opportunities for "bystander" nations, it also revealed the challenges of economic decoupling and the limits of protectionist policies in an interconnected world (NBER, 2022).

Statement of the Problem
Trade wars and protectionism have resurfaced as significant issues in global politics, reflecting the tensions between economic nationalism and globalization. Governments often resort to protectionist measures such as tariffs and subsidies to protect domestic industries from foreign competition. While these measures may offer temporary relief to local businesses, they disrupt trade flows and generate economic inefficiencies. The U.S.-China trade war from 2018 onwards stands as a modern case of how protectionism can reshape the global economy. Both countries imposed tariffs on billions of dollars' worth of goods, triggering retaliatory actions that disrupted supply chains and imposed higher costs on businesses and consumers alike (Fajgelbaum et al., 2021). Despite these actions, the trade war failed to fully address the underlying economic concerns, such as trade imbalances and intellectual property

theft, while exacerbating tensions between the two largest global economies (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023).

One of the critical concerns with trade wars is the erosion of international trade frameworks and norms. Institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO) were designed to foster cooperation and reduce trade barriers, yet trade wars threaten their relevance. Protectionist policies contradict these multilateral agreements and promote a zero-sum approach to international relations. The U.S.-China trade war exemplified this trend by sidelining the WTO dispute resolution mechanisms in favour of bilateral actions (NBER, 2021). As more countries adopt tariffs and quotas to protect their domestic markets, a cycle of retaliation can emerge, undermining trust between trading partners. This shift towards economic nationalism creates uncertainty for global businesses, discouraging investment and long-term planning in an already volatile economic landscape.

The economic costs of protectionism also extend to consumers, businesses, and entire industries. During the U.S.-China trade war, tariffs on Chinese goods increased production costs for American companies reliant on imported components, particularly in sectors like technology and automotive manufacturing (Fajgelbaum et al., 2021). Similarly, Chinese firms faced reduced demand from U.S. markets, causing job losses and slowing growth. Consumers in both countries ultimately bore the burden of higher prices, highlighting the unintended consequences of such policies. While protectionist measures aim to promote domestic industries, they often lead to inefficiencies, as companies divert resources to manage trade barriers instead of focusing on innovation and expansion.

Trade wars also raise broader geopolitical concerns, as economic disputes can escalate into political conflicts. The U.S.-China conflict extended beyond trade, reflecting deeper strategic rivalries over technology, security, and global influence (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023). Both nations used tariffs as tools to assert geopolitical power, with the U.S. seeking to counter China's technological ambitions and China responding by strengthening economic alliances elsewhere. This geopolitical dimension complicates efforts to resolve trade disputes through diplomacy, as both sides view economic measures as integral to their national security strategies. The resulting standoff illustrates how economic conflicts can fuel broader political instability and disrupt international cooperation.

Another issue lies in the unintended realignment of global supply chains. The trade war prompted several companies to relocate operations from China to countries like Vietnam and Thailand to avoid tariffs. While these shifts benefit some economies, they introduce new risks by creating more fragmented and complex supply networks (NBER, 2022). Additionally, companies that relocated production often had to contend with weaker infrastructure or regulatory frameworks in their new host countries, complicating their operations. The sustainability of these new trade routes remains uncertain, especially as nations adjust their trade policies in response to evolving geopolitical dynamics. What happens if these newly favoured economies themselves become targets of protectionist policies? How resilient are the relocated supply chains in the face of further trade disruptions? Therefore, it is against this backdrop that this study was undertaken to examine the trade wars and protectionism in global politics: The case of U.S.-China trade relations, 2016-2023. Specifically, the study seeks to:
1. examine the economic impact of the U.S.-China trade war on domestic industries, employment, and consumer prices in both countries.
2. investigate the political strategies driving the adoption of protectionist policies and their influence on national security agenda.
3. assess the long-term effects of the U.S.-China trade war on global supply chain restructuring and economic diversification.
4. evaluate the effort of multilateral organisations in addressing the challenges of USA and China's trade war

Theoretical Underpinning
The study is anchored on the Mercantilism Theory, a classical economic theory that emphasizes the role of the state in accumulating wealth through trade surpluses and protecting domestic industries. Although its ideas were first popularized by early modern European economists between the 16th and 18th

centuries, Thomas Mun (1571–1641), an English writer, is often credited with formalizing its principles through works such as *England's Treasure by Forraign Trade* (published posthumously in 1664). Mercantilists believed that national prosperity depended on maintaining a favourable balance of trade by maximizing exports and minimizing imports, thereby accumulating precious metals, primarily gold and silver, as a measure of wealth (Irwin, 2017). This theory guided many European nations, which sought to enhance national power by controlling foreign trade and imposing tariffs to protect local industries from external competition.

A central assumption of mercantilism is that the global economy is a zero-sum game, meaning that one nation's economic gain results in another's loss. This view encourages protectionism and trade restrictions, such as tariffs, to secure a competitive advantage. The state plays a critical role in regulating trade to achieve economic goals, emphasizing self-sufficiency and minimizing dependence on foreign goods (Mun, 1664). Although classical economic theories, such as Adam Smith's free-market ideas, challenged mercantilism, its underlying assumptions remain relevant in contemporary trade disputes. In today's global economy, elements of mercantilist thinking are evident in the policies of nations that prioritize trade surpluses and seek to reduce trade deficits through protectionism (Irwin, 2017; Council on Foreign Relations, 2023).

The relevance of mercantilism to this study lies in its ability to explain the strategic motivations behind the U.S.-China trade war. Both countries have engaged in protectionist policies - imposing tariffs and quotas - to protect domestic industries and reduce reliance on foreign imports. The U.S.'s tariffs on Chinese goods reflect mercantilist thinking by attempting to curb the trade deficit and revive local manufacturing industries (Fajgelbaum et al., 2021). Similarly, China's retaliatory tariffs and its efforts to boost domestic production reflect its strategic pursuit of economic self-sufficiency. Mercantilism provides a useful framework to understand how these trade policies are not just economic tools but also instruments of political leverage. The theory underscores the complex interplay between economics and politics, highlighting how modern nations continue to pursue trade surpluses to enhance national power and influence in a highly competitive global environment.

Methods
This study adopted a qualitative approach to provide an in-depth understanding of the complex dynamics of the U.S.-China trade war and protectionism in global politics. Qualitative research is appropriate for analyzing the political, economic, and strategic dimensions of trade wars as it allows for the exploration of themes, trends, and underlying motivations that quantitative methods might overlook. The qualitative approach also facilitates a nuanced interpretation of geopolitical strategies, economic impacts, and global trade realignments, offering rich insights into the subject matter. Secondary sources, including textbooks, government publications, international news outlets (e.g., Reuters, Aljazeera, CNN, and BBC), and business publications, were used to gather data. These sources provided current, relevant, and diverse perspectives on the trade war. Academic publications added scholarly rigor and theoretical grounding to the study. Using secondary sources ensured access to comprehensive data, including official statements, policy documents, and expert analyses, which enhanced the credibility and depth of the research. The data collected were analyzed through content analysis; a method suitable for identifying patterns, themes, and underlying narratives across diverse sources. Content analysis enabled the systematic interpretation of qualitative data, ensuring that the study's findings were based on objective evidence. This method is justified in geopolitical and trade-related research, as it helps synthesize insights from multiple perspectives, ensuring balanced conclusions

Discussion
Economic Impact of the U.S.-China Trade War on Domestic Industries, Employment, and Consumer Prices in Both Countries.
The U.S.-China trade war, initiated in 2018, marked a pivotal shift in global trade relations, significantly impacting domestic industries, employment, and consumer prices in both countries. The imposition of tariffs by the U.S. and the retaliatory measures by China disrupted long-established supply chains, increased the cost of goods, and influenced the labour market. While the primary goal was to protect

domestic industries and promote fair trade, the unintended consequences of these policies rippled through the global economy.

U.S. Tariffs on Chinese Goods (2016-2023): This table summarizes the tariffs imposed by the U.S. on Chinese goods from 2016 to 2023, including their motives. These measures were introduced to address issues such as trade imbalances, intellectual property theft, and national security concerns. The tariffs aimed to curb China's influence, encourage local production, and realign global trade networks.

Table 1: Tariffs imposed by the U.S. on Chinese goods from 2016 to 2023

Year	Tariff/Action	Affected Goods	Tariff Rate	Motive	Source
2018	Section 301 Tariffs – List 1	Machinery, electronics, medical devices	25%	To counter alleged intellectual property theft and forced technology transfer.	Statista. (2024).
2018	Section 301 Tariffs – List 2	Chemicals, building materials, machinery	25%	Responding to China's industrial policies (e.g., "Made in China 2025").	Statista. (2024).
2018	Section 301 Tariffs – List 3	Furniture, appliances, food products	10% (later raised to 25%)	Addressing trade imbalances and applying pressure on China to change policies.	GEOFOR. (2024).
2019	Section 301 Tariffs – List 4A	Clothing, footwear, electronics (consumer goods)	15% (later reduced to 7.5%)	Targeting consumer goods to escalate pressure before negotiations.	GEOFOR. (2024).
2020	Tariffs on Steel and Aluminum	Steel and aluminum imports from China	25% (steel), 10% (aluminum)	National security concerns – reducing dependence on foreign metals.	Statista. (2024).
2020	Expansion of Entity List	Technology firms (Huawei, ZTE)	Export restrictions	Safeguarding national security by limiting access to sensitive technology.	Statista. (2024).
2021	Continued Tariffs (Biden Administration)	Various products (Lists 1-4A)	25%	Maintaining pressure while focusing on diplomatic engagement.	LinkedIn Economic Graph. (2024
2023	Tariff Review and Adjustments	Select agricultural and consumer goods	Adjusted tariffs	Evaluating tariff effectiveness and mitigating consumer impacts.	LinkedIn Economic Graph. (2024

Source**:** Authors' Compilations, 2024

China's Reciprocal Tariffs on U.S. Goods (2016-2023)
This table below summarizes the tariffs imposed by China (PRC) in response to U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods between 2016 and 2023. These tariffs targeted key U.S. exports, especially in the agricultural and technology sectors, and served as strategic measures to counterbalance U.S. trade actions. The motives behind these tariffs reflect both economic and political strategies, aimed at exerting pressure on the U.S. economy.

Table 2: China's Reciprocal Tariffs on U.S. Goods

Year	Tariff/Action	Affected Goods	Tariff Rate	Motive	Source
2018	1st Round Tariffs	Soybeans, automobiles, chemicals	25%	Targeting U.S. agricultural exports to impact key U.S. regions.	Statista. (2024).
2018	2nd Round Tariffs	Meat, seafood, fruit, grains	10%-25%	Further pressure on U.S. agricultural exporters.	Statista. (2024).
2019	3rd Round Tariffs	Oil, natural gas, chemicals	5%-10%	Response to U.S. tariffs on consumer goods.	GEOFOR. (2024).
2019	Luxury Goods Tariffs	Aircraft, cars, whiskey, electronics	25%	Targeted U.S. luxury goods to maximize pressure.	GEOFOR. (2024).
2020	Tariffs Adjustment	Soybeans, pork (Reduced)	Lowered from 25%	Eased tariffs to control food inflation and support stability.	Statista. (2018).
2020	Medical Equipment Tariffs	Medical devices, machinery	5%-15%	Retaliated against U.S. technology restrictions.	GEOFOR. (2024).
2021	Tariff Review	Agricultural goods	Exemptions on some goods	Facilitating negotiations with the Biden administration.	LinkedIn Economic Graph. (2024).
2022	Continuation of Tariffs	Soybeans, automotive parts	10%-25%	Maintained pressure while balancing domestic interests.	Statista. (2024).
2023	Tariff Revisions	Select agricultural and consumer goods	Adjusted tariffs	Evaluating outcomes and focusing on recovery.	Statista. (2024).

Source: Authors' Compilations, 2024

Impact on Domestic Industries

The U.S.-China trade war profoundly affected key industries in both countries, particularly those reliant on cross-border supply chains. The U.S. imposed tariffs on a wide range of Chinese goods, including technology, machinery, and consumer electronics, which disrupted production processes for companies that sourced components from China (Fajgelbaum et al., 2021). In the automotive sector, U.S. manufacturers faced increased costs due to tariffs on Chinese parts, forcing many companies to either absorb the costs or pass them on to consumers (Autor, Dorn, & Hanson, 2023). Similarly, Chinese industries suffered from reduced exports to the U.S., notably in electronics and textiles, leading to a contraction in production and sales.

The graph below displays the impact of the U.S.-China trade war on key domestic industries in both countries. The trade war significantly affected industries such as technology, automotive, and textiles, leading to increased costs, disruptions in production, and reduced exports. Both countries adapted by relocating production, especially to Southeast Asia, although these moves presented new challenges, such as operational complexities and weaker infrastructure.

Impact of U.S.-China Trade War on Domestic Industries (2016-2023)
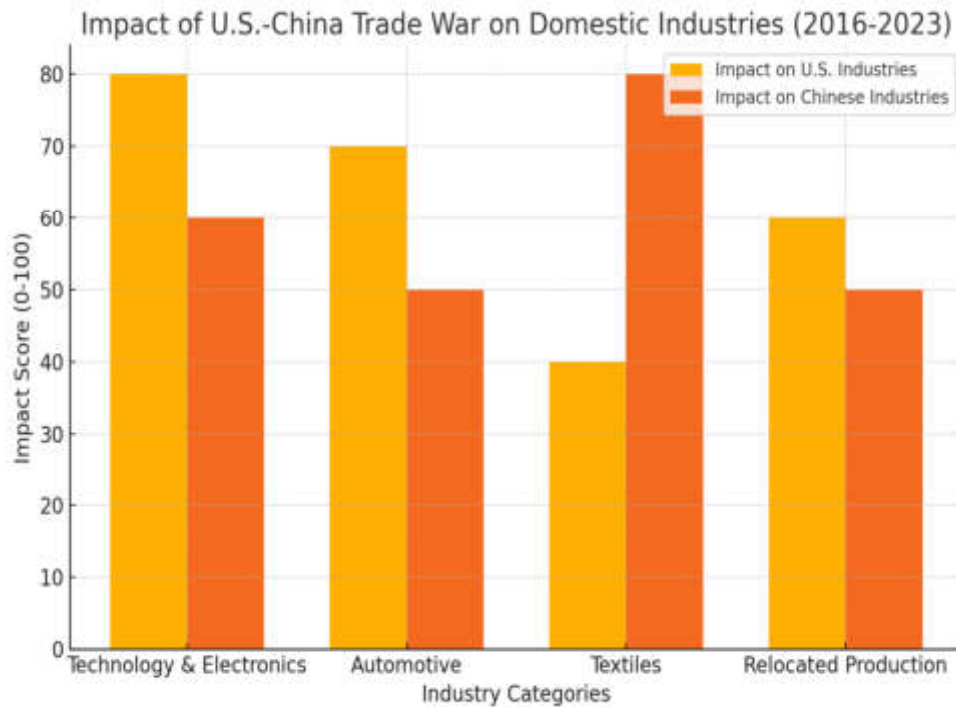
Data Source: Fajgelbaum et al., 2021; Autor, Dorn, & Hanson, 2023; NBER, 2022.

Moreover, industries in both countries adapted by diversifying their supply chains to mitigate risks. Some companies relocated production to Southeast Asia, particularly Vietnam and Thailand, but encountered new challenges, such as weaker infrastructure and increased operational complexity (NBER, 2022). This reconfiguration of supply chains reflects the economic complexities introduced by protectionist policies, which aimed to reduce reliance on foreign imports but ended up creating inefficiencies across industries.

Employment Effects and Labour Market Disruptions
The trade war also exerted considerable pressure on employment rates in both economies. In the U.S., industries that relied heavily on Chinese imports, such as manufacturing and retail, faced significant job losses as production costs soared (Autor et al., 2023). Many companies either scaled down operations or shifted production abroad, resulting in layoffs and reduced job creation. For example, the technology sector experienced disruptions, as tariffs increased the cost of components needed for assembling products in the U.S. (Fajgelbaum et al., 2021).

The graph below illustrates the impact of the U.S.-China trade war on employment across key industries in both countries. In the U.S., sectors like manufacturing and retail faced job losses due to higher production costs, while the technology sector struggled with the increased cost of imported components. In China, the textile and electronics industries, heavily dependent on U.S. demand, experienced significant disruptions and layoffs. The trade war thus caused substantial labour market instability, affecting both economies.

Employment Effects and Labor Market Disruptions (2016-2023)
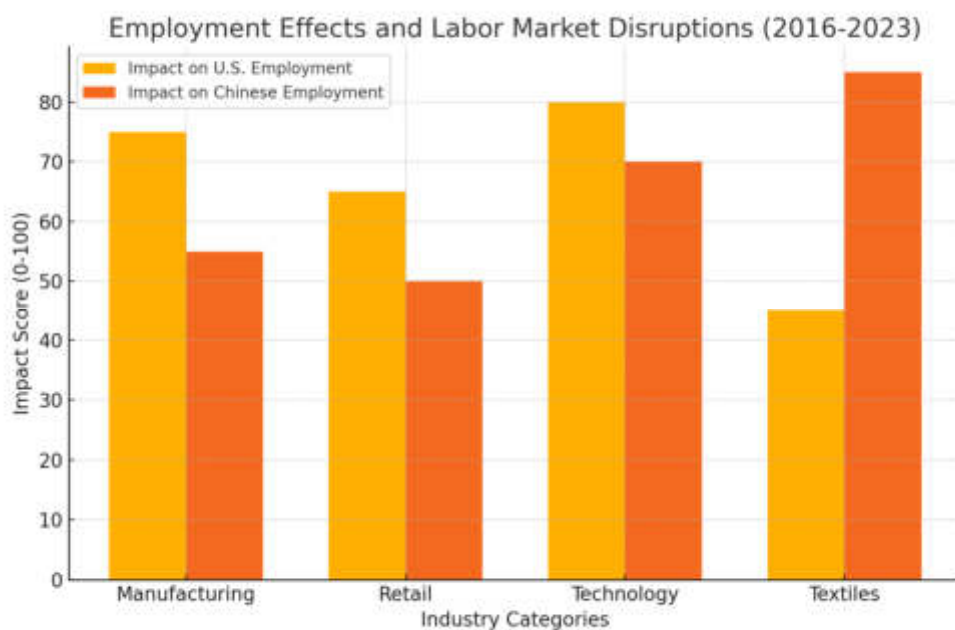
Data Source: Fajgelbaum et al., 2021; Autor, Dorn, & Hanson, 2023; NBER, 2022.

China, on the other hand, saw employment challenges in industries that were heavily dependent on exports to the U.S. The textile and electronics sectors, which had previously thrived on U.S. demand, reported lower production volumes and worker layoffs (NBER, 2022). The reduction in export activity not only affected businesses but also strained local economies in regions where these industries were concentrated. This labour market instability illustrates the unintended consequences of protectionist policies, which disrupted employment patterns and complicated long-term economic planning.

Impact on Consumer Prices and Purchasing Power: Consumers in both the U.S. and China felt the impact of tariffs through higher prices, as companies passed on increased production costs. In the U.S., products such as electronics, clothing, and household appliances became more expensive, reducing the purchasing power of consumers (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023). The automotive industry, for instance, saw a rise in car prices due to the tariffs on Chinese-made components, further straining consumer budgets. The higher cost of living reduced disposable income, affecting consumer spending and slowing economic growth.

China also experienced inflationary pressures, as domestic firms that depended on U.S. imports faced higher input costs. While Chinese consumers were somewhat shielded by government subsidies, the trade war disrupted access to certain goods and services, leading to market inefficiencies (NBER, 2022). Both economies grappled with the challenge of balancing protectionist policies with maintaining consumer welfare, revealing the complexities of managing trade wars in an interconnected global economy.

Broader Economic Disruptions and Long-term Implications: The economic disruptions caused by the U.S.-China trade war extended beyond immediate price increases and job losses. Protectionist measures prompted firms to reconsider their business models, leading to a reorganization of global trade networks. Some countries, such as Vietnam, benefited from trade diversions, but the long-term sustainability of these new trade routes remains uncertain (Fajgelbaum et al., 2021). Additionally, the trade war highlighted the risks associated with economic decoupling, as businesses struggled to adapt to new market dynamics and geopolitical uncertainties.

The persistence of tariffs, even under the Biden administration, suggests that protectionist policies may continue to influence economic strategies in both countries. Although diplomatic efforts aim to stabilize

trade relations, the ongoing challenges underscore the difficulties of reconciling economic competition with geopolitical stability (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023). The trade war has also set a precedent for future trade wars, as countries increasingly view economic policies as tools of strategic leverage. The economic impact of the U.S.-China trade war on domestic industries, employment, and consumer prices underscores the far-reaching consequences of protectionist policies. While these measures aimed to protect national industries and correct trade imbalances, they introduced new inefficiencies, disrupted supply chains, and strained labour markets. The increased prices faced by consumers in both countries reflect the challenges of managing economic conflicts in a globalized world. As the trade war continues to shape economic strategies and policy decisions, the need for sustainable trade practices becomes increasingly evident.

Political Strategies Driving the Adoption of Protectionist Policies and their Influence on National Security Agenda

The adoption of protectionist policies by states has not only shaped economic interactions but also served as a strategic tool to achieve political objectives. In recent years, countries have increasingly used tariffs and trade restrictions to address national security concerns, protect sensitive industries, and promote technological dominance.

Protectionism as a Strategic Tool for National Interests: Protectionist policies, particularly tariffs, have been utilized by countries to protect local industries from foreign competition and to address trade imbalances. In the U.S., tariffs imposed on Chinese technology and goods were framed as necessary to defend intellectual property rights and ensure fair competition (Atlantic Council, 2024). The decision to impose tariffs on machinery, technology, and consumer electronics from China exemplifies how trade restrictions served a dual function: supporting local manufacturing and exerting pressure on China's growing technological dominance (Fajgelbaum et al., 2021).

Beyond mere economic concerns, these trade measures were also designed to realign global supply chains and reduce dependence on foreign imports (Homeland Security, 2024). By discouraging reliance on Chinese components, the U.S. aimed to bolster its industrial base and minimize vulnerabilities in critical sectors such as technology and defense. The political strategy behind these tariffs reflects the intent to maintain national sovereignty over strategic industries, which are seen as vital for long-term economic stability and security.

Technological Dominance and Geopolitical Competition: Technological advancement plays a significant role in modern geopolitics, and protectionist policies often target high-tech industries to maintain global competitiveness. The U.S., for instance, implemented export controls on Chinese technology firms like Huawei, aiming to limit China's access to sensitive technologies (China Briefing, 2024). Such measures were designed to slow down China's technological progress and protect American innovation, reflecting the intersection of trade policy and national security agendas.

China responded with its own restrictions on U.S. goods and investment, particularly in sectors critical to its industrial policy, such as semiconductors and artificial intelligence (Homeland Security, 2024). The strategic use of tariffs and trade barriers highlights how both nations sought to influence global trade dynamics in their favour. Protectionist policies in this context served not only to protect economic interests but also to advance geopolitical goals, as control over technology translates into strategic influence in global affairs.

Trade Restrictions as Instruments of Defense Security: The nexus between trade policy and national security is particularly evident in the defense sector. Tariffs on steel and aluminum imports imposed by the U.S. were justified on the grounds of national security, as these materials are critical for defense manufacturing (Atlantic Council, 2024). The political rationale for these tariffs was to reduce dependency on foreign suppliers, ensuring that vital resources for national defense remained under domestic control.

Similarly, the expansion of the U.S. "Entity List," which restricted American companies from selling technology to certain Chinese firms, further demonstrates how trade policies were integrated into national security strategies (Homeland Security, 2024). These measures aimed to safeguard the U.S. from potential security threats while simultaneously weakening China's industrial capabilities. As both nations pursued protectionist strategies, it became evident that trade policy was increasingly being shaped by considerations beyond economics, with security concerns taking precedence.

The political strategies behind the adoption of protectionist policies underscore the complex interplay between trade policy and national security. Tariffs and trade restrictions are no longer mere economic tools but have become instruments of political leverage, used to protect national interests and promote strategic goals such as technological dominance and defense security. The U.S.-China trade war illustrates how economic measures can serve broader geopolitical objectives, reshaping global supply chains and influencing power dynamics. As countries continue to navigate these challenges, the alignment of trade policy with national security agendas is likely to become even more pronounced.

Long-Term Effects of the U.S.-China Trade War on Global Supply Chain Restructuring and Economic Diversification

The long-term effects of the U.S.-China trade war extend beyond immediate economic disruption, fundamentally reshaping global supply chains and promoting economic diversification. Businesses and economies worldwide have been forced to reassess their dependencies on Chinese manufacturing and U.S. consumer markets. This reconfiguration has sparked a wave of strategic realignment, leading to the diversification of supply chains and efforts to reduce risks. However, these shifts raise questions about the sustainability of new trade patterns and the vulnerabilities that might emerge from the restructuring of global networks.

Global Supply Chain Restructuring and the Shift Away from China: The U.S.-China trade war prompted several U.S. companies to relocate production from China to neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia. The primary goal was to mitigate the risks posed by tariffs and geopolitical uncertainties, and to diversify supply chains away from reliance on Chinese manufacturing. Key sectors affected include technology, consumer electronics, and automotive industries, which moved production to countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, and India. Notable companies that shifted their manufacturing bases include Apple, which began diversifying production to India for iPhone assembly to reduce reliance on Chinese factories (China Briefing, 2024). Google also moved some production of its Pixel smartphones to Vietnam as part of a broader supply chain strategy. In the automotive sector, Harley-Davidson relocated some operations to Thailand to circumvent the trade barriers created by the U.S.-China war (Dhae, et al. 2023)

Vietnam has become a significant beneficiary of these shifts. The country's export of textiles and garments to the U.S. surpassed China's by 2024, reflecting its growing competitive advantage in labour-intensive industries (Vietnam Briefing, 2024). Meanwhile, Dell and HP have been reported to relocate part of their laptop and electronics manufacturing to avoid U.S. tariffs on Chinese products. The relocation strategies of these companies demonstrate the geopolitical complexities driving business decisions in a fragmented trade environment. While these moves diversify risks, they also introduce new operational challenges, such as managing multi-country production networks and ensuring quality control across different jurisdictions.

However, while relocating production allowed firms to avoid tariffs, it introduced new challenges. Weaker infrastructure, labour issues, and operational inefficiencies in some of these new host countries presented obstacles to seamless operations (CBIZ, 2024). The diversification of supply chains has increased complexity, with companies now managing production across multiple locations. Although this approach reduces dependence on a single country, it also raises logistical costs and heightens the risk of disruptions from unforeseen events, such as natural disasters or political instability.

Economic Diversification and Strategic Realignment: The U.S.-China trade war spurred both nations to adopt economic diversification strategies and realign their economies toward resilience and

independence from foreign vulnerabilities. The United States prioritized reshoring critical industries, particularly focusing on semiconductors and pharmaceuticals, which are essential for both technological advancement and public health. For instance, the U.S. government introduced incentives such as the CHIPS Act to encourage domestic semiconductor production, reducing reliance on Chinese imports (Deloitte, 2024). Similarly, pharmaceutical manufacturing was expanded within U.S. borders to mitigate supply chain disruptions observed during the COVID-19 pandemic and to safeguard national health security.

In parallel, China's strategic response materialized through the "dual circulation" strategy, which aimed to reduce the country's dependency on external markets and enhance domestic consumption (CERRE, 2024). This approach emphasized expanding China's local manufacturing capabilities and fostering self-reliance in technology, green energy, and critical industries. Additionally, China tightened its control over sectors like electric vehicles (EVs) to maintain its industrial leadership while reducing vulnerabilities to Western sanctions.

While these strategic realignments have strengthened each country's economic defenses, they also risk creating inefficiencies by fragmenting global trade networks. The diversification of production hubs and reduced interdependence may increase operational costs and impact global economic growth. The shift away from China has also resulted in countries like Mexico becoming the largest exporters to the U.S. market, reflecting a significant realignment in global trade dynamics (Deloitte, 2024). Both the U.S. and China's economic policies exemplify a broader trend toward nationalism, prioritizing resilience over globalization.

Sustainability of New Trade Patterns and Emerging Vulnerabilities: The long-term sustainability of the reconfigured supply chains remains uncertain. Although diversification offers some protection against geopolitical risks, it also introduces new vulnerabilities. For instance, companies that relocated production from China to Southeast Asia now face higher costs and potential disruptions due to limited infrastructure (J.P. Morgan, 2024). Furthermore, as countries like Vietnam and Thailand become more integrated into global supply chains, they may attract similar geopolitical tensions, potentially leading to new trade wars.

In addition, the focus on economic self-sufficiency may reduce the overall efficiency of the global trade system, increasing production costs and limiting consumer choices. The reorganization of supply chains has also highlighted the importance of flexibility and adaptability in business strategies. Companies that successfully navigate the complexities of diversified supply chains are better positioned to weather future disruptions, while those that struggle may face financial and operational difficulties (Cipher News, 2024).

The U.S.-China trade war has triggered significant shifts in global supply chains and economic strategies, promoting diversification and reshoring efforts. While these changes offer some protection against geopolitical risks, they also introduce new challenges, including operational inefficiencies and increased costs. The long-term sustainability of these new trade patterns depends on the ability of businesses and economies to adapt to evolving geopolitical landscapes. As countries and companies continue to realign their strategies, the global economy may experience further fragmentation, reshaping the dynamics of international trade in the years to come.

Multilateral Organisations and the Challenges of USA and China's Trade War
The trade war between the United States and China, beginning in 2018, has presented significant challenges not only for the two countries but also for the broader global economy. As the world's two largest economies, their tariffs and retaliatory trade measures have disrupted global trade flows, heightened geopolitical tensions, and challenged the norms of international trade. Multilateral organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have sought to address these challenges. Their efforts have primarily focused on mitigating the trade war's impact on global markets, mediating disputes, and promoting cooperation between nations. However, the effectiveness

of these organisations has been questioned, especially in light of the unilateral actions taken by the U.S. and China, which have often circumvented multilateral frameworks.

The World Trade Organization's Role: The World Trade Organization (WTO) has been central to global trade governance, and its role in the U.S.-China trade war is significant, yet limited. The WTO's dispute resolution mechanism was designed to resolve trade disputes through legal frameworks and ensure that member states abide by agreed-upon trade rules (Bown & Irwin, 2019). However, the U.S. repeatedly expressed frustration with the WTO, particularly concerning China's trade practices, which the U.S. claimed the WTO was ill-equipped to address (Zeng, 2021). The U.S. imposed tariffs on China without pursuing WTO dispute settlement procedures, effectively sidelining the organization. Despite this, China lodged complaints with the WTO, seeking a resolution through the multilateral process (WTO, 2020). While the WTO made attempts to mediate, its influence over the outcome of the trade war was limited due to the U.S.'s unilateral approach and China's selective engagement. Furthermore, the WTO's Appellate Body was undermined when the U.S. blocked the appointment of judges, crippling its dispute resolution capacity (Pelc, 2021). These developments highlight the challenges multilateral organizations face when key players bypass their mechanisms.

International Monetary Fund's Economic Mediation: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has also played a role in assessing and mitigating the economic fallout from the U.S.-China trade war. As an institution tasked with overseeing global financial stability, the IMF raised concerns about the adverse effects of the trade war on global economic growth, highlighting the negative impact on both developed and developing economies (IMF, 2019). The IMF warned that tariffs would lower global GDP by 0.5% and urged the U.S. and China to resolve their differences through dialogue, emphasizing the importance of avoiding further escalation (Gopinath, 2019). However, the IMF's influence in steering the U.S. and China towards a resolution was limited. Both countries continued to prioritize national economic strategies over global stability, reducing the efficacy of IMF interventions. While the IMF provided valuable analysis and forecasts, its lack of enforcement mechanisms and reliance on member countries' cooperation limited its ability to resolve the trade dispute effectively (Guzman, 2020). Thus, the IMF's efforts, though important in raising awareness of the trade war's global repercussions, were insufficient in fostering a direct resolution.

UNCTAD's Role in Global Trade Analysis: The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has been instrumental in analyzing the global trade shifts prompted by the U.S.-China trade war. UNCTAD focused on how the conflict reshaped global supply chains, with companies relocating production to other countries to avoid tariffs. The organization's reports indicated that developing nations in Southeast Asia, such as Vietnam and Thailand, were among the beneficiaries of these shifts, gaining market share in industries previously dominated by Chinese exports to the U.S. (UNCTAD, 2020). UNCTAD advocated for enhanced multilateral cooperation to stabilize global trade and emphasized the need for trade reforms to address the systemic issues exposed by the trade war, such as overdependence on specific supply chains and the risks of protectionism (Baldwin, 2020). However, similar to other multilateral organizations, UNCTAD faced limitations in terms of direct influence over the policies of the U.S. and China. While its analysis informed global policy discussions, it lacked the enforcement power to compel changes in the trade practices of the two superpowers, reflecting a broader challenge of multilateralism in the current geopolitical climate.

Multilateral organisations such as the WTO, IMF, and UNCTAD have made considerable efforts to address the challenges posed by the U.S.-China trade war, but their success has been constrained by the unilateral actions of the two countries and the complex geopolitical underpinnings of the dispute. The WTO's dispute resolution mechanism was bypassed, undermining its role in trade governance. The IMF's economic assessments raised awareness of the global implications but failed to push for concrete solutions, while UNCTAD's analysis provided important insights into shifting global trade patterns without directly influencing the conflict's resolution. The U.S.-China trade war illustrates the limitations of multilateralism in resolving trade disputes between major powers, particularly when those powers are willing to sideline or bypass international institutions to pursue national interests.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The U.S.-China trade war from 2016 to 2023 highlighted the deep interconnections between economic policy and geopolitical strategies, reshaping global trade networks and supply chains. At its core, the trade war reflected the principles of mercantilism, where both nations pursued protectionist policies to safeguard national industries and achieve trade surpluses. This conflict disrupted traditional trade flows and underscored the fragility of global interdependence, forcing both countries to reassess their trade relationships. While the U.S. imposed tariffs to counter China's industrial policies and perceived unfair practices, China responded with retaliatory measures targeting U.S. agricultural and technology sectors. These actions not only impacted bilateral trade but also introduced economic inefficiencies, disrupting production processes and consumer markets across the globe.

The trade war drove substantial restructuring of global supply chains as companies sought to mitigate risks and diversify production. U.S. firms relocated production from China to neighbouring countries such as Vietnam and Thailand, reflecting an attempt to reduce exposure to geopolitical uncertainties. At the same time, the trade war catalyzed economic realignments, with both countries focusing on self-sufficiency. The U.S. aimed to bolster domestic production of semiconductors and pharmaceuticals to enhance national security, while China pursued a "dual circulation" strategy to reduce dependence on Western markets. However, these strategies also revealed vulnerabilities, as the shift to new supply chains increased logistical complexities and operational costs.

In line with mercantilist theory, both the U.S. and China used trade policies as tools for political leverage, asserting their economic dominance and strategic interests. Mercantilism's emphasis on accumulating wealth through trade surpluses was reflected in both nations' pursuit of economic nationalism and self-reliance. While these policies aimed to secure long-term economic advantages, they also fragmented global trade networks, weakening the efficiencies of globalization. The challenges posed by fragmented supply chains underscore the need for flexible economic strategies that balance national interests with global cooperation. The U.S.-China war serves as a case study in how modern economic policies continue to echo mercantilist principles, highlighting the intricate relationship between trade, politics, and security in an increasingly interconnected world.

The absence of a strong and effective International regulatory and enforcement Institutions to regulate trade, investments and industrial activities at the global level contributed to the challenges as the World Trade Organization, International Labour Organizations and other related organizations at the local, regional and international levels don't have the bark and the bite to act particularly when it involves the world powers that funds its budgets and produces its key officials. The multilateral Institutions plays a laid back and passive roles which made it to be a free for all fight for all competitors allowing the strongest to carry the day with the consequential outcomes of distabilizing free trade with its negative narratives on domestic and international trade. There are also positive effects of protection on the home industries and an optimum balance of protecting home industry and international Free trade should be pursued by strong multilateral agencies with the political and economic will to strike an optimum balance of a win-win solutions to the domestic industry and international free trade needs.

Based on the above findings, the study recommended that:
1. To mitigate future disruptions, both the U.S. and China, alongside global businesses, should diversify supply chains across multiple regions to reduce dependencies on any single country. Governments and industries must invest in technologies like blockchain and AI to improve transparency and efficiency within supply networks. Developing contingency strategies will also ensure adaptability in the face of geopolitical risks, natural disasters, or pandemics. Promoting multilateral trade agreements can foster cooperation, encouraging stability and reducing the economic vulnerabilities exposed by the trade war.
2. Both nations should shift focus toward diplomacy and multilateral negotiations to resolve trade disputes rather than rely on unilateral protectionist policies. Engaging through platforms such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) will promote fair trade practices and restore global economic stability. Policy reforms addressing intellectual property rights and market access can alleviate tensions. Diplomacy-driven trade strategies will help maintain stable bilateral relations, ensuring

that national security agendas do not compromise the economic welfare of both nations and the global economy.

3. The U.S. and China must promote sustainable industrial diversification, focusing on technology, green energy, and healthcare. Policies supporting innovation in critical industries such as semiconductors and pharmaceuticals will reduce reliance on foreign imports. At the same time, regional economies benefiting from the trade shifts—like Vietnam and Thailand—should be integrated into long-term development strategies. Encouraging sustainable practices will foster long-term growth, ensuring that the reconfigured trade networks remain resilient while avoiding further fragmentation of the global economy.

4. The multilateral institutions for trade, investments and industralization should be strengthened as capacity building to have the political and economic will to bark, bite and to enforce an effective enforcement of free trade that will benefit all stakeholders at local and international levels

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CONLICT RESOLUTION AND MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES IN THE EXECUTIVE/LEGISLATIVE RELATIONSHIP OF THE THIRD TIER OF GOVERNMENT

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Abstract
This paper is titled, Conflict Resolution and Management Techniques in the Executive/Legislative Relationship of the Third Tier of Government. The paper highlights key functions and Role of both the Executive and Legislative arms of Local Government as well as possible avenues of conflict and how to both resolve and manage conflicts if and when they arise. Since it is a known fact that conflict in any organization cannot be eradicated, it was suggested amongst others that to reduce and resolve conflicts, both the Executive and Legislative members of the Third Tier of Government should prioritize the total Development of local councils; ensure that there is no bias and work as a team.

Keywords: Conflict Resolution, Conflict Management, Executive, Legislature, Local Government

Introduction

The Local Government System by Democratically elected Local Government Councils is guaranteed under the 1999 Nigerian constitution, Section 7. Based on this section, the 1999 Nigerian Constitution provides for the functions of a local council under its fourth schedule. This schedule tends to derive mainly from the Basic and constitutional transition provisions (Decree 15 of 1987). These functions of Local Governments are categorized into:

1. The Exclusive list and
2. The concurrent list

"The Exclusive List" of functions are those functions that are solely performed by local governments, while the concurrent list of functions are those that the local government performs in collaboration with state and or federal government. The state and or federal government can also perform these functions on behalf of local government until local governments are in a position to perform such functions. In performing the said functions above, a strong relationship between the executive and legislative arms of the Local Government is very much necessary and essential. This is to avoid unwarranted and unnecessary conflicts.

Going further, we shall briefly consider a few ingredients that will bring about a strong, virile and formidable relationship between the executive and legislative arms of the local government, for a free flow of the delivery of the dividends of democracy to the people at the grassroots.
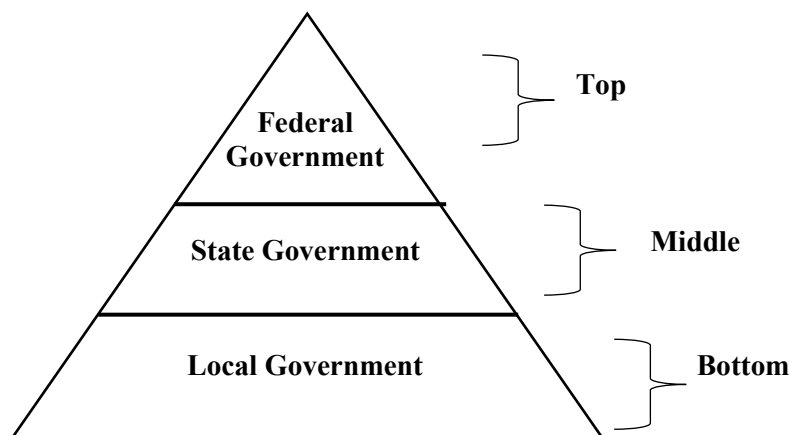
Figure 1: Pyramid of Government Institutions

Definition of Key Terms/Brief Review of Related Literature
Here, we shall briefly consider, define and do a quick review of related literature.

Executive
The Executive arm of the Local Government is constituted by the chairman, the vice chairman elected with him, the secretary and supervisors appointed by the chairman. The main functions of these key officers specified in the Hand Book on Local Government (1999) are as follows:
The chairman, as the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, shall perform the following functions;
i.   He shall observe and comply fully with the checks and balances spelt out in the existing guidelines and financial regulations governing receipts and disbursement of public funds and other assets entrusted to his care and shall be liable for any breach thereof;
ii. His Accountability shall not cease by virtue of him leaving office and he may be called upon, at any time, even after leaving office, to account for his tenure as chairman.
iii. The Chairman as Chief Executive and Accounting Officer shall face periodic checks in order to ensure full adherence to the fiancé (control and management). And to this end;
(a) All instructions relating to expenditure of public funds by the Accounting officers shall be in writing.
(b) All Accounting Officers shall be responsible to Account to the Public Accounts Committee for all monies voted for each department and shall be peculiarly liable.
(c) The Chairman as Chief Executive and Accounting Officer shall render monthly statement of income and expenditure and annual reports to the Local Government Council for it to consider and debate in order to ensure Accountability and enforce the performance ethics. The format and content of the Annual report shall place emphasis on performance and concrete achievements of the Local Government targets and output during the relevant year.
(d) The Local Government Chairman shall render quarterly returns of the actual income and expenditure of the Local Government to the State Government for onward transmission to the office of the vice president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with a copy to the Central Bank of Nigeria.
(e) The Chairman as Accounting Officer shall be bound by the provisions of any other rules, regulations, guidelines, edicts and laws governing the roles and functions of a Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.
(f) The Chairman shall ensure the strict observance of the spending limits by all concerned.
(g) All reference to the secretary as Accounting Officer in the financial Regulations and any other rules, regulations, guidelines, edicts or laws shall be construed as Reference to the Chairman.
(h) The Chairman shall direct the officers of the Local Government and shall allocate responsibilities to the Vice Chairman, Secretary and Supervisors at least once every week.
(i) The Chairman shall hold meetings with the members of the executive committee of the Local Government i.e. Vice Chairman, Secretary and Supervisors at least once every week.
(j) He shall maintain liaison with the Local Government legislature and the leader of the legislature in the interest of the Local Government.
(k) He shall countersign the Annual performance evaluation report of the heads of Department of the Local Government which shall be initiated by the secretary to Local Government.

The Vice Chairman
The Vice Chairman, who shall be elected with the chairman of Local Government, shall be assigned responsibilities for the Administration of a Department of the Local Government:
1.   He shall Act for the Chairman in his absence;
2.   The Vice Chairman may be called upon at any time, even after leaving office, to account for his tenure as Vice Chairman.

The Secretary to the Local Government
The Secretary to the Local Government shall be appointed by the chairman and shall hold his office at the pleasure of the Chairman. He shall:
1.   Serve as the Secretary of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Local Government and keep the records thereof;
2.   Co-ordinate the activities of the Departments of the Local Government;

3. Liaise, on behalf of the Chairman, with the Local Government Council through the Leader of the council;
4. Liaise with the Secretary to the State Government and other necessary state functionaries on state – Local Government Relations; and
5. Perform such other duties as may be assigned to him from time to time, by the chairman.

Supervisors

The supervisors shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Local Government in consultation with the Local Government Council. Each Supervisor shall hold his appointment at the pleasure of the Local Government Chairman who appointed him or her and the Supervisor's tenure shall automatically remain the discretion of the Chairman.

The functions of the Supervisory Councillors as political heads are as follows;

a. Political heads of their respective departments;
b. Member of the finance and general purpose committee which in effect is the cabinet to the Local Government,
c. Giving directives to Executive heads of Local Government departments on general policy issues, only, but not on the internal management of the department;
d. Assisting the Chairman to supervise the execution of Local Government projects within their respective Departments;
e. Chairman of Relevant committee i.e. their respective departments (such as Education, works, Health, etc)
f. Carrying out such other functions as Chairman or council may assign to them from time to time.

Legislature/Legislative Arm of Local Government

The Legislature comprises the Leader of the council, the Deputy Leader and Councillors. The Legislative power vested in the Local Government council are exercised by the bye-laws passed by its legislature and assented to by the chairman.

The functions of the Legislature in the Local Government include;

Law Making

(see section 1 (a), (b) of the fourth schedule of the 1999 constitution for the exclusive list. The concurrent list of matters on which both a Local Government council and the State Assembly have powers to legislate on are in section 2 (a), (b) of the fourth schedule).

Making Resolutions and Approval

The council exercises its powers through resolutions and approval in relation to individual or specific cases.

a. A resolution to remove the chairman or leader of the council by a two third majority. This function is distinct from the authority to make bye-laws, which have wide applicability in the area.
b. The power to approve by a simple majority of the members of the council the nomination of the chairman of the Local Government, for the appointment of the Vice Chairman of the Local Government in case of vacancy by reason of death, resignation or removal.
c. The power to approve the nomination of anyone appointed by the Chairman of the Local Government as supervisor.

Relationship

The Oxford Advanced Leaner's Dictionary, 6th edition, defines the word Relationship as follows;

1. Connection or Association; the condition of being Related.
2. A way in which two or more people behave and are involved with each other, etc.

Conflict Resolution/Management Techniques

Conflict is bound to occur where there is a Relationship between two or more people. This can happen both in the family, church, business or public organization. The term conflict can be regarded as an overt behaviour that results when an individual or group of individuals think a perceived need or needs of the individual or group of individuals has been frustrated or is about to be frustrated. (Hardy, 2018). As far back as 1943, Hansfield (in Hardy, 2018) defines conflict as a breakdown in the normal activities of an organization in such a manner that the individual or groups involved experience disharmony in

working together. Oparaku and Obi (2019) define conflict as a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party.

There are three key aspects of conflicts. They are;
- Goal Conflict - A situation in which desired objectives and preferred outcomes appear to be incompatible among individuals.
- Cognitive Conflict – A situation in which ideas or thoughts are perceived as incompatible.
- Affective Conflict – A situation in which feelings or emotions are incompatible, that is people become angry with one another.

Conflict is perfectly natural and should be expected to occur. In view of this assertion, leaders must know when to eliminate conflict and when to build on it. Today's leaders and managers in all sectors must accept the existence of conflict and realize that attempt to eliminate all conflicts might be unrealizable. The general consensus is that conflict in itself is not undesirable rather it is a phenomenon that can have constructive or destructive effect depending on its management. Conflict management can therefore be said to be the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflicts. The aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and Group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in an organizational setting (Oparaku & Obi, 2019).

Types of Conflict
Oparaku and Obi (2019) have identified the following types of conflicts;
1. Interpersonal conflict
2. Intrapersonal conflict
3. Inter Group conflict
4. Intra Group conflict

Sources of Conflict
The following sources of conflict have also been identified by Oparaku and Obi (2019) with Harry (2010)
1. Power and Authority
2. Environmental Economic Changes
3. Interdependence of work activities
4. Goal Difference
5. Limited Organizational Resources
6. Differences in values, personal styles, organizational ambiguities and communication.
7. Differences in perception
8. Violation of territory
9. Inequitable treatments
10. Role Conflicts

Conflict Reduction Methods
Hardy (2018) has given the following conflict Reduction methods
1. Collective Bargaining
2. Productivity Bargaining
3. Proper Chain of Communication
4. Unifying two Groups against a common Energy

Conflict Resolution Methods
Oparaku and Obi (2019) have stated the following Conflict Resolution methods
1. Suppression And Dominance; Suppression of the Lower power by the higher power. This may sometimes be a short term measure.
2. Compromise; Here, each party to the conflict will be prepared to give up something of value. It is a give and take situation.
3. Integrative Problem Solving Method: This involves face to face meeting of the conflicting parties for the purpose of identifying the problem and solving it through open discussion
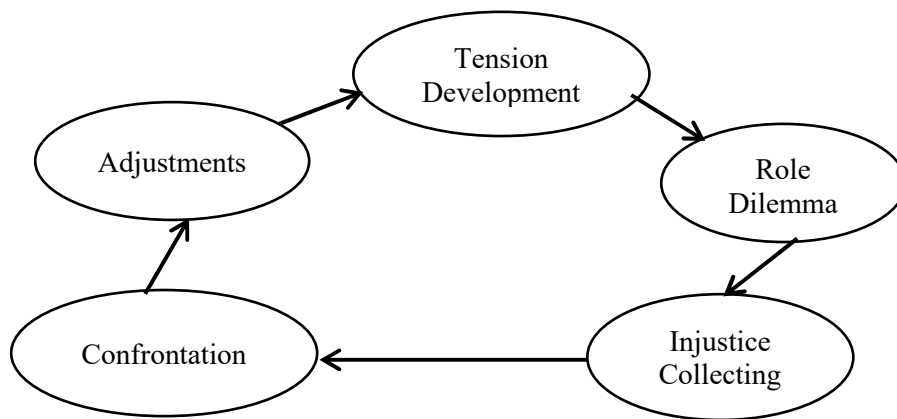
Figure 2: Conflict Cycle (Robinson, 1978)

General Relationship Tips for a Good Working Relationship Between the Executive/Legislature
1. All officers of Local Government should know their functions, duties, obligations and Responsibilities as much as possible.
2. There should be respect for Authority; Respect for the Council Chairman, Respect for the house leader and Respect for each other.
3. All officers of Local Government should know their basic Rights and Limitations.
4. Both the Council Chairman, Vice Chairman and Councilors should appreciate the fact that they all came by the ballot box.
5. Everyone should work to achieve set goals and objectives. All officers of the council should be mindful of the fact that they are Accountable to the people and Accountable to God ultimately.
6. Give honour to the office of the Executive Governor and to the person of the Governor of the state.
7. Don't take anything personally. Forgive when offences arise. Tolerate one another.
8. Focus on the Development of the people.
9. Don't be carried away with the paraphernalia of office. Power is transient. Be humble but not stupid.
10. Fear God as you keep the secrets of the council secret.

Summary/Conclusion
In this paper we have been able to consider Conflict Resolution And Management Techniques in the Executive/Legislative Relationship of the Third Tier of Government. We conclude here that conflicts are bound to occur in this Relationship, but when they do, we should be constructive as we settle amicably.

Suggestions
The following suggestions are given to assist in ensuring that conflicts are effectively resolved and managed:
1. The total Development of the Local Government Area should be the upper most priority of all elected council officials.
2. All council officials should use their various links to draw state firms, institutions and industries to the Local Government Area.
3. There should be no form of bias. Everyone should be carried along.
4. No council officer should sabotage the Local Government Area.
5. Corruption should be avoided in all ramifications.
6. Elected council officer should put a demarcation between their individual private lives and their public life.
7. Give education the attention it deserves.
8. Council officers should take good care of their health.
9. Do what you say, say what you do. Endeavor not to make frivolous promises, donations, etc, in public gatherings.
10. There should be teamwork.

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"AN IDLE HAND IS THE DEVIL'S WORKSHOP": ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND VALUE REORIENTATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN KANO STATE

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Abstract
The study investigated the impact of entrepreneurship development programmes on value reorientation for rural development in Kano State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. Purposive sampling was used to select 320 participants from four local government areas, which include Kumbotso, Gwale, Wudil and Kano Municipal that were purposively selected. Four research questions were raised while two research hypotheses were tested. An instrument entitled Entrepreneurship Development Programmes and Value Reorientation for Rural Development Questionnaire (EDPVRRDQ) was designed to collect data for the study. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression statistical analysis at 0.05 significance level. The results showed that employment development programmes had significant influence on value reorientation for rural development; and that entrepreneurship skills had significant influence on development of societal values among youths. Based on the findings, Policy makers should ensure that entrepreneurship education promotes positive values, such that youth hones both wealth creation skills as well as moral values; trade instructors should focus on using entrepreneurship skills as tools for instilling in youths positive societal values.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Development Programmes, Value Reorientation, Kano State, Rural Development and Entrepreneurship Skills

Introduction

Rural Development is an integrated approach to food production, provision of physical, social and institutional infrastructures with an ultimate goal of bringing about good healthcare delivery system, affordable and quality education, improved and sustainable agriculture etc. (Ogunkoya, et. al., 2015). Rural development is a dynamic and evolving field that plays a crucial role in promoting inclusive growth, reducing disparities, and improving the quality of life in rural areas (Yu, et al. 2023). Rural development is not a new phenomenon to the developing countries. Despite the growth rate of civilization, Nigeria's internal disparity between rural and urban areas remains very high even after several national and regional development efforts (Ogunkoya, et. al., 2015). According to the report, nearly six (6) of the eight (8) million people living in rural Kano are living below the poverty line (The Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning (2020) Kano State Development Plan 2022-2025).

With such level of unemployment and poverty in the rural areas, they have become areas of high patronage for terrorism and insecurity that has resulted in the displacement of many persons in several rural settlements, destruction of homes, closure of schools and the desert of farmlands by farmers because of banditry. These has further worsened the case of poverty, hunger, low job prospect, limited access to education, poor health infrastructure, low life expectancy, deepened unemployment and food scarcity in the region and the country at large. In view of this, Kano State have rolled out several entrepreneurship development programmes with the aim of plummeting the level of youth unemployment, income generation which will help in alleviating poverty in the state and self-reliance

rather than overdependence on the government (Ado, 2016; Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning (2020) KSDP III 2022-2025).

Many scholars explained that entrepreneurship plays an important role in development especially in rural communities. (Ibrahim, 2023; Maheswari & Kumar, 2023; Candelario-Moreno & Sánchez-Hernández, 2024). Entrepreneurship has the potential to significantly enhance a nation's economy and improve quality of life in a nation. Entrepreneurship development involves making a person equipped with the required information and knowledge that is used for enterprise building and enhancing his entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurial Development Programs (EDP) play a critical role in equipping individuals to seize new startup opportunities and establish successful business ventures. (Maheswari & Kumar, 2023). These programs benefit both aspiring entrepreneurs and those with existing businesses by enhancing their skills, providing tools to address specific challenges, and fostering innovative thinking. EDPs focus on developing and strengthening entrepreneurial abilities, such as risk-taking, decision-making, and problem-solving, which are essential for navigating the complexities of business. Entrepreneurship development programmes typically consist of three main phases. According to Alice, et. al., 2024, the first phase, known as the pre-training phase, involves preparation activities necessary for initiating the training program. The second phase, referred to as the training or development phase, aims to effect behavioural changes among the trainees. Finally, the third phase, also known as the post-training or follow-up phase, focuses on providing support for the establishment of new enterprises and the growth of existing ones. Alice, et al. (2024) in their study emphasizes the importance of customizing EDP curriculum to reflect the socio-economic and cultural dynamics of the region. They further argued that by aligning the curriculum to the local market dynamics, and fine-tuning their skills, it would be instrumental in addressing the specific needs of both rural and urban entrepreneurs.

Taking the case of big economies like China, India, Singapore, Japan, Brazil etc., entrepreneurship development programmes have played a significant and vital role in eradicating and alleviating unemployment in their respective economies (United Nation Conference on Trade and Development, 2007).

Kano State government in 2011, intensified its entrepreneurship programs, as the government paid keen attention on this sector by establishing entrepreneurship development institutes for this purpose (Ado et al., 2018). However, since the rate of development of a country depends largely on how productive and creative the youths are (Ado et al., 2018), the neglect of not properly training them would make them vulnerable and become a pool for terrorism employment resulting to educational disbenefit. The high rate of crimes and violence in the country is enabled by youth unemployment since jobless young people represent a ready pool of recruits for groups seeking to mobilize for criminal activities and violence (United State Agency for International Development, 2005). Since youths constitute about 70% of Nigeria's population, the nation cannot achieve development when they are mostly idle and unproductive (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2013).

As part of the Kano State Development Plan 2022-2025 under the sub-heading "increasing investment for the development of youth", the state aims at increasing its investments in youth development by enhancing their access to opportunities in education, including vocational and technical education, job creation and entrepreneurship development programmes (Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning (2020) KSDP III 2022-2025). The plan captures entrepreneurship programme for women also. Ado et al. (2018) reported that youth entrepreneurship development and empowerment has multiplier effects on the national economy, in areas such as increasing productivity, wealth creation, consumption and tax revenue.

Although, the view of this study is not exclusively tied to the provision of entrepreneurship development programmes for economic implications and its effect on wealth creation, it also considered the area of the institutionalization of values in the implementation of the entrepreneurship development programmes. This is in line with the Sustainable Development Goal Objective 4, which identified quality education as critical for national development in all its ramifications; where education is

expected to provide recipients with skills for economic resources that enable them conquer poverty, as well as social skills for forging efficient relationships with other members of the society.

The import of positive value orientation for any nation's development cannot be over emphasized (Olasehinde-Williams, 2018). Value reorientation means restoration or a change of attitude towards a number of things identified as wrong actions or wrong attitudes (Denen, 2020). Value reorientation is therefore conceptualized as the act "of deliberately attempting to change the direction which attitudes and beliefs in Nigeria are currently orientated or the act of adjusting or aligning behaviour, attitudes and beliefs of Nigerians in a new or different direction within the public discourse of contemporary Nigerian politics" (Osisioma, 2012 as cited in Denen, 2020). In addition, Njoku (2011) sees value reorientation as inculcating good values that can help Nigeria out of her numerous predicaments and can refocus the nation through greatness.

According to Obiagu et al. (2023), this should prepare youths to attach both moral and economic values to entrepreneurial activities as against sole emphasis on economic value and wealth creation. Entrepreneurial skills have the potential to significantly influence the development of societal values among youths (Amjad, et al., 2022). Skills such as leadership, problem solving, creativity, and ethical decision-making not only equip young people for economic opportunities but also help shape their attitudes toward social responsibility, collaboration, and accountability. As youths engage in entrepreneurial activities, they cultivate a strong work ethic; learn to take responsibility for their actions, and value teamwork and innovation. This, in turn, fosters societal values such as integrity, co-operation, and community engagement (Mamabolo, et. al., 2022). The integration of entrepreneurial skills into youth development programs, therefore, has the capacity to produce individuals who are not only economically empowered but also socially conscious, capable of contributing to the broader development of their communities.

Entrepreneurial development programs can play a pivotal role in reorienting societal values for rural development. In rural areas, where traditional values and norms often dominate, these programs can introduce new ways of thinking that encourage self-reliance, innovation, and sustainability (Candelario-Moreno & Sánchez-Hernández, 2024). By providing practical skills and fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, these programs contribute to a shift in attitudes, where rural youths and adults begin to prioritize environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and collective progress over individual gains. This value reorientation is crucial for rural communities, as it enables them to adapt to modern economic challenges, address issues like poverty and unemployment, and ultimately foster sustainable development through entrepreneurship-driven growth (Ibrahim, 2023).

Mohseni et al. (2023) explored the impact of entrepreneurship training on student's entrepreneurial attitude and general self-efficacy beliefs. Findings revealed the positive influence of entrepreneurship training on both self-efficacy beliefs and entrepreneurial attitude. Additionally, the study revealed the significant relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and self-efficacy beliefs, highlighting the importance of education in fostering entrepreneurship among students.

This void of values among the youths was evident during the 'End Bad Governance Protest'. The protest degenerated so much in Kano that certain non-state actors were seen looting and destroying government properties, this shows the level of value degradation in the region because of lack of education and gainful employment. It is clear that these said non-state actors were not mercenaries; rather they are citizens who have become enemies of the state, and as it is popularly said, "An idle hand is the devil's workshop".

However, rather than just empower them with skills needed for productive and economic development of the rural settlement, it is imperative that the place of moral values must be accommodated in the entrepreneurship development programmes offered to the youths. This implies that, if because of idle hands, people became enemies of the state to destroy their immediate environment, equally, hands must be trained with the right values to rebuild their society. In the same vein, Obiagu, et al (2023) argued that, for entrepreneurship programmes to be instrumental in clamping down on the level of

unemployment, materialism, youth restiveness and criminality posing threats to the social order and national security, it has to be re-strategised by decentring economic narratives and incorporating social values into its narratives. As such, the study considered rejigging the entrepreneurship development programmes to accommodate the tertiary institution slogans such as 'Probitas Doctrina' (In Character and Learning) 'Scientia Probitas' (Knowledge and Character), 'In truth and indeed' etc. Thus, entrepreneurship development programme must make a paradigmatic shift from its sole focus on wealth creation, and incorporate other human capabilities, such as social and emotional wellbeing, through creating freedoms and opportunities for individuals to develop a sense of dignity of labour and lead other lives beyond economic life (Sen, 1999, as cited in Obiagu et al., 2023). Based on this, this study investigated the impact of Entrepreneurship Development Programmes on Value Reorientation for Rural Development in Kano State, Nigeria.

Research Questions
The following research questions were raised to guide the study:
1. Does entrepreneurial skills impact the development of societal values among youths?
2. What are the entrepreneurial skills that would foster value reorientation for rural development?
3. Does entrepreneurial development programmes influence value reorientation for rural development?
4. What are the factors that would aid the effective implementation of entrepreneurship development programmes for value reorientation in rural areas in Kano State?

Research Hypotheses
These research hypotheses were postulated for the study:

Ho1: Entrepreneurship development programmes do not significantly impact value reorientation for rural development

Ho2: Entrepreneurial skills acquired from entrepreneurship development programmes do not impact development of societal values

Research Method
The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprised of the trade teachers' and directors of Center of Entrepreneurship Studies of 945 public secondary schools and three (3) public universities in Kano State respectively, as well as entrepreneurs. Four local government areas, which include Kumbotso, Gwale, Wudil and Kano Municipal, were purposively selected. Purposive sampling was used to select 320 participants. A researcher-developed questionnaire titled Entrepreneurship Development Programmes and Value Reorientation for Rural Development Questionnaire (EDPVRRDQ) was designed to collect data for the study. The developed items of the questionnaire yielded reliability coefficient of 0.88 using Cronbach Alpha method to find the reliability. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics such as Mean and Standard Deviation. A Simple Linear Regression statistic tool was used to analyse the hypotheses. Hypothesis was tested at a significance level of 0.05.

Result
Research Question 1: Does entrepreneurial skills impact the development of societal values among youths?

Table 1: Impact of Entrepreneurial skills on Development of Societal Values among Youths

	Statements	Mean	S.D.	Remark
1.	Teamwork fosters unity among youths	3.68	0.50	Agreed
2.	Interpersonal relationship engenders tolerance	3.27	0.84	Agreed
3.	Emotional intelligence help to ensure fairness among youths	3.37	0.67	Agreed
4.	Engenders hard work among youths	3.13	0.73	Agreed
5.	Adaptability would help to foster loyalty among youths amidst government policies	3.03	0.59	Agreed
6.	It promotes self-reliance among youths	3.46	0.53	Agreed
	Grand Mean	**3.32**	**0.45**	**Agreed**

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

As indicted in the Table 1, the participants agreed on all the items with their mean ratings all above the criterion mean of 2.50. Similarly, the table showed that the general opinion of the respondents represented by the grand mean of 3.32 is greater than the scale Mean of 2.50; this implies that entrepreneurship skills influences the development of societal values among youths.

Research Question 2: What are the entrepreneurial skills that would foster value reorientation for rural development?

Table 2: Entrepreneurial Skills that Fosters Value Reorientation for Rural Development

	Statements	Mean	S.D.	Remark
7.	Emotional intelligence	3.12	0.87	Agreed
8.	Teamwork	3.54	0.53	Agreed
9.	Interpersonal relationship	3.56	0.53	Agreed
10.	Adaptability	3.42	0.61	Agreed
11.	Problem-solving skills	3.51	0.53	Agreed
12.	Creativity	3.64	0.51	Agreed
13.	Innovation	3.73	0.48	Agreed
14.	Leadership	3.80	0.44	Agreed
15.	Decision-making skills	3.73	0.48	Agreed
16.	Willingness to learn	3.61	0.52	Agreed
	Grand Mean	**3.57**	**0.36**	**Agreed**

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

As indicted in the Table 2, the participants agreed on all the items with their mean ratings all above the criterion mean of 2.50. Similarly, the table showed that the general opinion of the respondents represented by the grand mean of 3.57 is greater than the scale mean of 2.50; this implies that the highlighted entrepreneurial skills fosters value reorientation for rural development.

Research Question 3: Does entrepreneurial development programmes impact value reorientation for rural development?

Table 3: Impact of Entrepreneurial Development Programmes on Value Reorientation for Rural Development

	Statements	Mean	S.D.	Remark
17.	Willingness to learn engenders youths interest in education	3.22	0.82	Agreed
18.	Problem solving skills will help youths to address challenges that face their community	3.61	0.52	Agreed
19.	Decision-making skills sharpens youth contribution to rural development	3.56	0.53	Agreed
20.	Creativity and innovation help youths to create new business ideas that contributes to economic growth of their settlement	3.65	0.51	Agreed
21.	It creates a sense of loyalty towards protecting economic resources rather than destroying them	3.56	0.53	Agreed
22.	Reduces unemployment rate	3.65	0.51	Agreed
23.	Instrumental towards clamping down on civil unrest	3.32	0.59	Agreed
24.	Leadership skill is instrumental towards helping Youths become more patriotic	3.46	0.53	Agreed
25.	Emotional intelligence increases the chances of relative peace in the rural areas	3.43	0.66	Agreed
	Grand Mean	**3.51**	**0.43**	**Agreed**

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

As indicted in the Table 3, the participants agreed on all the items with their mean ratings all above the criterion mean of 2.50. Similarly, the table showed that the general opinion of the respondents represented by the grand mean of 3.51 is greater than the scale mean of 2.50; this implies that entrepreneurial development programmes influences value reorientation for rural development.

Research Question 4: What are the factors that would aid the effective implementation of entrepreneurship development programmes for value reorientation in rural areas in Kano State?

Table 4: Factors that aid the Effective implementation of Entrepreneurship Development Programmes

	Statements	Mean	S.D.	Remark
26.	Finance	3.70	0.46	Agreed
27.	Sensitization and awareness programme	3.67	0.47	Agreed
28.	Collaboration with stakeholders such as religious leaders, traditional rulers, policy makers and private companies among others.	3.60	0.49	Agreed
29.	Security	3.68	0.47	Agreed
30.	Adequate supply of physical infrastructure that aids hands-on learning	3.73	0.45	Agreed
	Grand Mean	**3.68**	**0.31**	**Agreed**

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

As indicted in the Table 4, the participants agreed on all the items with their mean ratings all above the criterion mean of 2.50. Similarly, the table showed that the general opinion of the respondents represented by the grand mean of 3.68 is greater than the scale mean of 2.50; this implies that the highlighted factors would foster the effective implementation of entrepreneurship development programmes.

Research Hypothesis 1: Entrepreneurship development programmes do not significantly impact value reorientation for rural development

Table 5: Impact of Entrepreneurial Development Programmes on Value Reorientation for Rural Development

Regression Model	ANOVA					
	Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
R=0.773	Regression	35.522	1	35.522	471.539	0.000
R^2=0.597	Residual	23.956	318	0.075		
Adj. R^2 =0.596	Total	59.478	319			

a. Dependent variable: Value reorientation for rural development
b. Predictor: (constant), Entrepreneurial development programmes

Table 5 shows a co-efficient of regression (R) of 0.773, this indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between entrepreneurial development programmes and value reorientation for rural development. The result also shows Regression square (R^2) of 0.597, indicating that the independent variable entrepreneurial development programmes is accountable for 59.7% (Regression square $R^2 \times 100$) variability in value reorientation for rural development. The table indicated that the analysis of variance of regression produced an F-ratio value of 471.539 with p-value (0.000) at 0.05 level of significance. This means that employment development programmes had a significant influence on value reorientation for rural development (F= 471.539; df= (1;318); p-value (0.000)<0.05).

Research Hypothesis 2: Entrepreneurial skills acquired from entrepreneurship development programmes do not impact development of societal values

Table 6: Impact of Entrepreneurial skills on Development of Societal Values among Youths

Regression Model	ANOVA					
	Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
R=0.498	Regression	15.662	1	15.662	104.786	0.000
R^2=0.248	Residual	47.532	318	0.149		
Adj. R^2 =0.245	Total	63.194	319			

a. Dependent variable: Societal Values among youths
b. Predictor: (constant), Entrepreneurial development programmes

Table 6 shows a co-efficient of regression (R) of 0.498, this indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between entrepreneurial development programmes and societal values among youths. The result also shows Regression square (R^2) of 0.248, indicating that the independent variable

entrepreneurial development programmes is accountable for 24.8% (Regression square $R^2 \times 100$) variability in societal values among youths. The table indicated that the analysis of variance of regression produced an F-ratio value of 104.786 with p-value (0.000) at 0.05 level of significance. This means that entrepreneurial development programmes had a significant influence on societal values among youths (F= 104.786; df= (1;318); p-value (0.000)<0.05).

Discussion of Findings
The findings of this study illustrate the significant role of entrepreneurship development programs (EDPs) in influencing value reorientation and fostering rural development in Kano State, Nigeria. Entrepreneurial skills such as teamwork, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving demonstrated a profound influence on societal values among youths. These findings align with Mamabolo et al. (2022), who emphasized the role of entrepreneurial skills in fostering collaboration, ethical responsibility, and accountability. As well as that of Amjad et al. (2022), who highlighted the dual benefits of economic empowerment and social responsibility derived from entrepreneurial activities, further corroborate this.

Skills like creativity, innovation, leadership, and decision-making were identified as critical in promoting value reorientation for rural development. This aligns with Ibrahim (2023) and Candelario-Moreno and Sánchez-Hernández (2024), who noted that fostering an entrepreneurial mindset in rural areas can lead to sustainable practices and social innovation, thereby addressing broader community challenges. The study confirmed that EDPs significantly impact value reorientation, contributing to increased youth participation in education, problem-solving for community challenges, and reduced unemployment. These outcomes reflect Ado et al. (2018) and Obiagu et al. (2023), who posit that integrating moral values into EDPs is essential for sustainable development and curbing youth restiveness.

The study identified finance, infrastructure, sensitization, security, and collaboration with stakeholders as critical for the successful implementation of EDPs. This finding is consistent with the observations of Maheswari & Kumar (2023), who emphasized the importance of tailored interventions and multi-stakeholder involvement for the success of entrepreneurship initiatives.

Furthermore, findings of this study highlights the necessity of integrating moral and social values into entrepreneurship training to maximize their impact on societal development. As Obiagu et al. (2023) noted, a paradigmatic shift in the narrative of EDPs from mere economic empowerment to holistic human development is crucial for achieving lasting rural transformation.

Conclusion
This study has explained that entrepreneurship development programs are vital tools for addressing rural development challenges in Kano State. By promoting entrepreneurial skills and integrating value reorientation, these programs empower youths economically and socially, creating a foundation for sustainable development. As supported by Ado et al. (2018) and Obiagu et al. (2023), effective EDPs not only reduce unemployment and poverty but also enhance societal cohesion and community engagement.

The study advocates for the integration of moral and ethical training into entrepreneurial education, emphasizing that skill acquisition alone is insufficient without corresponding value orientation. Addressing factors such as financing, infrastructure, and collaboration with key stakeholders is critical to the success of these programs. This approach aligns with the Sustainable Development Goal of promoting inclusive and equitable quality education to empower individuals and communities. By reorienting youths to view entrepreneurship as a pathway to both economic and societal improvement, policymakers and educators can leverage EDPs as a transformative tool for fostering resilience and self-reliance in rural communities.

Recommendations

1. Policy makers should rejig entrepreneurship development programmes to accommodate the tertiary institution slogan "Probitas Doctrina" (in character and learning), such that youth hones both wealth creation skills as well as moral values that promotes peaceful co-existence in the society.
2. Trade instructors should focus on using entrepreneurship skills as tools for instilling in youths positive societal values.
3. Government should collaborate with other key stakeholders in the society especially in order to access resources persons and workshops/workspaces for activity-based learning.
4. Policy makers and government should toe the line of the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) programme in catering for out-of-school children, such that craft-centers are opened to every youth to learn a trade; this should hang on the philosophy of social democratic approach to education.

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THE SOCIAL COMMENTARY IN YORUBA FOLKSONGS: ADDRESSING ISSUES OF JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND MORALS

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Abstract

Yoruba folksongs, embedded in the oral traditions of the Yoruba people, serve as potent tools for social commentary, moral instruction, and cultural preservation. This study explores the multifaceted roles of Yoruba folksongs in addressing critical societal issues such as justice, equality, and morality. Drawing from a rich tapestry of proverbs, aphorisms, and allegories, these songs encapsulate and transmit communal values, emphasizing virtues like integrity, patience, respect, and humility. While they critique social vices such as corruption and greed, Yoruba folksongs reinforce traditional norms, including hierarchical and patriarchal structures, thereby reflecting both progressive and conservative dimensions of Yoruba culture. The analysis highlights the interplay between retributive justice and moral values in the narratives of these songs, using allegorical tales to deliver impactful lessons. The study examines the evolving relevance of Yoruba folksongs amidst globalization and urbanization, advocating for their adaptation to address contemporary ethical challenges, including gender equity and social justice. By bridging traditional teachings with modern realities, Yoruba folksongs remain vital in shaping cultural identity and fostering societal reflection and reform. Recommendations for preservation and modernization emphasize their enduring significance as educational tools and vehicles for social critique in a rapidly changing world.

Keywords: Yoruba Folksongs, Social Commentary, Cultural Preservation, Oral Traditions

Introduction

Yorùbá folksongs serve as a vital conduit for social commentary. Odunuga and Ogunrinade (2015) argue that it addresses themes of justice, equality, and morality within the community. These songs are embedded in Yorùbá oral literature, which encompasses a rich tapestry of folklore, proverbs, and aphorisms. These tapestries reflect the societal values and ethical principles of the Yorùbá people. The concept of 'Omolúàbí' epitomizes the Yorùbá ideal of a person of good character, embodying virtues such as honesty, integrity, and respect (Olusola, 2018). This notion is woven into Yorùbá folksongs, which function as vehicles for moral instruction and social regulation. Through engaging narratives and melodies, these songs impart lessons on appropriate conduct, communal responsibilities, and the importance of upholding justice and equality.

Nnamdi (2018) emphasize that, folksongs employ aphorisms and proverbs, encapsulating complex moral teachings in succinct and memorable forms. Certain Yorùbá folksongs utilize proverbs to convey messages about the consequences of greed or the virtues of patience and humility, thereby reinforcing societal norms and expectations. Aluede and Braimah (2005) note that, Yorùbá folksongs serve as a medium for social critique, addressing issues such as corruption, inequality, and moral decadence. These songs encourage reflection and, ultimately, social reform. Contemporary Yorùbá artists have utilized folksongs to comment on social injustices and to promote moral values, thereby continuing the tradition of using music as a tool for social commentary (Marwaha, 2019).

Yorùbá folksongs are not forms of entertainment but are integral to the moral and social fabric of Yorùbá society. They function as educational tools, preserving and transmitting cultural values. These songs also serve as instruments of social commentary, addressing and challenging issues related to justice, equality, and morality. Through their rich oral traditions, the Yorùbá people continue to utilize folksongs as a means of fostering communal harmony and ethical consciousness.

Literature Review
Folksongs as Social Commentator

Yoruba folksongs serve as powerful tools for social commentary, reflecting the values, struggles, and evolving realities of Yoruba society (Okpokwasili, 2023). These songs explore themes of moral instruction, social justice, gender roles, and leadership. It blends them with humour, proverbs, and subtle critiques. Jarrar, Awobamise, & Bukhari (2019) argue that, songs admonish rulers (*oba*) for neglecting their duties highlight the expectation of accountable leadership, while others celebrate communal living, resilience, and the virtues of hard work. These songs act as custodians of history, preserving narratives of historical events, migrations, and societal shifts. The Yoruba folksongs ensures that the Yoruba ethos is passed down through generations.

> Yoruba people have a rich and complex folklore system, which is a composite of riddles (alo-apamo), jokes (efe) wise sayings and maxims (oro), proverbs (owe) folktales (alo), Ifa corpus (odu-Ifa), hunters chants (ijala-ode), bridal chants (ekun-iyawo), praise songs/ names (oriki), poetry (ewi) and others. (Olarinmoye:2013)

Many folksongs reinforce traditional hierarchies and gender roles, idealizing submissiveness to authority and perpetuating patriarchal ideals. Omojola (1995) note that, this conflict with contemporary movements for gender equity and social change. While folksongs are adept at addressing certain societal ills, they avoid controversial topics due to cultural taboos, limiting their scope of criticism. The decline in their prominence, driven by globalization and urbanization, poses a threat to this medium as a vibrant tool for social reflection.

Yoruba folksongs remain a vital part of cultural heritage. It offers accessible and emotionally resonant critiques of societal norms. Their use of poetic language, rhythm, and communal performance strengthens the impact of their messages, fostering shared understanding across generations. Adesoji, Ajewole, & Paul (2024), argue that, for these songs to maintain their relevance, they must adapt to contemporary realities and broaden their critical lens to address emerging issues. The preservation and modernization of Yoruba folksongs will continue to serve as a meaningful platform for social commentary and cultural identity.

Yoruba Folksongs as a Medium of Justice

Yoruba folksongs serve as a conduit for moral and social teachings, regarding fairness and justice. Ogunrinade, & Oluniyi, (2021) note that these songs depict clear moral lessons, rewarding characters who act justly and admonishing those who do not. This helps in reinforcing community values and societal norms through engaging narratives. According to Olufolabi, & Abubakar (2013), utilizing metaphors and symbols, such as animals or natural elements, these songs teach important lessons in ways that resonate across ages, making abstract concepts of justice and fairness more tangible. These narratives oversimplify complex social issues. Issues of fairness and justice are rarely black and white and involve detailed circumstances that these folksongs not adequately address. Upholding traditional norms, these songs perpetuate outdated or unfair social structures and norms, such as rigid gender roles or social hierarchies, which support existing power dynamics that are unjust (Odunuga, 2016).

Igbin a ...ke Osin

Yoruba lyrics

Lead: Igbin pa'buke osin
Chorus: Gbadudugba
Lead: Oba da Igbin l'ola
Chorus: Gbadudugba
Lead: Igbin gesin ileke
Chorus: Gbadudugba
Lead: Igbin dade ileke
Igbin dade ileke

English Translation

Snail killed the hunchback man of Osin
Gbadudugba!
The king enrich Snail as a reward
Gbadudugba!
Snail ride on a decorated horse
Gbadudugba!
Snail is decorated with a crown
Gbagudugba!

The song in spoken verse above accompanies a folklore about Ijapa (the tortoise), who, out of hatred for Igbin (the snail), falsely accused him of killing Abuke-osin (the hunchback man of Osin). The king, believing the accusation, ordered Igbin's arrest and execution. Before his execution, Igbin requested to be decorated and placed on a horse, accompanied by music, claiming the truth would be revealed. The king granted this request. Upon seeing this, Ijapa regretted his actions and confessed to killing Abuke-osin, urging the king to punish him instead. The king then arrested Ijapa and sentenced him to death (Adedeji & Olusola, 2020).).

The relevance of Yoruba folksongs in contemporary settings is not straightforward. The changing global landscape presents new ethical challenges that these traditional narratives struggle to address. Ibekwe (2019) argues that, the interpretation and teaching of these folksongs need to evolve, ensuring that they continue to enhance a reflective and just society while adapting to modern ethical dilemmas and social dynamics. This critical engagement with traditional media will bridge the gap between historic teachings and contemporary societal needs.

The intersection of Nigerian folksongs with legal and social justice themes is illustrated through the country's rich history of protest music, which provides cultural commentary and actively participates in the socio-political discourse (Akande, 2023). Contemporary Nigerian musicians, drawing inspiration from the legacies of iconic artists such as Fela Kuti and Miriam Makeba, have continued to address critical social issues through their music. These issues include police brutality, corruption, and the need

for social reforms. Artists such as Falz, Burna Boy, and Asa have been at the forefront of this movement. Falz's '*This Is Nigeria*' inspired by Childish Gambino's *'This Is America,'* offers a stark, satirical look at Nigeria's social issues from corruption to social injustice, despite facing censorship challenges. Burna Boy's *'20 10 20'* reflects on the Lekki Massacre, embodying the collective grief and protest against police brutality, capturing a critical moment in Nigeria's fight for justice

These songs are pieces of music but serve as rallying cries for social change, echoing the broader global context of music as a form of resistance and a voice for the marginalized. The narrative and thematic elements of these songs challenge the status quo and push for a dialogue on pressing national issues. These songs foster a sense of community and shared purpose among listeners

The Role of Retributive Justice and Patriarchy in Traditional Folk Music
Traditional folk music in Nigeria cut across communal values, including narratives of retributive justice where moral lessons emphasize a balance where good is rewarded and evil is punished (Akpan-Obong, 2023). While this reinforces ethical behaviour and community norms, it risks simplifying the concept of justice to punitive measures. This overshadows restorative justice approaches that emphasize healing and reconciliation found in many African traditions.

Elete Momori-momo

Yoruba	Translation
Lead: Momo	Big-big!
Lead: Elete momori-momo	Demon with big, big lips
Chorus: momo	Big-lips!
Lead: Se'na lo wa fon	Have you come fetch fire?
Chorus: momo	Big-lips!
Lead: Abete lo wa wo	Or you are here to make gest of the lips
Chorus: momo	big-lips!
Lead: Ete tagiri gbe mi	Let him be swallowed by the lips
Chorus: kalo!	Promptly!!
Chorus: Ete tagiri gbe mi	Let him be swallowed by the lips
Chorus: kalo!	Promptly!

The folklore tied to a story about a boy sent by his mother to fetch fire from a demon with large lips. Unlike others in the village, the boy mocked and ridiculed the demon upon arrival. The demon's children, angered by his behaviour, warned him to stop, but he ignored them. In their frustration, they sang a song urging their father, the demon, to punish the disrespectful boy. Despite the warning, the boy continued his mockery. Enraged by his insolence, the demon eventually heeded the song's call and swallowed the boy, serving as a cautionary tale of respect.

Patriarchal values are embedded in the lyrics and stories of Nigerian folk music. These values depict men in dominant roles while relegating women to passive positions. This portrayal perpetuates gender stereotypes and normalizes male supremacy. The folk repertoire portrays women as influential figures, which challenges these patriarchal norms and promote gender empowerment. The interplay between retributive justice and patriarchal themes in folk music reinforce harmful norms, such as men as avengers of family honour, justifying control over women under the guise of protection. This relationship between music, cultural values, and societal norms requires critical engagement. This critique is academic and has practical implications for evolving contemporary Nigerian societal values.

Themes of Equality in Yoruba Folksongs

Nigerian folksongs, encapsulate and convey the societal norms and values across different ethnic groups. Odunuga and Udok (2016) note that, these songs reinforce traditional gender roles and socioeconomic statuses by upholding longstanding narratives, such as extolling domestic responsibilities and motherhood for women. The songs pass down wisdom and moral lessons that enforce expected behaviours regarding gender and social class.

Aja O Ran Mi L'eru

Yorùbá	Translation
Lead: Jánjálá too-fée	Jánjálá too-fée
Lead: Ajá ajá o ràn mí l'ẹrù	Dog please assist me with the load
Chorus: Jánjálá too-fée	Jánjálá too-fée
Lead: Bóò bá ràn mí lẹrù ma ké s'ólóko	If you refuse, I will report you to the farm owner
Chorus: Jánjálá too-fée	Jánjálá too-fée
B'ólóko bá dé ooo àá mú ẹ dè	You will be arrested by the owner of the farm
Chorus: Jánjálá too-fée	Jánjálá too-fée

The folklore song referenced in Song No. 3 was traditionally sung to accompany a tale about Ìjàpá (the Tortoise) and Ajá (the Dog), who were close friends. The story unfolds during a period of severe drought in their town, when many were suffering and dying from scarcity, yet Aja remained healthy and well-fed. Curious about Aja's apparent well-being, Ìjàpá approached him to uncover his secret. Ajá, agreeing to share his source of sustenance, led Ìjàpá to a farm where he had been covertly taking food to provide for his family. On the farm, Aja carefully took only a moderate amount of food, sufficient to meet his family's needs. However, driven by greed, Ìjàpá took an excessively large quantity, far more than he could carry. As they were about to leave, the owner of the farm began approaching. Sensing the danger, Aja quickly fled, leaving Ìjàpá struggling with his cumbersome load. Realizing he had been abandoned, Ìjàpá resorted to singing a threatening song, attempting to compel Ajá to return. Despite Ìjàpá's pleas, Aja refused to come back. Ultimately, the farm owner arrived and found Ìjàpá with the stolen goods. Ìjàpá was apprehended and faced the consequences of his actions in accordance with the law of the land. This tale, like many in folklore, serves as a cautionary story about the perils of greed and the importance of moderation.

Folksongs possess the potential to challenge and critique societal norms. They highlight inequalities, offering a voice to marginalized communities and inspiring discussions on gender disparity and socioeconomic issues. Odunuga and Ogunrinade (2012) argue that these songs lag in reflecting progressive views on gender equality and social mobility, thus maintaining a cultural lag that upholds outdated societal norms. The role of Nigerian folksongs in both perpetuating and challenging social constructs presents a dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity. They reinforce stereotypes and existing power dynamics, limiting diverse representation. These songs serve as powerful agents of social change. The themes in these songs promote inclusivity and equality (Nwoke, 2019). The folksongs contribute to transforming societal attitudes towards a more equitable framework.

Folksongs in Nigeria serve reflect the experiences of its diverse ethnic groups, including marginalized communities. These traditional songs carry the histories and social narratives of groups sidelined in mainstream discourse. This includes ethnic minorities, women, and economically disadvantaged populations. The role of folksongs is double-edged; they preserve and communicate the unique identities and challenges of these communities (Bessey, 2016). They also perpetuate existing stereotypes and social hierarchies. Some songs uphold gender roles that depict women in primarily domestic settings, thus reinforcing traditional views that may hinder social progress.

Folksongs oversimplify complex social issues, presenting them in ways that are easily digestible though fail to spur substantial change. This romanticization of struggle obscures the harsh realities faced by these communities, making the aesthetic appreciation of their plight a substitute for actionable change. The risk of losing these cultural treasures is as older generations pass, and with them, their songs. The challenge lies in documenting and preserving these folksongs in a manner that respects their origins. Also, in a manner that ensures they continue to inspire and educate future generations about the richness of marginalized narratives in Nigerian society.

Yoruba Folk Songs and Moral Values
Proverbs, embedded within the folksongs, are poetic devices and serve as educational tools that transmit wisdom, ethics, and community norms across generations (Odejobi, 2014). Folksongs helps in cultural preservation and education, using memorable proverbs to reinforce key societal virtues such as honesty

and respect. According to Babátúndé and Olúbòmẹhìn (2018), these songs entertain and play a crucial role in the moral upbringing of the community, promoting cohesion and ethical conduct.

Ori O Olajumoke Nlo

Yoruba
Lead: Ọlájùmọ̀kẹ́ ńlọ
Lead: Orí orí o!
Chorus: Ọlájùmọ̀kẹ́ ńlọ
Lead Orí orí o!
Chorus Ọlájùmọ̀kẹ́ ńlọ
Lead: Orí ko l'ápá
Chorus: Ọlájùmọ̀kẹ́ ńlọ
Lead: Orí kò l'ẹ́sẹ̀
Chorus: Ọlájùmọ̀kẹ́ ńlọ

Translation
Ọlájùmọ̀kẹ́ is attempting to escape
Head, head!
Ọlájùmọ̀kẹ́ is attempting to escape
Head, head!
Ọlájùmọ̀kẹ́ is attempting to escape
You head that has no arms
Ọlájùmọ̀kẹ́ is attempting to escape
You head that has no legs
Olajumoke is attempting to escape

The folklore song narrates the poignant tale of Ọlájùmọ̀kẹ́, a beautiful young woman from a village, who chose love over the counsel of her family. Despite numerous suitors seeking her hand in marriage, Ọlájùmọ̀kẹ́'s heart remained untouched until a mysterious stranger named Orí arrived in the village for a business transaction. Captivated by his charm, she fell deeply in love with him and decided to leave her family to follow him to his home. Her parents, concerned for her well-being, strongly disapproved of the union. However, Ọlájùmọ̀kẹ́, convinced of her choice, defied their wishes and embarked on a journey with Orí. Along the way, Ọlájùmọ̀kẹ́ began to notice strange behavior in her new husband. Stopping at various houses, Orí would return parts of his body that he had "borrowed' his legs, arms, and torso until only his head remained. It was then that Oríi revealed his true nature to Ọlájùmọ̀kẹ́: he was not human but a demon composed solely of a head. This horrifying revelation filled Ọlájùmọ̀kẹ́ with regret and despair. Realizing the peril she was in, she sought to escape, but Orí and his demon companions were vigilant. Whenever she tried to flee, the other demons would alert Orí by singing the haunting song, allowing him to capture her before she could get away. Trapped in a terrifying and hopeless situation, Ọlájùmọ̀kẹ́ made several desperate attempts to regain her freedom. However, the unrelenting pursuit left her with no way out. Overcome by despair and isolation, she tragically ended

her own life, bringing the story to its heartrending conclusion powerful reminder of the consequences of unchecked love, deception, and the loss of agency.

The analysis of these folksongs considers the diversity within Nigeria's multiple ethnic groups, each contributing uniquely to the country's rich tapestry of oral traditions. The dynamic nature of these cultural expressions means that the proverbs and their interpretations evolve over time. This reflects a shift in societal values and realities. The process of collecting, translating, and interpreting these proverbs, introduces biases and alters meanings, distorting their original cultural significance.

Folksongs encompass a variety of themes, such as honesty, respect, and communal responsibility, conveyed through engaging stories involving humans, animals, or mythical beings. The role of these songs extends beyond mere entertainment. They are important during communal activities such as farming and ceremonies, reinforcing social norms and unity through their lyrical content. Measuring the direct influence of these songs on individual and community behaviour presents methodological challenges due to the complex interplay of various socializing forces including family, religion, and education.

The traditional influence of folksongs wane, replaced by contemporary music and modern media, leading to a shift in how values are communicated within communities. This evolution raises concerns about the preservation of traditional music and the ways in which values are taught. The digital media offers both a means to preserve these songs and a barrier to traditional communal learning experiences. Nigeria's diverse ethnic landscape means that the impact of folksongs varies widely, with factors such as age, gender, and urbanization complicating the relationship between traditional music and community behaviour. This complexity highlights the challenge in quantifying the impact of folksongs, amidst ongoing cultural transformations and the integration of modern values.

ki ni o fo-lo se la-ye ti mo wa o   ki ni o fol-le se la-ya ti mo wa

ka-ka ki n ja-le ma ku-ku de ru__   ki ni 0 fo0le se la - ye ti mo wa

The song strongly advocates for maintaining one's integrity by choosing not to engage in dishonest activities like stealing, despite potential personal gain. It places a high value on honesty, implying that living truthfully is more important than any benefit one might derive from deceitful acts.

we ki o mo   fo 'so__ re   jeun to da ra l'a-si-ko ma jeun ju

The song suggests the importance of cleanliness for maintaining good health and presenting oneself respectfully in society. It promotes the consumption of nutritious food at proper times, highlighting the value of a balanced diet. The song suggests that excess, even in something as essential as food, can be detrimental to one's health.

Conclusion

Yorùbá folksongs stand as a timeless medium of social commentary, rooted in the cultural fabric of the Yorùbá people. These songs serve as instruments of entertainment and act as vehicles for moral instruction. It fosters communal values such as justice, equality, and respect. Weaving proverbs, aphorisms, and engaging narratives into their compositions, the songs provide lessons on the virtues of integrity, humility, and moderation while critiquing societal issues like corruption, greed, and moral decay.

The study highlights the dual role of Yorùbá folksongs in preserving and perpetuating traditional norms, some of which may reinforce outdated gender roles and power dynamics. Their potential to inspire change and promote inclusivity remains significant, especially when reinterpreted in the context of contemporary societal challenges.

In a rapidly evolving world, where globalization and urbanization threaten the prominence of traditional cultural expressions, the preservation and modernization of Yorùbá folksongs become imperative. Adapting these narratives to address current ethical dilemmas and social realities, Yorùbá folksongs continue to serve as powerful tools for social reflection and reform. Bridging the gap between traditional teachings and modern values will ensure that these cultural treasures endure and remain relevant in shaping a more just and equitable society.

Recommendations

- Yorùbá folksongs should be modernized and adapted to address contemporary ethical dilemmas and social realities. This includes integrating themes such as gender equality, environmental conservation, and social justice into their narratives while retaining their traditional essence.
- Digital platforms should be leveraged to document and preserve Yorùbá folksongs, ensuring accessibility for future generations. This involves creating audio and video recordings, transcriptions, and translations that reflect their cultural significance and historical context.
- Yorùbá folksongs should be integrated into educational programs to teach moral and social values, emphasizing their role as tools for cultural preservation and social critique. Schools and community programs should promote these songs as part of Nigeria's intangible cultural heritage.
- Academics, cultural practitioners, and social reformers should engage critically with the themes in Yorùbá folksongs, challenging outdated patriarchal and hierarchical norms while highlighting their potential to inspire inclusivity and social reform. This includes creating forums for dialogue around the reinterpretation of these songs to align with contemporary progressive values.

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DEFORESTATION AND POVERTY IN OGBA/EGBEMA/NDONI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This paper examined deforestation and its implications on the relative poverty of the people of Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study adopted survey research design imploring the use of primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data were generated through the questionnaires administered to 2,970 randomly selected respondents in the study area. The study instrument employed was the structure questionnaire while Chi-square statistical techniques was used in analyzing the data. The data analysis revealed that there is significant relationship between deforestation activities and relative poverty on the people in the study area. The t – calculated value of 69.746 was greater than the t – table of 7.815 (at 3 d.f and 0.05 Alpha level). The result showed that poverty in the study area is influenced by deforestation activities. The study identifies Agricultural Expansion, logging and timber extraction, infrastructure development and industrialization as major factors responsible for deforestation. More so, the study revealed that sustainable forest management, poverty alleviation programs, policy enforcement, and community education are key components in mitigating deforestation and improving the socio-economic conditions of the people. The study concludes that deforestation and poverty in the study area are deeply interconnected issues that require a multifaceted approach to address.

Keywords: Deforestation, Forest Resources, Poverty, Forest Management, Poverty Alleviation

Introduction

Deforestation and poverty are interlinked issues affecting many rural areas in developing countries, and the idea behind the phenomenon can be a diminution of vegetal covers from thick forest to light forest, from heavy or light forest to open or isolated land (Okerie, 2012; Agwu, 2022; World Bank, 2023). In spite of the various usefulness of the forest resources, rapid population growth and change in land use has put the forest resources under pressure (Ajoku, 2014). The rural people depend so much on forest resources. They survive through forest resources. They earn a living through forest resources, more especially the people of the study area who relied so much on forest resources, such as: vegetables, bush meats, woods for furniture making, snails, palm oil, crops, fire woods which serves as fuel and many more. But due to the level of deforestation, it has affected the people of the area, more especially their economic lifestyles and those who depend so much on food gathering (picking of fruits and vegetables). In other word, this has increased the rate of poverty in the area (Nwabueze, 2016).

In Nigeria, it has been observed by (Food and Agricultural Organization, FAO, 2005) that the country has the highest rate of deforestation in the world between 2000 and 2005. Nigeria lost 55.7% of its primary forests with a rate of forest change of 31.2%. Balarabe (2011) observed that deforestation has negative implication on the environment in terms of wildlife and increased desertification. However, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni LGA is predominantly rural, with agriculture and forest resources playing a crucial role in the local economy. The area is characterized by its rich biodiversity and extensive forest cover, which provides a source of income, food, and raw materials for the inhabitants (Nigerian Environmental Study/Action Team (NEST), 2023). However, in recent years, there has been an alarming rate of deforestation due to logging, farming expansion, and infrastructural development. The

dependency on forest resources for livelihood is significant. However, unsustainable exploitation of these resources has led to severe deforestation, which in turn impacts the socio-economic well-being of the local communities (Rivers State Ministry of Environment Annual Report on Forest Conservation and Management, 2023). This paper therefore, investigates the causes and consequences of deforestation in the area and its direct correlation with poverty levels in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni LGA of Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study
The aim of this study is to examine the impact of deforestation on rural poverty in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni LGA of Rivers State. The specific objectives of this study are to:
1. Determine the causes of deforestation in the study area?
2. Examine the impact of deforestation on poverty of the people in the study area?

Research Questions
Based on the outlined specific objectives of the study, the following research questions were posed to guide the study.
1. What are the causes of deforestation in the study area?
2. What are the effects of deforestation on the relative poverty of the people in the study area?

Hypotheses
- The Null hypothesis (H0:) of the study states that: There is no significant relationship between deforestation activities and relative poverty on the people in the study area.
- The Alternative hypothesis (H1:) states that: There is significant relationship between deforestation activities and relative poverty on the people in the study area.

Conceptual Clarification
Deforestation
Deforestation is simply defined as the conversion of forested areas to non-forested land for certain reasons such as for urban and residential developments, for pasture and farming operations, for timber logging, and for sports or recreational purposes. In order words, deforestation leads to a progressive destruction and depletion of forest resources for some perceived reasons. It is used to describe the processes involving the removal of trees in the forests and woodlands and converting the land to other uses. According to the United Nation of Food and Agriculture Organization (F.A.O 1993) an area is said to be deforested if a change of land use has occurred with depletion of tree crown cover to less than 10 percent.

Deforestation has been practiced by man in different societies for thousands of years mainly as a result of clearing forest lands firstly for residential buildings and collection of fire wood as domestic fuel, secondly, for farming operations and thirdly for paths or road construction. Later on the intensification and expansion of land use activities especially residential neighbourhoods and the creation of open spaces for town squares, king palaces, schools and play fields amongst others; introduction of commercial agriculture and industrial establishments; the need to expand existing road networks and construction of new highways, rail lines and airports, the development of universities and large scale building of sports complexes, dams and irrigation projects; etc. has led to the lost of forest lands more rapidly than it was in centuries ago (FAQ, 1993).

Today, the effects of deforestation (e.g. climate change, global warming and associated problems) of the past is been felt across the globe jus as to the effects of the current trend in deforestation will be felt by generations to come. This is why conservationists, pressure groups and international organization are championing anti-deforestation crusades across the globe. Today, there is increased pressure mounted on governments to take urgent drastic and more practical steps to curb or halt deforestations in order to save our forests (UNEP, 1992; World Rainforest Movement (WRM) 1990, 2003).

Causes of Deforestation

The tropic generally entails all the areas lying between the latitudinal limits of the tropic of Cancer (23°N) and tropic of Capricorn (23°S) of the equator. Thus, all the forests found in these regions are best classified as either tropical rainforests, equatorial evergreen forests, or coniferous forests. According to the works of Carr (2004), there are three proximate causes of tropical deforestation which emerged primarily as a result of land use. These are agricultural expansion, timber extraction and infrastructural developments. Thus, from these three broad group, certain underlying factors or uses of deforestation can be identify. These are: demographic, socio-economic, technological, political and environmental. Base on this fact, there are two broad schools of thought dominating the discourse on the causes of deforestation. The first school of thought held the view, that deforestation is the result of single-factor causation e.g. shifting cultivation or population growth. The second school of thought is of the opinion that the causes of deforestation are irreducibly complex. That is to say those relationships among deforestation and multiple causative factors are many and varied, revealing no definite pattern It is evidently clear that population growth leads to increase pressure on the demand for forests products whereby primary forests are continually degraded in order to satisfy the demand forest products (firewood for fuel, timber for building construction, pulp for paper making, leaves, barks and roots for medicinal needs, fruits for food, etc.). To this end, Marcoux (2000) reported that deforestation resulted from a combination of population pressure and stagnating economic, social and technological conditions. In a nutshell, the processes and causes of tropical deforestation is attributed mainly to agriculture where it is observed that subsistence agriculture account for 48% of deforestation, 32% attributed to commercial agriculture, 14% for logging, and 5% attributed to fuel wood removals (UNFCCC, 2007). Another cause of tropical deforestation is selective logging whereby only particular trees are chosen for logging while other around them are left standing.

In general terms, the main causes of tropical deforestation include subsistence agriculture (Slash-and-burn, shifting cultivation) and commercial agriculture, infrastructural development (roads, buildings, schools), forest fires (during dry season), increased demand for firewood

Materials and Methods
Study Area
Ogba-Egbema Ndoni LGA of Rivers State is located at the central Orashi with the latitude of 4^050^0N to 5^030^0N and extends from about 6^025'E to about 6^040^0E. it covers an area of 969 sqkm in the northern part of the Niger Delta region.
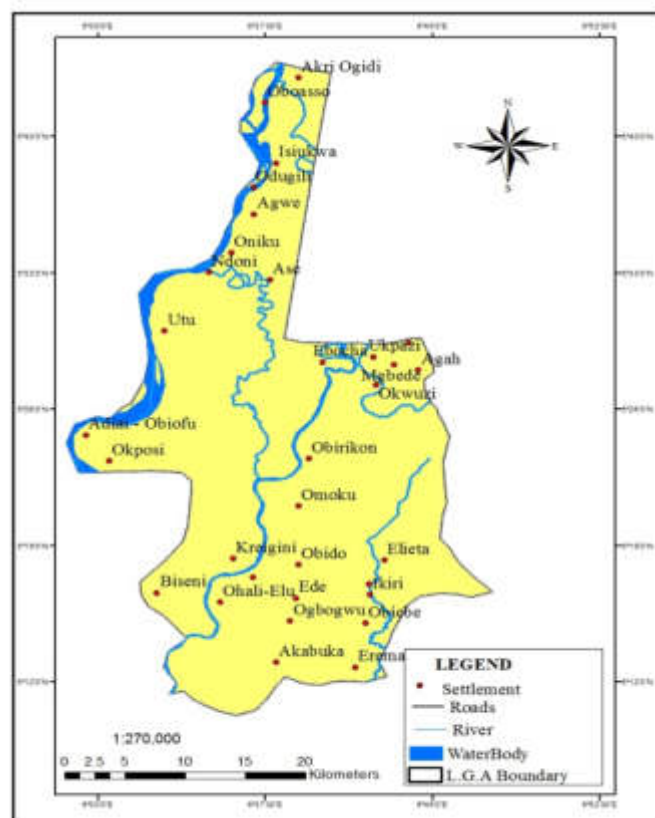
Figure 1: Showing Study Area

Methodology
The data for this study was sourced mainly from both primary and secondary sources. The study population comprises of all communities in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. Random sampling method was used to select 21 communities out of 71 communities representing 30% of the total communities in the study area. The sample is 2,970 and sampling technique applied was the random sampling method comprising of 2,970 respondents drawn from ten percent (10%) of the registered voters' population in each of the selected community, hence, the sample size for respondents. Out of a total of 2,970 structured questionnaires distributed in the study area, 2,970 were also, retrieved and analyzed, representing an approximate response rate of 100%. The systematic random sampling technique was used in distributing the questionnaire and the choice of the household was every sixth house, beginning from the first house on the streets in the sampled communities. The Likert scale rating was applied to elicit information whereby our respondents were required to score their opinions using the scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed and the data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics method of data analysis such as percentage and mean while hypotheses one and two were tested using Chi-square (x^2) method of statistics analysis.

Results and Discussion
Research Question 1: What are the causes of deforestation in the study area?
Table 1: Distribution of respondents view on factors responsible for deforestation

S/N	Factors responsible for deforestation	SA (%)	A(%)	SD(%)	D(%)	Total
1	Agricultural Expansion	1,553(52.3)	1,061(35.8)	212(7.1)	144(4.8)	2,970(100)
2	Logging and Timber Extraction	1,380(46.5)	999(33.6)	254(8.6)	337(11.3)	2,970(100)
3	Infrastructure Development (housing, road)	1,143(38.5)	912(30.7)	471(15.9)	444(14.9)	2,970(100)
4	Industrialization	1,514(50.9)	906(30.5)	281(9.5)	269(9.1)	2,970(100)
	Total	5590(47.1)	3878(32.6)	1218(10.3)	1194(10.0)	11,880(100)

Source**:** Researcher's Fieldwork, 2024

Table 1 showed the respondents views on the factor responsible for deforestation in the study area. The responses were arranged on a 4-point likert scale of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D). Out of a total of 2,970 respondents, 1,553 and 1,061 respectively representing 52.3% and 35.8% strongly agrees and agrees that agricultural expansion due to increase in population is responsible for deforestation in the study area while 212 and 144 representing 7.1% and 4.8% strongly disagreed and disagreed to that view. This implies that a total of 2,614 (88.1%) out of the total respondents agreed that agricultural activities and expansion have implication for deforestation in the study area while a total 356(11.9%) disagrees with that view. On the strongly agreed column, it is observed that most important factor is agricultural expansion with 2,614(88.1%) out of 2,970 respondents followed by industrialization, and lastly logging and timber extraction while the least in that column is infrastructure development (housing, road) with a total of 1,143(38.5). in the Strongly Agreed and Agreed columns, it is noticed that out of a total of 2,970 respondents, 2,420(81.4%) respondents agrees that industrialization is responsible for forest decline while 550(18.6%) respondents disagrees with the view. This was followed by logging and timber extraction with 2,379(80.1%) and Infrastructure Development 2,055(69.2%).

Research Question 2: What are the major effects of deforestation on the relative poverty of the people?

Table 2: Distribution responses on the major negative effects of deforestation on the relative poverty of the people in the study area

S/N	Options	Responses	Percentage (%)
1	Impact in area such as income	997	33.6
2	Inability to access food due to deforestation	209	7.1
3	Increased in poverty level in your community	406	13.7
4	Reduction in available forest resources	475	15.9
5	Impact in the area of Loss of biodiversity	883	29.7
	Total	2,970	100.00

Source**:** Researcher's Fieldwork, 2024

From table 2 above, 997 respondents out of a total of 2.970 respondents representing 33.6% identified impact in area such as income as one of the major negative effect of deforestation on the relative poverty of the people in the study area. This could be as a result of dependency on forest resources for survival. 883 (29.7%) identified loss of biodiversity; this is followed by reduction in available forest resources 475 (15.9%) and Increased in poverty level 406(13.7%) while 209(7.1%) respondents identified Inability to access food due to deforestation listed options.

Research Question 3: What are the strategies adopted to mitigate the impacts of deforestation in the study area?

Table 3: Responses on measures adopted towards mitigating the impact of deforestation.

S/N	Measures Adopted	Reponses	Percentage (%)
1	Poverty alleviation programs	225	7.6
2	Access to alternative livelihoods	534	17.9
3	Policy enforcement, Community Education and training on sustainable practices	1,027	34.6
4	Diversified Income Sources	422	14.2
5	Reduced dependence on forest resources	762	25.7
	Total	2,970	100.00

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2024

From Table 3 above, it is revealed that policy enforcement, community education and training on sustainable practices is the strategic measure adopted towards mitigating the effect of deforestation in the study area as it occupies 1,027(34.6%) responses out a total of 2,970 respondents followed by reduction on forest resource dependency with 762 (25.7), access to alternative livelihoods with 534(17.9%), diversified income sources 422 (14.2%) and poverty alleviation programs with 225(7.6%) respectively.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The hypothesis was tested using Chi-square statistical technique. It is of the form:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(0-E)2}{E}$$

Where:

X^2 = Value of chi-square test

O = value of observed frequency

E = value of expected frequency

$\sum$ = Summation

The test was carried out under the 0.05% level of significance

Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between deforestation activities and relative poverty of the people in the study area.

Table 4: Summary of Chi-square (X^2) on the relationship between deforestation activities and relative poverty on the people in the study area.

Degree of freedom	Sample	No. of rows	No. of columns	Calculated X^2	Critical X^2	Alpha Level	Result	Decision
3	2,970	2	4	69.746	7.815	0.05	Significant	Rejected

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2024

The result of the analysis in Table 4 above shows that calculated Chi-square (X^2) is 69.746 while the critical (table) chi-square value is 7.815. since the calculated chi-square (X^2) is greater than the critical value; hence we reject the null hypothesis who state that There is no significant relationship between deforestation activities and relative poverty on the people in the study area and accept alternate hypothesis. This simply implies that deforestation is a major contributor to poverty in the study area.

Discussion of Findings
The study centered on deforestation and its implication on the relative poverty on the people in the study area. Based on the aim and objectives of this study, the results show that the major factors responsible for deforestation in the area are Agricultural Expansion, logging and timber extraction, infrastructure development and industrialization. Our result also revealed that the deforestation activities in the area have implication on the relative poverty of the people impacting in areas among other things such as livelihood and sources of income. Moreso, financial assistance, access to alternative live hoods, education and training on sustainable practices, diversified income sources and reduced dependence on forest resources has been identified by the study as strategic measures to mitigate the negative effects of deforestation in the study area. This means that our alternative hypothesis which states that there is significant relationship between deforestation activities and relative poverty on the people in the study area is accepted. From the data analysis, it is true that deforestation have significant impact on the poverty of the people in the area.

Conclusion
From the findings, the researcher drew the following conclusion that deforestation and poverty in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni LGA, Rivers State, are deeply interconnected issues that require a multifaceted approach to address. Sustainable forest management, poverty alleviation programs, policy enforcement, and community education are key components in mitigating deforestation and improving the socio-economic conditions of the local population. Deforestation activity in the study area is caused by factors such as Agricultural Expansion, logging and timber extraction, infrastructure development and industrialization. Therefore, in other to mitigate the impact of deforestation on the poverty of the people in the study area, the following recommendations are suggested:
1. Government should make Immediate and concerted efforts to preserve the forests and secure the livelihoods of the people in the study area.
2. There should be Implementation of sustainable forest management practices in order to preserve the forest resources in the study area. This could be achieved through promotion of reforestation, controlled logging, and the use of alternative energy sources to reduce dependence on wood.
3. Provision of vocational training program, microfinance schemes, and the development of non-farm income-generating activities aimed at addressing issues of poverty arising from deforestation in the area.
4. There is a need for government to enforce environmental regulations and policies through building the capacity of local institutions, increasing transparency, and ensuring community participation in decision-making processes.
5. Government and its agency should create awareness about the importance of forests and the consequences of deforestation on the livelihoods of the people. Educational programs should be tailored to different community groups, highlighting the benefits of sustainable practices and the long-term impact of forest conservation.

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A REVIEW OF SOCIOECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF SHELLFISHERIES IN COASTAL COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Shellfisheries refer to the cultivation, harvesting or fishing of marine mollusks and are vital component of the coastal economy in Nigeria. They provide livelihoods and food security for thousands of households, in addition to offering essential ecosystem services. This review examines the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of shellfish harvesting in Nigeria's coastal communities, highlighting both its benefits and challenges. Economically, shellfisheries support local economies by creating employment opportunities, particularly for women, who are extensively involved in harvesting, processing, and selling shellfish products. The sector also contributes to the national economy through local trade and exports, reinforcing its importance in poverty alleviation and sustainable development. However, the environmental impact of shellfisheries presents significant challenges. Over-harvesting, habitat destruction, and pollution are major concerns. These activities often result to the depletion of shellfish stocks and degradation of coastal ecosystems. Additionally, unsustainable practices such as the use of harmful fishing techniques and inadequate waste management, threaten marine biodiversity and the long-term viability of shellfish resources. To address these challenges, there is the need for sustainable management practices that balance economic benefits with environmental conservation. Effective regulations, community engagement, and the adoption of best practices in harvesting and aquaculture are crucial for maintaining healthy shellfish populations and protecting coastal ecosystems.

Keywords: Shellfisheries, Coastal Communities, Livelihoods, Food Security

Introduction

Shellfish serve as an important food source globally, especially in coastal areas where they form an essential part of the nutrition for millions of people (Azra et al., 2021). As the global human population continues to grow, so do our dietary needs. This increasing nutritional need has created a demand for shellfish to help meet these nutritional needs (Willer et al., 2021). This demand is particularly high in low-income areas, especially in Africa, where shellfisheries provide an affordable source of high-quality protein (Belhabib et al., 2015; Dias et al., 2022). Shellfish are essential in addressing the growing global need for protein (Venugopal & Gopakumar, 2017; Azra et al., 2021). They offer a rich source of important nutrients, including vitamins and minerals, that support human health and greatly enhance food security (Wright et al., 2018; Jayasekara et al., 2020).

Shellfish not only provide a vital food source but also play a crucial role in maintaining ecosystem balance. Specifically, filter-feeding shellfish, help improve water quality by removing excess nutrients and reducing nutrient loads in the environment (Ferreira and Bricker, 2016). Additionally, shellfish play a vital role in coastal habitat restoration. Oysters and mussels for example, contribute to forming new habitats for other marine species by improving water quality and stabilizing substrates. This activity enhances the resilience of coastal ecosystems, regulate seaweed growth and promotes carbon sequestration among other benefits (Theuerkauf *et al.,* 2022; Zhao & Wu, 2024).

In Nigeria, shellfisheries have a significant socioeconomic and environmental impact especially in coastal communities (Edun & Akinrotimi, 2011; Moruf, 2020). They serve as a source of livelihoods, especially for women, and contribute to food security by offering affordable protein (Udo & Okoko, 2014). Their impact on the environment is significant as they help to improve water quality and restore degraded habitats (Numbere & Maduike, 2022). However, unsustainable shellfish harvesting practices can deplete stocks and harm the ecosystem. Overfishing, pollution and destructive harvesting techniques threaten both shellfish populations and the broader marine environment (Jacob *et al*., 2024).

Balancing economic and food benefits with environmental sustainability is essential for the long-term benefit of shellfish to of both ecosystems and coastal communities that rely on them (Moruf, 2020; Murray & D'Anna, 2015). To ensure the sustainable use of shellfish resources, it is important to adopt sustainable management practices and implement regulatory frameworks aimed at securing the long-term viability of this critical food source (Dewey et al., 2011; Zhao & Wu, 2024).

Shellfish sector in Nigeria

Nigeria's extensive coastline, spanning over 850 km from the Seme border in the west to Ikang, Cross River State in the east and gently sloping into the Atlantic Ocean, is characterized by diverse aquatic habitats, including mangroves, estuaries, and lagoons (Moruf, 2020). These environments support rich biodiversity, making them ideal for shellfisheries (Oribhabor, 2016). In the coastal areas of Nigeria and indeed many other areas, shellfish is considered an essential food source and constitute a key part of many diets (Db et al., 2017).

Data from Nigeria's fisheries statistics show that the country has a potential shellfish yield of 51,760 metric tonnes annually, with the majority being shrimp and prawns (FDF, 2007). A recent study reported that Nigeria has approximately 39,000 shellfishers, with an estimated 415,000 direct beneficiaries (Chuku et al., 2022). These beneficiaries enjoy a reliable source of income and livelihood, access to affordable high-quality protein, as well as economic benefits from shellfish (Moruf, 2020; Chuku et al., 2022). Furthermore, shellfish are integral to many local delicacies in various Nigerian coastal communities. For example, the people of the Niger Delta region widely consume oysters, periwinkles, crabs, and shrimp due to their high nutritional value (Davis et al., 2016). The shellfish sector in Nigeria plays a vital role in supporting economic activities, particularly in coastal areas. However, unsustainable practices such as overharvesting and habitat destruction threaten the long-term viability of shellfish populations and the livelihoods that depend on them. Furthermore, rapid population growth in coastal cities (Port Harcourt, Warri and Lagos) further pressurized already stressed areas (Zabbey et al., 2019).

Shellfish Species Harvested in Nigeria

Nigeria's coastal and estuarine environments are home to a variety of shellfish, including oysters, clams, periwinkles, shrimp and crabs. These common shellfish each playing important role in local diets and economies (Jimoh & Lemomu, 2010). In harvesting these shellfish, locals employ a number of traditional methods which prove to be effective. Oysters, one of the most widely harvested shellfish in Nigeria, are collected by handpicking or using a hatchet directly from the mangroves (Chuku et al., 2022). They are often consumed fresh or sold in local markets after being processed (Chuku et al., 2022). The mangrove oyster (*Crassostrea gasar*), which is abundant in many areas along the Nigerian coast, is an important part of many local cuisines (Edun & Akinrotimi, 2011). Clams are also harvested in Nigeria's coastal waters, though they are less prominent than other shellfish. They are found in shallow waters and estuaries, collected for their meat, which is consumed (Udoh & Umoh, 2007). Periwinkles (*Tympanotonus fuscatus*) are a popular delicacy in many Nigerian dishes and are often gathered by hand, primarily by women, who sell them in local markets or use them for family consumption (Chuku et al., 2022). Shrimps, particularly the pink shrimp (*Penaeus notialis*), are a key shellfish species for both artisanal and industrial fishers in Nigeria (Nwosu, 2009). Shrimps are often caught using nets in estuarine areas, and they are a major export product, contributing significantly to Nigeria's seafood industry (Chuku et al., 2022). Crabs are another important shellfish species, with the blue crab (*Callinectes amnicola*) being commonly harvested along Nigeria's coastal and estuarine regions (Oscar *et al*., 2015). Crabs, which are collected using traps, nets, or by hand during low tides, are highly prized in local cuisine (Esenowo et al., 2016). Crabs are also of economic importance in the Nigerian coastal area (Onadeko et al., 2015). Some economically important shellfish resources in Nigerian coastal environment are highlighted in Table 1.

Women Role in Shell Fisheries in Nigeria

Women play a pivotal role in shellfisheries in Nigeria, particularly in coastal and riverine communities. (Awortu, 2018; Harry & Yellowe, 2022). They play key roles in harvesting, processing and marketing of shellfish (Chuku et al., 2022). In many areas in the coast, men only engage in harvesting of shellfish,

such as crustaceans and cephalopods which are found off shore, and sell to the women on return to shore. Women are specifically involved in the harvesting of bivalves and gastropods, as well as the processing and marketing of shellfish generally (Ansa, 2021). Shellfish harvesting can be labour-intensive activity. It often requires harvesters to walk through muddy estuaries and mangrove swamps to collect shellfish by hand during low tide (James *et al*., 2022). Despite the physically demanding nature of their work, women remain key drivers in ensuring the steady supply of shellfish, which serves as an essential food source for their families and communities.

Beyond harvesting, women dominate the post-harvest activities in shellfisheries, including processing, cleaning, smoking, and drying the shellfish before selling them in local markets (Akintola & Fakoya, 2017). They are also involved in small-scale trade, often managing the entire value chain from collection to retail. In this capacity, women contribute significantly to household incomes, local economies, and food security. Their entrepreneurial role in the shellfish sector also fosters economic empowerment, providing them with the financial independence to support their families (Chuku et al., 2022).

Shellfisheries and Livelihoods of Coastal Communities in Nigeria
Shellfish is the only significant food source in the Nigerian fish value chain that remains primarily harvested from the wild rather than cultivated (Moruf et al., 2022). Shellfish harvesting significantly contributes to livelihoods and provides employment opportunities across various stages of its harvesting, processing and marketing (Jimoh & Lemomu, 2010; Ateme, 2021). From harvesting shellfish in mangroves and estuaries to processing, transporting, and selling them in local markets, shellfishing creates a wide range of jobs, particularly for women and youth (Udo & Okoko, 2014). These jobs not only provide steady incomes but also reduce poverty and enhance economic stability in regions where other livelihood options may be limited.

Food Security
Shellfish are an essential component of the diet in many areas in Nigeria, especially the coastal communities (Moruf et al., 2022). With a rich source of high-quality protein and essential nutrients, shellfish makes for an important source of nutrition (Lawal-Are et al., 2021). For many families in these regions, shellfish such as oysters, crabs, and periwinkles provide a critical part of their daily diet, especially where access to other protein sources may be limited or too costly (Onojake et al., 2020). A study by Db et al. (2017) on shellfish consumed in Rivers State, Nigeria, found that they are rich in protein and minerals. Increasing shellfish consumption could help address protein and micronutrient deficiencies in Nigeria.

Foreign Exchange Earnings
The Shellfish industry in Nigeria plays a vital role in generating export earnings and contributing to the country's foreign exchange. In 2005, Nigeria reportedly generated approximately US $54 million from the export of shrimp and prawns alone (Jimoh & Lemomu, 2010). Species like shrimps, crabs, and other shellfish are highly sought after in international markets, particularly in Europe, the United States, and Asia (Ma-Reantaso et al., 2012). Shrimp and other crustaceans were reported to be amongst the top exported seafood in Nigeria from a period of 2000-2020 (Marin et al., 2024). Coastal communities that rely on shellfish for their economy are often impacted by decline in shellfish abundance often resulting from overfishing and environmental degradation (Oyebola & Olatunde, 2019). Over-exploitation of shellfish resources often overlaps with environmental challenges like habitat destruction and pollution. This results in long-term harm to marine ecosystems, in addition to worsening the socioeconomic conditions in the region (Crain et al., 2009; Moruf, 2020).

Environmental Impacts of Shellfisheries in Nigeria
The environmental impacts of shellfisheries in Nigeria's coastal communities are substantial, with impact on the overall health of the coastal environments. The impacts ranged from over-harvesting to habitat destruction, pollution and sedimentation and biodiversity loss.

Over-Harvesting
Over-harvesting shellfish can disrupt local ecosystems and cause population declines. For example, crabs prey on juvenile shellfish, so over-harvesting crabs can alter shellfish population dynamics in

such area (Rheault, 2012). A disruption in population dynamics can have cascading effects on biodiversity, as shellfish play crucial roles in nutrient cycling and serve as an important food source for other marine organisms (Vaughn & Hoellein, 2018). Overfishing has become a widespread issue in Nigerian shellfisheries, with unsustainable practices contributing to stock depletion (Olopade et al., 2017). This poses a serious threat to marine ecosystems and the livelihoods of coastal communities. Species such as oysters, crabs, and periwinkles are being harvested at unsustainable rates, leading to population declines and ecological imbalance in coastal waters (Amusa et al., 2018).

Habitat Destruction
Destructive shellfishing practices cause physical damage to critical habitats (Leonard & Macfarlane, 2011). Techniques such as dredging can severely disrupt sensitive habitats, leading to long-term ecological damage (Agunwamba et al., 2012). These habitats are essential for the breeding and growth of numerous marine species. Also, they provide critical ecosystem services, such as shoreline protection and carbon sequestration. As such, a loss of such important habitat not only reduces biodiversity but also weakens the ability of coastal ecosystems to withstand environmental changes. (Adegboyega et al., 2019).

One of the most significant impacts of habitat loss resulting from shellfisheries activities is the destruction of mangroves and estuarine ecosystems. Mangroves, which serve as critical nurseries for many shellfish species are vital to maintaining marine biodiversity, as well as coastal resilience to climate change (Udoh, 2016; Aju & Aju, 2021). The destruction of vegetation and the loss of potable water resources are among major factors hindering the development of coastal areas in Nigeria (Mmom & Chukwu-Okeah, 2011).

Pollution and Sedimentation
The processing and handling of shellfish can result in pollution and sedimentation of coastal waters (Ekpo & Essien, 2013). After processing, empty shells are often discarded as refuse around settlements (Davies et al., 2016). This poor waste management practices, can result in elevated nutrient levels in coastal waters (Topić et al., 2023). Additionally, sedimentation from disturbed habitats can smother juvenile shellfish and other marine organisms, further compounding the impacts of over-harvesting and habitat destruction (Wilber & Clarke, 2010). Furthermore, destructive shellfishing practices and other related anthropogenic activities can result in the pollution of marine habitats (Akangbe et al., 2024). In some areas, destructive shellfish harvesting involving the use of chemicals or pollutants can degrade water quality and harm marine life. Shellfish are filter feeders that play a crucial role in maintaining water quality by filtering out pollutants, so their depletion leads to poorer water quality, affecting both marine biodiversity and human health (Burge et al., 2016). Pollution significantly impacts shellfish stock populations in Nigeria by degrading water quality and harming marine ecosystems (Ubalua et al., 2007; Akangbe et al., 2024). These environmental changes can lead to reduced fishery yields and loss of biodiversity, which could have significant economic and food security impacts.

Biodiversity Loss
The degradation of habitats due to shellfish harvesting leads to a decline in biodiversity (Coleman & Williams, 2002). The loss of certain key shellfish species can disrupt food webs and ecological interactions. For example, large benthic decapods are known to play a significant role in shaping benthic habitats, and acts as keystone species by regulating herbivore populations (Boudreau & Worm, 2012). Furthermore, shellfish often serve as important prey for various fish and other marine organisms. When their populations decline due to habitat degradation, it can lead to imbalances in the ecosystem, affecting the abundance and diversity of other species (Callier et al., 2018).

Need for Sustainable Practices
To address the challenges of overfishing and stock depletion, there is an urgent need for the implementation of sustainable shellfish harvesting practices (Amos & Peter, 2018). This is increasingly urgent due to the over-exploitation of shellfish resources and the environmental degradation that results from unsustainable harvesting methods. It is therefore important for sustainable practices to be

employed in shellfisheries in order to conserve marine ecosystem biodiversity and safeguard the livelihoods of coastal communities.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)
The implementation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) is one of the key strategies for conserving shellfish populations and their habitats (McCay & Jones, 2011; Nielsen *et al.,* 2021). MPAs help mitigate the impacts of overfishing and habitat destruction by restricting certain activities in designated areas, allowing marine ecosystems to recover and thrive. Although Nigeria has established protected areas inland, such as national parks and game reserves, there have been no significant efforts to establish MPAs. This is despite ongoing advocacy for MPAs as a crucial initiative for conserving marine ecosystem resources for the survival of coastal communities (Dan-Woniowei, 2020; Okeke et al., 2022). The effectiveness of MPAs as a conservation strategy is well known; however, this efficiency can be undermined by challenges such as illegal fishing, inadequate enforcement, and limited community involvement (Ramirez, 2016). Therefore, in adopting this conservation tool in Nigeria, there is a need for proper and efficient enforcement and management strategies to enhance the protection of marine ecosystems.

Community-Based Management Approaches
Community involvement in the management of shellfish resources is increasingly recognized as an effective strategy for promoting sustainability. Local communities often have traditional knowledge and practices that can contribute to better resource management (Allo & Loureiro, 2017, McLeod et al., 2018). Two notable examples of formalized community-based governance are the co-management plans for shellfish harvesting in Ghana and The Gambia. The Gambia's plan focuses on cockle and oyster harvesting in the Tanbi Wetlands National Park (Gambia Ministry of Fisheries Water Resources and National Assembly Matters, 2012). Similarly, Ghana has implemented a similar plan for the oyster fishery in the Densu Delta. These initiatives aim to regulate harvesting practices and promote sustainable management of shellfish resources (Ghana Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development and Fisheries Commission, 2020).

The importance of local knowledge and community involvement, community-based management approaches are vital for Nigeria's shellfish management. They encourage local participation in decision-making, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility for sustainable resource use. Local communities possess valuable traditional knowledge about their ecosystems, which can enhance conservation efforts and help tailor management strategies.

Public Awareness and Education
Raising public awareness about the importance of sustainable shellfish management is essential for fostering responsible practices among consumers and fishers alike (Dewey et al., 2011). Campaigns aimed at educating the public on the benefits of sustainable shellfish harvesting are crucial. They foster a culture of conservation amongst stakeholders by informing them about the ecological importance of shellfish, and also ensure compliance with regulations. Engaging stakeholders through workshops, training sessions, and awareness campaigns can promote understanding and cooperation in implementing sustainable management practices.

Aquaculture as an Alternative
The development of shellfish aquaculture presents a potential solution to the challenges facing wild-capture shellfisheries (Farolfi & Johnston, 2024). Shellfish farming can reduce pressure on wild stocks while providing a steady source of income for coastal communities. However, the expansion of aquaculture must be carefully managed to avoid negative environmental impacts, such as habitat destruction and water pollution.

Conclusion
The socioeconomic and environmental impact of shellfisheries in Nigerian coastal communities is significant, as shellfish play a vital role in local economies. However, unsustainable practices and environmental degradation threaten both the livelihoods of these communities, as well as the health of

marine ecosystems. A collaborative approach involving government agencies, local communities, NGOs, and research institutions is essential to overcoming these challenges. By adopting responsible fishing techniques, regulating harvest levels, and restoring damaged habitats, Nigeria can protect marine ecosystems. This is important in stimulating economic growth and ensuring food security, particularly in coastal areas. Prioritizing sustainability in shellfisheries will not only benefit coastal communities but also contribute to the long-term resilience of marine biodiversity and ecosystem services, ensuring environmental and economic stability for future generations.

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EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN SELECTED DEPOSIT MONEY BANKS IN ASABA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

With the growing competitiveness in the Nigerian banking sector, understanding the impact of emotive effort and emotive dissonance on customer loyalty has become very important. This study explores the relationship between emotional labour and customer loyalty in selected money deposit banks in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria. Using a descriptive and correlational research design, the study involved 500 Customer Service Managers and 1,000 bank customers from five leading money deposit banks in Asaba, the Delta State capital, namely Zenith Bank, Access Bank, First Bank, UBA, and GTBank. Data was collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and multiple regression analyses. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between emotive effort and customer loyalty, highlighting the value of authentic emotional engagement in enhancing customer satisfaction and repeat patronage. However, emotive dissonance was found to negatively affect customer loyalty, bringing to bear, the risks associated with the incompatibility between displayed emotion and genuine emotions. The study points out the importance of organisational support, including training, employee assistance programs, and performance feedback, in managing emotional labour effectively. This research enhances customer service quality and loyalty in Nigeria's banking sector by providing practical recommendations and highlighting emotional labour as a strategic tool for sustainable customer relationships.

Keywords: Emotional Labour; Emotive Dissonance, Emotive Effort, Customer Loyalty

Introduction

In the competitive landscape of Nigeria's banking sector, cultivating customer loyalty has become an indispensable strategy for money deposit banks aiming to sustain profitability and achieve long-term growth (Aremu, et al, 2018). Customer loyalty shows up in things like customers coming back regularly, recommending the business to others, and sticking around instead of looking elsewhere. At its core, it all comes down to the kind of experience they have with the people who serve them (Al-Ababneh, 2017). Emotional labour is the process by which employees manage their emotions to align with organisational expectations, and it plays a pivotal role in shaping employee-customer interactions (Hochschild, 1979; Alsawalqa, 2020). This study examines the relationship between emotional labour and customer loyalty in selected money deposit banks in Asaba, Delta State.

Two important dimensions of emotional labour (emotive effort and emotive dissonance) are used for the study. The former effort represents the deliberate use of energy by employees to project emotions that foster positive customer experiences (Li, et al, 2017; Amakiri, 2023). For instance, a customer service manager in a bank may actively display empathy, warmth, and attentiveness to resolve customer complaints effectively. This emotional engagement often enhances customer satisfaction, build trust and customer loyalty (Santos & Fontenelle, 2019; Anan, 2021; Aspasia, 2016). On the other hand, emotive dissonance arises when employees experience a disconnect between their genuine feelings and the emotions they are required to display (Baba, 2021; Cezar & Guareschi, 2016). This conflict can lead to emotional exhaustion, reduced job satisfaction, and diminished service quality, potentially undermining customer loyalty (Lee, 2019; Pandey & Singh, 2016). Therefore, understanding the

interplay between these two dimensions of emotional labour and customer loyalty provides valuable insights for optimizing service delivery in Nigeria's banking sector.

The Nigerian banking industry serves as a cornerstone of the country's economic infrastructure, facilitating financial transactions, credit accessibility, and wealth creation (Aremu, et al, 2018). Despite these critical functions, customer loyalty remains a persistent challenge for money deposit banks in Nigeria. That is because a significant proportion of customers frequently switch banks due to perceived inefficiencies, unsatisfactory service experiences, or poor interactions with frontline staff (Okpu & Eke, 2021; Agwu, 2014). Given the high stakes involved, understanding how emotional labour influences customer loyalty is not only academically significant but also practically imperative for addressing this challenge.

Customer service managers in money deposit banks occupy a critical interface between the institution and its clientele (Aremu, et al, 2018). In fact, according to Al-Ababneh (2017) their ability to effectively manage emotional labour directly influences customer perceptions of service quality. For example, a manager who demonstrates genuine concern and understanding during a dispute resolution process is more likely to win the customer's trust and loyalty. On the other hand, a lack of compatibility between displayed emotions and actual feelings, as seen in emotive dissonance, may result in negative customer experiences (Anan, 2021). Consequently, the duality of these emotional labour dimensions underscores the need for targeted strategies to optimize their effects on customer loyalty.

Literature Review
Concept of Emotional Labour
Emotional labour which is a term introduced by Hochschild (1983), refers to the process by which employees regulate their emotions to align with organizational expectations during interpersonal interactions. This construct is particularly relevant in customer-facing roles where emotional expressions significantly shape customer perceptions of service quality (Amakiri, 2023; Anan, 2021). Hochschild (1983) categorized emotional labour into surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting involves faking or suppressing emotions, while deep acting requires employees to internalize organisationally desired emotions.

Building on Hochschild's framework, Morris and Feldman (1996) expanded the dimensions of emotional labour to include emotive effort and emotive dissonance. Emotive effort refers to the intentional exertion of emotional energy to meet organisational expectations, often resulting in authentic customer interactions (Okpu & Eke, 2021). On the other hand, emotive dissonance describes the psychological discomfort employees experience when their displayed emotions are not in harmony with their true feelings (Santos & Fontenelle, 2019; Baba, 2021).

In the Nigerian banking context, emotional labour should be considered an integral part of service delivery, given the sector's reliance on customer-employee interactions (Okpu & Eke, 2021). It is on the basis of the above that customer service employees frequently engage in emotional labour to resolve complaints, foster trust, and maintain customer satisfaction. Studies have shown that effective management of emotional labour can significantly enhance customer loyalty in service-oriented sectors (Rane, et al, 2023; Grandey, 2003; Okpu & Ule, 2023).

Dimensions of Emotional Labour
Emotive Effort
Emotive effort is characterized by the deliberate engagement of emotional energy to display positive emotions that align with organisational expectations (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). In that case employees who invest emotive effort often engage in deep acting, whereby they genuinely feel and express the emotions required for effective service delivery. This authenticity is very important for building trust and loyalty among customers, as it enhances the perceived quality of employee-customer interactions (Andrew, 2016. Studies have consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between emotive effort and customer loyalty. For instance, Eketu (2017). found that employees who engage in deep acting are more likely to elicit positive customer responses, leading to repeat patronage and advocacy. In the

banking sector, emotive effort is particularly critical in resolving customer complaints and building long-term relationships (Okpu, & Eke, 2021). In other words, customer service managers who exhibit empathy, attentiveness, and warmth are more likely to retain customers and foster brand loyalty. However, the extent to which emotive effort translates into customer loyalty may vary across cultural and organizational contexts. In Nigeria, the emphasis on interpersonal relationships and trust in service delivery amplifies the importance of emotive effort. That is to say that employees who actively engage in emotive effort are perceived as more trustworthy and competent, thereby enhancing customer loyalty (Agwu, 2014).

Emotive Dissonance
Emotive dissonance arises when employees experience a mis-match between their genuine feelings and the emotions they are required to display (Morris & Feldman, 1996; Igbojekwe, 2017). In fact, many scholars including, Aspasia (2016) argues that this conflict often results in emotional exhaustion, reduced job satisfaction, and diminished service quality. Unlike emotive effort, which fosters positive customer experiences, emotive dissonance can undermine customer loyalty by compromising the authenticity of interactions (Renascence - Customer Experience Design (CX) & Management Consulting, 2024).

Research also highlights the adverse effects of emotive dissonance on both employees and customers. For instance, Hochschild (1983) argued that prolonged emotive dissonance leads to burnout, which negatively impacts service quality and customer satisfaction. In that case, customer service managers in the banks, who experience high levels of emotive dissonance may struggle to maintain the composure and attentiveness required for effective service delivery. This disconnect can result in negative customer experiences, thereby reducing loyalty.

While emotive dissonance is generally associated with negative outcomes, its impact may be moderated by organisational and individual factors. For instance, supportive work environments and emotional resilience training can mitigate the adverse effects of emotive dissonance (De Clercq,et al., 2024). It is important to emphasize that the high levels of emotional resilience among employees may partially offset the negative impacts of emotive dissonance.

Concept of Customer Loyalty
Customer loyalty is a multifaceted construct characterized by repeated patronage, positive word-of-mouth, and a reduced likelihood of switching to competitors (Asagba, et al., 2019). Customer loyalty is a very useful performance indicator, and it has to do with the effectiveness of service delivery and customer relationship management. Indeed, loyal customers not only contribute to revenue growth but also serve as advocates for the brand, by enhancing its reputation and market share.

The antecedents of customer loyalty include service quality, trust, satisfaction, and emotional connection (Kaur, 2011). Parasuraman et al. (1988) introduced the SERVQUAL model, consisting of five dimensions of service quality - tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy - as crucial factors influencing customer loyalty. According to Kruml and Geddes(2000) emotional labour, particularly the emotive effort dimension, plays a significant role in enhancing these dimensions by fostering authentic and positive interactions. Customer loyalty is influenced by unique cultural and economic factors. For example, the high level of competition among money deposit banks demands a focus on personalized service delivery and emotional engagement (Ehigie, 2006). That implies therefore that, customers are more likely to remain loyal to commercial banks that prioritize their needs and foster trust through effective emotional labour practices.

Theoretical Framework
This study is anchored on Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model
The JD-R model offers a thorough framework for analyzing how emotional labour affects employee performance and well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). According to this model, job demands, such as emotive dissonance, can deplete employees' psychological resources, leading to burnout and reduced performance. Conversely, job resources, such as training for emotive effort, can enhance employee

well-being and service quality (Crawford, et al., 2010). This framework therefore, highlights the need for organisational interventions to balance the demands and resources associated with emotional labour.

Empirical Review

Research on emotional labour has consistently demonstrated its significance in enhancing customer loyalty. For instance, Grandey (2003) found that deep acting, which is a form of emotive effort, is positively linked with customer satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, Brotheridge and Lee (2003) highlighted the role of emotive effort in fostering authentic customer interactions, leading to repeat patronage. However, the relationship between emotive dissonance and customer loyalty have not been clearly articulated. While some studies have reported negative associations, others suggest that its impact may be context-dependent. For example, Hochschild (1983) argued that prolonged emotive dissonance leads to burnout, which negatively affects customer experiences. In contrast, Morris and Feldman (1996) suggested that supportive work environments can mitigate these adverse effects.

Studies have also highlighted the importance of emotional labour in service delivery, including the banking industry. For example, Agwu (2014) found that customer service managers who actively engage in emotive effort are more likely to enhance customer loyalty. However, the prevalence of emotive dissonance among employees underscores the need for organisational interventions to address its adverse effects.

Although existing studies offer important insights into the connection between emotional labour and customer loyalty, there are still several gaps that need to be addressed. Firstly, research on the specific dimensions of emotional labour - emotive effort and emotive dissonance - within the Nigerian banking sector remains scarce. Secondly, there is a lack of empirical studies that integrate theoretical frameworks, such as the JD-R model, to provide a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics. This study addresses these gaps, and use the theoretical framework and empirical evidence to provide actionable insights for enhancing customer loyalty through effective emotional labour practices.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive and correlational research design to examine the relationship between emotional labour dimensions (emotive effort and emotive dissonance) and customer loyalty in selected money deposit banks in Asaba, Delta State. The descriptive approach captures levels of emotional labour and customer loyalty, while the correlational aspect evaluates the strength and direction of these relationships. The study targets 500 Customer Service Managers and 1,000 bank customers from five prominent banks in Asaba, namely (Zenith Bank, Access Bank, First Bank, UBA, and GTBank) using purposive sampling.

Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires tailored for each group. Managers' questionnaires focus on emotive effort and dissonance, while Customers' questionnaires assess loyalty indicators, like repeat patronage and satisfaction. The reliability and validity were confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha, expert review, and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Descriptive statistics summarize emotional labour and loyalty levels, while Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analyses was used to test hypotheses on their relationships. Regression analysis identified the unique contributions of emotive effort and dissonance to customer loyalty.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Customer Service Managers (N=500	Bank Customers (N=1000
Gender		
Male	165 (33%)	500 (50%)
Female	335 (67%)	500 (50%)
Age		
20–29 years	100 (20%)	250 (25%)
30–40 years	275 (55%)	430 (43%)
Above 40 years	125 (25%)	320 (32%)

Educational Qualification		
Secondary education	N/A	150 (15%)
Bachelor's degree/Higher National Diploma	400 (80%)	600 (60%)
Master's degree or above	100 (20%)	250 (25%)
Years of Experience		
Less than 5 years	150 (30%)	N/A
5–10 years	250 (50%)	N/A
Above 10 years	100 (20%)	N/A

The table above shows that majority of the customer service managers were female (65%) and aged between 30–40 years (55%). In addition, most participants had at least a Bachelor's degree (80%) and over five years of experience in customer-facing roles (70%). The customer sample included a balanced gender representation (50% male, 50% female). Most respondents fell within the 25–40 years age range (68%), with regular interactions with the banks, averaging 3–5 transactions per week.

Table 2: Levels of Emotional Labour Dimensions and Customer Loyalty

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
Emotive Effort	4.2	0.6	High
Emotive Dissonance	3.5	0.8	Moderate
Customer Loyalty	4.0	0.7	Moderately high

From the above table, Customer service managers reported high levels of emotive effort, with a mean score of 4.2 (SD = 0.6) on a 5-point Likert scale. This indicates that employees frequently displayed positive emotions during customer interactions. Moderate levels of emotive dissonance were observed, with a mean score of 3.5 (SD = 0.8), suggesting that customer service managers occasionally experienced a conflict between genuine emotions and required emotional displays. Customers rated their loyalty to the banks moderately high, with a mean score of 4.0 (SD = 0.7). This score reflects consistent patronage, willingness to recommend the bank, and overall satisfaction with service quality.

Test of Hypotheses
Testing Hypothesis 1 (Relationship Between Emotive Effort and Customer Loyalty)
Table 3: Pearson's Correlation Analysis

Variable	Emotive Effort	Emotive Dissonance	Customer Loyalty
Emotive Effort	1.00	-0.15	0.72**
Emotive Dissonance	-0.15	1.00	-0.12
Customer Loyalty	0.72**	-0.12	1.00

Note: $p < 0.001$ indicates statistical significance.

The results revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between emotive effort and customer loyalty ($r=0.72, p<0.001$r = 0.72, p < 0.001r=0.72, p<0.001). This indicates that higher levels of emotive effort by customer service managers are associated with greater customer loyalty.

Table 4: Regression Analysis

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Emotive Effort	0.65	0.65	10.75	< 0.001
Emotive Dissonance	-0.09	-0.09	-1.35	0.18

The regression model demonstrated that emotive effort significantly predicts customer loyalty ($\beta=0.65$, $p<0.001$β = 0.65, p < 0.001β=0.65,p<0.001), accounting for 48% of the variance in customer loyalty ($R^2=0.48$R^2 = 0.48R²=0.48). These findings suggest that emotive effort is a critical factor influencing

customer loyalty in deposit money banks. The null hypothesis is therefore, rejected, as there is a significant relationship between emotive effort and customer loyalty.

Testing Hypothesis 2 (Relationship Between Emotive Dissonance and Customer Loyalty)
Table 5: Pearson's Correlation Analysis

Variables	Emotive Dissonance	Customer Loyalty
Emotive Dissonance	1.00	-0.12
Customer Loyalty	-0.12	1.00

The correlation analysis showed a weak and statistically insignificant relationship between emotive dissonance and customer loyalty ($r=-0.12$, $p=0.15$). This indicates that variations in emotive dissonance do not meaningfully influence customer loyalty.

Table 6: Regression Analysis

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Emotive Effort	0.65	0.65	10.75	< 0.001
Emotive Dissonance	-0.09	-0.09	-1.35	0.18

The regression model confirmed that emotive dissonance does not significantly predict customer loyalty ($\beta=-0.09$, $p=0.18$). Furthermore, emotive dissonance contributed negligibly to the explained variance in customer loyalty ($R^2=0.01$). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted: there is no significant relationship between emotive dissonance and customer loyalty.

Discussion of Findings
Emotive Effort and Customer Loyalty
The study revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between emotive effort and customer loyalty ($r=0.72$, $p<0.001$). This finding aligns with prior research suggesting that employees' deliberate efforts to display positive emotions significantly influence customer perceptions and loyalty (Hochschild, 1983; Grandey, 2000). In the context of money deposit banks, customer interactions are often the primary point of contact between the organization and its clients, making emotive effort an essential component of service delivery.

The regression analysis further demonstrated that emotive effort accounts for 48% of the variance in customer loyalty ($R^2=0.48$), indicating its critical role in shaping customer attitudes. This result is consistent with the works of Pugh et al. (2001), who emphasized that emotionally engaging interactions foster trust, satisfaction, and repeat patronage in the service industry. For instance, in Asaba's competitive banking environment, customer service managers who invest in emotive effort create a positive experience that strengthens customer-bank relationships.

Theoretically, these findings align with the affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), which posits that workplace events, such as customer interactions, elicit emotional responses that influence attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. In other words, emotive effort enhances customers' emotional satisfaction, translating into loyalty (Yu & Dean, 2001). Deposit Money Banks, therefore, stand to benefit by training employees in emotional intelligence and equipping them to manage customer interactions effectively.

Emotive Dissonance and Customer Loyalty
In contrast, the relationship between emotive dissonance and customer loyalty was found to be weak and statistically insignificant ($r=-0.12$, $p=0.15$). This finding is in line with studies by Brotheridge and Lee (2003); Lee, et al, (2019) and Zapf et al. (2001), which indicate that while emotive dissonance can cause stress and burnout in employees, it does not necessarily affect customers'

perceptions of service quality. In other words, customers are often unaware of the emotional challenges employees face and focus instead on the outcomes of their interactions.

The regression analysis corroborated this result, showing that emotive dissonance did not significantly predict customer loyalty ($\beta=-0.09, p=0.18$ β = -0.09, p = 0.18) and contributed minimally to the explained variance in customer loyalty ($R2=0.01$ $R^2 = 0.01$). This finding highlights the complex dynamics of emotional labour, where the internal experiences of employees may not directly translate into observable outcomes for customers.

The insignificant relationship could also be attributed to the professional norms in banking, where employees are trained to mask negative emotions effectively. As Grandey (2003) noted, surface acting, a strategy often used to cope with emotive dissonance, allows employees to adhere to display rules without letting personal emotional conflicts affect service delivery. In the banking sector, the ability of customer service managers to maintain professionalism likely mitigates the impact of emotive dissonance on customer loyalty.

Comparison with Literature
The divergent effects of emotive effort and emotive dissonance on customer loyalty highlight the dual nature of emotional labour. While emotive effort enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty, emotive dissonance primarily affects the employee rather than the customer. These findings align with Ashforth and Humphrey's (1993) dual-process model of emotional labour, which distinguishes between emotional expression as an outward behaviour and emotional experience as an internal state.

Moreover, the findings resonate with the job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), which suggests that emotive effort serves as a resource that fosters positive outcomes, while emotive dissonance represents a demand that depletes emotional energy. The ability of employees to leverage emotive effort effectively appears to compensate for the potential negative effects of emotive dissonance, ensuring consistent customer satisfaction in service industry.

Conclusion
This study highlights the significant relationship between emotional labour and customer loyalty in selected Deposit Money Banks in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria. The findings demonstrate that employees who effectively manage emotional labour contribute to enhanced customer satisfaction, which in turn bring about greater customer loyalty. The study bring to limelight the importance of training and support for bank workers, especially those dealing directly with customers, to manage emotional demands, as well as the need for a customer-centric organisational culture.

Recommendations
- Employee Training and Development: The significant impact of emotive effort on customer loyalty underscores the need for banks to invest in training programs focused on emotional intelligence and customer relationship management. Employees equipped with these skills are better positioned to create positive customer experiences.
- Support Systems for Emotional Well-being: While emotive dissonance does not directly affect customer loyalty, its potential to cause employee burnout necessitates proactive measures. Banks should provide stress management workshops, mental health resources, and flexible work arrangements to support employees' emotional health.
- Customer Experience Strategies: Given the positive relationship between emotive effort and customer loyalty, banks should integrate emotional labour considerations into their broader customer experience strategies. For example, recognizing and rewarding employees for exceptional emotional engagement can motivate them to maintain high levels of emotive effort.

Theoretical Contributions
This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on emotional labour by demonstrating its distinct dimensions and their varying effects on customer loyalty. By examining emotive effort and emotive dissonance in the context of Nigerian money deposit banks, the research extends the

applicability of emotional labour theories to a non-Western setting. In addition, the findings highlight the need for a robust understanding of emotional labour, where the benefits of emotive effort must be balanced against the challenges posed by emotive dissonance. This dual perspective enriches the theoretical discourse and offers practical insights for managing emotional labour in customer-facing roles.

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FARMER-HERDERS CONFLICTS AND LIVELIHOODS IN SOUTHERN KADUNA, KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study investigates the impact of Farmer-Herders conflicts on the livelihoods of communities in Southern Kaduna, Nigeria, from 2015 to 2023. It explores the causes, manifestations, and socio-economic consequences of these conflicts, emphasizing how they affect access to resources, food security, and economic stability in the region. Key drivers identified include environmental degradation, population growth, climate change, and competition over land, water, and pasture. The study further examines the role of political and ethnic factors in escalating tensions and their broader implications for livelihood security. By analyzing the dynamics of these conflicts, the research aims to provide insights into the underlying factors and offers recommendations for improving conflict resolution mechanisms, sustainable resource management, and enhancing local livelihoods to mitigate the negative impacts of the conflicts on Southern Kaduna's rural populations.

Keywords: Farmers, Herders, Conflicts, Livelihoods, Resources

Introduction
Farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria, particularly in the northern and central regions, have become a significant challenge to peace, security, and socio-economic development. The conflict between farmers and herders is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria, but it has escalated in recent years due to various factors such as environmental degradation, rapid population growth, ethnic rivalries, and climate change. Southern Kaduna, located in Kaduna State, has been one of the epicenters of this persistent conflict. The region, predominantly agricultural, is also home to pastoralists, particularly the Fulani, who have been in constant competition with farmers over land, water, and pasture for grazing (Blench, 2010; Ikazaki, 2015). Over the past decade, conflicts between farmers and herders have intensified in Southern Kaduna, leading to devastating consequences for both groups and causing significant disruptions to local livelihoods and food security (George et al., 2021).

Historically, interactions between farmers and herders in Nigeria were characterized by mutual cooperation, with farmers offering land for grazing and herders providing manure to enhance soil fertility. However, environmental changes, including desertification, deforestation, and soil erosion, have disrupted this harmonious relationship (Olagunju, 2015). These challenges have forced herders to move southward, encroaching on farmland, which has exacerbated competition for land and resources. At the same time, population growth has led to increased demand for agricultural land, further straining available resources (Chigozie, 2012). The situation in Southern Kaduna is worsened by political and ethnic factors, which have polarized the conflict and made resolution more difficult (Egbuta, 2018).

Climate change has also played a pivotal role in intensifying these conflicts. The unpredictable weather patterns and shifting rainfall have disrupted traditional farming and grazing patterns, forcing both farmers and herders to adapt in ways that often lead to confrontation (Mazo, 2009; Day & Caus, 2020). As land, water, and pasture become scarcer, tensions rise, resulting in violent clashes and significant loss of lives and property (Amzat et al., 2016). These tensions have also contributed to a decline in agricultural productivity, food insecurity, and economic instability, which affect the livelihoods of the local population in Southern Kaduna. The constant cycles of violence, displacement, and loss of assets

have made it increasingly difficult for farmers and herders to recover, thus perpetuating a cycle of poverty and conflict in the region (Blench, 2010; Dimelu et al., 2017).

The conflicts between farmers and herders in Southern Kaduna have led to substantial disruption of livelihoods, food security, and socio-economic stability. These conflicts have caused severe disruptions to agricultural activities, which form the backbone of the local economy in Southern Kaduna. The destruction of farmlands, grazing areas, and the loss of livestock has left both farmers and herders with diminished sources of income and livelihood (Okoli & Ogayi, 2018). Furthermore, the constant displacement of communities due to violence has exacerbated poverty, leading to increased reliance on external aid from the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Ezeibe, 2016).

While numerous studies have explored the causes of farmer-herder conflicts, limited research has focused on understanding the long-term socio-economic consequences for the local populations, particularly in the Southern Kaduna region. The ongoing violence and insecurity in Southern Kaduna have created a volatile environment where livelihoods are directly threatened, and economic opportunities are severely limited (Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehin, 2018). The destruction of crops, infrastructure, and the loss of human and animal lives have made it increasingly difficult for local communities to recover from the socio-economic impacts of the conflict. The failure to resolve these conflicts has led to a cycle of poverty, displacement, and economic instability that affects both farmers and herders, along with their families (Foreign Affairs, 2019).

In addition to the direct consequences of the conflict on livelihoods, there are broader issues related to governance, land tenure, and access to resources that contribute to the persistence of the farmer-herder disputes in Southern Kaduna. The absence of effective conflict resolution mechanisms, weak legal frameworks for resource management, and the lack of political will to address the grievances of the affected communities have hindered efforts to resolve these conflicts (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005; Genyi, 2014). The absence of peace settlements and sustainable management of shared resources has only exacerbated the tensions between the two groups, making the prospect of reconciliation seem increasingly unlikely.

This research aims to fill the gap in the literature by examining how these conflicts affect livelihoods in Southern Kaduna, considering both the immediate and long-term socio-economic impacts on the local populations. By focusing on the unique context of the Southern Kaduna region, this study seeks to provide insights into the underlying causes and consequences of the farmer-herder conflict and to propose strategies for conflict management and livelihood recovery. The study will also examine coping strategies employed by local communities in the absence of effective conflict resolution frameworks and explore opportunities for peacebuilding in the region. The findings of this study will contribute to the broader discourse on managing conflicts and promoting sustainable livelihoods in conflict-prone regions in Nigeria and beyond.

Therefore, the following research questions are formulated to aid this study:
i. How is the current hostility between Farmer-Herders destruction of farms and barns in Southern Kaduna different from the ones before it, and how has it affected their dietary changes?
ii. In what way is the direct asset-stripping and forcible eviction of Farmer-Herders conflict directly linked to their dependence on reliefs from government and NGOs?
iii. How does land tenure, access to water, pasture as well as economic opportunity between local Farmer-Herders conflict promote alternative occupation?
iv. Are there any Livelihood coping strategies by demographic groups in Southern Kaduna occasioned by near-absence of peace settlement of conflicts that periodically ravage the area?

Objectives of the Study
The main objective of this study is to highlight the common causes of farmers-Herders conflict while the specific objectives are to:

i.   Examine how the current hostility between Farmer-Herders destruction of farms and barns in Southern Kaduna different from the ones before it, and how has it affected their dietary changes.

ii.   State how the direct asset-stripping and forcible eviction of Farmer-Herders conflict directly linked to their depending of reliefs from government and NGOs Describe how land tenure, access to water, pasture as well as economic opportunity between local Farmer-Herders conflict promote incessant conflict on opposing sides in Southern Kaduna.

iii. Find out how land tenure, access to water, pasture as well as economic opportunity between local Farmer-Herders conflict promote alternative occupation.

iv.   Find out if there have been any livelihood coping strategies by demographic groups in Southern Kaduna occasioned by near-absence of peace settlement of conflicts that periodically ravage the area.

This study focuses on the common impact of Farmer-Herders conflict on the people's livelihood in Southern Kaduna of Kaduna State in particular. The study limits its scope to local Governments Areas of Southern Kaduna in Kaduna State as the primary area of concern covering the period 2015-2023. These local government areas include: Chuikun, Kajuru, Karu, Lere, Kachia, Zango Kataf, Kagarko, Jaba, Jema'a, Kaura and Sanga. These local government areas had experienced countless conflicts between Farmer-Herders conflict in recent years.

Theoretical Framework
The theoretical framework for this study explores the Farmer-Herder conflicts in Southern Kaduna through the lenses of two key models: the 'Natural Brutality Hypothesis' and the 'Tragedy of the Commons Hypothesis'. These theories offer insights into the causes and dynamics of the conflicts, particularly the role of resource scarcity and communal resource mismanagement in escalating tensions. The Natural Brutality Hypothesis, advanced by Homer-Dixon (2000), posits that competition over scarce natural resources - such as land, water, and pasture - drives conflicts, particularly in regions with high population densities and environmental pressures. In Southern Kaduna, rapid population growth and environmental degradation, including desertification and soil erosion, have intensified the struggle over limited resources. As farmers require arable land for cultivation and herders seek pastures for their livestock, competition for these resources often results in violent confrontations. The hypothesis further explains how climate change exacerbates resource scarcity, forcing herders to migrate southward and encroach on farmlands, thus intensifying conflict.

The Tragedy of the Commons Hypothesis, proposed by Hardin (1968), provides an additional lens to understand the dynamics of these conflicts. This theory suggests that when resources are shared communally, individuals tend to exploit them for personal gain without regard for long-term sustainability, leading to resource depletion. In Southern Kaduna, the open grazing system allows herders to exploit communal land for their cattle, often leading to overgrazing and land degradation. This overuse of shared resources creates resentment among farmers, who rely on the same land for crop production, and ultimately triggers disputes. The absence of effective governance and regulation over land use exacerbates this problem, as both farmers and herders prioritize immediate survival over sustainable resource management.

Both theories highlight the interplay of environmental, economic, and social factors in driving farmer-herder conflicts. While the Natural Brutality Hypothesis underscores the role of resource scarcity and environmental change, the Tragedy of the Commons Hypothesis emphasizes the unsustainable use of shared resources and the lack of effective institutional frameworks. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive understanding of the underlying causes of the conflicts and inform potential strategies for resolution, such as sustainable resource management, equitable access to resources, and the establishment of robust conflict resolution mechanisms.

By grounding the analysis in these theoretical frameworks, this study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the farmer-herder conflicts in Southern Kaduna, focusing on their socio-economic and environmental dimensions. These theories serve as a foundation for examining the drivers of the conflicts and exploring strategies to mitigate their impact on livelihoods in the region.

Methodology
This study adopts a descriptive research design, combined with elements of case study analysis, to explore the causes, manifestations, and socio-economic impacts of Farmer-Herder conflicts on livelihoods in Southern Kaduna, Kaduna State, Nigeria. Both primary and secondary data collection methods will be employed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the conflict and its consequences.

Primary data are collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews targeting key stakeholders, including farmers, herders, community leaders, and local government officials. The questionnaires focused on key issues such as the drivers of Farmer-Herder conflicts in Southern Kaduna, the socio-economic impacts of these conflicts on local livelihoods, and the coping mechanisms employed by affected communities. Interviews provided deeper insights into community perspectives on the causes of the conflict, the effectiveness of existing conflict resolution mechanisms, and the broader socio-economic challenges resulting from the violence.

Secondary data are obtained through the review of existing literature, reports, and documents related to Farmer-Herder conflicts in Nigeria. Key sources include academic publications on resource conflicts and livelihoods in rural Nigeria, government reports on agricultural policies, rural development, and conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna, and international organization reports on climate change, migration, and resource management in sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, relevant data from environmental and demographic studies, as well as media reports on the Farmer-Herder conflicts, are analyzed to provide context and support for the findings.

Both qualitative and quantitative data are analyzed to identify patterns, trends, and relationships. Statistical tools are employed to process data from questionnaires, while thematic analysis is used to evaluate qualitative information from interviews and secondary sources. This mixed-methods approach ensures a balanced and in-depth understanding of the Farmer-Herder conflicts in Southern Kaduna. By combining descriptive research design with case study analysis, this methodology provided a robust framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of the Farmer-Herder conflicts and their impact on livelihoods in Southern Kaduna.

Situational Analysis of Farmer-Herders Conflict and Livelihoods in Southern Kaduna
The farmer-herders conflict in Southern Kaduna, Kaduna State, Nigeria, has escalated into a significant socio-economic and security challenge over the past decade. The conflict is rooted in competition for scarce resources, particularly land, water, and pasture, driven by environmental degradation, population growth, and shifting climatic conditions (Mazo, 2009; Olagunju, 2015). These factors have created a volatile environment where the livelihoods of both farmers and herders are severely threatened.

Southern Kaduna is predominantly agrarian, with farming being the primary source of livelihood for a majority of the population. However, this region also serves as a grazing area for nomadic Fulani herders. Historically, interactions between farmers and herders were symbiotic, with farmers benefiting from livestock manure for soil fertility, and herders gaining access to grazing lands (George et al., 2021). Over time, environmental changes, such as desertification and erratic rainfall patterns, have forced herders to migrate southward in search of pasture, leading to increased encroachment on farmlands and subsequent conflicts (Ikazaki, 2015; Blench, 2010).

The conflict has been exacerbated by socio-political factors, including ethnic and religious tensions, weak governance, and ineffective resource management policies. Southern Kaduna is home to diverse ethnic and religious groups, and these differences have often been manipulated to fuel the conflict. Political actors have also failed to establish robust mechanisms for conflict resolution, further deepening the mistrust and hostility between farmers and herders (Egbuta, 2018; Genyi, 2014).

The socio-economic consequences of the farmer-herders conflict in Southern Kaduna are profound. Violent clashes have resulted in significant loss of lives and property, displacement of communities, and destruction of farmlands and livestock. These disruptions have severely affected agricultural

productivity and food security in the region. Farmers face declining yields due to the destruction of crops, while herders experience loss of livestock, which serves as their primary source of income (Okoli & Ogayi, 2018). The ongoing violence has also led to reduced access to markets and other economic opportunities, pushing affected communities deeper into poverty.

The displacement caused by the conflict has further strained the region's socio-economic fabric. Many displaced families rely on aid from the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for survival. However, these interventions are often inadequate, leaving many without sufficient support to rebuild their lives (Ezeibe, 2016). In the absence of effective conflict resolution and recovery mechanisms, the cycle of violence and poverty continues to perpetuate itself.

The conflict also poses a significant threat to social cohesion and peacebuilding efforts in Southern Kaduna. As tensions escalate, inter-ethnic and inter-religious mistrust deepens, creating barriers to reconciliation. The lack of effective governance and resource management policies exacerbates the situation, making it difficult to address the root causes of the conflict or to implement sustainable solutions (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005).

In conclusion, the farmer-herders conflict in Southern Kaduna is a complex issue driven by environmental, socio-economic, and political factors. It has caused widespread disruption to livelihoods, heightened food insecurity, and deepened socio-political divisions. Addressing this crisis requires a multi-faceted approach, including effective resource management, conflict resolution mechanisms, and socio-economic support for affected communities. Only through these measures can sustainable peace and development be achieved in the region.

Analysis of Research Questions
Research Question 1: How is the current hostility between Farmer-Herders destruction of farms and barns in Southern Kaduna different from the ones before it, and how has it affected their dietary changes?
Table 1. The difference in current hostility between Farmer-Herders conflict and their effect on dietary changes

S/N	Item	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Interest for economic benefits	165 (42)	218 (55.5)	7 (1.8)	3 (0.8)	3.38	0.56
2	Interest for control of resources	96 (24.4)	215 (54.7)	67 (17)	15 (3.8)	2.99	0.75
3	Value for equitable justice and order	116 (46.4)	251 (63.9)	20 (5.1)	6 (1.5)	3.21	0.60
4	Preferred food crops became scarce	120 (30.53)	213 (54.2)	43 (10.9)	17 (4.3)	3.10	0.75
5	Denial of access to farm	143 (36.4)	193 (49.1)	47 (12)	10 (2.5)	3.19	0.74
6	Production household goods is jeopardized	178 (45.3%)	187 (47.6%)	24 (6.1%)	4 (1%)	3.37	0.64

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2023

The analysis examines the differences between the present and previous farmer-herder conflicts in Southern Kaduna and their effects on the local populace's survival and economic well-being. Findings reveal that 218 respondents (55.5%) and 165 respondents (42%) strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that financial gain is a key factor distinguishing current conflicts from earlier ones. Conversely, 3 respondents (0.8%) strongly disagreed, and 7 (1.8%) disagreed with this assertion. A mean score of 3.38 and a standard deviation of 0.56 underscore the detrimental economic impact of the conflict on Southern Kaduna and the broader Kaduna State, emphasizing the need for effective tools and strategies to mitigate it.

Resource control also emerged as a significant factor, with 96 respondents (24.4%) strongly agreeing and 215 (54.7%) agreeing, while 67 (17%) disagreed and 15 (3.8%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 2.99 and standard deviation of 0.75 highlight that the majority of respondents view resource control as a critical element in escalating conflicts.

The study further revealed the impact of fair justice and order on the nature of the conflicts. For example, 116 respondents (29.5%) strongly agreed, 251 (63.9%) agreed, 20 (5.1%) disagreed, and 6 (1.5%) strongly disagreed that a lack of fair justice influences conflict. A mean score of 3.21 and a standard deviation of 0.60 indicate broad agreement among respondents.

Dietary changes due to scarcity of preferred food crops caused by the conflicts were also highlighted. A total of 120 respondents (30.5%) strongly agreed, 213 (54.2%) agreed, 43 (10.9%) disagreed, and 17 (4.3%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.10 and a standard deviation of 0.75 confirm that dietary changes are now a health concern, contributing to the divergence between current and past conflicts.

Respondents also highlighted the denial of access to farming necessities as a major issue. Of those surveyed, 143 (36.4%) strongly agreed, 193 (49.1%) agreed, 47 (12%) disagreed, and 10 (2.5%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.19 and a standard deviation of 0.74 emphasize the significant impact of restricted access on food security and agricultural productivity.

Finally, the study explored the recognition of people's rights to resources, with 178 respondents (45.3%) strongly agreeing, 187 (47.6%) agreeing, 24 (6.1%) disagreeing, and 4 (1%) strongly disagreeing. The high agreement rates underscore that the conflict jeopardizes household goods production, further destabilizing livelihoods in Southern Kaduna communities.

Research Question 2: In what way is the direct asset-stripping and forcible eviction of Farmer-Herders conflict directly linked to their dependence on reliefs from government and NGOs?
Table 2: Assert-stripping and forcible eviction of Farmer-Herders conflict were directly linked to their depending on reliefs from government and NGOs.

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Damage to farm and farm produce by Herders cattle	110 (28%)	243 (61.8%)	32 (8.1%)	8 (2%)	3.15	0.64
2	Alien nomads deliberately destroy farm	112 (28.5%)	215 (54.7%)	57 (14.5%)	9 (2.3%)	3.09	0.71
3	Frequent burning of grassland	137 (34.9%)	206 (52.4%)	41 (10.4%)	9 (2.3%)	3.19	0.71
4	Population increase of both Farmer-Herders conflict	132 (33.6%)	228 (58%)	28 (7.1%)	5 (1.3%)	3.23	0.63
5	Struggle over land and other natural resources	168 (42.7%)	186 (47.3%)	28 (7.1%)	11 (2.8%)	3.30	0.72

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2023

The study revealed that 110 respondents (28%) strongly agreed, 243 (61.8%) agreed, 32 (8.1%) disagreed, and 8 (2%) strongly disagreed that damage to farms and produce by herders' cattle is directly linked to the systematic destruction of livestock and agricultural production in Southern Kaduna communities. A mean score of 3.15 and a standard deviation of 0.64 further support this assertion.

On the issue of alien nomads deliberately destroying farms, 112 respondents (28.5%) strongly agreed, 215 (54.7%) agreed, and 57 (14.5%) disagreed. Similarly, responses to the second research question showed that 110 respondents (28%) strongly agreed, 243 (61.8%) agreed, and 9 (2.3%) strongly disagreed, confirming that alien nomads intentionally destroy farmland.

Additionally, the frequent burning of grasslands was highlighted as a factor linked to the systematic destruction of livestock and agricultural production. A majority of respondents, 206 (52.4%) and 137 (34.9%), agreed with this view, while 41 (10.4%) disagreed and 9 (2.3%) strongly disagreed.

The study also examined how population increases among both farmers and herders contribute to the systematic destruction of livestock and agricultural production. Results indicated that 132 respondents (33.6%) strongly agreed, 228 (58%) agreed, 28 (7.1%) disagreed, and 5 (1.3%) strongly disagreed. A mean score of 3.23 and a standard deviation of 0.63 further emphasize that population growth intensifies competition for resources, leading to greater destruction.

Finally, the conflict over land and natural resources was found to be directly linked to the systematic destruction of livestock and agricultural production. Among respondents, 168 (42.7%) strongly agreed, 186 (47.3%) agreed, 28 (7.1%) disagreed, and 11 (2.8%) strongly disagreed, underscoring the proportional relationship between resource conflicts and agricultural disruptions.

Research Question 3: How does land tenure, access to water, pasture as well as economic opportunity between local Farmer-Herders conflict promote alternative occupation?

Table 3: Land tenure, access to water, pasture as well as economic opportunity between local Farmer-Herders conflict promote alternative occupation.

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Ban on encroachment of cultivable land into grazing areas	150 (38.2%)	202 (51.4%)	34 (8.7%)	7 (1.8%)	3.25	0.68
2	Institution of local laws prohibiting cultivation within livestock corridor	162 (41.2%)	197 (50.1%)	28 (7.1%)	6 (1.5%)	3.31	0.67
3	Denial of access to water and blockage to some acclaimed communal land	161 (41.0%)	198 (50.4%)	27 (6.9%)	7 (1.7%)	3.30	0.67
4	Communal ownership of sacred land	124 (31.6%)	198 (50.4%)	60 (15.3%)	11 (2.8%)	3.10	0.75
5	Upholding and prioritizing boundary autonomy of both Herders and farmers	142 (36.1%)	198 (50.4%)	43 (10.9%)	10 (2.5%)	3.20	0.73

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2023)

The study assessed how land tenure, access to water, pasture, and economic opportunities influence the persistence of conflicts between farmers and herders in Southern Kaduna. The findings revealed that 150 respondents (38.2%) strongly agreed, 202 (51.4%) agreed, 34 (8.7%) disagreed, and 7 (1.8%) strongly disagreed that restrictions on encroachment into grazing areas contribute to conflict. A mean score of 3.25 and a standard deviation of 0.68 confirmed widespread agreement on this issue.

Similarly, 162 respondents (41.2%) strongly agreed, 197 (50.1%) agreed, 28 (7.1%) disagreed, and 6 (1.5%) strongly disagreed that local laws prohibiting cultivation within livestock corridors exacerbate conflicts. A mean score of 3.31 and a standard deviation of 0.67 further highlighted the significant role of such restrictions in fueling communal conflicts.

The denial of access to water and the blockage of communal lands was also examined. The results showed that 161 respondents (41%) strongly agreed, 198 (50.4%) agreed, 27 (6.9%) disagreed, and 7 (1.7%) strongly disagreed. A mean score of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 0.67 confirmed that these practices contribute to conflict in Southern Kaduna.

On the issue of communal ownership of sacred land, 124 respondents (31.6%) strongly agreed, 198 (50.4%) agreed, 60 (15.3%) disagreed, and 11 (2.8%) strongly disagreed that claims to such lands are a major source of conflict. The mean score of 3.10 and standard deviation of 0.75 confirmed that this is a significant factor.

Lastly, the prioritization of boundary autonomy for both farmers and herders was analyzed. The findings showed that 142 respondents (36.1%) strongly agreed, 198 (50.4%) agreed, 43 (10.9%) disagreed, and 10 (2.5%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.20 and standard deviation of 0.73 confirmed that boundary autonomy plays a crucial role in mitigating conflicts.

Research Question 4: Are there any livelihood coping strategies by demographic groups in Southern Kaduna occasioned by near-absence of peace settlement of conflicts that periodically ravage the area?
Table 4: Livelihood coping strategies by demographic groups due to near-absence of peaceful settlement of conflicts

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Job experience as a coping strategy	162 (41.2%)	204 (51.9%)	22 (4.9%)	5 (1.3%)	3.33	0.64
2	Taking up alternative occupation as a coping strategy	150 (38.2%)	194 (49.4%)	39 (9.9%)	10 (2.5%)	3.23	0.72
3	Buying food for home as a coping strategy	138 (35.1%)	195 (49.6%)	50 (12.7%)	10 (2.5%)	3.17	0.74
4	Adopting and taking loans from friends and family as a coping strategy	150 (38.2%)	187 (47.6%)	44 (11.2%)	12 (3.1%)	3.20	0.75

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2023)

The table above highlights the livelihood coping strategies adopted by demographic groups in Southern Kaduna in response to the near-absence of peace settlements for recurring conflicts. The first coping strategy identified was the introduction of job experience, with 162 respondents (41.2%) strongly agreeing, 204 (51.9%) agreeing, 22 (4.9%) disagreeing, and 5 (1.3%) strongly disagreeing.

Another strategy assessed was taking up alternative occupations, with 150 respondents (38.2%) strongly agreeing, 194 (49.4%) agreeing, 39 (9.9%) disagreeing, and 10 (2.5%) strongly disagreeing. Similarly, buying food for home emerged as a common strategy. A significant portion of the respondents, 150 (38.2%), strongly agreed, while 187 (47.6%) agreed. However, 44 respondents (11.2%) disagreed, and 12 (3.1%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.20 and a standard deviation of 0.75 confirmed the prevalence of this strategy. Taking loans from friends and family was also widely adopted. Among the respondents, 150 (38.2%) strongly agreed, 194 (49.4%) agreed, 39 (9.9%) disagreed, and 10 (2.5%) strongly disagreed.

In conclusion, while other strategies may exist, the identified measures were the most frequently employed to mitigate the impacts of conflict. Notably, most respondents did not use litigation as a coping strategy, despite the existence of land use regulations. This could be attributed to a lack of awareness of legal rights or resignation to the circumstances. Seeking help from the government was also not a primary strategy, likely due to the absence of an enabling environment to facilitate such support.

Results of Interview and Discussion of Findings
In-Depth Interview (IDI) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD)
A total of 46 respondents participated in focus group discussions (FGDs). In Gidan and Dokwa, the first and second FGDs consisted of 9 and 7 participants, respectively. In Anchuna and Kamantan, the first and second FGDs included 8 and 7 participants, respectively. Additionally, 47 respondents were

successfully sampled for in-depth interviews (IDI), resulting in a total of 93 participants across these approaches. The researcher manipulated the independent variable experimentally to gather meaningful data, while the dependent variable was measured accordingly. This process focused on identifying the actual causes of conflict, assessing vulnerabilities, evaluating mitigation approaches, and analyzing the multiplier effects of conflict on the economic livelihoods of Southern Kaduna inhabitants.

The findings from the qualitative experiments highlighted the severity of current conflicts and their impacts on both the people and their economic well-being. Eighteen individual respondents provided in-depth insights during interviews, and their perspectives helped reach a consensus on the issues discussed. This study adopted qualitative research methods to capture the factors and extent of the conflict, particularly in the sampled communities of Southern Kaduna, due to their relevance in addressing the research objectives.

We have painstakingly highlighted some of the findings in this study, therefore, our emphasis at this point is to summarize the findings shown in this research as follows:

The Newness of Current Hostilities between Farmer-Herders Conflict in Southern Kaduna: It is very obvious conflicts between Farmer-Herders conflict are as old their existence, however, the dimension and magnitude of this conflict in contemporary time is worrisome. The researcher in this regard have points to the previous discussions of the study that established that the herder-farmer conflict involves differences in the following object of conflict: interests (economic benefits, control of resources), need (security, recognition of rights, identity), value (justice, equality, order), rights (that threats their expression of justice).

Assert-stripping and Forcible Eviction of Farmer-Herders Conflict Directly Linked to Systematic Destruction of Livestock and Agricultural Production: What the issue here explains in simple term is that the severity of farmers/Herders conflicts has affected food insecurity either directly or indirectly; for instance, violent clashes, which lead to the injury and/or death of household members, loss of crop yield, and destruction of farm property, has direct and immediate effect on household food insecurity through a reduction in the immediate availability of food. Farmers severely affected by this conflict may also shift their production practices from profitable commercial cultivation to subsistence farming to ensure the food demands of their households, resulting in negative consequences for farm productivity.

Land Tenure, Access to Water, Pasture as well as Economic Opportunity between local Farmer-Herders Conflict Promotes Incessant Conflict on Opposing Sides in Southern Kaduna: Land tenure, access to water, pasture as well as economic opportunity between local Farmer-Herders conflict that promote incessant conflict on opposing sides in Southern Kaduna; this is because pastoralist who could not access these resources, would in anger attack their target communities at the time they may be most vulnerable.

Livelihood Coping Strategies by Demographic Groups in Southern Kaduna Occasioned by Near-Absence of Peace Settlement of Conflicts that Periodically Ravage the Area: Coping strategies of respondents were assessed and classified into three namely: problem oriented coping strategy (POCS), emotion oriented coping strategy (EOCS) and social support seeking coping strategies (SSCS).

Summary of Findings
The main objective of this study was to identify the common causes of Farmer-Herders conflicts and their impact on the livelihoods of people in Southern Kaduna. To achieve this, research questions were developed to guide the investigation. The study focused on Southern Kaduna, particularly two local government areas (LGAs) and four communities. The literature review was structured into four parts: conceptual review, theoretical framework, empirical literature review, and the appraisal of related literature. The theoretical framework discussed two key theories: the Environmental Violence Theory (Homer-Dixon, 1999) and the Tragedy of the Commons Theory (Garrett Hardin, 1968). The review emphasized the dynamic nature of the conflict and provided a historical context to understand the evolution of the Farmer-Herder conflict in Nigeria. A descriptive design was adopted, covering the Southern Kaduna region and its communities. Snowball sampling was used to select respondents from

the two LGAs and four communities: Zango Kataf LGA (Kamantan and Anchuna) and Kachia LGA (Dokwa and Gidan). The study included 300 respondents for the questionnaire survey, with 46 participants in the focus group discussions (FGD) and 47 in-depth interview (IDI) participants. Both primary and secondary data sources were used, and simple percentage analysis was applied to analyze the primary data.

The study found that factors contributing to the Farmer-Herder conflict in Southern Kaduna include the destruction of farm products and denial of access to livestock resources. The conflicts are particularly explosive when linked to ethno-religious antagonism, lawlessness, and exclusionary politics. Southern Kaduna is deeply divided along ethnic, religious, and regional lines, with political authority and resources being shared in an exclusive manner, fueling the conflict.

Conclusion

Land, as a key resource, remains a major cause of conflict between farmers and herders. Violent conflicts, especially Farmer-Herder disputes, have been a significant issue for economic livelihoods, and they continue to threaten peace, security, and development in the 21st century. These conflicts have led to loss of lives, destruction of property, reduced agricultural production, unemployment, and increased poverty. They have also exacerbated social issues such as school dropouts, teenage pregnancies, and rural-urban migration.

The literature review identified several causes of the conflict: pastoral mismanagement, weak or non-inclusive governance, poor relationships and ethnic bias, violence and human insecurity, and environmental scarcity. The findings support these causes, with tenure insecurity being a central issue, particularly concerning access to land and natural resources. However, tenure insecurity is often overlooked in conflict discussions, focusing more on governance and political issues rather than technical aspects such as resource scarcity or climate change.

The conflict has led to various coping strategies among the affected communities. Farmers typically adopt problem-oriented strategies, while herders tend to use emotion-oriented strategies, reflecting the strong emotional attachment to cattle among the Fulani. These findings suggest that a deeper analysis of the root causes of the Farmer-Herder conflict is necessary, rather than focusing solely on visible or easily quantifiable issues.

Recommendation

Farmer-Herders' conflicts have persisted for far too long and the various strategies adopted by both groups have brought little or no progress in dousing the tide and impacts of the conflicts. Therefore, this study proffer following remarkable reforms as its recommendation that if adopted by relevant government agencies, civil society groups, and individuals will go a long way in providing solution to the problem of farmers/herders' conflicts in Southern Kaduna:

i.   Government or policymakers should make state-specific or local government-specific solutions that capture the area's history and political, economic and social interaction to accommodate the Farmer-Herders conflict who are parties involved regularly in conflict.

ii. Relevant agencies of government and the civil society should work towards reviewing existing and developing new mechanisms for the monitoring and control of Herders movement within these areas in dispute. The government can do this by collaborating with cattle owners in the area in creating grazing reserves that should be well maintained in order to solve the issue of herd's encroachment on farmlands and vice versa.

iii. As regard the issue of land tenure, access to water; there should be a policy for registering and branding of cattle across the state such that cattle trader should be certified and registered. This policy if implemented will help review and standardize of Farmer-Herders conflict, upgrade and regulate their framework of coordination across the different locations of the state, even before the full take off of ranches and farming season.

iv. There should be multi-stage conflict management framework is required among others as a coping strategy to help curb the danger posed by farmer-herdsmen conflict. The proposed framework should be statutory committees at community, local and state government levels. It should also include the relevant occupational unions.

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HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION AMONG WORKERS IN DEGEMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract
The study investigated Human Resource Development and Poverty Alleviation among workers in Degema Local Government Area in Rivers State. The study is anchored on the Human Development theory. The correlational survey design was adopted for the study. A sample size of 267 workers in Degema local government area in Rivers State was used for the study. The Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample while the snowball sampling technique was used to compose the sample. Two research questions guided the study while two hypotheses were tested in the study at a 0.05 level of significance. The instrument for data collection was a 5-point Likert scale multi-variate questionnaire Mean was used to answer the research questions while Spearman Rank Correlation was used to test the hypotheses. It was found out that human resource development such as education and health is low among workers in Degema local government area and thus, it is incapable of alleviating poverty in the local government area. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between education, health and poverty alleviation in Degema local government area. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Degema local government should increase its budget on educating their workers; provide entrepreneurial programmes to enable workers to venture into business to generate more income to alleviate poverty. Also, provide better healthcare services for workers and their families.

Keywords: Human Resource Development, Education, Health and Poverty Alleviation

Introduction

Investing in people's skills, knowledge and capabilities empowers them to improve their lives and contribute to economic growth. In modern society, humans are the most crucial resource for developing any organization and country. This is because exploiting other resources requires qualified and skilled human resources. The United States, Japan, and China are only a few developed nations that have effectively used human resource development techniques (Pham and Dung, 2022). Societies engage in human resource development when they work to increase their population's literacy, numeracy, and ability to contribute to society. Paying close attention to human resource development is strategically important for a nation's development advancement, and nations that achieve national development do so (Adans, 2018). The research will look at human resource development; education and health since it affects poverty alleviation.

To start, education is a deliberate process with goals including imparting information, developing positive character qualities, and skill sets (Chazan, 2022). In a similar vein, Nelson Mandela, as cited in Hampiholi (2021), expressed the belief that "Education is the most important tool that can be used to change the world." Poverty and education seem to go hand in hand. Continuing education and training are critical for improving livelihoods and producing a labour force that is resistant to economic shocks and adaptable to technological change (United Nations [UN] 2021). People in low-income situations may forego formal education in favour of finding gainful employment, leaving them unable to advance professionally due to a lack of basic reading, writing, and arithmetic abilities.

The second point is that health is the most valuable asset one can have, according to the famous saying of the Roman poet Virgil, "health is wealth" (Power Forward Group, 2021). This would imply that a healthy person is capable of doing anything, even helping to reduce poverty. When people are healthy, it's more than just the absence of illness; it's a condition of whole bodily, mental, and social wellness. It is not the point of existence, but rather a tool for the daily grind. World Health Organization (WHO), 1948, as mentioned in Sartorius, 2006, states that health is a positive notion that emphasizes physical

capabilities in addition to social and personal resources. All of this points to health not being an objective in and of itself, but rather a means to an end namely, the ability to carry out one's role in society. A fulfilling life with purpose and meaning may be within reach if one adopts a healthy lifestyle. One may wonder: according to the World Health Organization, how many Africans, Nigerians, and indigenous people of Rivers State really satisfy the standards for health? Nearly half of Africa's population, or 672 million people, do not have access to adequate medical treatment (Premium Times, 2023). Just like in other nations, Nigeria's healthcare system seems to have been severely neglected, despite the fact that the country is a population and resource behemoth in Africa and has produced some of the world's top healthcare minds. As a result of high medical costs and widespread poverty, Nigeria is among the worst health metrics in Africa (Punch, 2021). The National Multidimensional Poverty Index (NMPI) study by National Bureau of Statistics (2022) substantiates the idea that poverty is a significant barrier to health care access; the research found that 63% of Nigerians were poor as a result of insufficient resources for healthcare, education, housing, income, and safety. So, it would seem that poverty and health are related. Having good health may help alleviate while being unwell might make it worse.

Nigeria in 2022, had 88.4 million people estimated to be living in extreme poverty. About 44.7 million men and 43.7 million women in the nation were estimated to be living on less than $2.15 per day. In 2022, Nigeria had 12.9% of the world's population living in extreme poverty (Statista, 2023). According to the National Multidimensional Poverty Index [NMPI] study, which was released on November 18, 2022, by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 63% of Nigerians were poor because they lacked access to healthcare, schools, jobs, and safety nets. Various government programs have been implemented over the years to combat poverty. These include the National Social Investment Programme (2015), Conditional Cash Transfer Programme, among many others. Also, it seems like a lot of people in Rivers State, one of 36 states in Nigeria that has a lot of resources but is poor. There are 7,303,924 people in Rivers State, and 1,914,023 (or 23.9% of the total) are poor, according to 2019 data from the NBS. It is worth mentioning that rural regions have a far higher poverty rate (53.1% vs. 18%). Out of 23 local government areas in Rivers State, the five poorest are Akuku-Toru, Degema, Khana, Ogu-Bolo, Okirika, and Tai, according to a 2007 World Bank Poverty Mapping effort for states in Nigeria. The government may make a significant dent in the rising poverty rate by investing heavily in human resource development initiatives in areas like healthcare, education, jobs, and infrastructure. World Bank data from 2022 shows that nations like India and China have lifted 800 million people out of poverty; with serious investment in its people, Nigeria can do the same.

In all these, workers are faced with the challenge of meeting their basic needs despite their monthly earnings. In a study, Adegboye (2022) highlights the struggles faced by low-income earners, who manage to afford just a single meal each day. This limited access to food forces many to turn to desperate measures, such as borrowing from friends and relatives or even begging those who have more financial stability. The worrying scenario is that the 30,000 Naira minimum wage is insufficient to cover the cost of basic supplies for a healthy adult in a month, let alone an entire family. In January 2022, the price of necessary foodstuffs for one adult was 40,980 Naira, or approximately 37% higher than the minimum wage. How will these workers meet with responsibilities of their families? Human Resource Development (HRD) tactics have been employed as a weapon against poverty in many developing nations, with some proving to be quite effective. Also, improving education, health, skills, and employment opportunities can significantly reduce poverty. Thus, this research aims to investigate how human resource development contributes to reducing poverty in the Degema LGA. Researchers such as Janjua and Kamal (2011) emphasized the pivotal role of education in reducing poverty by enhancing people's earning potential. Meanwhile, Liu et al. (2023) observed that the rural health insurance scheme has significantly contributed to poverty alleviation in rural areas in China. This research aims to fill a gap in the existing literature by using inference to determine whether or not there is an official database for human resource development in connection to poverty reduction in the Degema local government area of Rivers State. To arrive at the findings of the study, the following research questions will be answered:

i. What is the relationship between education and poverty alleviation in Degema local government area, Rivers State?

ii. How can health of human resource promote poverty alleviation in Degema local government area, Rivers State?

Literature Review
Human Resource Development
The term "human resource development" was introduced by American scholar Nadler. He highlighted the need to analyze and adjust human resources in organizations based on their existing workforce and development strategies. This approach aims to enhance human resource management, improve efficiency, and support the organization's growth and development (Dai, 2021; Ge, 2018). McLean and McLean (2001) defined Human Resource Development as any process or activity that has the potential to improve an adult's work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity, and satisfaction, whether for oneself, an organization, a community, a country, or ultimately all of humanity, is considered human resource development. This can happen either initially or over an extended period of time. "Human resource development involves the systematic and scientific enhancement and utilization of human resources. This process includes analyzing human resource management practices, establishing a structured and institutionalized management system, ensuring optimal allocation of human resources, and gradually improving the effectiveness of human resource management (Guo, 2021)."

Education has a powerful impact on breaking poverty cycles and helping people from marginalized communities improve their economic status. Kelly, 1991 cited in Abeka,(2000) defined education as "the transmission of wisdom, knowledge, experience and skills". UNESCO's research has shown that if all adults completed secondary school, world poverty would decrease by over half. In low-income countries, basic reading skills could help nearly 171 million people escape extreme poverty, highlighting the vital role of education in combating poverty (Junjunia, 2023). In Nigeria, where economic growth is necessary to lift the nation out of poverty, education and health are especially crucial. According to Ararat (2017), increased access to higher education has a beneficial long-term impact on per capita GDP growth. Increasing the number of college-educated specialists leads to long-term economic growth. Further, Appleton and Teal (2014) found that primary education has a greater impact on economic growth than secondary education. They also noted that female education at all levels significantly boosts growth, while male education at the primary level has a minimal effect. According to Duryea and Pagés-Serra (2002), in many nations, education appears to have a positive but limited ability to raise earnings over the minimal level. In general, it appears that investments in education continue to yield significant returns, although weak underlying conditions account for education's limited influence in the short run (Duryea & Pagés-Serra, 2002).

Health comes next to education in the development of human resources. According to Yesufu (2016), excellent health policy is a mechanism by which the government may ensure that manpower is generated in the proper mix and distributed in accordance with national priorities while also ensuring the best degree of labour productivity. Chen and Pan (2019) discovered that China's health poverty alleviation initiative not only reduces out-of-pocket payments for low-income households but also increases inpatient health care utilization, showing a significant effect on financial risk protection. The project's enhanced financial capability enabled low-income households to respond to hospital care demand. In 2003, China established a new cooperative medical program, which was followed by a rural pension scheme in 2009. Almost all rural residents, especially the destitute, participated in the two initiatives. Evidence suggests that the rural health insurance plan has contributed significantly to poverty reduction in rural areas (Liu et al., 2023).

Poverty Alleviation
According to the United Nations (1998), poverty means lacking basic choices and opportunities, which violates human dignity. It prevents people from participating fully in society. Poverty means not having enough food or clothing for a family, access to a school or clinic, or land to grow food and earn a living. It also includes not having access to credit, leading to insecurity and powerlessness. People in poverty often face exclusion and are more vulnerable to violence. They frequently live in unstable environments without clean water or sanitation. Chakrabortty et al. (2009), defined poverty as a condition of deprivation encompassing socio-economic facets of life in addition to inadequate income or

consumption. Poverty is defined by the World Bank as significant deprivation in well-being (Haughton & Khandker, 2009). Poverty alleviation strategies were developed to combat increasing poverty and manpower depletion in Nigeria (Bakare, 2011). According to the United Nations Development Programme (2014), the objectives also include developing a strategy to eradicate or reduce poverty, as well as enabling the delivery of development essentials to aid in poverty reduction (World Bank Group, 2017). It will thereby address the basic needs and interests of all citizens, regardless of their rank or origin. These poverty alleviation projects also aim to strengthen the provision of better facilities and infrastructure in order to support growth and development frameworks that would improve citizens' standard of living (Aluko, 2003). However, it may foster socioeconomic growth by establishing major economic sectors that will serve as the national focal point for empowering and developing citizens.

Theoretical Framework
This study adopted Human Development theory as its theoretical framework, which was propounded by Amartya Sen in 1999. The theory broadened our understanding of both poverty and progress. It prioritizes human-centered poverty reduction on the global development agenda and tackles the narrow scope and shortcomings of earlier economists' interpretations of poverty by widening definitions of ill-being to include more than just average income and consumption levels. According to this concept, investing in people promotes growth and empowers people to choose many life pathways, hence enhancing human capacities. The most basic human development capabilities include the ability to live long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable (e.g., educated), to have access to the resources and social services required for a good standard of living, and to participate in communal life.

In linking the theory to the study, Human development focuses on individuals and their possibilities and choices. Human development focuses on enhancing people's lives rather than expecting that economic progress would always result in better well-being for all. Income increase is viewed as a means, rather than an aim in itself. In terms of opportunities, human development is about allowing people the freedom to live the lives they value. In practice, this entails strengthening the skills of Degema LGA employees and giving them the opportunity to use them. Giving people an effective education, for example, can give them with the ability to develop their talents and generate additional revenue. Again, in terms of choice, human development is simply about more options. It is about giving individuals opportunities rather than mandating that they take them. The growth process (human development) should at the very least provide an environment in which people, both individually and collectively, can reach their full potential and have a decent chance of leading productive and creative lives. This would help to relieve poverty in Rivers State's Degema local government area.

Empirical Review
Duryea & Pagés-Serra (2002) examined the ability for education to improve labour salaries above poverty levels in Latin America, and discovered that in many nations, education has a positive, but limited, potential to raise wages over the minimum wage. The findings show that investments in education continue to produce significant payoffs, but poor underlying conditions explain the modest outlook for education's significance in the short term. Appleton and Teal (2014) discovered that primary education had a higher influence on economic growth than secondary education. They also discovered that female education at all levels considerably promotes growth, whereas male education at the basic level has no effect.

Chen and Pan (2019) looked at how the health poverty alleviation initiative affected the financial risk protection of Chishui City, China's rural residents. Out-of-pocket expenses are reduced by 15% on average by the health poverty alleviation project, and the likelihood of catastrophic health expenditures (annual out-of-pocket expenses exceeding 10% of annual household income) and impoverishing health spending occurrences (out-of-pocket expenses pushing a household into poverty or deeper poverty) is reduced by 7.7 and 11.7%, respectively, according to the results. Lui et. al. (2023) investigated Poverty alleviation and health services for the poor in China: evidence from national health service surveys in 2013 and 2018 The study evaluated the shifts in the needs, use, and costs of health services for the impoverished during the time of poverty reduction. Reducing poverty in China may benefit the

impoverished by increasing their access to healthcare and lessening the financial burden that comes with disease and the use of medical services.

Methodology

The study adopted the correlational survey design. This research design was used because the researcher is interested in finding out the degree, strengths and extent of the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables and the design indicates the direction and magnitude of the relationship. The population of the study is 800 [Male: 358; Female: 442] workers (Rivers State Statistical Year Book, 2019) in Degema local government area. Data was collected through a self-structured questionnaire titled: 'Human Resource Development and Poverty Alleviation among workers in Degema' (HRDPAWD) designed in Likert 5-point Scale format, developed through a logical approach. It is a non-cognitive instrument. The researcher developed a pool of items related to Human Resource Development and Poverty Alleviation. Major indices like education and health applicable to poverty alleviation among workers in Degema was considered in compiling the items. The sample size was 267 workers derived through Taro Yamane formula. The snowball sampling procedure was used for this study. The researcher employed the help of research assistants to reach out to other workers within the LGA council to distribute the questionnaire to respondents. Data collected by the researcher was analyzed quantitatively. The techniques for quantitative data analysis are Mean $(\overline{X})$ statistics and Standard Deviation (SD). The study used a criterion mean to determine if the item statement of the instrument is True or Not True. The criterion mean was determined by adding the weights of 5-points, 4-points, 3-points, 2-points, and 1-point assigned to SA, A, N, D, and SD respectively. That is $5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 15$. Divide 15 by 5 (because it is a 5-point scale) = 3. Thus, the criterion mean will be 3. The decision was that any item with a mean value of 3 and above will be accepted and regarded as True while any item with a mean value less than 3 will not be accepted and regarded as Not True. Furthermore, the null hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank-Order Correlation at 0.05 level of significance, through the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 26.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between education and poverty alleviation in Degema LGA?

Table 1: Mean score analysis for education and poverty alleviation in Degema LGA (n=267*)*

S/N	Education and poverty alleviation in Degema LGA	SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5	$\overline{X}$	SD	Result
1	Education has increased my knowledge of income generation.	55	139	49	18	6	2.18	1.84	Not True
2	Access to several education scholarships is provided for workers to further develop their skills in Degema LGA.	87	122	10	34	14	2.12	1.93	Not True
3	Entrepreneurship education is provided to enable workers have other source of livelihood.	82	155	7	17	6	1.91	1.59	Not True
4	Education has built my mental competence to engage in different employment activities.	69	157	10	31	0	2.01	1.67	Not True
5	Education has enabled me acquire skills to do business.	44	98	89	26	10	2.48	2.16	Not True
	Grand Mean						2.14		Not True

Source: (Survey Data, 2023)

Table 1 shows the calculated mean values and standard deviation values as received from respondents showing their responses on the relationship between education and poverty alleviation in Degema LGA From research question one, it is observed that items 1,2,3,4 and 5 in the analysis revealed a Mean of 2.18, 2.12, 1.91, 2.01, 2.48; and a Standard Deviation of 1.84, 1.93, 1.59, 1.67, and 2.16 respectively.

This revealed that the respondents rejected the item statements in the questionnaire. A Grand Mean of 2.14 was also obtained from the analysis of research question one which further shows rejection of the item statements as it is below the cut-off mean, 3.

Research Question 2: How can the health of human resources promote poverty alleviation in Degema Local Government Area, Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean score analysis of health and poverty alleviation in Degema LGA (n =267)

S/N	Health and poverty alleviation in Degema LGA	SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5	☐	SD	Result
6	Hospitals and health centres in Degema LGA have the needed infrastructure to provide good healthcare services.	79	60	120	3	5	2.23	1.91	Not True
7	Hospitals and health centres in Degema LGA have qualified medical practitioners.	50	108	99	4	6	2.28	1.91	Not True
8	Access to medical care is provided for the workers to alleviate poverty in Degema LGA.	47	120	80	12	8	2.30	1.96	Not True
9	Medical services are affordable to alleviate poverty in Degema LGA.	43	106	108	6	4	2.33	1.95	Not True
10	I benefit from health insurance scheme in Degema local government area.	12	154	79	16	6	2.44	2.02	Not True
	Grand Mean						2.31		Not True

Source: (Survey Data, 2023)

Table 2 shows the calculated mean values and standard deviation values as received from respondents and their responses on how the health of human resources can promote poverty alleviation in Degema local government area, Rivers State.

From research question two, it is observed that items 1,2,3,4 and 5 in the analysis revealed a mean of 2.23, 2.28, 2.30, 2.33, and 2.44; and a Standard deviation of 1.91, 1.91, 1.96, 1.95, and 2.02 respectively. This revealed that the respondents rejected the item statements regarding health and poverty alleviation in Degema local government area. A grand mean of 2.31 was also obtained from the analysis of research question two; which further shows the rejection from respondents as it is below the cut-off mean of 3.

Test of Hypotheses

Ho1. There is no statistical significance between education and poverty alleviation in Degema local government area, Rivers State.

Table 3: Spearman Rank-Order Correlation of Education and Poverty Alleviation

			HRPA	EDU
Spearman's rho	HRDPA	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.196[**]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	267	267
	EDU	Correlation Coefficient	.196[**]	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	267	267

[**]. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

There was a positive and statistically significant correlation between education and poverty alleviation, r_s = .196, n = 267, p < 0.05. The findings show that the variables are statistically and significantly correlated, but have a very weak positive correlation. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a statistical significance between education and poverty alleviation among workers in Degema Local Government Area in Rivers State.

Ho2. There is no statistical significance between health and poverty alleviation in Degema Local Government area, Rivers State.

Table 4: Spearman Rank-Order Correlation of Health and Poverty Alleviation

			HRPA	HPA
Spearman's rho	HRDPA	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.023[*]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.706
		N	267	267
	Health	Correlation Coefficient	-.023[*]	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.706	.
		N	267	267

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

There was a non-significant weak negative correlation between health and poverty alleviation, r_s = -.023, n = 267, p > 0.05. The findings show that the variables are not statistically and significant; it also has a weak negative correlation. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a non-statistical significance between health and poverty alleviation in Degema Local Government Area in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings
Relationship Between Education and Poverty Alleviation in Degema Local Government Area
The result indicates that there is a positive and statistical significance between education and poverty alleviation in Degema Local Government Area, Rivers State. The positive relationship between education and poverty alleviation suggests that as scores on education increase, there is a corresponding increase in the scores of poverty alleviation, and vice-versa. The result indicates that to reduce poverty among workers in Degema Local Government Area, it appears more workers should be educated, mostly in vocational/entrepreneurial education. Thus, education of workers in Degema Local Government Area may contribute to poverty alleviation. The results buttress the findings of Duryea & Pagés-Serra (2002) that investments in education continue to produce significant payoffs, but poor underlying conditions explain the modest outlook for education's significance in the short term. In a related study, Nelson Mandela cited in Hampiholi (2021) opined that "education is the most important tool which can be used to change the world and fight poverty. Indicators by the UN (2021) shows continuing education and training are critical to improving livelihoods and producing a workforce robust to economic shocks. Poverty may cause people to drop out of school in order to find employment, which deprives them of the literacy and numeracy skills necessary to advance in their jobs. Again, Ararat (2017), higher education has a beneficial long-term influence on per capita GDP growth. Increasing the number of college graduates leads to long-term economic prosperity. Although the relationship between education and poverty alleviation in Degema local government was statistically significant, the magnitude of the relationship was low.

Determine how Health can Promote Poverty Alleviation in Degema Local Government Area
The result indicates that there is significant but negative relationship between health and poverty alleviation of residents in Degema Local Government Area in Rivers State. The negative relationship between health and poverty alleviation of workers suggests that as scores on health increase, there is an opposite decrease in poverty scores, and vice-versa. The result reveals that workers that are unhealthy may be susceptible to poverty. The finding of the present study is in agreement with those of the ancient Roman poet, Virgil who posited that "health is wealth" as cited in Power Forward Group (2021) referring to health as the greatest form of riches one may possess. Implying that one in health, may accomplish anything; including poverty alleviation. Poverty is a major barrier to healthcare access, according to the National Multidimensional Poverty Index report (2022) by the National Bureau of Statistics, which states that 63 percent of Nigerians face poverty due to limited access to health, education, living standards, employment, and security. Government should provide better health insurance scheme to enable workers in rural areas have access to health care services. In China, the health poverty alleviation project has been a successful initiative that has significantly improved the healthcare situation for underprivileged households. The project has been able to achieve this by

reducing out of pocket payments for these households and increasing the utilization of inpatient healthcare services, ultimately resulting in a more financially secure situation for them. The project has also provided these households with an improved financial capability, allowing them to respond to the demand for hospital care more effectively. Additionally, the rural health insurance scheme has been instrumental in alleviating poverty in rural areas, as evident from various studies conducted by experts such as Chen and Pan in 2019 and Liu et al. in 2023. Overall, the health poverty alleviation project has been a crucial intervention that has made healthcare more accessible and affordable for underprivileged households in China, thereby contributing significantly to poverty reduction and improving the overall health outcomes for the population. Thus, there appears to be a correlation between health and poverty. Health may reduce poverty and the lack of it may exacerbate it. The relationship between health and poverty alleviation of workers in Degema local government area in Rivers State was statistically significant but the magnitude of the negative relationship was low.

Conclusion
The study revealed that the few existing human resource development programmes have not been successful. The findings indicated a significant relationship between education, health and poverty alleviation among workers in Degema Local Government Area of Rivers State. These programs were ineffective in alleviating poverty, primarily due to poor planning, inadequate implementation, and the exclusion of individuals who genuinely need assistance to escape poverty. Authors have observed that human resource development programs have successfully alleviated poverty in certain regions. By employing effective strategies, Degema local government can achieve similar results. The findings underscore the importance of implementing the Human Development Theory proposed by Sen (1999).

Recommendations
Following the findings and conclusion, the study recommends that:
1. Degema local government should increase its budget for education to provide skill acquisition equipment for staff development, which could lead to self-employment. Again, the Degema local government should encourage its workers who which to further their education by providing education grants for them. This will give workers better job opportunities for more sustainable development and faster economic growth to alleviate poverty.
2. There should be access to basic health care which appears to be a critical solution to poverty alleviation. The local government should provide affordable health services when and where workers and their families need them. Possibly, enroll its workers and their families on better health insurance scheme to reduce the out of pocket expenses on medical services.

Contributions to Scholarship
This study employed human resource development variables such as education and health to alleviate poverty among workers in Degema L.G.A. of Rivers State, Nigeria. The contributions are; The findings of the research revealed that HRD programmes in the L.G.A. have not alleviated poverty among the workers in the area. The research method; correlational survey design, with a sample size of Two Hundred and Sixty-Seven.

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COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS OF SECURITY AGENTS: AN ANTIDOTE TO SECURITY THREATS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The numerous security challenges in Nigeria have prompted increasing collaboration between non-state security groups (local hunter, vigilante groups) and statutory security agencies (police, military, and civil defense forces). This partnership aims to address critical security issues such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and communal violence, which often exceed the capacity of formal state forces. This paper identifies the reasons and the nature of collaboration. It also examines why collaboration is an antidote and challenges associated with the collaboration. The paper is anchored by network governance theory. The paper relied on secondary data extracted from books, magazines, journals, newspapers, and other relevant documents. The study was analysed using content analysis. *The findings showed that frequent cases of insecurity, information sharing and inability of Statutory Security Agents to provide lasting solution to security threat of the country significantly influenced the partnership The study showed that Intelligence Sharing, Joint Operations, and organization of training formed the nature of relationship The study also revealed that the collaboration led to security coverage, improved intelligence gathering, reduced the security threat and restored peace The paper showed that challenges, such as issues of accountability, coordination and training disparities, limited funding and human right abuse had greatly hindered the benefits accrued with the collaboration. The paper therefore recommended a structured and regulated partnership model to bolster national security without undermining the rule of law.*

Keywords: Collaborative Effort, Security Agents, Antidote, Security Threats, Nigeria.

Introduction

Security remains a fundamental prerequisite for the stability and development of any nation. Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, continues to grapple with numerous security challenges, including terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, money ritual, armed robbery, Fulani herdsman, cybercrime, and communal conflicts. The complex and different nature of these threats has rendered constitutional duty of State security agents inadequate, necessitating collaborative efforts among various stakeholders to address them effectively (Eze & Adeoye, 2021). Collaborative security efforts involve partnerships between government established security agents (Nigerian Police, military, NSCDC) and private security organisations (local hunters, vigilante groups, ethnic militias) to address security threats through shared responsibility, resource pooling, and strategic coordination (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2011). Collaborations among the security agents arise from the evolving nature of threats, which often transcend across Nigeria which require security strategies that give adequate attention to such security challenges. Scholars argue that non-state actors can provide specialized resources, local knowledge, and flexibility that statutory agencies might lack due to bureaucratic constraints (Miklaucic & Naim, 2013). For example, non-state security groups have an intimate understanding of local environment which can be helpful for effective intelligence gathering and trust-building within communities (Baker, 2008).

In many developing countries like Nigeria, limited budgets and resources hinder government agencies' ability to maintain a significant security presence across all regions. Non-state security groups can help fill these gaps, thus becoming crucial contributors to national security issues (Börzel & Risse, 2010). For Nigeria, collaborative efforts have proven significant in countering insurgencies such as Boko Haram in the North and kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery and communal crisis in other parts of the country (Ajayi et al., 2022). However, the effectiveness of these partnerships is contingent on clear communication, trust among stakeholders, and the alignment of objectives. Additionally, the collaboration among these groups is not without challenges such as differences in mandate, accountability, operational principles, and legality can create friction. For instance, while statutory

agencies are accountable to legal and political authorities, non-state actors may operate with profit motives or organizational objectives that sometimes conflict with public interests (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2011; Avant,2005). These complexities raise important questions about the legitimacy, accountability, and ethical implications of such collaborations. It is against this background that paper examines the reasons, nature, why collaboration is an antidote, and challenges associated with these partnerships. To attain this objective, the first section of the paper forms an introduction, and the second addresses conceptualization. The third section examines reasons for and nature of the collaboration. The fourth section examines why collaboration is an antidote and challenges associated with the collaboration while the fifth section suggests the way out and concludes the paper.

Method and Materials

The study employed a documentary research method to analyse different documents that contain information on collaborative efforts of security agents and security threats in Nigeria. The rationale for a documentary research method is to provide and ascertain representativeness, credibility and authenticity as well as make good meaning of the available data. This includes the collection of secondary sources of data from books, magazines, newspapers, articles, journals, internet information etc. The data were systematically coded and thematically analysed using the content analysis.

Conceptual Clarification

Non-State Security Groups NSSGs) have no single definition, depend on the lens each scholar look at it. Williams, (2008) see them as entities that operate outside the formal state apparatus and yet engage in security-related functions. These groups range widely in purpose, structure, and influence, and they can include private military companies (PMCs), militias, insurgent groups, paramilitary groups, and certain types of vigilante organizations. The NSSGs can operate both within and across national borders, with varying degrees of legitimacy and motivations. Non-state security groups refer to various organizations that operate independently of government control, providing security services to their communities. In Nigeria, these groups include local vigilantes, ethnic militia, and community policing initiatives. Notable examples include the Amotekun Corps in the Southwest, the Bakassi Boys in the Southeast, and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in the Northeast (Onuoha, 2018). Avant, (2005) views NSSGs as one that operate without formal authorization from the state, making them autonomous in terms of governance, decision-making, and operations. This independence can place them in opposition to state actors or make them auxiliary forces used to achieve specific security goals.

On the other hand, Statutory Security Agencies (SSAs), according to Bayley (2001) refer to official government-sanctioned bodies tasked with protecting state sovereignty, enforcing laws, and maintaining national security. SSAs include the police, military, intelligence agencies, and other entities created under national legislation to maintain law and order. Unlike NSSGs, SSAs operate within a legal framework that mandates accountability, discipline, and oversight. Peters (2003) observed that SSAs are created, funded, and regulated by the government, adhering to policies designed to protect citizens and uphold the rule of law. Their actions are sanctioned by legislation that defines their roles, responsibilities, and accountability measures. Bruneau (2005) argued that SSAs are subject to oversight by both internal and external bodies to ensure lawful operations. This includes audits, disciplinary bodies, and parliamentary oversight that ensures SSAs remain compliant with legal standards. In many cases, SSAs also coordinate with international counterparts to manage global security threats, such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and cybercrime (Weiss & Collins, 2000). Due to their accountability and formalized training, SSAs typically have greater legitimacy in the eyes of the public compared to NSSGs (Loader & Walker, 2007).

Theoretical Framework

Network Governance Theory is particularly relevant for explaining collaboration between non-state security groups and statutory security agencies. This theory posits that security is not the sole responsibility of the state but rather a function shared among various actors, including non-state organizations or private entities (Rhodes, 2007). The theory acknowledges the role of informal and formal networks that work towards shared goals, often outside traditional hierarchical structures. This theory emphasizes the importance of horizontal interactions between actors, highlighting that

government agencies and non-state security groups operate through interdependent networks to achieve certain objective. (Provan & Kenis, 2008). This mutual cooperation arises because statutory security agencies may lack resources, local intelligence, or community trust that non-state actors can provide, especially in diverse and decentralized areas. The theory also underscores the importance of decentralization in security governance. Non-state security groups, such as local hunter, vigilante groups and ethnic militias often have more flexibility and can quickly respond to emerging threats, whereas statutory agencies may be hindered by bureaucratic red tape (Ansell & Gash, 2008). This theory is particularly useful in explaining how collaborations form between these groups and agencies in both high- and low-risk areas, where they share intelligence, coordinate patrols, and even conduct joint operations.

Why is collaboration necessary?
A lot of reasons had been advanced to inform the collaboration among security agents. Several of them are discussed below:

Frequent Cases of Insecurity: with persistent cases of insecurity across the country which NSSAs are unable to tame due to a lot factors attributed to it. Abrahamsen & Williams, (2011) identified lack of adequate personnel, logistical resources, funds and modern equipment as factors that hinder NSSAs from providing effective security across Nigeria due to budget constraints. Research shows that pooling resources from Non-state security actors, can lead to more efficient and effective security outcomes(Dupont, 2004). Supporting the above view, Bayley & Shearing, (2001) observed that in many developing countries, SSAs are constrained by limited resources, including personnel, equipment, and funding which actually hinder them from covering local community that experience persistent cases of criminal activities, hence, intervention of Non state security actors become imperative.

Enhanced Information Sharing: Information sharing is another factor prompts the collaboration. NSSGs are parts of local community and they are trusted with any information shared with them, thus making it possible to gather intelligence information from grassroots levels, which is essential for understanding local security dynamics, especially in regions where SSAs may not have a strong presence. With this, informal security groups can offer real-time information on crime or other threats within neighbourhoods. This synergy enhances the ability to pre-empt security threats and allows for coordinated responses to incidents (Ferguson & McGregor, 2015). SSAs often face trust issues within certain communities, especially in regions where there have been instances of poor police-community relations. NSSGs, especially those rooted in the community, often have stronger bonds and better trust with local populations. By collaborating with these groups, SSAs can improve their legitimacy and garner community support. Studies indicate that community trust is a crucial factor in effective policing and crime prevention, as it encourages citizens to report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement (Loader, 2000). Thus, partnering with trusted non-state groups can bridge the gap between communities and state actors.

Quick Response to Insecurity: NSSGs can act with greater flexibility and speed than statutory agencies bound by bureaucracy and strict regulations. Private security outfits, for instance, can deploy personnel quickly, adjust to emerging threats, and operate across borders with fewer constraints than SSAs. Collaborating with these flexible partners allows SSAs to respond to security threats more dynamically. This agility is especially beneficial in regions affected by conflict or crises, where rapid response is crucial (Singer, 2003). In fragile states where SSAs may be weak or lacking, NSSGs often play a central role in maintaining stability and providing security. This collaboration provides a makeshift security network where the state apparatus is either absent or limited, thus preventing chaos and offering some level of safety to the population (Weber, 2013). For instance, vigilante groups often form in fragile states to protect communities where official law enforcement is limited or ineffective. In post-conflict situations, NSSGs, particularly those involved in peace building, facilitating reconciliation mediating local disputes, supporting victim rehabilitation, and creating dialogue between former adversaries. Their collaboration with SSAs supports a holistic approach to peace building that goes beyond law enforcement, focusing on restorative justice and conflict resolution (Kaldor, 2003).

Nature of Collaboration

Intelligence Sharing: One of the primary forms of collaboration is the exchange of intelligence. Non-state actors often have localized knowledge that can be vital for statutory forces in planning operations. For instance, the CJTF has been credited with providing critical intelligence to the Nigerian military, significantly contributing to the fight against Boko Haram (Ogbondah, 2020). Bureau of Justice Assistance (1994) observed that collaborative efforts encourage trust, reinforce the exchange of intelligent information and help to identify other areas that could serve as benefit to the community in fighting crimes. Corroborating with Baker's position, Arase (2018) pointed out that Nigerian police ought to understand that, operating in isolation, neither formal nor volunteer organisations can effectively address societal issues. The Nigerian police must therefore create a plan for communicating with and cooperating with other statutory authorities as well as unofficial security groups to combat criminal activity and other problems that impede public order.

Joint Operations: Non-state security groups frequently conduct joint operations with statutory agencies. The collaborative effort can enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement operations. For example, during the surge in armed robberies in southwest Nigeria, Amotekun conducted joint patrols with the police, improving response times and increasing visibility in affected areas (Adedayo, 2022). Adejoh (2013) emphasised that policing function is more effective and efficient when it is collaboratively, carried out as a collective responsibility among the stakeholders. Similarly, Phenson (2014) emphasised that close coordination or networking between state and Non-state security is necessary, particularly when it comes to intelligence sharing, security operations, and planning. Members of the community should alert the Nigerian police and vigilante organisations about criminal activity and criminal hideouts in local areas for the purpose of ensuring adequate security .In addition, it is imperative that stakeholders work together efficiently to ensure that crime is minimised in their particular communities, as Okunola (2011) discovered that some community members are unwilling to disclose illegal activity to Non-state security organisations. Olomitutu (2024) specifically unveiled the areas in which the two groups relate, referring to the joint patrol where they both work greatly, arrest and hand over the suspects to Nigerian police for prosecution. He maintained further that, provision of information and handing over suspects to police form the term of mutual cooperation between the groups.

Training: Some non-state security groups engage in training programs for local members in areas like conflict resolution, community policing, and emergency response, which can complement the efforts of statutory security agencies. For instance, Vigilante groups have been involved in training its members to assist in law enforcement duties, providing additional manpower to the police (Ajayi, 2021). According to Olomitutu (2024), both the groups relate very well especially in terms of training during the recruitment of NSSGs' members, many Nigerian police officers and military personnel serve as resources personnel for them. They sometimes organise workshop and seminar for them when the need arises.

Community Engagement: Non-state actors often serve as intermediaries between the police and local communities, facilitating better communication and trust. This engagement is crucial in areas where the police may have lost public confidence. The CJTF, for instance, works closely with community leaders to foster trust and cooperation with the military (Olofinbiyi, 2021). Obidiegwu (2019) buttressed that the vigilante groups work together with the police to ensure protection of lives and properties in the communities. This is because of cordial relationship that exists between them in Abia State. He further added that vigilante groups usually give police information on how to trace and curb the security threats. The poor attitudes of some community members towards reporting criminal activities in their areas to Vigilante groups hinder the quick and timely sharing of intelligent information between the two security bodies. This view was supported by Umar and Bappi (2014) who established that information sharing among members of society, vigilante and Nigerian police greatly influence cooperative and collaborative ties towards reducing criminality and upholding law and order. In similar view, Obidiegwu (2019) pointed out that, the government ought to facilitate more cooperation between Non-state security organisations and state security agencies by creating forums that would allow them to engage in cooperative thought, decision-making, and action. This will contribute to increased crime

control, protection of life and property by fostering harmony, teamwork, efficiency, and effectiveness within the security groups.

Why Collaborative Effort is an Antidote to Insecurity in Nigeria
The security issues in Nigeria are numerous, characterized by a myriad of non-state security groups (NSSGs) operating alongside formal statutory security agencies, such as the Nigeria Police Force and the Nigerian Army. The collaboration between these entities is increasingly prominent as they seek to address various security challenges, including terrorism, communal violence, and organized crime. The effects are discussed below:

Enhanced Security Coverage: with the collaboration among the security agents, security operation would reach areas where state security agencies are unable to cover due to shortage of personnel. As noted by Abrahamsen & Williams (2011), many non-state actors operate in local communities and possess detailed knowledge of the areas they serve, which can help statutory agencies improve response times and better understand local dynamics. This collaboration can lead to increased visibility and deterrence, reducing crime rates in underserved areas. For example, in Nigeria, private security groups such as local hunters, vigilante groups and ethnic militias supplement police efforts in local community areas with high crime rates, enhancing the police force's ability to address crime hotspots (Baker, 2002). According to Olomitutu (2024), NSSGs are more effective than conventional security agencies at the community level while explaining that NSSGs officers are sons of the soil and they know all angles where criminals are likely to hide or decipher in their community, that is why the partnership is highly needed to assist in providing intelligence to Statutory security agencies on criminal activities in the community, and this information helps a lot in making it easy for security agencies like Nigerian police to be able to address the issue of insecurity.

Improved Intelligence Gathering and Information Sharing: Non-state security groups often have direct access to localized intelligence due to their proximity to communities. By collaborating with statutory security agencies, non-state actors can share this intelligence, improving operational response. This information-sharing capability is especially valuable in counterterrorism efforts, where intelligence from community-based organizations can aid in identifying potential threats before they materialize (Aning, 2009). For instance, the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Borno State has worked closely with the Nigerian military to combat Boko Haram insurgency. The CJTF's local knowledge and community ties have enabled them to gather intelligence, identify insurgents, and conduct operations, significantly contributing to the military's efforts (Ibrahim, 2017). Additionally, when statutory agencies collaborate with trusted non-state actors, public trust in security initiatives can increase. Non-state actors, especially community-based groups, often maintain close ties with local residents and may be more trusted than state agencies due to historical grievances or distrust. By working alongside these actors, statutory agencies can improve their relationship with the community, fostering better cooperation and compliance (Meagher, 2012).
This is also noted in Ogundana's words that:

> Vigilante groups, Local hunters and OPC work with police and other security agencies. There is no operation that they would go that vigilante groups don't go. The private security outfits are very good in having access to information because they know their terrain very well compared to Nigerian police and other statutory security operatives who are from different areas and they may not know the environment as much as the local security groups (Punch newspaper, January 7th, 2020).

In Nigeria, for example, community vigilante groups have partnered with the police to combat crime, and this collaboration has resulted in greater community support and a perceived increase in legitimacy for both actors (Hills, 2014). However, this effect depends heavily on the non-state group's reputation; partnerships with actors perceived as corrupt or abusive can erode public trust (Ruteere, 2011). For example, the involvement of local vigilante groups in drafting security policies in Lagos State has improved the responsiveness of the police to community concerns (Afolabi, 2022).

Reduced Crimes: One of the effects of relationship according to Skogan (2019) include, reduction of crime, greater citizen's participation, improved police-community relations and social cohesion and

improved standard of living of the community. In the same vein, Nyaura and Ngugi (2014) added that NSSGs enhance partnership between the police and the community in securing the communal needs, problem–solving, involving the non-state security and the communities, attitude modification and social behaviours. Supporting the above view, Wale Oyewole submitted that:

> the OPC, VGN and local hunters in Irepo, Oorelope and Olorunsogo local government of Oyo State through joint security initiative combed a forest reserve in Oke-Ogun area of the state and arrested five suspected kidnappers. Meanwhile, Gani Adam has earlier raised alarm on the invasion of strange terrorists in Oke- Ogun of Oyo State (Daily Trust, 21st September, 2021).

The benefit of an improved partnership between the community and the police is an integral part of neighbourhood policing. Similarly, Olomitutu (2024) pointed out some of the security challenges that have been addressed through the collaboration which include kidnapping, armed robbery and cattle rustling in the community. They have contributed immensely in joint operations to flush out terrorists in the forest reserve areas of the community. With this, their efforts have yielded positive result in making the community peaceful.

Developed Effective Security: The collaboration has really helped in effective security across many communities, especially where statutory security agencies are short of staff. Obidiegwu & Elekwa (2019) stressed that the performance of NSSGs has aided decrease in serious criminal activity within the state. He added that the Collaborative efforts between the state security agencies and the NSSGs has significantly decreased criminal activities in the State. Through unrelenting efforts of the groups, criminals are now afraid to go about their regular business; they have been able to identify and disperse their hiding locations; abduction is almost a thing of the past in the state; robberies and rapes have decreased as a result of the group's operation. Therefore, he urged the statutory security agencies, NSSGs and community members to work hand in hand in furtherance of the operation. Their progressive and positive contributions are felt everywhere in the nation and according to the above, they have restored peace in the religious circle, farming and even during elections. The hooligans and touts who always aim at destabilising the existing peaceful and standard of living adjust and refract from the dubious activities that endanger the region (Olomitutu, 2024). The above view is in line with the study carried out by Chikwendus *et al* (2016) who pointed out that NSSGs have been in partnership with the Nigerian police, covering and combing the nooks and crannies of the community that the statutory security agencies have not been able to effectively carry out in the community, preventing criminals from operating and giving a quick response to security threats to prevent brake down of law and order. This view is supported by Adugbusi(2009) who stated that vigilante groups partner with the police in several operations in the community and this partnership has assisted in the reduction of crime rate. The study is also similar to the Chukwuma& Alemika (2004) who maintained that VGNs are usually available whenever they are needed since they maintain constant presence in the community to prevent criminal from perpetrating their criminal acts.

Challenges Associated with the Collaboration Among the Security Agents in Nigeria
Despite the potential benefits, the collaboration among the security agents is fraught with challenges:
Lack of Trust and Reliability: One of the fundamental challenges to collaboration between NSGs and SSAs is the lack of trust and reliability. State agencies often view non-state actors with scepticism, fearing they may lack accountability, training, and professional standards. As DCAF (2020) highlights, statutory agencies worry about the reliability of non-state groups, suspecting potential alliances with criminal organizations or other informal networks. Similarly, NSGs may perceive statutory agencies as bureaucratic and inefficient, which discourages open and effective collaboration (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2017).

Differences in Legal and Operational Standards: Statutory agencies typically operate within strict legal and regulatory frameworks that govern their conduct, use of force, and accountability to the public. In contrast, non-state actors, especially in areas with weak governance, may operate with looser regulatory oversight. This discrepancy leads to challenges when coordinating operations, as NSGs may employ tactics and standards that do not align with legal and ethical expectations of statutory agencies

(Abrahamsen & Williams, 2009). For instance, non-state actors may employ excessive force or arbitrary detention methods that are not legally permissible for state agencies (Howell & Lind, 2018). The legal framework governing collaboration between NSGs and SSAs is often ambiguous, creating confusion about jurisdiction and authority. For instance, the precise roles and responsibilities of each entity in joint operations are not always clearly defined, which can result in operational conflicts and reduce efficiency (DCAF, 2020). These legal ambiguities also create challenges in terms of prosecuting crimes or managing disputes that arise between NSGs and SSAs, as the law may not clearly specify the legal jurisdiction of each party (Schuberth, 2015). Abrahamsen and Williams (2017) note that when non-state actors are heavily involved in policing functions, it can erode public trust in statutory agencies, as citizens question the motives behind such partnerships. This disparity raises concerns over transparency in joint operations, as it becomes challenging to monitor and regulate the actions of non-state actors effectively (Bayley & Shearing, 2001). Consequently, incidents involving human rights abuses or corruption may go unaddressed, as there is no clear framework for holding NSGs accountable within the context of collaborative security efforts (Avant & Sigelman, 2010).

Resource and Training Disparities: Disparities in resources and training create additional obstacles. Statutory agencies often have access to advanced technology, well-trained personnel, and substantial financial support. Non-state actors, however, may lack these resources and rely on less formal training, which can compromise operational efficiency in joint security efforts. According to Abrahamsen and Williams (2011), private security outfits may lack the capacity to address complex security threats effectively, which limits their role in high-stakes operations involving statutory agencies.

Human Rights Violations: Collaborations with non-state actors increase the risk of human rights violations, as NSGs may not adhere to the same human rights standards as statutory agencies. For example, community vigilante groups or local militias may use extrajudicial measures in maintaining order, which could lead to abuse or excessive use of force. This raises serious concerns about the ethical implications of partnering with such groups, as statutory agencies may be held indirectly responsible for these actions (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2009). The presence of NSGs in collaborative efforts may lead to "mission creep," where non-state actors begin to exercise authority beyond their mandate. For instance, a private security firm contracted to protect a specific asset may become involved in broader policing duties, which can undermine the legitimacy and authority of statutory agencies (Avant, 2005). This encroachment creates potential conflict between statutory agencies and non-state actors, leading to confusion over who holds primary authority in security matters (Howell & Lind, 2018).

Conclusion

The challenges posed by security threats in Nigeria are numerous, requiring innovative and collective approaches. These collaborative security efforts have proven to be an essential strategy in addressing these threats by fostering partnerships among government agencies and private security organizations. These collaborations enhance intelligence sharing, resource pooling, and operational coordination, leading to more effective responses to security challenges such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and cybercrime. However, the success of these efforts hinges on mutual trust, transparent governance, and the consistent implementation of policies that prioritize the safety and welfare of citizens.

Recommendations

Addressing these issues requires that:
- There should be capacity-building efforts, and mechanisms to ensure accountability and transparency across both sectors.
- There should be willingness of both NSGs and SSAs to prioritize public safety over individual interests and to work within established ethical and legal boundaries.
- There should be careful management to avoid negative consequences, such as human rights abuses, corruption, and the erosion of state authority.
- There should be regular joint security and peace meeting in every community, which serves as a forum to resolve security challenges of the community.

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STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN VEGETABLE PRODUCTION FOR LIVELIHOOD IN EMOHUA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract
The paper investigated the strategies to enhance youth participation in vegetable production for livelihood in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State. This paper adopted research survey design and the objectives are to: identify factors inhibiting youth participation in vegetable production, determine strategies for enhancing youths' participation in vegetable production for livelihood. The study employed a multistage sampling technique to select the samples. Data were collected using structured questionnaire to 180 youth vegetable farmers. The data for this study was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean). The result showed that all the 20 items tested were factors inhibiting youth participation in vegetable production in the study area while all 13 items tested were accepted as strategies to enhance youth participation in vegetable production. The factors inhibiting youths' participation in vegetable production ranges from inadequate finance, land unavailability, inadequate training as well as inadequate basic amenities and facilities and the strategies such as adequate provision of finance, infrastructure, basic amenities, trainings and the likes that can enhance the participation of youths in vegetable production. This study concluded that if the inhibiting factors are removed and the enhancing strategies are promoted, youth participation in vegetable production for livelihood would be boosted. It was recommended that factors enhancing youth participation in vegetable production should be promoted by agricultural stakeholders in the study area.

Keywords – Strategies, Inhibitor, Enhance, Youth, Vegetable, Production, Livelihood

Introduction
Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State is blessed with a suitable climatic and fertile soil favourable for crop production. The climatic and soil conditions favour the production of arable crops, permanent crops and ornamental plants. Crops are central to the culture and survival of Emohua people in Rivers State. Vegetable crops like fluted pumpkin (*Telfairia occidentalis),* water leaf *(Talinum triangulare),* bitter leaf *(Vernonia amygdalina),* pepper *(Capsicum spp.),* okazi *(Gnetum africanum),* eggplant *(Solanum melongena),* cucumber *(Cucumis sativus),* tomatoes *(Solanum lycopersicum),* okra *(Abelmoschus esculentus),* etc are tropical crops grown in the study area. These vegetables grow in many parts of Nigeria, but are mainly cultivated in the rainforest zone of Nigeria and Emohua L. G. A. is located in the rainforest zone. Vegetables are used primarily in soups, porridges and herbal medicine. Vegetable crops are rich sources of vitamins and minerals, carbohydrate, salts, protein and fat and contribute to the balanced diet of many people. Vegetables have historically held a place in dietary guidance because of their concentrations of vitamins, especially vitamins C and A; minerals, especially electrolytes; and more recently photochemical, especially antioxidants (Slavin & Lloyd, 2012**).** They are the best resources for overcoming micronutrient deficiencies and provide smallholder farmers with much higher income and more jobs per hectare than staple crops. Vegetable production has emerged as one of the activities that could complement other livelihood strategies that the youth can engage in. Sustainable farming requires exertion of energy and use of physical strength, innovativeness and agility (Brooks, Zorya, Gautam & Goyal, 2013).

The National Youth Policy of Nigeria sets the age bracket of youth between 15 – 29 years, but Rivers State Policy is targeted at those aged between 15 – 35 years. This group represents the most restive, energetic and vibrant members of the state with abilities and the capacity to innovate and take risks, but have not fully utilized them productively (Rivers State Ministry of Youth Development (2020).

Furthermore, most youth opt to engage in agricultural activities that have high and quick returns so that they could secure an income throughout the year (Njenga, Mugo & Opuyo, 2013).

However, the participation of youth in vegetable production in Emohua local government area has not been clearly established in terms of inhibiting factors to youth participation and strategies for enhancing youth participation in vegetable production. Furthermore, essential farming resources such as land, water, finances, farm inputs, and labour necessary for youth participation in vegetable production, along with the contribution of youth in vegetable production to livelihoods, have received little recognition, and the constraints facing youth participation in vegetable production have received limited attention in Emohua Local Government Area.

Despite all the favourable conditions for vegetable production enterprises to thrive well in Emohua L.G.A., most youths migrate from rural areas to the urban and semi – urban areas or cities in search of formal employment from other sectors of the economy. The works of agricultural production is left in the hands of the aged who are no longer strong, mostly illiterates and are unaware of agricultural innovations. This situation triggered the researchers to research into strategies to strategies to enhance youth participation in vegetable production for livelihood in Emohua Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Objectives of the Study
The specific objectives of the study are:
1) Identify factors inhibiting youth s' participation in vegetable production.
2) Determine strategies for enhancing youths' participation in vegetable production for livelihood.

Methodology
This study adopted a research survey design. This study was conducted in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. Emohua Local Government Area is one of the twenty-three (23) Local Government Area in Rivers State, with 6 districts, namely Ogbakiri, Emohua, Rumuji, Ibaa-Obelle, and Elele Alimini. The local government area has its administrative headquarters located in Emohua. Emohua LGA is bounded by Obio-Akpor LGA in the south-east, Asari-Toru and Abua-Odua LGAs in the south, Ikwerre LGA in the east and Ahoada East LGA in the north. It has an area of 831km^2 (321 sq.miles) and a population of estimate 322,423 (NPC 2020). The predominant occupation of the people is farming. The cropping systems practiced are mainly mixed cropping, intercropping as well as sole cropping and the main crops cultivated in the area are yam, okra, cocoyam, Maize and Vegetables such as fluted pumpkin (*Telfairia occidentalis),* water leaf *(Talinum triangulare),* bitter leaf *(Vernonia amygdalina),* Pepper *(Capsicum spp.),* okazi *(Gnetum africanum),* eggplant *(Solanum melongena),* cucumber *(Cucumis sativus),* tomatoes *(Solanum lycopersicum),* okra *(Abelmoschus esculentus), etc* cultivation. This cropping pattern is made possible by the annual rainfall of over 2000mm, mean annual temperature of 28 – 30 and high relative humidity of over 80%. The population of the study was made up of all the youths engaged in vegetable production in Emohua L. G. A.

The study employed a two-stage random sampling technique to select the samples for the study. In the first stage, ten respondents each from ten communities within Emohua Local Government Area were randomly selected. The communities were Emohua, Ndele, Omudioga, Elele-Alimi, Ibaa, Rumuekpe, Ogbakiri, Egbeda, Akpabu and Rumuji. In the second stage, eight youth vegetable farmers were randomly selected from each of the communities selected to give a total of One Hundred and Eighty farmers.

Structured questionnaires were administered to One Hundred and Eighty youth vegetable farmers in order to collect quantitative data. The data for this study was analyzed using descriptive statistics (such as mean, frequency tables, etc.). The responses on the likely factors inhibiting youth participation in vegetable production for livelihood in Emohua Local Government Area and strategies for enhancing youth participation involved in vegetable production for livelihood in Emohua Local Government Area were subjected to a 4-point Likert-type rating scale of agreement; (strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). The values of the scale (4, 3, 2 and 1) were summed up to

obtain 10. The mean value of the sum gave 2.50, which served as the cut-off mean. This became the bench mark for accepting any item as factors inhibiting youth participation in vegetable production for livelihood in Emohua Local Government Area and strategies for enhancing youth participation in vegetable production for livelihood in Emohua Local Government Area.

Results and Discussion
Factors inhibiting youth participation in vegetable production for livelihood in Emohua Local Government Area

Table 1 Mean and Standard Deviation showing factors inhibiting youth participation in vegetable production for livelihood in Emohua Local Government Area

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	STD	Decision
1	Lack of funds to establish vegetable enterprise by youths	86 (344)	76 (228)	18 (36)	0 (0)	3.38	0.66	Agreed
2	Lack/Inadequate land for meaningful establishment of a vegetable enterprise	46 (184)	58 (174)	42 (84)	34 (34)	2.64	1.06	Agreed
3	Lack of technical know-how by youths on vegetable production	58 (232)	87 (261)	30 (60)	5 (5)	3.1	0.77	Agreed
4	Migration of youths to urban areas due to lack of social amenities or for greener pasture	43 (172)	69 (207)	42 (84)	26 (26)	2.72	0.98	Agreed
5	Poor revenue from vegetable or agric-based livelihood	49 (196)	72 (216)	42 (84)	17 (17)	2.85	0.93	Agreed
6	Lack of collaterals to obtain loans from banks to establish vegetable production enterprise	89 (356)	78 (234)	13 (26)	0 (0)	3.42	0.61	Agreed
7	Poor social values on agriculture (vegetable) based livelihood	92 (368)	81 (243)	7 (14)	0 (0)	3.47	0.57	Agreed
8	Drudgery in agriculture generally discourage youths from engaging in any agricultural activities	94 (376)	68 (204)	18 (36)	0 (0)	3.42	0.67	Agreed
9	Inadequate extension services	87 (348)	66 (198)	27 (54)	0 (0)	3.33	0.72	Agreed
10	Inadequate extension/training services	56 (224)	88 (264)	28 (56)	8 (8)	3.07	0.8	Agreed
11	Inadequate infrastructural facilities to support vegetable farming activities	68 (272)	89 (267)	23 (46)	0 (0)	3.25	0.67	Agreed
12	Inadequate storage facilities	64 (256)	92 (276)	24 (48)	0 (0)	3.22	0.66	Agreed
13	Poor marketing structure	65 (260)	90 (270)	25 (50)	0 (0)	3.22	0.67	Agreed
14	Shortage of farm labour supply	67 (268)	98 (294)	15 (30)	0 (0)	3.29	0.61	Agreed
15	Unpredictable changes in climate (Extreme weather conditions)	89 (356)	78 (234)	13 (26)	0 (0)	3.42	0.62	Agreed
16	Unsteady agricultural policies	93 (372)	78 (234)	9 (18)	0 (0)	3.47	0.59	Agreed
17	Inadequate agricultural credit facilities	89 (356)	76 (228)	15 (30)	0 (0)	3.41	0.64	Agreed
18	Unpredictable or low product prices	65 (260)	86 (258)	29 (58)	0 (0)	3.2	0.69	Agreed
19	Inadequacy in the supply of farm inputs	71 (284)	98 (294)	11 (22)	0 (0)	3.33	0.59	Agreed
20	Lucrative kpor fire activities limit youth participation in farm (vegetable) operations generally.	69 (276)	96 (288)	15 (30)	0 (0)	3.3	0.61	Agreed
	Average					**3.23**	**0.7**	**Agreed**

Table 1 shows the factors inhibiting youth participation in vegetable production for livelihood in Emohua Local Government Area. From the analysis done, it was revealed that 20 out of 20 items were tagged as agreed based on the mean score obtained being greater than the criterion-mean score of 2.5. Based on this, it can therefore be deduced that factors inhibiting youth participation in vegetable production ranges from inadequate funds, land unavailability, inadequate training as well as inadequate basic amenities and facilities, etc. If these factors are adequately taking care of youths would be encouraged to go into vegetable production for livelihood in Emohua L. G. A. This finding supports the research result of Lan, Onu and Akaa (2019), who also asserts that some of the above factors are inhibiting factors to youths participation in agricultural activities.

Strategies for enhancing youth participation in vegetable production for livelihood in Emohua Local Government Area

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation showing the strategies for enhancing youth participation in vegetable production for livelihood in Emohua Local Government Area

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\overline{x}$	STD	Decision
1	Provide adequate technical and vocational guidance to students	112 (448)	68 (204)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.62	0.48	Agreed
2	Use modern or innovative techniques in teaching agricultural science such as use of multimedia and ICT	109 (436)	71 (213)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.61	0.49	Agreed
3	Organizing seminars/conferences /workshops for youths where experts give talk on the value of agriculture and food security	87 (348)	93 (279)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.48	0.5	Agreed
4	Introduce agricultural shows where rewards will be used to motivate youths with good agricultural products.	78 (312)	102 (306)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.43	0.49	Agreed
5	Giving scholarships to students studying or to study agriculture	76 (304)	104 (312)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.42	0.49	Agreed
6	Providing social amenities and ICT facilities within the farming communities	69 (276)	111 (333)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.38	0.49	Agreed
7	Make soft loans available to youths interested in vegetable farming without collateral	72 (288)	108 (324)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.4	0.49	Agreed
8	Mentoring young farmers by successful agricultural entrepreneurs to develop their skills, attitude and knowledge in vegetable production	88 (352)	92 (276)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.49	0.5	Agreed
9	Agricultural science should be made compulsory for all students at the secondary school level	65 (260)	115 (345)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.36	0.48	Agreed
10	Establish Agro-tourism centres	79 (316)	101 (303)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.44	0.5	Agreed
11	Access to farm land should be guaranteed	80 (320)	100 (300)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.44	0.5	Agreed
12	Link social media to agriculture	112 (448)	68 (204)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.62	0.48	Agreed
13	Agricultural extension services should be made available	123 (492)	57 (171)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.68	0.47	Agreed
	Average					**3.49**	**0.49**	**Agreed**

The above Table 2 shows the strategies for enhancing youth participation in vegetable production for livelihood in Emohua Local Government Area. From the Table, it was revealed that 13 out of 13 items were tagged as agreed based on the mean score obtained being greater than the criterion-mean score of 2.5. Based on this, it is therefore agreed that adequate provision of finance, infrastructure, basic amenities, trainings and the likes can enhance the participation of youths in vegetable production. This result agrees with Tasie, *et al.* (2022), who posit that for youth to participate in agricultural activities it must be made attractive to them by making it innovative and providing modern facilities in the rural areas

Conclusion and Recommendations
Based on the findings of the study, it was observed that several factors inhibit youth participation in vegetable production in Emohua L. G. A. and also that many strategies enhance youth participation in vegetable production. So, if the inhibiting factors are removed and the enhancing strategies are promoted, it would boost youth participation in vegetable production for livelihood.
Based on the foregoing, it is recommended that factors enhancing youth participation in vegetable production should be promoted by agricultural stakeholders in the study area.

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AND UNEMPLOYMENT REDUCTION IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF NATIONAL SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (N-POWER) IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract
The study examines entrepreneurship development programmes and unemployment reduction in Rivers State with a focus on National Social Investment Programme (N-Power) in Rivers State. The study was guided by two research questions. Furthermore, literature and related concepts on entrepreneurship development programmes and unemployment reduction were reviewed. The study adopted the descriptive survey design method. The target population was 54,189, thus the Krejcie and Morgan table for sample size to arrive at a sample size of 381. Three sampling techniques were adopted for the study. A structured questionnaire and In-depth interview were used to elicit opinion from respondents. The content/face validity of the instrument was ascertained by my supervisor and two other experts. The mean and standard deviation were used to analyze research questions. The findings of the research revealed that there is a low rate of employment among N-power volunteers who have undergone entrepreneurship programme in Rivers State. It was recommended that Government should have a transitional plan for entrepreneurship development programmes beneficiaries from the programme to long term employment. This can be achieved by creating employment opportunities for beneficiaries within the ministries and agencies of governments or empowering the private sector to absorb the beneficiaries after some periods of training.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Development, Unemployment N-Power

Introduction
Ideally, entrepreneurship represents a strategy for achieving national economic objectives of employment generation, poverty reduction, indigenous technology, reduction of rural migration, increase in the gross domestic earnings, etc. at a low investment rate, and the development of capabilities. As Abdullahi (2008) argued, entrepreneurship is a vehicle to improve the availability of life for individuals, families, and communities, and sustain a healthy economy and environment. However, entrepreneurship growth has been limited due to poor environmental forces which include: inadequate electricity supply; inadequate finance, political instability, and others. Nigeria is endowed with significant natural and human resources, but the failure of the country's leadership to get it right over the years has continued to set the nation backward. General economic meltdown, policy somersault, failure to protect investors' investments, and lack of deliberate efforts to separate business The Administration of President Muhammadu Buhari "designed and implemented the current National Social Investments Programme (N-SIP) as a strategy for combating poverty and unemployment. The N-SIP scheme was created to enable citizens to exit from the twin evils of poverty and unemployment through capacity building, investment, and direct financial support (Abin, 2018). The programme consists of four major components the Job Creation and Youth Empowerment (N-Power), National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), National Cash Transfer Programme (NCTP), and Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP). NSIP is generally aimed at increasing the number of poor and vulnerable households with income/livelihood by providing access to targeted funds, thereby improving the household's ability to absorb economic shock (Abin, 2018).

N-Power is a scheme under the National Social Investments Programme of the Nigerian Federal Government geared towards graduate job creation; poverty alleviation and empowerment initiatives through volunteering services. The programme is available to graduates and non-graduates. It is aimed

at inculcating in Nigerian youths the learn-work entrepreneurship culture between the ages of 18-35 (FGN 2018). The graduate's category is further divided into three areas namely, the N -Teach, N-Health and N-Agro. For the non-graduate's category, the N-Build Scheme is geared towards equipping its beneficiaries with the necessary and meaningful skills to be self-employed.

Since its inception, the government has spent an estimated sum of N6.3 billion. In the face of this, the unemployment level is still high. In a study conducted by Odey and Sambe (2019), it was argued that the over-centralization of the N-Power program under the authority of the Federal Government of Nigeria was a challenge, as it affects interactions between the authorities who control the programme and the beneficiaries of the programme, thereby limiting the possibility of improving the programme through understanding the plights of the programme beneficiaries. Similarly, Ebiri et al., (2017) in their report stated that at inception, the N-Power programme was bogged down by challenges such as systemic hiccups such as insufficient information and wrong bank verification number (BVN) as some of the factors undermining the programme. To confirm this failure, the same government has abandoned the programme regime. These, among others, informed this study.

Secondly, other studies on N-Power, by Abin (2018), revealed that some of the problems faced by the programme included unpaid and late payment of stipend to volunteers. A study by Okoro and Bassey (2018) also found that the programme did not empower beneficiaries with teacher education before deployment to teach. Odey and Sambe (2019), revealed that adequate plan was not made to transit these young beneficiaries into more meaningful entrepreneurs after training. The previous studies focused attention on other States in the country. None of these studies dwelled on how N-power entrepreneurship development programme has influenced unemployment reduction in Rivers State. On this note, the study anchored its research questions on the following:
i. What is the effectiveness of entrepreneurship development programmes in reducing unemployment through N-power in Rivers State?
ii. How have government policies in entrepreneurship development programmes reduced unemployment through N-power in Rivers State?

The study was anchored on Marxist Theory of Unemployment and the Elite Theory developed by Karl Marx in 1863. Karl Marx, in this theory, believes that unemployment is inherent within the unstable capitalist system and periodic crises of mass unemployment are.to be expected. Capitalism, to the Marxists, unfairly manipulates the labour market by perpetuating unemployment which lowers labourers' demand for fair wages. Workers are 'pitted' against one another at the service of increasing profits for owners. In the conception of Karl Marx, the only way to permanently eliminate unemployment would be to abolish capitalism and the system of forced competition for wages, and then shift to the socialist or communist economic system.

For the contemporary Marxists, the existence of persistent unemployment is a proof of inability of capitalism to ensure full employment. The socio-economic distress the Nigerian citizens faced under colonialism led the populace to clamour for socialism as advocated by the Marxists. The socialist movement was initially a reaction against extreme poverty caused by capitalism on the masses. It lays great emphasis on the state embarking on a broad programme of welfare for the people, "the programme that would provide social insurance to protect the masses against unemployment and economic distress".

Methodology
This study adopted the descriptive survey design. In descriptive survey research, independent and dependent variables are used to define the scope of study, but cannot be explicitly controlled by the researcher. This design was adopted for this study because it establishes a relationship between variables which is what this study intended to looked at. The population of this study is all unemployed graduates in Rivers State including those who have benefited or undergone N-Power. The target population was 54,189 (Rivers State Ministry of Economic Empowerment and Employment Generation Bulletin, 2023). The study adopted the Krejcie and Morgan table to determine the sample size therefore, the sample size for this study was 381. The study adopted three sampling techniques. The cluster sampling

techniques was used to cluster Rivers State into three Senatorial districts. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one local government each from the three senatorial districts while the purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents including N-Power volunteers in Primary Schools, Primary Health Centres, Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) and key persons from the office of the National Orientation Agency Rivers state for the interview. The three senatorial district was adopted as three cluster areas, which constituted the conceptual universe.

Table 1: The Three (3) Senatorial District

Rivers East	Rivers West	Rivers South East
Emohua	Akuku-Toru	Andoni
Bonny	Abua/Odual	Gokana
Ikwerre	Ahoada West	Khana
Etche	Ahoada East	Eleme
Ogu/Bolo	Asari-Toru	Opobo/Nkoro
Obia/Akpor	Degeme	Oyigbo
Port Harcourt	Ogba/Egbeme/Ndoni	Tai
Okrika	Omuma	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

After classifying the senatorial district, balloting method -a type of simple random sampling method was used to choose 3 local government areas, one (1) local government each from the three senatorial districts. Through balloting process, numbers from 1-8 were assigned to the eight (8) LGAs in Rivers East, numbers 1-8 were assigned to the eight (8) LGAs in Rivers West while numbers 1-7 were assigned to the seven (7) LGAs in Rivers South East senatorial district. These were written on pieces of papers and then folded properly. The numbered pieces of papers were put into different containers (one for Rivers East, one for Rivers West and the other for Rivers South East senatorial districts) and were probably independently mixed. The required number of local government (1 local government each from Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South East were picked). This was to enhance proportional representation of the unemployed graduates in Rivers State. Therefore, in Rivers East senatorial district, the work selected Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, in Rivers West senatorial district, the Ahoada West Local Government Area was selected while in Rivers South East senatorial district Khana Local Government Area was selected. Purposive sampling techniques was used to select unemployed youths and those who have benefited or undergone N-Power programme.

Table 2: Local Government Areas selected for the Study

Rivers East	Rivers West	Rivers South East
Obio-Akpor	Ahoada West	Khana

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Both primary and secondary source of data collection were used in this study. The secondary sources include the review of literatures, text books, journals, and the internet, which provided the needed theoretical background of the study and also proved very helpful in identifying those measures that can be taken to enhanced entrepreneurship development programmes. In this study, a structured questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Sections A and B respectively. Section A entails respondents' personal information while section B is made up of the test items. The first instrument was a Questionnaire on Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP). The second instrument was on Unemployment Reduction Questionnaire (URQ). These was used to collect relevant data from the subject. The Modified Four Likert Scale option of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed was used to get the opinion of respondents. The In-depth interview method was used to elicit opinion of respondents. The interviewees made up of N-power volunteers. There was a selection of two research assistants that help in the note taking as well as conducting the interview. The researcher used content validity to validate the instrument. To achieve the reliability of the study, the researcher adopts the test re-test method. The data were analyzed using charts, table and percentage for the analysis of bio-data. The mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions.

Also, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses while the qualitative instrument was analyzed using content analysis.

Concept of Entrepreneurship
Entrepreneurship has been seen as a vision of progress, innovations, developmental pillar of a nation's capacity building, and a key to a robust economy. Entrepreneurship shows the skills to supervise or monitor the business environment, identify opportunities, assume economic risk, and initiate change, based on recent realities. Ossai and Nwalado (2012) posits entrepreneurship as creating some new or different values by developing the necessary time, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic, and social risks, and receiving the resulting rewards of most personal satisfaction. Entrepreneurship is a lifelong learning process, starting as early as elementary school and progressing through all levels of education, including adult education.

Entrepreneurship is an act of identifying opportunities, and mobilizing the required capital and resources to create economic products and services to make a profit, thereby creating employment through innovations and entrepreneurial spirit (Adaeze, 2019). Entrepreneurship has been defined by various authors to mean many things since the Middle Ages. The entrepreneur has been seen as an actor, innovator, or a developer of technology. However, the summary of what entrepreneurship means will reflect the individual definer's point of view. Entrepreneurial development has been found to be capable of making positive impacts on the economy of a nation and the quality of life of the people (Nzewi et al., 2017).

Considering these definitions, entrepreneurship development could equally be seen as a gradual process in which an individual takes in establishing a business or creating wealth to make profit. Osemeke (2012) states that entrepreneurship development refers to the process of enhancing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through structured training and institution-building programmes.

Moreover, entrepreneurship development in Nigeria concentrates more on growth potential and innovation. Essentially this means the acquisition of skills that will enable an entrepreneur to function appropriately and adequately in terms of turning the perceived challenges into opportunities.

Concept of Unemployment
Unemployment is one of the developmental problems that face every developing economy in the world. This has become a global concern and has more direct consequences on the youth who would have been the next generation of potentially productive economic and a threat to political, and socio-economic fortunes as well as the peace and stability of many countries also. Unemployment was defined by International Labour Organization (2018) as a state of joblessness that arises when individuals are without jobs and they have actively sought work within a month. The unemployment statistics are calculated as a percentage by dividing the number of unemployed individuals by individuals currently in the labour force. According to the (ILO, 2018), unemployed workers are those who are currently not working but are willing and able to work for pay, currently available to work and have actively searched for work.

Rafindadi (2012) defined unemployment as the number of people in the population who are willing and offer themselves for employment but could not be employed because of lack of vacancies for them. National Bureau of Statistics (N.B.S) Nigeria defines unemployment as the proportion of the labour force that is available for work but did not work for at least thirty-nine (39) hours in the week preceding survey period. Bakare (2012) referred to the concept of disguised unemployment which be defined as the Gap between the actual numbers of workers available for employment and the level of employment at which the marginal product is below the institutional or subsistence wage.

Role of Entrepreneurship Development Programmes in Generating Employment
Initiatives that focus on increasing entrepreneurship and increasing employment share a great deal in common, as entrepreneurship can be seen as a special form of employability. Entrepreneurship has often been cited as a key factor to improving economic growth in developing countries. Entrepreneurship is

also seen as an important way to deal with issues relating to poverty, as entrepreneurship creates new jobs, fosters a climate of innovative thinking, and can lead to the launch of pioneering and cutting-edge companies (Amaeshi 2007).

Kritikos (2014) viewed entrepreneurship as important to economic development because the introduction of innovative technologies, products, and services causes increased competition because entrepreneurs challenge existing firms, create new job opportunities in the short and long term, raises the overall productivity of firms and economies and also accelerate structural change replacing established, sclerotic firms. These further buttresses the importance of entrepreneurs in an economy because of the role they play in employment creation through continuous introduction of innovated products and technologies which allows competition. This competition allows consumers to enjoy good products and services at relatively cheap prices, discourages monopoly and ensures non-exploitation of consumers.

Employment generation has over the years been widely recognized as major paths to socio-economic progress. Indeed, employment generation has been among the cardinal macro-economic objectives of most governments in developing world (Ogwumike, 2013). As noted by Seers (2012), growth accompanied by reduction in unemployment is one of the principal indicators of economic development. In Nigeria, the menace of unemployment and poverty cannot be over- emphasized.

Achievements of Entrepreneurship Development Programmes in Nigeria
The speed at which industrialization has taken place in recent years is due to the major role played by Entrepreneur Development Programmes. Following are the major achievements of Entrepreneur Development Programmes:
➢ Entrepreneur Development Programmes played an important role in establishment; development and expansion of the practice-oriented development programme In India almost all the training programmes conducted are organized and developed under Entrepreneur Development Programmes
➢ Entrepreneur Development Programmes have also developed and established various support systems necessary for entrepreneurs. They strengthen and coordinate these support systems.
➢ Entrepreneur Development Programmes have not only created a background for industrialization but have also given momentum to it.
➢ These programmes have also contributed a lot to solving the problem of unemployment.
➢ Entrepreneur Development Programmes have helped to a great extent in this direction by starting self-employment programmes and giving momentum to the speed of industrialization.
➢ Another achievement of these programmes is the establishment and development of new enterprises which is a very difficult task in this competitive era. Entrepreneur Development Programmes have provided various inputs to establish new enterprises and also provided various entrepreneurial skills and qualities.

Analysis of Research Questions
Research Question 1: What is the effectiveness of entrepreneurship development programmes in reducing unemployment through N-power in Rivers State?
Table 3: Mean score on the effectiveness of entrepreneurship development programmes in reducing unemployment through N-power in Rivers State: **N=357**

	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
There is a low rate of employment among N-power volunteers who underwent entrepreneurship training in Rivers State.	243	107	5	2	3.5	Accept
There is no sustainability of businesses started by N-power beneficiaries post-entrepreneurship development programmes.	295	56	3	3	3.2	Accept
There is a low correlation between the level of entrepreneurship skills acquired and the subsequent employment status of N-power volunteers	271	68	14	4	3.1	Accept

	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
There is no success rate for N-power volunteers in accessing financial support or grants for their entrepreneurial ventures post-training.	343	14	0	0	3.7	Accept
There were few mentorship and support networks provided during entrepreneurship development programmes on the employability of N-power beneficiaries in Rivers State.	352	5	0	0	3.3	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2024
Keys: SA: Strongly agree, A: Agree, SD: Strongly Disagree, D: disagree

Table 3 shows the evaluation of entrepreneurship development programmes through N-power volunteers in Rivers State, by providing insights into its effectiveness in reducing unemployment. The findings indicate low rate of employment among N-power volunteers who have undergone entrepreneurship training in Rivers State. This access to financial resources enables volunteers to realize their entrepreneurial aspirations and contributes to the growth and expansion of their businesses, thereby generating employment opportunities for themselves and others.

Also, the provision of mentorship and support networks during entrepreneurship development programmes was discouraging and did not contribute to the employability of N-power beneficiaries in Rivers State. Mentorship and support networks did not offer valuable guidance, resources, and encouragement, which are instrumental in helping volunteers navigate the complexities of entrepreneurship and succeed in their ventures. The evaluation suggests that entrepreneurship development programmes didn't play a significant role in reducing unemployment among N-power volunteers in Rivers State. By not providing beneficiaries with essential skills, facilitating the establishment and sustainability of businesses, and not offering mentorship and support, the programmes failed to empower individuals to create employment opportunities for themselves and others, thereby not contributing to the socioeconomic development in Rivers State.

Research Questions Two: How have government policies in entrepreneurship development programmes reduced unemployment through N-Power in Rivers State?
Table 4: Mean score on how government policies in entrepreneurship development programmes reduced unemployment through N-Power in Rivers State: **N=357**

	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
There are inadequate government policies in fostering an enabling environment for entrepreneurship among N-Power participants in Rivers State.	243	107	5	2	3.7	Accept
The implementation of government policies is faced with barriers that discourage N-Power volunteers from engaging in entrepreneurial activities.	295	56	3	3	3.4	Accept
There are no regulatory frameworks governing entrepreneurship development programmes and their impact on unemployment reduction within the N-Power scheme in Rivers State.	271	68	14	4	3.5	Accept
There is no accessibility of government entrepreneurship development resources and facilities by N-Power beneficiaries in Rivers State.	343	14	0	0	3.1	Accept
There is no alignment between government entrepreneurship policies and the specific needs of N-Power volunteers in Rivers State.	352	5	0	0	3.0	Accept

Keys: SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, SD: Strongly Disagree, D: Disagree

Table 4 show how government policies in entrepreneurship development programmes has continued to mitigate its role in contributing to the reduction of unemployment through N-Power in Rivers State. The ineffectiveness of government policies in fostering an enabling environment for entrepreneurship

among N-Power volunteers in Rivers State was acknowledged. The decision indicates that these policies have not created an environment conducive to entrepreneurial activities. This suggests that the government has not implemented policies that support and encourage N-Power volunteers to explore entrepreneurial opportunities, thereby reducing unemployment rates.

Furthermore, the implementation of government policies is faced with barriers that discouraged N-power volunteers to engage in entrepreneurial activities. These barriers have discouraged volunteer of N-Power from venturing into entrepreneurship. Moreso, the regulatory frameworks have been ineffective in ensuring the quality and effectiveness of entrepreneurship programmes. These frameworks if properly streamlined would have help to ensure accountability, and maintain standards, thereby maximizing the impact of entrepreneurship programmes in reducing unemployment.

Additionally, the accessibility of government entrepreneurship development resources and facilities by N-Power beneficiaries in Rivers State is noted to be very poor. These resources and facilities are really not available to N-Power volunteers. This accessibility would have ensured that participants have access to necessary resources, training, and support to pursue entrepreneurial ventures effectively, thus contributing to unemployment reduction but it wasn't possible.

Lastly, the alignment between government entrepreneurship policies and the specific needs of N-Power volunteers in Rivers State is not recognized. The government policies are not well-aligned with the needs of N-Power participants. This alignment would have ensured that policies are tailored to address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by N-Power volunteers, thereby maximizing their effectiveness in reducing unemployment.

Government policies in entrepreneurship development programmes have not significantly contributed to the reduction of unemployment through N-Power in Rivers State. By not fostering an enabling environment, providing incentives and subsidies, by not implementing regulatory frameworks, ensuring accessibility to resources, and aligning policies with the specific needs of volunteers, the government has not created opportunities for N-Power beneficiaries to engage in entrepreneurial activities to secure sustainable employment.

Discussion of Findings
On effectiveness of entrepreneurship development programmes in reducing unemployment through N-Power in Rivers State. Table 4.2 shows the evaluation of entrepreneurship development programmes within N-Power participants in Rivers State and provides insights into its effects in reducing unemployment. The findings indicate a low rate of employment among N-Power volunteers who have undergone the programme in Rivers State. The findings collaborate with the findings of Effiong (2021) which show that the unemployment rate during N-Power was even higher than before the N-power programme in Nigeria. This shows that N-Power programme has not been effective in curbing the unemployment rate as unemployment keeps increasing in Rivers State.

Again, we found that participants were not equipped with adequate training skills and knowledge that enhance their employability, potentially leading to reduced unemployment rates among programme beneficiaries in Rivers State. This assertion is in order with that of Ekong and Ekong (2016) that training of personnel must be in place with relevant facilities to accomplish successful programmes.

Additionally, the success rate of N-Power participants in accessing financial support or grants for their entrepreneurial ventures post-training is reported to be very low. Lastly, the provision of mentorship and support networks during entrepreneurship development programmes was discouraging and did not contribute to the employability of N-Power beneficiaries in Rivers State.

Recommendations
The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:
i.   Government should have a transitional plan for entrepreneurship development programmes beneficiaries from the programme to long-term employment. This can be achieved by creating

employment opportunities for beneficiaries within the ministries and agencies of governments or empowering the private sector to absorb the beneficiaries after some periods of training.

ii. There should be proper entrepreneurship policies that ignite entrepreneurial interest among the populace. This can be done by encouraging financial institutions and other relevant agencies to set aside part of their profits to support the development of entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

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FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION AND HEALTH IMPLICATION IN YENAGOA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA (LGA), BAYELSA STATE

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Abstract
Given the continuous call by various government of nations to deracinate gender-based violence, this study examined Female Genital Mutilation-FGM and its health implication in Yenagoa LGA, Bayelsa State. The study adopted the descriptive research design; Four research objectives and questions were formulated for the study, Key Persons Interview (KPI), and a 27 item questionnaire were the major instrument used to elicit information from respondents. The study's population is 227,860 females while the sample size of 400 was determined using Taro-Yamani formula. A multistage sampling technique were used to select the respondents. Culture bound theory was adopted as the theory for the study. The data was analysed using thematic for KPI, mean score for the questionnaire schedule and percentages for the socio-demographic data of respondents. The findings revealed excision as the nature of FGM that exist in Yenagoa, with its attendant health implication ranging from convulsion to cyst infection. The quest for utmost femininity was revealed as the reasons for FGM in the area, hence its persistent justification by some change resistant individuals irrespective of the ban. It was thus recommended amongst others that government and concerned social organisations make concerted effort to provide valid information to disprove the cultural misconceptions of the suppose benefits of FGM, expressly create awareness on the negative effect of FGM on the health of women, and domesticate the law prohibiting FGM in Bayelsa State.

Keywords*:* Female Genital Mutilation, Health Implication, Women's Health, Socio-Cultural Determinants, Rite of Passage.

Introduction

Most women's health concerns, stem from difficulties connected to reproductive responsibilities and harmful cultural behaviours including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines FGM as "any procedure that results in the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs, for reasons other than those associated with medical care" (2018b). The practice of FGM has been around for a very long time but only after the topic was extensively publicised in the 1980s and 1990s that it became a global concern (Leina, 2014).

More than 200 million girls and women are believed to be living today who have undergone FGM in the nations where the practice is most common, and an estimated 3 million girls worldwide are at risk of undergoing FGM each year, by the year 2030, an estimated extra 68 million girls would be subject to genital mutilation (WHO, 2020). Most typically, FGM is conducted on children and young women younger than 18 years of age, the majority of girls being cut before they become 15 years old (WHO, 2021).

Amongst the countries where FGM is known to occur; most of these are in Africa, but the practice is also found in the Middle East and Asia. UNICEF has also received reports of FGM in several South American ethnic groups (UNICEF, 2020). In addition, the number of girls and women who have had female genital mutilation or who are at danger of being subjected to the procedure in Europe, Australia, and North America have grown as a result of rising migration (WHO, 2020). The European Network (2020) states that large-scale national surveys asking women aged 15-49 about their own or their daughters' experiences with FGM have been used to estimate the prevalence of the practice. Prevalence rates higher than 80% were discovered in eight of the sub-Saharan African nations of which Nigeria is a component. Adegoke (2005) averred that the sort of operation done also varies, mostly with ethnicity, and that the incidence differs between areas within nations. He went on to say that surveys of women

over the age of 15 suggest that roughly 90% of FGM cases involve Types I (mainly clitoridectomy), II (excision), or IV ("nicking" without flesh removed), and that 10% (over 8 million women) are Type III-Infibulation, most commonly associated with serious health problems.

Given its population size, Nigeria has the highest absolute number of FGM cases in the world, making up roughly a quarter of the 115-130 million circumcised women UNICEF (1998) estimates are cut globally. The south-south region of Nigeria has the greatest frequency of FGM (77% among adult women), followed by the south-east (68%) and the south-west (65%), whereas the north has lower prevalence but a more severe version of the practice (Adegoke, 2005).

There is evidence of FGM in Nigeria as studies have shown its existence in Bayelsa State despite the fact that the government has implemented specific laws to combat the practice, such as the VAPP Act 2015, which forbids and criminalizes FGM. A medical professional in Bayelsa State have been evidenced carrying out the surgery (Dotimi, 2016; Ibrahim, Oyeyemi & Ekine, 2013). Whether performed by a doctor or a local traditional circumciser with little to no health knowledge, making use of sharp, crude implements, the truth is that almost all women who have undergone FGM have experienced severe pain and bleeding as a result of the procedure. Girls are restrained while the treatment is performed, and they are given little or no pain medication or anaesthetic to ease their discomfort.

Consequently, as confirmed by WHO (an entity with worldwide leadership responsibilities in health affairs, 2021), FGM poses serious health risks to its victims, thus unacceptable from the health perspectives. The level of difficulties may also depend on how the surgery is carried out, as noted by Morrison, Scherf, and Ekpo (2001). Additionally, the victim may be at a higher risk for complications if the procedure was performed with unsterile equipment, no analgesic. Primary infections related with FGM, according to Ivazzo, Sardiand, and Gkegke (2013), include staphylococcus infections, urinary tract infections, extreme and unmanageable pain, and bleeding, whilst, secondary infection will include, Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF), Rift Valley Fever (RVF), excessive or prolonged bleeding during childbirth, cyst infections, infertility, high risk of experiencing complications during childbirth, and increased risk of new born deaths were all cited as health risks associated with FGM by the WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund in 2020. In 2018, it cost around $1.4 billion USD annually to treat the health consequences associated with FGM in twenty-seven high prevalence nations, of which Nigeria is a number (WHO, 2021). If FGM prevalence stays the same, this number would increase to $2.3 billion in 30 years (2047), however, if nations forsake FGM, this cost will fall by 60% over the following 30 years (WHO, 2021).

More than half of the countries where the practice is widespread have passed laws outlawing it, but we have yet to see these laws enforced in full. Studies by UNICEF (2000) confirm that just four of the 29 nations worldwide (in Africa and the Middle East) where FGM is performed have ever brought charges against those responsible for the crime. This is especially true in Nigeria as there are no known court verdict against the practice of FGM but the practice continues to exist.

In Bayelsa state, the law prohibiting FGM was passed but, with no planned endeavours towards snaring perpetrators. Okeke, Anyaechie, and Azenyeaku (2012) categorised the prevalence of various forms of FGM across the states of Nigeria, with no study in Yenagoa, indicating a gap to be filled. As a result of these and other factors, the researcher decided to investigate the form of FGM in Yenagoa, to understand the link between FGM and health of women in Yenagoa, by focusing on the social-cultural determinants that predisposes the persistence practise of FGM in the geographical space called Yenagoa, Nigeria. The study's goal is to fill this need as it contributes to attaining real sustainable development by 2030.

Objectives of the Study
Specifically, the study undertook the following objectives, to:
i.   Examine the nature of FGM and its health impact on women in Yenagoa**?**
ii. Identify the factors promoting the practice of FGM that negatively affect the health of women in Yenagoa.

iii. Examine the common health problems associated with FGM that negatively impact the health of woman in Yenagoa.
iv. Proffer solutions that will eradicate the practice of FGM and reduce FGM associated health risk in Yenagoa.

Research Questions
i. What is the nature of FGM in Yenagoa?
ii. What are the factors promoting the practice of FGM in Yenagoa that negatively impact on women's health?
iii. What are the common health problems associated with FGM in Yenagoa that impact on women's health?
iv. What solutions can be given to eradicate the practice of FGM in Yenagoa?

Literature Review
Female Genital Mutilation
If the external female genitalia are cut, burned, or otherwise altered for no medical reason, then this practise is known as FGM. A wide variety of cultural justifications lead individuals, groups, and nations to practise FGM. Girls between the ages of 1 and 15 are the most common victims of FGM (WHO, 2020). Cultural and societal factors include perceptions of beauty and purity, fertility, religious endorsement, discrimination, and peer pressure. The custom is said to have existed before the spread of Christianity and Islam and to be indicative of long-standing gender inequality. Women who choose not to undergo circumcision may face stigma in certain cultures.

Variations in cultural and customary aspects of FGM exist amongst ethnic enclaves (Islam and Uddin, 2001). Girls may have the surgery done anytime between the ages of 0 and 15, or even during their first pregnancy (WHO, 2020). Some tribes do the process before birth, menarche, or before marriage (Morison, Dirir, Elimi, Warsame, & Dirit, 2004), while others do it during the first pregnancy or between the ages of six and eight as is customary. Even though more than 40 women may be cut at once, FGM is nearly usually carried out in a ceremonial setting with the help of music, food, and presents. This was found by (Odukogbe, Afolabi, Bello, & Adeyanju, 2017). There is a wide variety of people who can perform the surgery, from traditional birth attendants (often older women from the community) with no medical training to midwives, retired nurses, and auxiliary health attendants (Nour, 2015).

Most of the time, sterility is not possible to achieve, and there are no anaesthetics on hand; instead, the wound is stitched with thorns or other primitive instruments and medical sutures (if medicalised). Legs are tied for up to six weeks after an infibulation, and ointments and compounds composed of herbs, milk, eggs, ashes, honey, or animal dung are applied to the wound to promote healing. Thorns may also be used to keep the two sides of the labia majora together (Abu-Dai, 2000).

The girls who are getting the operation have various levels of understanding of what will occur to them. Girls are urged to be strong and emotionless throughout the surgery so that their families won't be embarrassed if they weep (Morrison, Scherf & Eko, 2001). Men are barred from attending the ceremony and cheering on the participants, and in certain cultures, females will be instructed to sit in cold water minutes to the ritual in order to numb the region and lessen the possibility of heavy bleeding, but no measures are made to alleviate the agony (Morrison, Scherf & Eko, 2001).

Prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation
FGM is largely performed in roughly 31 countries, mostly in Africa, Asia and Latin America and among communities from these areas; There are an estimated 200 million women and girls living today who have experienced FGM in 31 different countries (WHO, 2020); around 41% of females in Nigeria are responsible for the global total of 200 million women and children who have been circumcised. Ninety percent of Egyptian women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 have undergone FGM (UNICEF, 2016).

As UNICEF (2020) pointed out, the illegality of FGM in several countries makes it difficult to collect data on its prevalence. Since daughters may not know if they have been cut or how deeply they were cut if FGM was performed on them at a young age, but since any recent cutting would have had the mother's involvement or consent, information on the FGM status of daughters is generally regarded as more reliable than women's self-reports.

Challenges to Eradicate Female Genital Mutilation
The practise of FGM has persisted through the centuries despite global, regional and national efforts to abolish it via legislation and intervention. This is because the practise is firmly established in the customs and beliefs of the people. In 2020, the 'vice media' reported that the corona virus boosted the number of FGM cases in Kenya because it kept more girls and women at home, where their parents were more likely to opt to circumcise them (un.org, 2021). The practice persists despite the fact that it is punishable by up to a twenty-year prison sentence in some countries, as part of the measures to deracinate the practise.

Female Genital Mutilation and Health of Girl Child
Many health issues (such as prolonged bleeding, urinary difficulties, cysts, infections, and challenges during delivery) and other ethical, moral, and economical repercussions impact the female child for the rest of her life as a result of FGM. The yearly cost of obstetric difficulties due to FGM, as claimed by the WHO, is rising steadily (WHO, 2020). But genital mutilation continues to be justified because its practitioners refuse to acknowledge that they are causing damage. And since many immigrant groups, especially those settling in highly civilized countries, value maintaining cultural ties to their home countries, they provide a unique challenge to the worldwide elimination of FGM (Naguib, 2012; Goldberg, Stupp, Okoroh, Besera, Goodman & Daniel, 2012).

Staphylococcus aureus infections, urinary tract infections, extreme and unmanageable pain, and bleeding are all examples of primary infections (Ivazzo, Sardi & Gkegke, 2013). Type 3 mutilated women and girls had a much higher risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections such HIV, Chlamydia trachomatis, Clostridium tetani, and Herpes simplex virus (HSV) compared to those who did not undergo genital mutilation (Ivazzo, Sardi & Gkegke, 2013). The immediate repercussions of female genital mutilation may be devastating. Because of the scarcity of medical resources in low-income countries, the mortality rate rises when the short-term problems become apparent; for example, bleeding and infection may be fatal.

Though information on the fatalities of FGM recipients is difficult to get, it is believed that 1 in 500 circumcisions is fatal (Reyners, 2004). A case-control study in Sudan debunked the notion that the operation prevents STIs in the same way as male circumcision does, rather Physiological and psychological difficulties, as well as significant issues during delivery, continue to plague patients long after the injury has healed (Ivazzo, Sardi & Gkegke, 2013).Also, keloid scar tissue formation over the cut region is a frequent long-term consequence, and the disfiguring scar may be a source of concern and humiliation for women who have had FGM (Toubia, 2004).

Maternal mortality rates are much greater due to problems during labour and childbirth for infibulated mothers (WHO, 2021). Women who have been infibulated have had a cut made in the perineum region during birth (Chibber, El-Saleh & El- Harm, 2011). Delayed effects from FGM sometimes include psychological issues including PTSD, postpartum depression, anxiety problem, sadness, neurosis, and psychoses (Rushman, 2006; Child Welfar.Org, 2016). These disorders, which if ignored may lead to mental health issues later in life, are often overlooked in underdeveloped nations owing to the need to address more immediate concerns (food, clothing, and shelter requirements).

According to UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Manfred Nowak, "the anguish produced by FGM does not cease with the first surgery, but typically persists as continued torture throughout a woman's life" (UNFPA, 2019). The operation has devastating effects on a person's sexual, psychological, and bodily well-being.

Consequences for women's mental and physical health include anxiety disorders and depression, as well as physical issues including persistent pain and vaginal or pelvic infections, cysts, abscesses, and genital ulcers (Toubia, 2004). Infibulations include the additional hazards of urinary and menstrual issues, infertility, further surgery (defibulation and reinfibulation), and painful sexual intercourse; Only after surgically or penetratively opening the infibulation can sexual activity occur; Consequently, the first few weeks of sexual initiation may be quite unpleasant for both partners (WHO, 2021).

Women who have experienced FGM had much higher risks for bad events during delivery, and genital mutilation in mothers has harmful impacts on their newborn kids, according to a research conducted by the World Health Organization across six African nations. Significant life trauma is added to a woman's life cycle as a result of female circumcision. Sometimes scar tissue tears or has to be sliced during delivery to make room for the baby. A reinfibulation is a second round of suturing performed on a woman after she has given birth in order to make her "tight" for her husband. It is very painful and traumatic for a woman to have her genitalia cut and restitched in this way. WHO (2021) identified the short and long term impacts of FGM, to include, viz: severe pain, shock and excessive bleeding, urine retention and difficulty passing urine, septicaemia and infections, anaemia, cysts, abscesses and infertility, pain during sexual intercourse, psychological problems, diminished sexual pleasure, scar tissues (kleoids), complications in childbirth, higher risk of maternal and new-born deaths.

Theoretical Framework
Culture-bound served as the theoretical bedrock for this investigation. It is common practice to use culture bound theory, a central medical sociology theory, when examining the connections between cultural norms and health or illness. The primary idea behind culture-bond theory is that exposure to one's own culture might cause one to exhibit a certain pattern of behaviour. Thereby, culturally labelling a trend makes it simpler to determine its origins and, from there, to formulate an effective response (or none at all).

Researchers like Lambo (2011) and Hong Kong's Yap (2018) were among the first to examine the cultural determinants of health and illness in non-industrial civilizations. They argue that cultural norms have an impact on the prevalence of diseases and how people respond to health problems. Furthermore, Lambo and Yap discovered that, no standard conceptions exist for different diseases throughout human communities, and that normalcy is influenced to a considerable part by socio-cultural variables. This is because what is considered normal in one group may be considered abnormal in another. A cultural perspective, on the other hand, considers the context in which a problem first arises and the means by which that problem may be resolved if it poses a danger to human survival. In most European and American civilizations, FGM is seen as harmful and wrong. However, in other African societies, FGM is seen as natural, a way to integrate girls into society, and a celebration of their transition from childhood to adulthood.

It will be pertinent to say here that, given the importance of cultural background in health and sickness, any strategy to eradicate FGM in a region would rely on the cultural foundations and, by extension, causes encouraging FGM in that region, since there may be several cultural claims that motivate various groups, tribes, and civilizations to engage in the practice.

Area of the Study
The study is carried out in Yenagoa Local Government Area, the capital of Bayelsa State and it is located in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Yenagoa is one of the eight Local Governments in Bayelsa State and gained its status as a capital city of the state in 1996 immediately after the creation of Bayelsa State by the then Military Government headed by late General Sanni Abacha. Apart from being the seat of government in Bayelsa, Yenagoa is the commercial hub of the state. It is predominantly made up of industrious men and women who engage in office jobs, agricultural activities and various forms of commercial and industrial activities. It also serves as a gateway to other riverine areas of the state and a transit route to carry farm and ocean products out of the state. Yenagoa is bounded by Latitude $4^052'$ & $4^058'$N, and Longitude 6^016& $6^020'$E and it has a total area of about 21,110km^2 (Google Earth, 2016). It is bordered to the North by Kolokoma/Opokuma LGA, to the South by Southern – Ijaw LGA, on the

West by Sagbama LGA and to the East by Ogbia LGA. It consists of fifteen (15) electoral wards and several communities and localities such as Igbogene, Yenigwe, Akenfa, Agudama-epie, Akenpai, Edepie, Etegwe, Okutukutu, Opolo, Biogbolo, Yenizue-gene, Yenizue-epie, Kpansia, Okaka, Ekeki, Amarata, Azikoro, Onopa, Uvom, Yenagoa, Famgbe, Akaba, Ogu, Agbora, Kolo, Swali, Yeniebebeli, Agbia, Nedugo-Agbia, Ogboloma, Okolobiri, Obuna, Gbaraturu, Korama, Polaku, Ofiotiama, Zarama-Ayambiri, Zarama -epie, Kalaba, Akumoni, Karama, Egbe-biri.

Methodology
The descriptive research design is adopted for this study. The questionnaire and Key Persons Interview represent a major data gathering tool in this research and was adequately explored. The population of the study comprised of females in Yenagoa. The study population is projected at Two hundred and twenty-seven thousand, eight hundred and sixty (227,860) women. Deducible from the NPC projected population of 2016 at an annual exponential growth rate of 2.9%. (National Population Commission, 2006).

A sample size of 400 for this study was determined from the study population figure, using the Taro Yamane's method. A multi- staged sampling approach comprising stratified, simple random, purposive and accidental sampling techniques were used to select the sample for the study. Stratified sampling technique was employed to divide the study population (Yenagoa) into six (6) strata according to their clan; Epie, Atisa, Gbarain, Busani, Zarama-Okodia and Ekpeama. Thereafter simple random sampling was used to select the number of communities to participate in the study from each stratum (clan) and this was done through balloting process; the names of all the communities (within a stratum) were written down in singular pieces of paper (giving every community equal opportunity to be selected), two communities were drawn at random from each stratum, making a total of twelve (12) communities for the six strata. Thirty-four respondents (which are adult females from 18 years of age and above) were purposively targeted in each of the twelve selected communities and thereafter accidental sampling technique employed to reach respondents. This means that four hundred and eight (408) respondents were chosen for the study; the choice of thirty-four (34) respondents from each selected community was because any less, will amount to less than the Taro Yamane's minimum sample size required for the study. Thus, the researcher was at liberty to add two percent of the required sample to the sample size. This is because, it is better to be more, than less in order to be a true representative of the population. After collation of the questionnaire, 402 were returned. The questionnaire that met the relevant criteria for analysis were 400, hence the sample size. Also, three separate individuals who are well knowledgeable about the culture were interviewed on private one on one basis.

To collate, analyse and calculate the data from the field work, analytical tools such as tables; percentages, arithmetic mean, and thematic were used to get the impact of the result. The research questions were analysed using mean score for questionnaire responses and thematic for KPI. While Percentages was used to analyse responses from the socio-demographic data.

Results
Research Question 1: Examine the nature of FGM and its health impact on women in Yenagoa**?**
Table 1: Mean score on the nature of FGM that exist in Yenagoa and the negative health impact on women in the area?

S/N	Questions	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Sample	(x̄) Mean	Decision
1.	Excision is the common form of Female genital mutilation-FGM performed in Yenagoa?	262	96	31	11	1409	400	3.5	Accepted
2.	People are declining from performing FGM in Yenagoa recently?	134	148	68	50	1166	400	2.9	Accepted
3.	Pain from FGM is severe, traumatizing and take long to heal?	180	126	48	46	1240	400	3.1	Accepted

S/N	Questions	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Sample	($\bar{x}$) Mean	Decision
4.	Bacteria can enter the FGM cut and cause infection; UTI, difficulty passing urine, septic fever.	192	186	16	6	1364	400	3.4	Accepted
5.	Profuse bleeding can occur during FGM causing death of the girl child.	138	169	68	25	1220	400	3.1	Accepted
6.	FGM is not painful and cannot cause bleeding, death nor other health problems.	63	30	142	165	761	400	1.9	Rejected

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey, 2022

Research Question 2: What are the factors promoting the practice of FGM in Yenagoa that negatively impact on women's health?

Table 2: Means Score on the factors promoting the practice of FGM in Yenagoa that negatively impact on women's health.

S/N	Questions	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Sample	($\bar{x}$) Mean	Decision
7.	FGM is performed to Stimulate sexual satisfaction.	82	67	140	111	920	400	2.3	Rejected
8.	People perform FGM in Yenagoa because it is rooted in their culture and love to continue it?	162	155	56	29	1248	400	3.12	Accepted
9.	People perform FGM because they are not educated or have poor educational background.	26	58	148	168	742	400	1.9	Rejected
10.	Parents perform FGM on their girl child so they will be considered absolute womanly and sexually fit for the men.	118	140	73	69	1107	400	2.8	Accepted
11.	Men prefer mutilated girls	115	153	70	62	1121	400	2.8	Accepted
12.	FGM numbs sexual sensation.	122	137	103	38	1143	400	2.9	Accepted
13.	Social integration is a factor encouraging FGM in Yenagoa.	129	138	92	41	1155	400	2.9	Accepted
14.	Lack of awareness of its negative health implications could be a reason for the continued practice of FGM.	194	116	52	38	1256	400	3.14	Accepted

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey, 2022

Research Question 3: What is the common health problems associated with FGM in Yenagoa that impact on women's health?

Table 3: Mean Score on the common health problems associated with FGM that impact on women's health.

S/N	Questions	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Sample	($\bar{x}$) Mean	Decision
15.	Cyst infection is common amongst women in Yenagoa and it may be due to FGM?	182	98	72	41	1207	400	3.0	Accepted
16.	Girl child dies as a result of FGM.	102	154	98	46	1112	400	2.8	Accepted
17.	Pains from FGM can cause insomnia/sleeplessness?	210	168	18	4	1384	400	3.5	Accepted
18.	In some cases, FGM causes tetanus and urinary tract infection?	197	182	16	5	1371	400	3.4	Accepted
19.	Anemia due to profuse bleeding is common with FGM?	156	164	68	12	1264	400	3.2	Accepted

S/N	Questions	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Sample	(x̄) Mean	Decision
20.	There is the tendency that FGM may be associated with health problems suffered by women in Yenagoa?	133	137	62	68	1135	400	2.8	Accepted

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey, 2022

Research Question 4: What solutions can be given to eradicate the practices of FGM in Yenagoa.

Table 4: Mean score on the solutions that can eradicate the practice of FGM in Yenagoa.

S/N	Questions	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Sample	(x̄) Mean	Decision
21.	Mass Orientation: creating awareness and enlightenment on the negative effect of FGM on health of women can help reduce FGM.	202	162	30	6	1360	400	3.4	Accepted
22.	Creating incentive reward for anyone who reports case(s) of FGM around them?	196	124	25	55	1261	400	3.2	Accepted
23.	Enforcement of arrest and prosecution of FGM offenders can eradicate FGM?	204	180	19	5	1399	400	3.5	Accepted
24.	Providing valid information to disprove the cultural misconception of FGM supposed benefits can help reduce FGM.	116	136	68	80	1088	400	2.7	Accepted
25.	Domestication of the law prohibiting FGM in the state will lead to change in attitude toward FGM.	151	142	76	31	1213	400	3.0	Accepted
26.	Linking mutilated women with primary health sector to evaluate and establish the level of damage FGM has done to them.	208	159	22	11	1364	400	3.4	Accepted

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey, 2022.

Table 5: Showing KPI data in themes for the research questions.

Questions	Interviewee- Response	Source
What is the nature of FGM practiced in the area?	Excision; mainly the cutting off, of the labia minora and the partial removal of the clitoris. The procedure is carried out at a variety of ages. Ranging from age 6 to 10. But due to the pains suffered by children between these ages, it was reconsidered to mutilate during infancy, after ten (10) days of birth. A local surgeon performs the procedure but recently by health officers because they are accessible in this times. The circumciser will press the clitoris to push it out fully and cut-off /remove part of it, particularly the surface. Thereafter, the mother of the circumcise will apply local herbs until the cut heals.	**Anonymous 70 YEARS**
On whether FGM is still dominant in the area?	It is very scanty. I mean very scanty in the area, not like in our days when you have to go through it to stand out as a complete woman.	
Do you have a daughter?	Yes	

Did you cut her?	Yes
If it were today, will you cut her.	I can't say; I will have to think it through, whether or not to cut her. FGM is very painful, since it is not as important as it were in our days. I may not see the need to cut her. Men no longer discriminate against uncut women these days.
What factor is responsible for performing FGM?	FGM is part of our heritage. FGM is a means of enhancing sexual strength for women, which presupposes marital acceptability for men in the past. It becomes necessary for parents (particularly mothers) to ensure that their girls be mutilated to be considered poised with complete womanness.
What are the negative impact of FGM on the health of woman?	FGM is very painful but then it is only lazy and weak children who cannot withstand the procedure that bleed and become weak and may die as a result but it is very few. FGM is painful, can cause fever and sometimes infected with bacteria if the cut is not well taken care of by the mother of the circumcisee. FGM numbs sexual interest too, this observation contributed to its decline in the area.

Anonymous
57 years' old

What is the nature of FGM in Yenagoa?	FGM is performed not long after a female child is delivered. It is most commonly performed between the ages of 0-9 years. Part of the clitoris and the two folded skin is cut off. The procedure is usually performed by skilled traditional circumcisers within village settings with razor blade, knives, broken bottles or any sharp object. Afterwards, the application of treatment like alcohol or herbs to facilitate healing of the excised part. Already mutilated children within the age group of the current mutilatee will be gathered around and served refreshment.
What is the social determinants of the persistence of FGM in Yenagoa	FGM is a heritage. It endows the girl child with cultural identity as a woman, it may also increase her prospect for finding a husband because she will be considered a total woman with all privileges and features. So some individuals who are obstinate-opposed to change, do not want to give up their cultural heritage, argue it is of relevance-value and continue in it; though in secrecy no longer collectively as it were. FGM is going into extinction; no longer collectively celebrated.
How do you mean, her prospect for finding a husband?	The men desire circumcised women.
Do the men still desire circumcised women lately?	Society is evolving, as such times/beliefs are changing and so with the quest for circumcised girls because parents are scarcely circumcising their girls. Not only because of the ban by the government but also about its impact on a woman's health.
What negative health impacts are	FGM causes a lot of foreign sicknesses but I am not a doctor to begin to call the names. I am familiar with severe pains,

Anonymous

common with FGM?	fever, vomiting, bleeding, convulsion, abscesses around the cut area, hotness of the body, difficulty passing urine. These health issues are common among the immediate circumcisees.	**46 years**
What type/nature of FGM is practiced in Yenagoa?	Excision. It is mainly performed on girls from aged 0-10 years. FGM is also perform on married women (from different ethnicity) during their first pregnancy.	
What is the reason for the continuous practice of FGM in Yenagoa.	Some people still believe in the old stories that FGM confers optimal femininity, enhances fertility, facilitates easy child delivery, reduces still birth, and could enhance sexual pleasure for one's spouse because FGM reduces quick-sexual satisfaction for women.	
Does it mean that people who are not mutilated do not have the attributes you have stated of the mutilated?	They may have but not as much. Though, recently the awareness to discontinue FGM became paramount because of it is accompanied with increased health problems and loss of randiness.	
How did you hear about the discontinuation-ban of FGM by the government?	I heard it from a friend that there is a ban but not a government official.	
What are the negative health impact of FGM?	FGM causes high fever which may go away after few days or weeks of the mutilation. It causes urinary problems, urinary tract infections, genital infections, vagina itching and discharges and cyst infection.	
Do girls die consequent upon FGM?	Yes, but very few though. Death occurs if there is a mistake in the process of cutting and the child bleeds so much and becomes anemic and later dies. And/or if the fever leads to convulsion, then death.	
Is teratoma tumour cyst common in the area?	Yes, it is. There are traditional people who attend to it.	

Discussion of Findings

Following from the data presented and analyzed from the survey, it is obvious that the following facts are discerned: That large majority of the survey participants were of the opinion that the 'excision' is the type of FGM practiced in Yenagoa and it is marked with excruciating pain, trauma, septic fever, sleeplessness, and associated with profuse vagina bleeding, causing anemia and also housing bacteria in some cases causing tetanus, urinary tract infection and can lead to death. This study further established that a positive relationship exists between FGM and health. The study validates UNICEF (2020) and WHO (2021) declaration on how FGM undermines the health of women.

This study refutes Adeneye, Oke and Adeneye (2006) observation in Oyo State that the practice is further perpetuated by people with poor educational background, but rather upholds and corroborates the study by James (2018), as the KPI revealed that the persistence of FGM is chiefly because it is rooted in their cultural milieu- considered a valued traditional practise, formerly held together by members of the society and handed down by their forebears. Furthermore, the result of the study showed

that the continuous adaptation to FGM is due also in a part to the bleak awareness of its actual long and short term negative health implication on women, thereby excusing the overt immediate health risk experienced in the process of cutting, as part of the procedure. Dotimi (2016) further revealed a consensus with the above position of this survey in Odi Community at the time with lived experience of the mutilated women which included their awareness of FGM, social implication of FGM, cultural perception and myths.

Unlike the ceremonial customary way of cutting FGM participants at once in their numbers, as accounted by Odukogbe, Afolabi, Bello, and Adeyanju (2017). Findings of this study revealed that, in recent times, FGM is considered individually rather than collectively as it were in the past. Some people insist on performing FGM while some others have given up on it due to the ban, and modernity. The quest for social integration, enhance fertility, facilitated child delivery, reduced still birth, and the need to be considered sexually fit-strong and a preference for the marital demand of the male folks contribute to the need for FGM in the area. So, FGM is only commonly persistent among change resistant individuals.

The study further revealed that FGM numbs sexual sensation. This the researcher presumes makes it pertinent for a mutilated to stay longer in sex act in order to achieve sexual satisfaction, due to delayed sexual randy-sensitivity (which is supposedly-erroneously considered sexual fitness) irrespective of any trauma prolonged sexual activity may pose; The implication may include having multiple sexual partners in order to satisfy longing for sexual sensitivity and climax. This position conforms to Ebisi (2012), when they opined, that FGM is used to curb sexual enjoyment for women; that mutilated woman is treated as sex object for the men, for his sexual gratification resulting from mutilated genitalia which allows him to overly usurp a woman sexually due to delayed arousal /lack of sensitivity around the genital region.

It will be pertinent to say here that, the intended sexual strength longed-after, through FGM, the researcher conceives as a dehumanization of the female folk, because it is embedded in the girl's delayed or inability to achieve orgasm after a prolonged sexual activity due to numbness of the genitals, which has health implication, and has the ability to trigger the quest for multiple sexual partners to achieve climax. Further revealed is that FGM could lead to the deaths of the girl child, since there are cases of loss of lives resulting from the procedure. This affirms Reyner (2004) position, when they estimated that 1 in every 500 circumcisions results in death, and UNICEF estimation that FGM causes 1-2% prenatal deaths per 1000 women.

Conclusion
It is obvious that FGM is deeply ingrained in the people's socio-cultural life; an acceptable cultural value with some acclaimed socio-reproductive benefits, hence the continuous adaptation and persistence by some change resistant individuals to justify and covertly continue in the practise irrespective of the ban by the Nigerian government through the VAPP Act, 2015.

Suffice it to say here that, FGM has been a bane to women in Yenagoa, it alters and constrains the life trajectories of girls and women who undergo it as it poses a lot of health risks and contributes to the death of female children. The socio-cultural underpinnings that propel the people to performing FGM is due on one part to the belief and misconception of its supposed advantage to standard femininity; sexual fitness, and also in a part to the bleak awareness of its actual long and short term negative health implication on women, thereby excusing the overt immediate health risk experienced in the process of cutting, as ideal part of the procedure. Therefore, any propagation at ending FGM should include a proper knowledge of the factors promoting it amongst a people as may be different from other groups. Hence, the following recommendation.

Recommendations
1. The government at all levels, Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs), health agencies and research institutes should organize local community to community (town hall) sensitization and enlightenment campaign for a number of years on the health implications of FGM that necessitated

its ban by international health organizations and the Nigerian government. If the populace is well aware of its (FGM) health complication, the implication will be that they will take their own destiny by their hands (to shun FGM) to live in dignity and good health.

2. Health agencies and concerned social organizations should disseminate information to confute the cultural claims of FGM supposed benefit to optimal femininity, and relearn the people on better safe sex practices and habits that could prolong sexual activity to achieve climax.

3. Welfare institutions in conjunction with social organizations (partners' interventions and NGOs) should create free accessible health facilities and link the mutilated women to it, to evaluate and ascertain the level of damage FGM has done to them and persuade these women that have been medically evaluated and diagnosed to serve as reference point (a fact known from direct observation) to speak to others on the issues of FGM health implication. If the people are acquainted with the health hazard of FGM by direct profiling or observation, they will protect themselves by abandoning FGM.

4. There should be specific domestication of the law prohibiting FGM in Bayelsa state to create awareness of the ban of FGM at the state to local government level; prompting the people that the ban of FGM is not a fight against the culture of the people but geared towards improving the quality of life and wellness of citizens, which is part of government responsibility to its citizenry.

5. Creating incentive reward for anyone who reports case(s) of FGM around them.

6. Enforcement of arrest and prosecution of FGM offenders.

Contribution to Knowledge

The study has been able to determine the nature of FGM in the area, illuminating the socio- cultural underpinnings necessitating its continuous adaptation, and also the health risk faced by the mutilated woman in Yenagoa.

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MAINSTREAMING THE RENEWABLE ENERGY CONVERSATION TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES' PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

Climate change is profoundly changing our world in ways that pose major risks to human societies and the natural ecosystem. This paper traces the climate change trajectory and identifies the global polluters and argues that the ongoing narrative requiring0 the global South to transit from fossil fuels to cleaner energy sources needs to the problematized given that this path has never been trodden before in the annals of developmental history and it has, in fact, being the converse path that was adopted by the global North to attain economic growth and development. The paper identifies the mutually exclusive challenges the global South faces - meeting the energy needs of its people while simultaneously transiting from fossil fuels to the globally mandated renewable energy sources. This transition calls for the utilisation of all, not some, energy sources in addressing energy deficits that will propel economic development in and among the global South while sequencing and laying the building blocks of legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks that would enable a just transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources.

Keywords: Energy, Climate Change, Energy Transition, Global North, Global South, Energy Justice

Introduction

Energy is fundamental for sustainable human development acting without which virtually every conceivable aspect of development will be stunted (Lloyd, 2017). Energy is essential for wealth creation, enabling of investments, innovation, and new industries that drive jobs, growth, and prosperity. It is also a basic input for most production and consumption activities, facilitating the availability of healthcare, food, safe water, infrastructure services, education and even life expectancy itself. Its availability in sufficient quantities and quality is invaluable for socio-economic growth and the eradication of poverty (Kessides, 2005, NEPAD-OECD, 2010). Notwithstanding its centrality to development and human wellbeing, its availability in the global South has been dismal. It is estimated that globally around 750 million people – 1 out of 10 – do not have access to electricity (The Energy Institute Statistical Review of World Energy, 2024) with the situation more dire in countries particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where around 80% of people without access to electricity live (Ahuja & Tatsutani, 2009). Ensuring that all have access to electricity with the renewables taking a higher share in the energy mix has been and remains a daunting task (IEA Report, 2024).

Simultaneously confronting the world, in addition to the above dismal energy shortages, is the current global carbon footprint that show accelerating global average temperatures as a result of anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases (Ahuja & Tatsutani, 2009). If mankind maintains the current levels of emissions throughout the 21st century temperature warming levels could rise above two-degree Celsius threshold with devastating outcomes for the environment and humanity with the poor been more impacted upon (Arent,2017). Given the gravity of the situation and what it portends for the future, and in order to mitigate and address the "potentially execrable outcomes associated with climate change" there have been concerted global action through legal instruments of International Environmental Conventions to elevate renewable energy sources over fossil fuels as latter still account for more than 80 percent of global energy production, while about 29 percent comes from renewable sources (United Nations, 2022). The next section of the Paper discusses how mankind got to where it is now environmentally, and problematises the tensions and challenges in and among the global South over the global energy transition conversation.

How Mankind Got Here

Up until the turn of the mid-19th century, traditional biomass – the burning of solid fuels such as wood, crop waste, or charcoal – was the leading source of energy globally (Ahuja & Tatsutani, 2009)**.** All that changed with the Industrial Revolution which witnessed the staggering rise of coal-to-energy and by the turn of the 20th century, half of the world's energy came from coal with biomass accounting for the rest (Ritchie, 2021). Coal powered factories and steam engines during the Industrial Revolution with steam power generating 90% of the horsepower were used in British industries for brewing, salt boiling, glass manufacturing and the use brick as a building material (Nordhaus, 2015). Moving past the Industrial Revolution up until 2005, the overall production and use of that energy source grew more than 50-fold from a global total of approximately 0.2 billion toe to 11.4 billion toe and most of this occurred in the global North, which had come to rely heavily on predominately fossil fuels for fuel their economies, drive power industries and manufacturing (Ahuja & Tatsutani, 2009). The non-renewable sources exploited by the global North to fuel the Industrial Revolution came with major environmental consequences of atmospheric pollution with the emission of carbon dioxide and sulfur from power plants and carbon dioxide emissions from petroleum industries impacting areas far beyond the geographic confines of the global North (Elum & Momodu, 2017).

This led to an acceleration of global average temperatures as a result of anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases. An atlas of global climate landscape shows that human activity was responsible for the increased atmospheric stock of greenhouse gases (GHGs), notable of which is carbon dioxide which was generated in the atmosphere from fossil fuels fired to power the Industrial Revolution (Weitzman[,] [2015].) The scale and enormity of lasting effects of carbon dioxide is underlined by the fact that once it is released in the atmosphere, it stays there for a long time from centuries to a millennia (NASA, 2019).

Energy Transition, Energy Justice and Development

For the global South, a significant portion of their population still lack access to basic energy and the conversation around the climate change and energy transition table over concerns about long-term environmental sustainability of the globe is often overshadowed by more immediate concerns of energy access and affordability which is vital for sustainable development and prosperity (Arent, 2017).

Moreover, a majority of themes of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2019) convalesce around key themes that speak to the pressing needs of the global South on development as opposed to climate change and energy transition. Even though themes on climate change and clean energy transition feature on the SDG goals, issues of hunger, poverty and human well-being take paramountcy. Themes such as no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, clean water and sanitation, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure among others resonate more for the sustenance of the global North. The developmental atlas of developing countries shows overriding concerns that ought to be put on the table to form part of the conversation to be addressed, climate issues and energy transition will always be a secondary issue.

As an example of the compelling and overriding challenges the global South faces in navigating the climate change landscape, a snapshot of Sub-Saharan Africa energy deficits will situate this point fittingly: with a population of over 1.14 billion people (World Bank, 2020) it has a grid generation capacity of little over 90 gigawatts (GW) and 139 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity of which half is located in only one country, South Africa. On the other hand, Spain with only 47.8 million people has an electricity consumption of 243 billion kilowatt-hours. When South Africa is excluded, electricity consumption averages 162 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per capita per year against a global average of 7,000 kWh. Out of a population of 860 million, 621 million Africans do not have access to electricity. Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria, an oil exporting country, has 93 million people without access to electricity. Even though Angola has five times the average income level of Bangladesh, the latter has far higher levels of access to electricity (55 per cent as against Angola's 35 per cent). In nine of these countries, more than 80% of primary schools have no electricity. Only seven countries in sub- Saharan Africa have electricity access rates exceeding fifty percent: Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Namibia, Senegal and South Africa (Castellano, et al, 2015).

The reality wherein billions of its citizens are trapped in under-development, lacking access to basic, modern energy services highlight the mindset with which the global South approaches the climate change conversation. In addition, underlining the energy transition conversation is energy patriotism clothed in garments of energy self-interests. Countries come to the table with mental talking points that seek to ensure that whichever way the conversation goes, their interests should be respected. Some of the global South's concerns that have been elevated to tensions in the climate change engagements coalesce around themes such as economic and financial, technology, socio-cultural, energy justice and political economy. The rest of this paper will discuss the most germane themes that highlight the compelling centrality of addressing the climate change with a global energy justice mindset.

Foremost, the economics around renewable energy sources poses a major limiting barrier to responsible ascension of global South to the climate change ladder. Financing constitutes a major component of renewable energy architecture. Renewable electricity projects costs are sunk in nature and sourcing for financing from financial institutions is difficult as lenders, attributing a high degree of risk to such projects, give preference to conventional fossil fuel electricity investments (Okonkwo et al, 2021). Even though renewable energy sources have low operational and maintenance costs, and are more affordable in the global North as the initial start -up investments constitute a major barrier. Part of the challenge of these renewable energy projects face is that the technologies are new and untested and therefore not attractive to lenders as opposed to other sources of energy such as hydro-power, gas powered plants, among others (Ogunmodimu & Okoroigwe, 2019). Given these twin barriers to renewable energy technologies, investors face higher risks and uncertainties when making investment decisions. Considering the global South's constrained access to capital within the context of competing demands for the available scarce capital resources, investors in renewable energy technology face the problems of high transaction costs and restricted access to capital (Ekholm et al, 2013). Most importantly, it is not so much as about the availability of finance, but rather its cost. An increase in international lending interest rates over the past two years has contributed to an increase in financing costs in the case of the global South who are majorly have weak macro risk profiles (Iyer, 2013).

While higher construction costs for renewable energy projects might make lenders more likely to adjudge the projects as risky which will lead to lending at higher rates and making it harder for investors to justify the investment; in the case of natural gas and other fossil fuel power plants, the cost of fuel can be passed onto the consumer, lowering the risk associated with the initial investment (The Union of Concerned Scientists, 2014).

Another additional challenge posed by energy transition are the job losses from traditional fossil fuel projects that predominate the global South energy portfolios. As transition occurs and countries move away from fossil fuels to cleaner energy sources, employment in the former will decline. The post-carbon transition implies significant changes in the structure of labour demand, a development that would negatively impact already challenged global South labour markets. While a global North nation such as the USA could withstand the job losses (which did occur between 2011 to 2020 when the coal mining industry lost around 35% of its workforce due to a mixture of factors including a shift to cleaner energy sources) it will be an uphill task for the global South to cope (Devlin, 2023). Major job losses will impact the job markets and are not likely to be replaced by the energy transition/renewable energy initiatives given the state of technologies they command. A path that halts the exploitation of fossil fuels will cut revenues, inevitably limit their ability to provide public services such as education, health care and physical infrastructure and other on social programs while also failing to benefit the poorest in society or reduce inequality (Saha, 2023).

Shrinking public sector employment, which represents a large proportion of formal employment in many of the global South would certainly impact growth in the event of a sudden pulling of the plug on fossils fuels. Across most of Africa, the share of government spending devoted to government employee compensation ranges between 30% and 50%. Declining oil and gas revenues could negatively impact the ability of governments to pay wages and jeopardize the sustainability of public sector employment (Saha, 2023).

Furthermore, the transition towards renewable energy sources also encounters technological challenges that make supply unreliable and require additional advanced interventions to ensure sustainable availability of energy. Miriam Lang et al identify such challenges to include, first, solar and wind power generation which is dependent on weather patterns, which can be unpredictable and also includes energy storage solutions are not yet advanced enough to store large amounts of renewable energy for use during periods of low generation, two, a lack of skilled personnel, code of standard, maintenance and operation, and also a lack of training All these aggregate to poor plans, poor quality of service, among others (Lang, et al, 2024).

In addition, inadequate technology and a lack of infrastructure necessary to support the technologies upon which renewable energy projects ride is a major hindrance to countries in the global South. Technology has been identified as a major hindrance to investors willingness to invest in renewable energy projects particularly in situations where core renewable energy technologies are not provided in many places or are not sustained well in some areas where present in the developing countries, especially Sub-Saharan Africa (Kariuki, 2018). Given the obvious lack of trained personnel to install, train, maintain and operate renewable energy structures particularly in the global South with high illiteracy levels, investors are unwilling to import the technologies for fear of failure (Kariuki, 2018).

Overconsumption remains one of major underlying drivers of climate change and its negative impacts on the global ecosystem. It increases air pollution, exhausting in the process the planet's life support systems like the ones that provide us with fresh water, cutting short mankind's materials critical to health, well-being and quality of life (Friends of the Earth, 2022). American policy analyst John Feffer and Edgardo Lander, a Venezuelan sociologist persuasively argue that the global North who are world's largest polluters must be assessed not only on the lacuna between the targets and pledges, agreed policies and actual implementation, but also in the overall harm to the environment as a result of their refusal to address overconsumption (Lang, et al, 2024).

In contradistinction to overconsumption, underconsumption ratios in in the global South is a stark reminder of the huge energy deficit these countries labour under. To put this point in perspective, these statistics speak for themselves: an average Tanzanian would take about eight years to consume as much electricity as an American use in one month (Corder & Andzenge, 2018). While a refrigerator in the U.S.A consumes six times more electricity in a year than an average citizen of Tanzania; it takes an average Ethiopian two years to consume the amount of electricity an average American uses in just three days. A kettle boiled twice a day by a family in Britain uses five times as much electricity as a Malian uses per year while a freezer in the United States consumes ten times more electricity than the average Liberian in one year (Corder & Andzenge, 2018).

Also, for energy justice's sake, it would be appropriate to ask how the global carbon footprint got to this dismal state? The environmental crisis facing the world today is a direct result of massive amounts of fossil fuels that were used to build the economies of the global North and it is these polluting effects that have pushed the planet to the brink with carbon-intensive footprints that has left other regions, mainly in the Global South, to struggling to meet their energy needs. The global North, including the USA, Canada, Japan and much of western Europe, make up just 12 percent of the global population today but are responsible for 50 percent of all the planet-warming greenhouse gases released from fossil fuels and industry over the past 171 years. And just 38 of the world's richest nations account for more than two-thirds of the world's oil demand (Tigue, 2022).

Furthermore, the USA, EU and China alone are responsible for the largest share of global carbon emissions today – a total of over 55 per cent with China alone contributing more than half of that amount. In addition, they are also responsible for more than half of all emissions historically with United States of America, and the EU having emitted 47 per cent and China about 13 per cent (Lang, et al, 2024). Even though some efforts have led to the reduction in global emissions marginally by the USA and more by the EU, emissions overall increased by 63 per cent between 1990 and 2017. China increased her emissions by 350 per cent. It is instructive that notwithstanding the heightened global conversations, treaties, resolutions and negotiated thresholds, China continued to set as priority,

economic growth over climate change and transition to renewable energy, citing national interest and the "right to develop" (Lang, et al, 2024).

The starkness of the contributions of global North to global emissions becomes apparent as an average USA citizen consumes more than ten times the energy of the average Indian, 4-5 times that of a Brazilian, and three times more than China. Table 1 and 2 gleaned from a Study (Guardian Newspaper, 2022) by the Center for Global Development (CGD) shows the number of days by which an average citizen of United Kingdom and the United States of America will have produced the annual carbon dioxide emissions generated by a citizen in a global South nation in a typical month!

Table 1: The number of days by which an average UK citizen will have produced the annual carbon dioxide emissions of a citizen in other countries

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
					1	2 DRC
3	4 Somalia Burundi	5 Chad CAR	6 Malawi Rwanda	7 Niger	8	9 Sudan Madagascar
10 Sierra Leone Uganda	11 Ethiopia	12 Guinea - Bissau	13	14 Afghanistan Tanzania	15 Burkina Faso	16 Mozambique Eritrea
17 The Gambia Guinea	18	19 Liberia	20 Toga Mali	21 Haiti	22 Camoros	23 Yemen
24 Cameroon	25 Kenya	26	27 Cote d'Ivoire	28	29 Nepal	30
31 Zambia						

Table 2: The number of days an average US citizen will have produced the annual carbon dioxide emissions of a citizen in other countries

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
					1 DRC	2 Somali Burundi Chad CAR
3 Malawi Rwanda Niger	4 South Sudan Madagascar Sierra Leone Uganda Ethiopia Guinea-Bissau	5 Afghanistan Tanzania	6 Burkina Faso Mozambique Eritrea The Gambia	7 Guinea Liberia Togo	8 Mali Haiti Comoros Yemen	9 Cameroon Kenya
10 Cote d'Ivoire	11 Nepal Zambia	12 Sudan	13 Timor-Leste Djibouti Bangladesh Ghana	14 Solomon Islands	15 Myanmar Congo, Rep. Vanuatu Senegal	16 Sao Tome and Principe Nigeria

17 Cambodia Benin Kiribati North Korea	18	19	20 Tajikistan Nicaragua	21 Zimbabwe Papua New Guinea Tuvalu	22 Angola Mauritania	23 Eswatini
24 Pakistan Sri Lanka	25 Honduras	26 El Salvador	27 Guatemala	28 Cabo Verde	29 Paraguay	30 Lesotho
31 Zambia						

Conversely, the global South emit a negligible percentage of emissions when compared the global North. For example, Africa as a whole account for the smallest share of global greenhouse gas emissions - 3.8 % when compared with the countries such as Russia and India (each account for 6 percent of global emissions) while it takes an average Ethiopian 240 years to register the same carbon footprint as the average American (Amadou, 2016) Paradoxically, countries in the global South disproportionately bear the impacts, including deaths, property destruction, famines and displacement of the emissions that is generated in the developed nations. For example, the small island nations of Kiribati could see as much as two thirds of its land mass swallowed by the ocean by the end of the century if the sea level rises by just 3 feet. And in Madagascar, one of the poorest countries in the world, more than 1 million people are on the brink of famine, in part because climate change is exacerbating drought conditions.

Energy justice requires a resolution of other emerging themes in the energy transition thresholds been imposed upon and mandated of the global South. Some of these themes include charges of green colonialism, carbon colonialism levelled against the global North in the inordinate push for unsustainable and unattainable thresholds for energy transition by global South countries (Lang, et al, 2024).

The push for foreign direct investments to finance climate change and renewable energy projects in the global South in exchange for the exploitation of her natural resources and cheap labour by the global North becomes highlighted thus entrenching the "unequal commercial and ecological exchange." (Dorninger, 2024)

Interestingly too, while the global North, on the surface today, acknowledges the centrality of rapidly reducing carbon emissions within its territories, their leading countries, the USA and EU could only commit to carbon neutrality by 2050 while China has undertaken attain peak emissions by 2030 before attaining carbon neutrality by 2060. (Lang, et al, 2024). It would be seen from these strategic steps that the global North, while appreciating the importance of transition to cleaner energy sources, intentionally prioritises national interests and national development over immediate transition.

The paradoxical irony in the whole conversation towards cleaner energy sources in shown in the fact while the global North while legislating against fossil-fuel based energy sources, multinational corporations and international oil headquartered in and owned by the state and sometimes its citizens continue to continues aggressively exploit fossil fuels in their former colonies (Lang, et al, 2024). Happening at the same time too is the continued extraction of minerals in the global South by countries of the global North that are needed for the construction of parts of the equipment required for renewable energy projects and systems. The mining of these minerals impacts negatively on the ecosystem of the host communities and calls into question entanglements that give rise to green colonialism (Lang, et al, 2024).

Of course while there is broad global consensus on the dangers of climate change, the mitigation conversation and action plan to tackle it is multifaceted and deeply rooted in the political economy of each nation. The past decade has seen a lot of turmoil in the energy sectors of many countries in the global South. Attempts to reform and restructure the energy sectors have made little progress, if any at

all, given the long histories of incumbent utility companies that garnered entrenched interests that cannot be not easily uprooted. In the past a decade and a half, reforms have taken root in at least 26 countries across south-Saharan Africa with varying extents, driven principally by the unique political economies and their national priorities (Kapika & Eberhard, 2013). Reasons for the lethargic progress range from the multiplicity of actors involved that often lead to turf fights and protection of turf interests, the changing perceptions of the state, the market and governments, resistance to change from bureaucrats, among others. With no clearly articulated national policy objectives, crafting legal and regulatory frameworks for entrench renewable reforms and projects became a major problem.

A lack of policies and regulations for the development of renewable energy projects and technologies continues to hinder adoption of these technologies in the global South. Given the nature of renewable energy structures, it needs clearly articulated policies and firm legal frameworks to ginger the interest of investors. Predictability in enabling policy, legal and regulatory frameworks create stable and predictable investment environments that aid in overcoming barriers, promoting entry and ensuring recovery of investments from reliable revenue streams. In addition, regulatory tolls such as standards and codes improve the adoption of renewable energy technologies by lessening the technological and regulatory risks that comes along with investments in the renewable energy projects (Kariuki 2018).

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, that climate change is one of the defining challenges of the 21st Century is undeniable. Notwithstanding, the global South also equally face a two-fold energy challenge in the 21st century - meeting the needs of billions of her people who still lack access to basic, modern energy services while simultaneously participating in a global transition to clean, low-carbon energy systems. To achieve this, all the available energy resources have to be utilized, without having the luxury of downgrading some or any of the sources to achieve traction within a short time in addressing the energy deficits while a conversation is ongoing on the pathways to transiting from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources is intensified in the global South.

To attain this delicate balance, an intentional and sequenced approach to energy transition is needed to allow the global South have fossil fuels as part of their energy mix for longer than being presently canvassed to allow for a deeper integration of energy access to the significant unserved populations in the global South. Happening at the same time should the institution of enabling strategies, policies, legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks that will offer credible commitments to attract financing, capacity building, grid infrastructure and technology upon which the clean energy transition train will run upon.

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PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT AND FIRE CRISIS MANAGEMENT: A STUDY OF NIGERIAN FIRE SERVICE (NFS), YENAGOA COMMAND, BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined public enlightenment and fire crisis management in Bayelsa State aiming to reduce the prevalence of fire disasters in Nigeria. To achieve the objectives of the study, a survey technique was applied using a questionnaire as the research instrument. The sample size for the study was 400 derived through the Taro Yamane sample derivation formula. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to choose the samples (i.e., cluster, random sampling, and convenient sampling techniques). In the course of the study, 328 questionnaires were retrieved, collated, and analyzed. Two analytical techniques were adopted: descriptive statistics (frequency tables and simple percentages) and Chi-square. The first was employed to evaluate the research objectives while the second was opted to test the research hypothesis. The findings among others revealed that though the Nigerian Fire Service, Yenagoa Command do carry out public enlightenment programs and campaigns in Yenagoa, they do it rarely. Based on the findings, the study concludes that public enlightenment is pivotal for effective fire crisis management; however, its implementation in Bayelsa State is inconsistent and inadequate to curb the recurring fire outbreaks that jeopardize lives and property. The study further recommended among others that the Nigerian Fire Service (NFS) should prioritize regular and widespread fire prevention campaigns across Bayelsa State.

Keywords: Fire, Crisis, Management, Public Enlightenment, Yenagoa

Background to the Study
Fire accidents represent a critical global public health concern, posing significant risks to individuals and communities worldwide (Syed, 2022). Each year, millions suffer injuries, burns, or fatalities caused by fires in residential, commercial, and public spaces. According to the Global Fire Statistics Centre (2022), fire incidents claim approximately 180,000 lives annually. Beyond the immediate physical harm, fire accidents inflict enduring psychological trauma, economic losses, and societal disruption. Survivors, particularly children, often grapple with mental health disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression, with research indicating that over half of juvenile fire survivors exhibit PTSD symptoms (Jones et al., 2022). Entire communities can be decimated by fires, eradicating livelihoods, infrastructure, and essential services, which exacerbates poverty and social inequalities. Displacement caused by fire-related disasters has profound social and economic consequences, including homelessness, community disintegration, and increased vulnerability to poverty (Martin, Tomida, & Meacham, 2016). Vulnerable populations - children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities - are disproportionately affected, underscoring the need for inclusive fire protection strategies. Urbanization, industrialization, and climate change further amplify fire risks, particularly in densely populated urban areas with substandard infrastructure.

Globally, fire-related damages amount to billions of dollars annually, straining healthcare systems, insurance providers, and disaster response agencies. For instance, the 2018 California wildfires resulted in an estimated $16 billion in damages (Martin et al., 2016). Despite the devastating impact, fire safety awareness and education remain inadequate in many regions, leading to preventable accidents and casualties. Governments worldwide have established firefighting organizations, such as the Nigerian Fire Service (NFS), tasked with managing fire incidents, mitigating damage, and enforcing fire safety laws (Fire Service Act, 1963). These agencies are not only responsible for extinguishing fires but also

for conducting fire drills, public awareness campaigns, and safety inspections. Collaborative efforts between firefighting units, medical services, and law enforcement agencies are essential to ensure a holistic approach to fire crisis management (Mandalapu, Seong, Jiao, 2024; Benson & Elsmore, 2022).

Despite the well-intentioned intentions that motivated the establishment of the Nigerian Fire Service (NFS) to safeguard lives, property, and the environment from fire catastrophes, their efforts are regularly undermined by the attitudes and actions of people and business organizations (Syed, 2022). Many individuals and companies fail to follow fundamental fire safety standards, frequently overlooking critical activities such as appropriate waste disposal, electrical system maintenance, and compliance with fire safety requirements. This neglect, whether due to ignorance, complacency, or a desire to save money, dramatically raises the danger of fire breakouts. For example, prevalent behaviours that increase fire hazards include inappropriate storage of combustible goods, unlawful connections to power lines, and overcrowded urban areas without suitable fire breaks (Jones et al, 2022). Corporate organizations, particularly those in high-risk industries like as oil, gas, and manufacturing, may neglect fire safety regulations in order to save money or maximize profits, ignoring the serious implications of possible fire catastrophes (Brkic & Praks, 2021). The absence of proper fire safety measures, emergency exits, and fire suppression equipment in many buildings reflects a widespread culture of noncompliance and short-sighted decision-making. Furthermore, the difficulty is exacerbated by the lack of strict enforcement of fire safety legislation, which allows risky behaviours to continue unabated.

The National Fire Service frequently responds to crises that may have been avoided with adequate measures. Public enlightenment campaigns aiming at increasing fire safety knowledge frequently fail to achieve their full potential due to widespread indifference, cultural attitudes, and poor literacy levels in some areas. As a result, addressing the core causes of these harmful behaviours through a mix of tough regulatory enforcement, comprehensive public education, and community participation is critical to assisting the NFS in meeting its mandate and creating a safer environment for everyone. Without a transformation in public and business attitudes towards fire safety, fire control measures will continue to be ineffective.

Bayelsa State, located in the heart of the Niger Delta, is not immune to the broader attitudes and difficulties confronting Nigerian society; in many respects, it is a microcosm of these larger dynamics (Oba, Weke, & Wolo, 2022). As in many other sections of the nation, there is widespread disrespect for fire safety standards and laws, which is exacerbated by socio-cultural, economic, and infrastructural variables that increase the danger of fire breakouts. Rapid urbanization, inadequate planning, and the spread of informal settlements make Bayelsa's ecosystems especially vulnerable to fires. As a result, fire breakouts continue to be a major issue in Bayelsa State, wreaking havoc in urban and rural areas, and putting people at risk. These disasters, which are frequently fueled by poor infrastructure, carelessness, illegal oil bunkering, and insufficient fire protection precautions, have resulted in substantial loss of life, property devastation, and socioeconomic upheaval. Residential and commercial locations are especially vulnerable, with electrical failures, indiscriminate garbage burning, and incorrect storage of combustible goods among the leading causes of fire.

In Bayelsa, where many structures are constructed of highly flammable materials, the chance of fire spread is exponentially high, aggravating the impact on victims. For instance, Nsikak (2018) reported the devastating effect of fire on lives and properties, which left about 300 persons homeless. The inferno, which began at approximately 2 a.m., destroyed property worth millions of naira. According to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), an eyewitness named Nicholas stated that the fire may have been started by a candle because there was no power at the time of the event. The terrible occurrence highlights the precarious living circumstances many people suffer, with inconsistent electricity and reliance on open flames producing dangerous situations in densely populated regions. In a similar case, Amanana (2019), a BBC News Pidgin reporter, reported a fire breakout in 2019 that destroyed portions of the state's radio station, Radio Bayelsa (97.1). According to the reporter, the fire began in the transmitter room and quickly spread to the studio and other departments, causing extensive damage. In his response to the media reporter, Samuel Numonengi, the Chairman of the Nigerian Union of

Journalists (NUJ) for Bayelsa, corroborated the claim, stating that the fire was caused by an electrical failure. This tragedy illustrates both the susceptibility of public institutions to fire threats and the state's lack of effective fire safety standards in vital infrastructures.

Similarly, Akinola (2020), reported about a fire in Amassoma town, Southern Ijaw Local Government Area, on January 3, 2020. The wildfire, which began as an unattended fire started to burn rubbish, or the remains of anything broken down or destroyed, and swiftly spread to neighbouring structures, resulting in substantial property destruction. This instance demonstrates the widespread use of improper trash disposal practices, which heightens the danger of fire breakouts in rural and semi-urban regions. The absence of suitable fire containment systems, as well as a low community understanding of fire prevention, exacerbates the issue.

In a more recent disaster, Okem (2024) reported an explosion on a wooden market boat known locally as the "Denghe market boat," killing 20 people on August 8, 2024, in Ezutu 1 village, Southern Ijaw LGA. The boat, built to allow passengers to cook and dine onboard during long river excursions, experienced a catastrophic engine explosion, resulting in a fire and the vessel's sinking. The unusual configuration of these boats, with people engaging in open-flame cooking amid volatile engine systems, poses a clear safety issue. The tragedy highlights the confluence of poverty, dangerous traditional customs, and restricted transit alternatives in Bayelsa's riverine villages. These incidents, however disturbing, are merely a small sample of the myriad fire-related calamities that occur daily throughout the state. Many similar occurrences go unreported, especially in distant places where media coverage is limited. The repeated occurrence of these fires, along with a lack of severe safety measures, reveals a larger systemic issue in Bayelsa. Poor infrastructure, illicit bunkering operations, and inadequate fire response methods all contribute to the frequency with which fire disasters occur. Despite these fatalities, preventive efforts are insufficient, and public understanding of fire safety standards remains poor.

The recurring frequency of these fires erodes community resilience, leaving many people scrambling to restore their homes and businesses after each one. The economic consequences are substantial, since fire breakouts destroy critical infrastructure, disrupt commercial activities, and erode public trust in safety measures (Brunsden, Hill & Maguire, 2014; Syed, 2022). Furthermore, health institutions and schools are not immune to fire breakouts, which have an impact on inhabitants' well-being and educational opportunities. Fire breakouts also put a burden on the state's fire department, which, despite its best efforts, frequently struggles owing to a lack of resources, financing, and people. Firefighter response times are frequently delayed, which is exacerbated by inadequate access roads and a lack of operable hydrants. This exposes communities to protracted periods of loss and ruin.

Overall, the frequency and severity of fire breakouts in Bayelsa represent a significant danger to public safety, economic stability, and the state's growth. Despite attempts by the Nigerian Fire Service's Yenagoa Command to ameliorate these problems, fire events continue to occur regularly, raising concerns about the efficiency of present fire management tactics. The frequency of recurrent fire emergencies implies a lack of public knowledge and comprehension of fire safety procedures, which might be attributed to insufficient public education activities. This problem is exacerbated by the general public's attitudes and actions, which frequently reject fundamental fire protection techniques, increasing the likelihood of fire breakouts.

It becomes pertinent at this juncture to note that a lot of studies have been carried out on the abuse of the fundamental human rights of the citizens in a society in addition to a series of investigative searches and research on police brutality. For example, Schultz, Thompson, and McCaffrey (2019) investigated the complexity and obstacles of modifying fire management strategies within the United States Forest Service. It emphasizes the competing issue definitions and aims ambiguities that prevent efficient firefighting. The research determined that the ambiguity and complexity of Forest Service fire policy, which acknowledges fire as both an ecological activity and a threat to human values, cannot be completely eradicated, nor would it be desirable.

In a similar vein, Brunsden et al. (2014) focused their research "Putting Fire & Rescue Service Stress Management into Context: a UK Informed Perspective" on stress management within fire and rescue services, particularly among operational professionals who attend emergency situations. It emphasises the significance of stress management for all emergency service professionals, not only frontline responders. The study concluded that environmental exposure, cultural context, the resulting coworker, and interfamilial and intrafamilial connections all influence the effectiveness (or failure) of treatments within the UK Fire Rescue Service.

Furthermore, Hamzat, Buhari, and Yahaya (2023) assessed the fire safety management systems used in Nigerian tertiary institutions in their study titled "Assessment of fire safety management in some selected Nigerian tertiary institutions" with the goal of reducing fire incidents in our institutions. The research used a combination of qualitative and quantitative (mixed method) methodologies. The study discovered through fieldwork that most institutions lack a fire safety management plan that can be used to reduce the risk of fire in the event of a fire outbreak.

Many researchers consider a fire safety management plan to be a vital document that must be provided in all public buildings, particularly higher education institutions. However, despite the ample amount of research on the factors under consideration, none has addressed the essential role of public awareness in the pragmatic management of fire crises, particularly in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. This indicates a gap in the literature. It is against this backdrop that this study tries to shed light on the relationship between public enlightenment and fire crisis management in Bayelsa State, utilizing the Nigerian Fire Service (NFS), Yenagoa Command as a specific case study. It became imperative at this point to ask certain fundamental questions that will guide this research. These are:
i. Does the NFS Yenagoa command carry out public enlightenment programmes and campaigns in Bayelsa State?
ii. How often does the NFS Yenagoa command carry out public enlightenment programmes and campaigns in Bayelsa State?
iii. How effective are the public enlightenment programmes of the Nigerian fire service in terms of fire accidents in Yenagoa? And
iv. What are the challenges faced by the NFS, Yenagoa Command, in conducting public enlightenment for fire crisis management?

Objectives of the Study
i. To determine whether the NFS Yenagoa command carries out public enlightenment programmes and campaigns in Bayelsa State
ii. To find out how often the NFS Yenagoa command carries out public enlightenment programmes and campaigns in Bayelsa State.
iii. To examine the effectiveness of the NFS's public enlightenment programmes concerning fire crisis management
iv. To examine the challenges faced by the NFS Yenagoa Command, in conducting public enlightenment for fire crisis management.

Research Hypotheses
The more the Nigerian fire service enlightens the public about fire crisis management, the more fire accidents will be mitigated in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

Literature Review
Common Causes of Fire Crises
The causes of fire crises defy uniform description due to their complexity and varied origins. Each incident often involves a combination of unique factors, making it difficult to generalize or pinpoint a single cause. One of the leading causes of fire crises is faulty electrical wiring. In the opinion of Agbonkhese et al. (2017), the factors leading to the incessant outbreaks of fire crisis are irregular discharge of electricity, over-voltage, illegal electrical connections, improper electrical fittings, the use of low-quality materials, and ignorance. Electrical systems, when improperly installed or poorly maintained, can malfunction, causing sparks that ignite nearby combustible materials. Overloading or

short-circuiting in electrical systems and faulty appliances can generate arcs and sparks, which may ignite nearby flammable materials and cause fire (Tradesafe, 2024). In both residential and industrial settings, old or exposed wiring, overloaded circuits, and damaged electrical appliances are common culprits (Wangwiwattana & Yoshikazu, 2022; Obasa, Mbamali & Okolie, 2020; Wokocha, Eludoyin & Arokoyu, 2023). Electrical fires are particularly dangerous because they often start unnoticed, smouldering for hours before erupting into flames. This latent period gives the fire ample time to grow, making it harder to extinguish once it is discovered.

Negligence is another significant cause of fire crises, especially in residential areas. Simple acts of carelessness, such as leaving candles burning unattended, improper use of stoves, or mishandling flammable liquids like gasoline or cleaning agents, can trigger catastrophic fires. In industrial settings, negligence might involve poor safety protocols when handling dangerous materials, failure to conduct regular safety drills, or inadequate training for employees working with high-risk equipment. Brkic and Praks (2021), provide support when they report that corporate organizations, particularly those in high-risk industries like as oil, gas, and manufacturing, more often than not, neglect fire safety regulations to save money or maximize profits, ignoring the serious implications of possible fire catastrophes.

Another common cause of fire crises is inadequate Fire Safety Infrastructure and Regulation. The frequency and intensity of fire crises are often exacerbated by poor fire safety infrastructure and inadequate enforcement of building codes. According to Gbonegun (2020), the non-implementation of fire safety regulations as a preventative strategy is one of the leading causes of fire crisis. In many developing countries, building regulations either do not exist or are not enforced rigorously (Boadu et al, 2020). As a result, residential and commercial buildings may lack essential fire safety measures, such as fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, sprinkler systems, and fire exits. Furthermore, illegal construction, such as the addition of extra floors or rooms without proper permits, often disregards fire safety standards, creating hazards for occupants and neighbouring properties. In urban areas with densely packed slums or informal settlements, fire crises can be particularly devastating. These areas are often characterized by highly flammable materials, such as wood, cardboard, and plastic, as well as poor access to water and other firefighting resources. Once a fire starts, it can spread rapidly from one structure to the next, causing widespread destruction in a matter of hours. The lack of proper roads and infrastructure also hinders the ability of fire trucks and emergency personnel to reach affected areas in time, exacerbating the scale of the crisis.

Natural phenomena, though less frequent, also play a role in the ignition of fire crises. Earthquakes, tremors, and Lightning strikes particularly in regions prone to thunderstorms, can cause large-scale fires in both urban and rural areas (Bejide, 2023). In strengthening this position, in its research, the Faculty of Environment at Leeds University (2023), found that lightning is the primary cause of wildfire particularly in regions with dry weather conditions exacerbated by climate change. In dry, forested regions, a single lightning strike can lead to massive wildfires, consuming large tracts of land and destroying entire communities. The combination of natural and human factors, such as deforestation, which exposes dry vegetation, often exacerbates these fire events, making them harder to control and contain.

Arson, or the deliberate setting of fires, has been responsible for some of the most devastating fire crises in history (HASpod, 2023). Motives for arson can range from vandalism and revenge to insurance fraud and political unrest. These acts are particularly insidious because they are intentional and often strategically planned to cause maximum damage. In densely populated urban areas, arson can result in widespread chaos, loss of life, and long-term disruption to the community.

In highly industrialized areas, the presence of hazardous chemicals increases the risk and intensity of fire crises. Factories and industrial complexes often house large quantities of combustible materials, such as petroleum products, chemicals, and gases, which can ignite easily under the right conditions (Khan et al, 2016). For instance, in oil refineries or a fueling station, small fires can rapidly escalate into massive infernos, causing explosions that lead to extensive damage to the plant and surrounding areas. The combustion of certain chemicals can release toxic fumes, posing significant risks to human

health and the environment. A notable example of an industrial fire crisis is the 2015 Tianjin explosions in China, where improperly stored hazardous chemicals caught fire, leading to a series of massive explosions. According to Hilary (2015, August 17), the blast was so powerful that it caused structural damage to buildings kilometers away, killed over 170 people, and injured hundreds more.

In Nigeria, a notable example of an industrial fire crisis is the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) pipeline explosion in Lagos on December 26, 2006. According to Amos (2020), this tragic incident occurred after vandals broke the pipeline carrying fuel and residents in the area were trying to scoop fuel from the ruptured pipeline. The disaster resulted in the loss of not fewer than 260 lives and significant damage to the surrounding area. Such incidents underscore the importance of stringent proper storage protocols and safety regulations in preventing industrial fire crises. When fire outbreaks occur in these settings, the proximity of volatile substances makes firefighting efforts extremely dangerous and complicated, as even the smallest error can result in catastrophic consequences.

Impact of Fire Crises on Communities
The impact of fire crises on communities is multi-dimensional, affecting social, psychological, economic, and environmental aspects of life. One of the most immediate and devastating consequences of fire crises is the loss of life and injury, which leaves lasting scars on individuals, families, and communities. Fire outbreaks, often unpredictable and rapid in their spread, can engulf buildings, vehicles, and entire neighbourhoods, leaving little time for occupants to escape. The result is frequently a tragic toll of human casualties, including severe burns, respiratory damage from smoke inhalation, and fatalities (Bejide, 2023). According to the Global Fire Statistics Centre (2022), fire crisis take roughly 180,000 lives each year. Injuries sustained during fire incidents are often life-altering, requiring prolonged medical care, surgeries, and rehabilitation, with many victims facing permanent disabilities.

Fire accidents have far-reaching consequences beyond the immediate physical suffering; they also cause long-term psychological anguish. The psychological impact of surviving a fire incident can be equally profound, as individuals struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), grief, and anxiety long after the flames have been extinguished. Jones et al, (2022) adduced that, survivors of fire accidents, particularly children, frequently suffer from mental health disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression, with studies revealing that more than half of juvenile fire incident survivors exhibit PTSD symptoms. Victims may suffer from burns, smoke inhalation, or trauma caused by collapsing structures. Families who lose loved ones endure immense emotional and financial hardship, particularly in cases where the deceased were primary breadwinners (Bliss et al, 2023). In the worst cases, entire families are wiped out, leaving behind a legacy of grief and loss for the surviving members of the community. Communities are also deeply affected by these tragedies, as the loss of multiple lives in a single fire incident can erode social cohesion and leave lasting emotional scars.

Fire crises can unleash devastating economic impacts that extend far beyond the immediate aftermath, disrupting livelihoods and economic stability. The costs begin with medical expenses for treating injuries, burdening victims and overstretching healthcare systems. According to the American Burn Association (cited in International Fire Association, n.d), severe burn injuries can cost an individual up to $1.6 million in initial hospital care, rehabilitation, and lost earnings. Families and individuals face the uphill battle of rebuilding destroyed homes, while businesses encounter substantial losses in inventory, equipment, and infrastructure, often halting operations. In rural settings, fire crises can destroy crops, livestock, and tools essential for survival, thereby plunging affected populations into economic hardship. For instance, the 2018 California wildfires caused an estimated $16 billion in damage (Martin et al., 2016), illustrating the scale of economic devastation fires can cause. Small and medium enterprises are particularly vulnerable, with many unable to recover, resulting in job losses and diminished local economic productivity. As Bejide (2023) highlights, the shutdown of businesses can lead to long-term instability for individuals, enterprises, and communities. Infrastructure damage compounds these issues by disrupting essential services like transportation and electricity, delaying recovery efforts and exacerbating socio-economic disparities.

Vulnerable populations often face the worst consequences, as limited resources hinder their ability to rebuild, leading to prolonged displacement and financial instability. These cascading effects erode investor confidence and reduce economic activity. According to Obasa et al. (2020), the financial burden of fire crises significantly impacts families and communities, worsening long-term consequences. Although insurance can offset some losses, underinsurance is prevalent, especially in low-income regions, leaving many without adequate financial relief. The indirect costs, such as reduced tourism, declining property values, and increased government spending on reconstruction, further strain the economy. Over time, the cumulative economic toll hampers sustainable development and widens socio-economic inequalities. Therefore, effective fire crisis management and robust public enlightenment are essential to reducing these devastating impacts and fostering resilience.

Environmentally, fire crises can have far-reaching consequences, particularly in regions prone to wildfires or where hazardous chemicals are involved. Environmental degradation is a frequently overlooked aspect, where vast areas of natural resources are decimated, affecting climate, agriculture, and air quality (IFA, n.d). Wildfires can devastate entire ecosystems, destroying vegetation, natural resources, wildlife habitats, and biodiversity (Bejide, 2023). For instance, the wildfires in Australia in 2019-2020, known as the "Black Summer," resulted in the loss of an estimated 18 million hectares of forest, significantly impacting local ecosystems and economies (Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, 2020). The release of pollutants into the air, water, and soil during fire crises can also have long-term effects on public health and the environment. Wildfire smoke contains a mixture of hazardous air pollutants, including particulate matter (PM2.5), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), ozone, and other toxic substances. Toxic fumes released from burning industrial chemicals can contaminate the air, while runoff from firefighting efforts can pollute local water sources, further endangering human and animal life. These pollutants can cause respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, exacerbate existing health conditions, and lead to premature deaths (Naseem, 2023; World Health Organization, 2024).

Similarly, fire crises frequently result in the displacement of impacted populations, creating profound challenges for individuals, families, and entire communities (Martin et al, 2016). When fire outbreaks destroy homes, workplaces, and community structures, those affected are often forced to flee their environments, leaving behind their belongings, livelihoods, and sense of stability. In lending his support, Bejide (2023) adduced that the affected people may have to first relocate their family members to a safe place, the family faces more problems, such as where they will find immediate shelter, food, water, clothing, money and permanent housing. Displacement due to fires can be particularly devastating in urban and densely populated areas where alternative housing options are scarce. Many victims end up in temporary shelters, with inadequate access to basic necessities such as clean water, food, and healthcare, compounding the trauma of losing their homes. In its 2023 report, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre adduced that, for children, displacement disrupts access to education, harms their well-being, and hinders their development, creating a poverty trap that endures even after displacement. Additionally, on 1st October 2019, the United Nations highlighted that displacement can expose children to malnutrition, disease, and inadequate immunization, further impacting their ability to attend and benefit from education. The elderly and those with disabilities face heightened vulnerabilities in emergency shelters or makeshift accommodations. Displaced populations often experience psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and a loss of identity tied to their previous homes and communities.

Public Enlightenment and Fire Crisis Management
Like many other subject matters, public enlightenment has attracted the keen interest of several scholars, given its monumental role in shaping societal awareness, attitudes, and behaviour. Public enlightenment according to Canel and Serrano (2020), involves the dissemination of information, knowledge, and awareness to the public, intending to empower them to make informed decisions, participate actively in civic processes, and contribute to the betterment of their communities. Public awareness campaigns, educational initiatives, and open dialogues help bridge knowledge gaps, enabling citizens to grasp the complexities of these issues and make informed decisions. When the public is well-informed about their rights, responsibilities, and the issues affecting their communities, they are more likely to engage in

civic activities and advocate for positive change (Mas'ud & Ahmed, 2022). In the context of fire crisis prevention and management, public enlightenment plays a vital role in enhancing the effectiveness of government initiatives and interventions. By educating the public on fire safety regulations, the roles and responsibilities of relevant institutions, and the measures they can take to prevent accidents, public enlightenment can foster a culture of shared responsibility and personal accountability (Abubakar & Umar, 2021).

Public enlightenment is a key component of good fire crisis management, acting as a preventative approach by providing individuals and communities with the knowledge they need to avoid and reduce fire disasters (Bejide, 2023). Public awareness programs emphasize the significance of recognizing fire threats, safe practices, and emergency response procedures. According to Obasa et al. (2020), it not only aids in the prevention of fire catastrophes, but also in minimizing their impact once they occur. These initiatives frequently target high-risk populations, such as inhabitants of densely populated areas, industrial workers, and school communities, in order to lessen vulnerabilities. Education on fire safety measures, such as safe flammable material handling, adequate electrical installations, and the use of fire extinguishers, fosters a culture of safety and vigilance. When public awareness is extensive and persistent, communities become more proactive in recognizing dangers and implementing preventative actions, lowering the frequency and severity of fires (Falola & Agbola, 2022).

Equally critical, public understanding improves the capacity for timely and coordinated responses during fire emergencies. Effective crisis management is dependent on the rapid dissemination of information, which is aided by a well-informed audience (Bejide, 2023). Public education reduces confusion and delays during crises by making people aware of emergency response processes such as evacuation exercises and fire department communication protocols. According to Alexander (2015), public enlightenment not only familiarizes people with emergency response procedures, but it also boosts their confidence and ability in addressing disasters. Community fire brigades and volunteer groups boost localized responses by allowing for instant involvement before professional firemen arrive. Furthermore, outreach endeavours that use social media, seminars, and mass media boost the broadcast of emergency warnings and updates, potentially saving lives and property. Social media enables rapid and extensive communication, reaching a big audience quickly (Mackay et al., 2022). A collaborative effort between enlightened communities and well-prepared fire departments may greatly enhance fire crisis results.

Furthermore, public enlightenment supports long-term fire crisis management by encouraging collaboration among stakeholders, such as government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local communities (Falola & Agbola, 2022; Bejide, 2023). A well-informed public actively advocates for better fire safety infrastructure, such as accessible fire hydrants and contemporary firefighting equipment. This lobbying encourages policy reform, guaranteeing enough financing and institutional support for managing fire crises. Furthermore, public knowledge fosters responsibility, as individuals and institutions recognize their roles in fire prevention and management (Obasa et al, 2020; Oba & Ochuko, 2024). Over time, such initiatives help to establish fire-resilient society in which risks are reduced, responses are quick, and recovery is effective. This comprehensive approach to fire crisis management emphasizes the transformational power of educated communities in reducing the terrible impacts of fire catastrophes.

Theoretical Framework
A theory is a collection of associated ideas, concepts, propositions, variables, and hypotheses that are logically linked together to describe a certain phenomenon at a given moment. It is also an assumption or a set of ideas designed to explain anything over time, particularly one based on universal principles unrelated to the subject being explained. Theories serve as a platform for comparing and clarifying disparate inquiry outcomes (Akikibofori, 2014). To advance this research, the study uses systems theory as its theoretical foundation.

Systems theory was used to investigate social experiences from a sociological standpoint. System theory is an interdisciplinary study of how systems interact within bigger, more complex systems. The

essential premise of systems theory is that a complex system is made up of several smaller systems with input and output functions, and that the interaction of these smaller systems in functions results in a complex system. The core idea of systems theory is that, regardless of the field it is applied to, the whole is greater than the parts. This suggests that when analyzing how smaller systems interact to effect the larger complex system, certain aspects of the whole (the complex system) cannot be clearly explained or rationalized by looking at any one of its systems (component parts). Systems theory tries to explore and promote concepts about traits that appear to be unique to complex systems. Within any discipline, the application of systems theory entails examining how the various components of the system fuse to form a complex whole, and how this eventually leads to the result that none of the parts of the larger system could produce independently without a change in the environment.

In elucidating the nexus between public enlightenment and fire crisis management in Bayelsa, the study aligns with Talcott Parsons' systems theory based on the assumption that society (complex system) is composed of smaller systems (the government, fire service and the public). Fire crisis management in Bayelsa State encompasses multiple subsystems, including public awareness, emergency response mechanisms, infrastructure, and policy frameworks. Systems theory underscores that the effective functioning of each subsystem is vital to the success of the overall system. Public enlightenment serves as a critical input, empowering individuals with knowledge about fire prevention, risk mitigation, and emergency protocols. This input influences behaviours and preparedness, reducing the likelihood and severity of fire incidents. Simultaneously, effective public enlightenment creates feedback loops by enhancing community engagement and fostering trust in response systems. Failures in public awareness campaigns, inadequate resources, or poor coordination among stakeholders can destabilize the entire fire management system, leading to delayed responses and increased losses. Systems theory highlights the interdependence between the government, fire services, civil society, and the public, suggesting that holistic, well-coordinated interventions are essential. By addressing gaps and optimizing interactions between these subsystems, public enlightenment can significantly enhance fire crisis management, contributing to community resilience and safeguarding lives and properties in Bayelsa State. According to the systems theory, it is the quality of input invested in any part of society that determines how much output that part delivers to society as a whole (Ebipamowei & Elem, 2019).

Using the system theory, this study contends that bad inputs, in terms of inadequate public enlightenment campaigns and programs; inadequacy of firefighting personnel and equipment; poor funding on the part of the government, negligence on the part of residents, etc. that guarantees (as an output) the continuous prevalence of fire crisis and disasters in the society. Drawing from the systems theory, we are more likely to have fewer records of incidences of fire crises and disasters in settlements and States that a better appreciation of the fact that it takes concerted efforts (input) on the part of all stakeholders and smaller systems in the society to deliver effectively on their responsibilities than states with relatively poor and dilapidated concerted efforts (input) in the delivery of their responsibilities to the greater social system. In this sense, the different smaller social systems, and the role they play more than anything else provides a platform and motivation where the tenets of systems theory are manifested. Conclusively, as regards linking this theoretical postulation to the research problem under study "public enlightenment and fire crisis management", there is no doubt that if the smaller systems such as the government, fire service and the public, etc. which constitute a major part of the system exert the much needed efforts, fire crisis and disasters will experience a drastic decline in society thus contributing to the survival and stability of the complex social system.

Research Method

This study adopted the quantitative approach to investigate the nexus between public enlightenment and Fire crisis management using survey instrument for a comprehensive understanding of the complex socio-economic phenomena. According to NBS, the study's population included 2,277,961 people in Bayelsa state (2017). The sample size of this study is 400 household heads drawn using the Taro Yamane statistical technique as represented thus $n=N \div (1+Ne^2)$ where n is the expected sample size, 'N' is the total population which is equal to 2,277961 and 'e' is the level of significance which in this case is 0.05. A hybrid of probability and non-probability sampling strategies was used in the investigation. These sampling techniques include cluster, random sampling, and convenient sampling

techniques. The cluster sampling was used to partition Bayelsa based on the existing three senatorial districts (i.e., Bayelsa Central, Bayelsa East, and Bayelsa West), and thereafter, (4) particular communities from the three LGAs (Akenfa, Kpansia, Amasoma, and Yiba-ama). Finally, from these communities, the convenience sampling technique was deployed to select 100 household residents on easy-to-contact or reached bases from each area disproportionately (that is, not minding the population size of each area) making a total of 400 respondents. The study will focus on individuals aged 18 years and above residing in the research locale. This age group is selected because, constitutionally, those below 18 years are considered underage and lack the legal capacity for rational decision-making. Therefore, the target population ensured that participants can provide informed and rational insights pertinent to the research. Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 328 were properly returned for analysis.

The study's primary data was gathered through a questionnaire, while secondary data was obtained from published sources. The respondents were fully informed about the study's goal and their other rights as participants, including anonymity. The descriptive-analytical technique was utilized to interpret the data in this study. The data were summarized using frequencies and central tendency metrics. The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). To test the research hypotheses, the Chi-square (2) statistical method was used.

Results and Discussion
Substantive Data
Research Objective 1: To determine whether the NFS Yenagoa command carries out public enlightenment programmes and campaigns in Bayelsa State

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents aware of public enlightenment programs and campaigns carried out by the NFS Yenagoa Command

Category	Frequency	percentage	Cumulative Percent
Yes	247	75	75
No	81	25	100
Total	**328**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 above shows the distribution of respondents that are aware of public enlightenment programs and campaigns carried out by the NFS Yenagoa Command. From the distribution, it is easy to see that out of 328 of them, 247(75%) acknowledge that the Nigerian Fire Service (NFS) carry out public enlightenment programs and campaigns on fire prevention and mitigation strategies, while 81(25%) have no knowledge of fire prevention and mitigation enlightenment programs and campaigns organized by the NFS.

Research Objective 2: To find out how often the NFS Yenagoa command carries out public enlightenment programmes and campaigns in Bayelsa State.

Table 2: Distribution showing how often respondents observe or participate in public enlightenment campaigns by the NFS Yenagoa Command

Category	Frequency	percentage	Cumulative Percent
Weekly	-	-	-
Monthly	12	3	3
Quarterly	29	9	13
Rarely	206	63	76
Never	81	25	100
Total	**328**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 above showing how often respondents observe or participate in public enlightenment campaigns by the NFS Yenagoa Command. From the distribution, it is easy to see that out of 328 of them, 12(3%) said monthly, 29(9%) said quarterly, 205(63%) said the NFS Yenagoa Command rarely carryout and

they rarely participate in public enlightenment campaigns organized by the NFS, while 81(25%) said they never seen nor participated in any public enlightenment program or campaign on fire prevention and mitigation organized by the NFS.

Research Objective 3: To examine the effectiveness of the NFS's public enlightenment programmes concerning fire crisis management

Table 3: Distribution showing how effective are the public enlightenment campaigns conducted by the NFS Yenagoa Command in improving fire safety awareness

Category	Frequency	percentage	Cumulative Percent
Very effective	35	14	14
Effective	57	23	37
Neutral	105	42	79
Ineffective	21	9	88
Very ineffective	29	12	100
Total	**247**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 above showing distribution on how effective are the public enlightenment campaigns conducted by the NFS Yenagoa Command in improving fire safety awareness. From the distribution, it is easy to see that out of 247 of them, 35(14%) said the public enlightenment campaigns conducted by the NFS Yenagoa Command has been very effective in improving fire safety awareness, 57(23%) said it has been effective, 105(42%) were indecisive in their response about the effectiveness of the public enlightenment campaigns of the NFS Yenagoa Command, 21(9%) reported that these programs and campaigns has been ineffective, while 29(12%) said they have been very ineffective in improving fire safety awareness.

Research Objective 4: To examine the challenges faced by the NFS Yenagoa Command, in conducting public enlightenment for fire crisis management.

Table 4: Distribution showing the challenges do you think the NFS Yenagoa Command faces in conducting public enlightenment campaigns

Category	Frequency	percentage	Cumulative Percent
Insufficient funding	80	25	25
Lack of adequate manpower	45	14	39
Limited access to rural communities	31	10	49
Poor community cooperation	20	6	55
Negligence	148	45	100
Total	**324**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 shows respondents views on the challenges facing NFS Bayelsa State Command in conducting public enlightenment campaigns on fire safety. 80(25%) identified insufficient funding; lack of adequate manpower was noted by 45(14%) of the respondents, 31(10%) view limited access to rural communities as the challenge; 20(6%) said it's poor community cooperation while negligence was reported by 148(45%) respondents.

Hypothesis 1: The more the Nigerian fire service enlightens the public about fire crisis management, the more fire accidents will be mitigated in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

Table 5: Showing how enlightening the public about fire crisis management, mitigated the frequency of fire crisis in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Gender	Male	5	25	81	71	182
	Female	14	10	57	63	144
Total		19	35	138	134	326

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The data in Table 5 above shows respondents' opinions on whether enlightening the public about fire crisis management, mitigates the frequency of fire crisis in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. The data shows that 134 of the respondents strongly agree that if the Nigerian Fire Service enlightens the public about fire crisis management, the more fire accidents will be mitigated in Yenagoa, 138 of them agree to this, 35 disagree, while 19 strongly disagreed.

Table 6: Chi-square computation for Hypothesis 1

Category	O	E	O-E	$(O-E)^2$	$(O-E/E)^2$
Male	71	74.0	-3	9	0.12
	81	76.2	4.8	23.04	0.30
	25	19.3	5.7	32.49	1.68
	5	10.5	-5.5	30.25	2.88
Female	63	60.0	3	9	0.15
	57	61.8	-4.8	23.04	0.37
	10	15.7	-5.7	32.49	2.07
	14	8.5	5.5	30.25	3.56
Chi-Square	X^2				**11.13**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

From the table above, the chi-square (X^2) calculated value for hypothesis 2 is as follows:

Chi-square χ^2 = $\dfrac{\sum (o - e)^2}{e}$

Where o = observed frequency
e = expected frequency.

It is important to point out that the expected value is the product of the Row and column total for every single response divided by the total number of respondents in the analysis. That is, the expected value is calculated by multiplying the row total by column total for each response and dividing by the total number of respondents. Afterward, the chi-square calculated value is compared with the chi-square critical table value based on the calculated degree of freedom (df). Hence, to calculate the degree of freedom, the following formula applies.

α= 0.05
DF = (2-1) (4-1)
= (2-1) (4-1)
= 1x3
Therefore DF =3

At 3 DF, the table value of at 0.05 level of significance is =7.815

Decision Rule: The generally accepted decision rule for the application of the chi-square X^2 test states that: Accept null hypothesis if the calculated value is less than the table value and reject the hypothesis if the calculated value is greater than the table value. In this study, the calculated value is 11.13, and the table value is 7.815. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that "The more the Nigerian Fire Service enlightens the public about fire crisis management, the more fire accidents will be mitigated in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State" is hereby accepted. Given the weight of the computed value of the chi-square when compared to the table value, it is safe to submit that there is a significant relationship between the public enlightenment and fire crisis management in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

Summary of Discussion of Findings
The discussion of findings is done in line with the research objectives and respective hypotheses. There are several things that were discerned in the course of this study. The first finding in this study dealt with objective 1 and the relevant data were presented in Table 1 above. The result captured that 75% of the respondents acknowledge and affirmed that the Nigerian fire service (NFS) carry out public enlightenment programs and campaigns on fire prevention and mitigation strategies. This finding aligns with the mission of the Nigerian Fire Service, which includes the prevention of fire outbreaks through

regulations, training, enforcement and public enlightenment programs. However, a sizeable portion of the respondents are completely unaware of any form of public enlightenment on Fire crisis prevention and management by the NFS.

The second finding from the study dealt with objective 2 and the relevant data were presented in Table 2 above. The result shows that 63% affirmed the position that though the NFS do carry out public enlightenment programs and campaigns in Yenagoa, they do it rarely. This finding is consistent with Uche (2021), who found out that while these programs exist, their reach and frequency are limited, resulting in insufficient public engagement and awareness.

The third finding from the study dealt with objective 3 and the relevant data were presented in Table 3 above. The result shows that an aggregate of 37% reported that these enlightenment programs and campaigns has been effective, a whopping 42% of the aggregate respondents were indecisive about the effectiveness of these programs and campaigns in mitigating fire crisis and preventing them. This finding is in consonance with Bejide (2023), who in his paper discovered that for any management method of fire disaster to be successful, it requires mass participation, public awareness and education about fire disasters, involving the local volunteers, citizens, organizations and business, there is need to review urban and regional planning laws, especially the building code to reflect the prevailing circumstance in Nigeria among others. Based on these submissions and given that a significant number of the questionnaire participants, even though the results are mixed, we can conveniently state that these enlightenment programs and campaigns have significantly impacted fire crisis prevention and management in Yenagoa as it has dwindled the occurrence of fire accidents, improved societal response to fire emergencies, increased societal knowledge of fire safety significant (see Table 5 above). This position is further supported by the result from the chi-square statistical test of hypothesis revealed that at a significance level of 0.05, this can be termed a general statement in Bayelsa state (see Table 6 above). Consequently, given the outcome of the findings concerning the questionnaire outcome, hypothesis testing, it is easy to submit that the more the Nigerian Fire Service enlightens the public about fire crisis prevention and management, the more fire accidents will be mitigated in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

The fourth finding from the study dealt with objective 4 and the relevant data were presented in Table 4 above. The result shows that though the NFS has significantly dwindled fire crisis occurrences and management in Yenagoa, their effort is constantly challenged by negligence on the part of residents, insufficient funding; the lack of adequate manpower, and limited access to rural communities. This finding supports that of Bejide (2023), who pointed out that public enlightenment campaigns have effectively reduced the frequency of fire incidents by educating the public about fire safety practices.

Conclusion
The study delved into the issue of public enlightenment and fire crisis management in Bayelsa State, aiming to reduce the prevalence of fire disasters in Nigeria. The study concludes that public enlightenment is pivotal for effective fire crisis management; however, its implementation in Bayelsa State is inconsistent and inadequate to curb the recurring fire outbreaks that jeopardize lives and property. While the Nigerian Fire Service (NFS) has made commendable attempts to educate the public on fire prevention and mitigation strategies, these efforts are sporadic, limiting their overall effectiveness. Systemic challenges, such as insufficient funding, logistical inefficiencies, weak community engagement, and negligence on the part of residents further undermine the success of these initiatives. Despite their potentials, public enlightenment efforts remain underutilized, necessitating a more structured and consistent engagement approach to build widespread awareness and resilience to fire hazards. The research also concludes that the issue of fire crisis prevention and management requires the collective effort of all the stakeholders concerned. Finally, the blueprints/recommendations to help prevent and mitigate fire crises are presented below.

Recommendations
Based on the findings and the conclusions reached in this study, the following recommendations have been proffered:

1. The Nigerian Fire Service (NFS) should prioritize regular and widespread fire prevention campaigns across Bayelsa State. These campaigns should incorporate locally relevant communication strategies, leveraging traditional media, social media, and community outreach to ensure inclusivity and accessibility. Collaborating with local leaders and community-based organizations can enhance the effectiveness and cultural appropriateness of the messages.
2. Adequate funding is crucial to ensure the success of public enlightenment initiatives and overall fire crisis management. The government should increase budgetary allocations for the NFS to address resource constraints, including training programs, advanced firefighting equipment, and logistical support for outreach programs. Public-private partnerships can also be explored to mobilize additional resources.
3. Effective fire crisis management requires the collective effort of all stakeholders, including government agencies, local authorities, community leaders, and private entities. Establishing a collaborative platform to design and implement fire safety policies can improve coordination and accountability. Community participation should be actively encouraged to ensure local ownership and sustainability of fire prevention measures.
4. Integrating fire safety education into school curricula and workplace training programs can help inculcate a culture of safety consciousness from a young age. Regular fire drills, practical training on the use of fire extinguishers, and awareness of fire hazards should be mandatory to prepare individuals for emergency response. Such institutionalized education will contribute to long-term resilience and proactive crisis management.

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IMMUNIZATION SOURCE OF INFORMATION AND RELATED KNOWLEDGE OF MOTHERS IN NASARAWA STATE, NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract
Immunization is globally recognized as one of the safest and most effective interventions to prevent diseases and reduce child mortality. Access to quality information on immunization by mothers or caregivers has a direct effect on awareness and vaccination rates. The study, a descriptive survey, examined immunization source of information and related knowledge of mothers in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Mothers with children aged 0-5 years were invited to participate. A multi-stage systematic random sampling technique was adopted and a pre-tested structured questionnaire was administered to 400 representative respondents from three local government areas. Data was collected through the administration of semi-structured questionnaire and was subjected to descriptive analysis. The results show high awareness rate (93.3%) among respondents. This indicates strong community knowledge of where to access immunization services. Most households received immunization information from antenatal clinics or health talks (88.8%). A significant majority (84.8%) knew that the first immunization should be given at birth or before the naming ceremony, while 8.5% were unaware of the timing. This indicates good knowledge overall, but highlights a need to address gaps to prevent delayed immunization. A majority (55%) understood the multi-dose nature of childhood immunization (4-6 visits). Completion rates were high as 57% of mothers reported that their children had received the complete set of 4-6 vaccines. The study concluded that although mothers had good knowledge in aspects related to childhood immunization, which is vital for maintaining public health and achieving immunization goals; gaps still exist in some of the other studied domains. Public health campaigns should prioritize educating mothers on immunization schedules and addressing misconceptions. Nasarawa State government, through the Ministry of Information should intensify sensitization of mothers/caregivers to improve their knowledge on routine immunization through radio and television jingles

Keywords: Immunization, Knowledge, Mothers, Vaccines, Childhood

Introduction
Immunization remains one of the most crucial public health measures globally. It is a highly cost-effective strategy for preventing the spread of infectious diseases, significantly reducing both morbidity and mortality rates. By safeguarding individuals from infectious diseases, vaccination continues to save millions of lives every year, highlighting its importance as a cornerstone of public health initiatives (Centre for Disease Control, 2022). The Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) is a global initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO), established in 1974 to immunize children worldwide against the most serious diseases, including diphtheria, pertussis, tuberculosis, tetanus, measles, yellow fever, poliomyelitis, and hepatitis B (WHO, 2023). A standardized vaccination schedule was introduced in 1984 for the original EPI vaccines: Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP), oral polio, and measles. New vaccines, such as hepatitis B (HepB), yellow fever, and Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) conjugate vaccine was later added to the program (Gavi, 2022). The WHO recommends that children be immunized as early as possible to protect them against vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs). On record, over 3 million lives saved annually due to immunization efforts (WHO and UNICEF, 2022). Despite these achievements, vaccine-preventable diseases remain a leading cause of childhood mortality globally.

In Africa, immunization has played a pivotal role in reducing child mortality and morbidity rates. However, the continent faces unique challenges, including weak health infrastructure, limited healthcare workforce, logistical issues, and cultural barriers. This is despite significant progress that has been achieved through initiatives like the EPI and the efforts of organizations such as Gavi, UNICEF, and the African Union. In 2022, Africa eradicated wild poliovirus, a milestone highlighting the importance of sustained immunization campaigns, government commitment, and international support (WHO, 2023). However, other vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles and yellow fever, remain public health concerns in areas affected by conflict and displacement.

In Nigeria, these challenges persist, where immunization coverage remains inequitable and suboptimal, particularly in rural areas (Tagbo, et al, 2022). However, the 2018 NDHS reveals gradual improvement in vaccination coverage over the past decade. For example, the proportion of children aged 12–23 months who received all basic vaccinations increased from 23% in 2008 to 31% in 2018, while the percentage of children who received none of the basic vaccinations declined from 29% to 19% during the same period (NDHS, 2018). These figures still fall significantly short of the targets set by the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, with a specific focus on achieving over 90% immunization coverage. This gap highlights systemic inequities in healthcare delivery, compounded by challenges such as limited health service reach, inadequate communication strategies, and sociocultural barriers in rural communities (NDHS, 2018). The resulting immunization gaps also, create immunity deficits and have led to devastating public health outcomes in other parts of Nigeria. These challenges highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions to bridge immunity gaps, especially in regions with historically low vaccine coverage. Collaborative efforts by federal, state, and local governments, alongside donor agencies, aim to address these gaps and improve immunization outcomes ((NDHS, 2018)).

In Nasarawa State, only 36% of children aged 12-23 months are fully vaccinated, slightly above the national average of 31% but significantly below global and national targets (NDHS, 2018). The state's immunization challenges stem from poor healthcare infrastructure in rural areas, sociocultural barriers, vaccine hesitancy due to misinformation and distrust, and logistical issues like inconsistent vaccine storage in remote areas. While urban centers such as Lafia and Karu fare better due to improved infrastructure and awareness, rural areas like Awe, Keana, and Wamba lag behind. Progress has been made through targeted initiatives, including mobile immunization units supported by international organizations and community engagement via traditional and religious leaders. However, further improvements require addressing infrastructure gaps, fostering community trust, enhancing vaccine distribution systems, and combating vaccine hesitancy through education and communication.

Routine advertisements on social media and traditional media especially the radio are necessary to drive home the importance of these immunization exercises (Lydia, 2015; Umar et al, 2017; Sarajudeen, 2021; Dayom, et al, 2022). This is because mothers/caregivers are less likely to complete immunization schedules if they are poorly informed about the need for immunization, logistics (time, date, and place of vaccination), and the appropriate series of vaccines to be followed. Although knowledge in itself is insufficient to create demand, poor knowledge about the need for vaccination and when the next vaccination is due is a good indicator of poor compliance (Umar, 2017). Assessing the type and quality of information received by mothers would provide a vital tool for understanding routine immunization gaps in the study area. Thus, it is important to conduct this study to examine the knowledge and the information mothers/care givers receive because when up-to-date, complete, and scientifically valid information about vaccines is available, parents can make informed decisions. For example, they need to have access to accurate evidence-based information so that they understand the risks of non-vaccination, and the actual risks of complications. Without this information, many mothers may develop a false sense of security and regard immunizations as unimportant. The study sought to examine immunization source of information and related knowledge of mothers in Nasarawa State, North Central Nigeria.

Methodology

The study setting is Nasarawa State. It is situated in the North-Central geo-political zone of Nigeria. The state lies between latitude 7º 45' and 9º 25' N of the equator and between longitude 7º and 9º 37 E of the Greenwich meridian. It has boundaries with the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja in the West, Kaduna State in the North, Plateau and Taraba States in the East, Benue and Kogi States in the South. The state is predominantly agrarian with land area of 27,116.8 square kilometers and population of 1,863,275 according to 2006 census figure.

The study was a descriptive household systematic cluster survey research design. Prior to the survey, authorization was sought from the relevant authorities. An open-ended questionnaire was used to source data from a sample size of 400 mothers, aged 15 - 49 years with at least a child less than five years old in Lafia, Keffi, and Akwanga LGAs in the state; contacted through a multistage systematic sampling procedure. In the first stage was the stratification of the state into Senatorial Districts; One LGA was systematically selected in each of the senatorial districts. This systematic sampling exercise resulted in the selection of Keffi LGA in Nasarawa West Senatorial District; Akwanga LGA in Nasarawa North Senatorial District and Lafia LGA in Nasarawa South Senatorial District. In the second stage; each LGA was further stratified into urban and rural areas. Each local government headquarters was categorized as urban and while others as rural. The third stage was the selection of the LGA headquarters and two settlements in each LGAs using the updated version of the 2006 National Population Enumeration Areas (EAs). Sampling at the EA level proceeded with the listing of all the buildings in the EA, and in each compound, one household was sampled in which one mother of an eligible child was retained by random selection, after seeking verbal consent. Data were analyzed using frequency and percentage.

Results and Discussion
Socioeconomic and Demographic Characteristics of Respondents
Table 1: Socioeconomic and Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age	15 - 25 years	89	22.3
	26 - 35 years	236	59
	36 - 45 years	65	16.3
	46 - 55 years	6	1.5
	Over 56 years	4	1
	Total	**400**	**100**
Religion	Islam	206	51.5
	Christianity	182	45.5
	Traditional Religion	12	3.1
Education	No formal education	73	18.3
	Islamic Education	62	15.5
	Primary	87	21.8
	Secondary	125	31.3
	Tertiary	53	13.3
Occupation	Farming	86	21.5
	Civil Servant	66	16.5
	Artisan	18	4.5
	Business	188	47
	Housewife	22	5.5
	Not working	11	2.8
Monthly Income (Naira)	Below 10,000	107	26.8
	10,000 - 20,000	107	26.8
	20,001 - 30,000	66	16.5
	30,001 - 40,000	40	10
	40,001 - 50,000	37	9.3
	Above 50, 000	21	5.3

Variable	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Household Size	1-2	80	20
	3-5	115	29
	6-8	130	33
	9 and above	75	19

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The demography of the participants in Table 1 revealed childbearing age range, highlighting their critical role in decision-making regarding childhood immunization. Young mothers and caregivers often determined vaccination uptake, and their knowledge, attitudes, and practices can significantly influence immunization coverage (Samuel, et al, 2023). Majority practiced Islam (51.5%), followed by Christianity (45.5%), with a minority practicing traditional religion (3.1%). Religious beliefs significantly influenced attitudes toward immunization. For example, past resistance to vaccines, particularly among some Muslim communities in Nigeria, was tied to misconceptions about vaccine safety and religious prohibitions. This has been linked to outbreaks of diseases such as polio in northern Nigeria, where resistance to immunization programs was prominent (Kamal-deen, 2024). However, increased public health awareness and targeted advocacy campaigns have successfully improved perceptions of immunization among Muslim communities in recent years (Usman, et al, 2019). A significant proportion (66.4%) of the participants possesses formal education, which is critical for understanding healthcare-related information, including immunization programs. Individuals with higher education levels are more likely to have adequate knowledge about immunization benefits and are generally better positioned to access and utilize healthcare services (Adeyinka et al., 2019; Acharya, 2018). Inadequate educational attainment among caregivers has been linked to misconceptions about vaccines and lower immunization coverage rates in many developing regions (Lydia et al., 2017). The data emphasized the importance of integrating health education into community-based programs, which can be more effectively done with radio programs that cater for the needs of these mothers through simple adverts and dramatization in pidgin English or vernacular particularly targeting populations with lower educational levels, to address gaps in knowledge and promote immunization uptake.

The results in Table 1 indicated that a significant proportion of respondents were business owners (47.0%), followed by farmers (21.5%) and civil servants (16.5%). A smaller group (5.1%), reported not working or receiving any income. Engagement in occupations that generated income is critical for meeting healthcare-related needs, including the costs of transportation and medications for child immunization. Only 26.4% earned above ₦30,000 monthly. This revealed that most households operate below Nigeria's approved minimum wage of ₦30,000; limiting their capacity to meet essential household needs due to the high cost of living. Low income is a significant barrier to accessing healthcare services, as it impacts transportation to health facilities, out-of-pocket payments, and the ability to prioritize preventive care like immunization (Ekholuenetale et al,2024). The finding that most respondents earn low incomes highlights the economic vulnerability of many households, which may affect immunization uptake. The results in Table 1 further suggests that households in the study area had an average size of approximately six individuals, which aligned with patterns observed in Northern Nigeria, where household sizes typically ranged between 5-7 members due to cultural norms and economic factors (National Population Commission & ICF, 2019).
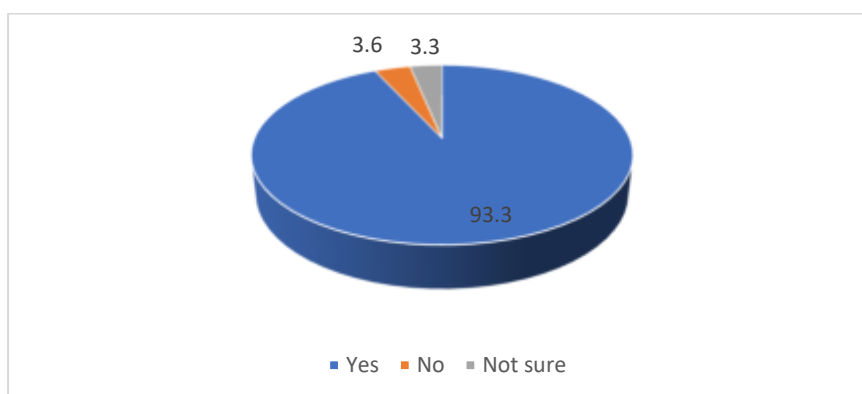
Awareness of Immunization Service Areas

Figure 1: Awareness of Immunization Service Area

Findings on the awareness of immunization service areas are presented in Figure 1. Awareness of immunization service areas is critical for ensuring timely and comprehensive vaccine coverage. The high awareness rate (93.3%) among respondents indicates a strong community knowledge of where to access immunization services, which is vital for maintaining public health and achieving immunization goals. However, the 3.6% of respondents who were unaware, and 3.1% who were unsure highlighted a gap that hindered uptake. Addressing these gaps through targeted health education and outreach is essential, as studies show that awareness significantly correlates with higher immunization rates (Eboreime et al., 2015).

Source of Information on Immunization
Table 2: Source of Information on Immunization

	Frequency	**Percentage**
ANC/health talk at the facility	355	88.8
Islamiya school	22	5.5
Television	19	4.75
Mother-in-law, aunt, sister (other relative)	62	15.5
Traditional birth attendant	11	2.8
CHEW in the community or at my home	130	32.5
A community volunteer came to my home	10	2.5
Community forum led by health worker	25	6.25
Mallam preaching at a mosque	6	1.5
Radio	96	24

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The result in Table 2 reveals that the majority of the households get information on immunization from ANC/Health talk facility (88.8%). Only 32.5% got their information from Community Health Extension Workers (CHEW). This was followed by those who get their information from the radio (24%), mother-in-law, aunt, and other relatives (15.5%). The overwhelming majority (88.8%) of households relying on antenatal clinics or health talk facilities for immunization information highlights the crucial role of these healthcare settings. This aligns with established knowledge about the effectiveness of healthcare providers in educating patients about preventive measures like immunization. The low percentage (32.5%) relying on Community Health Extension Workers (CHEWs) for immunization information is a cause for concern. CHEWs are typically deployed at the community level to bridge the gap between healthcare facilities and the population (Bakkabulindi et al., 2023). Their limited role in this context suggests potential gaps in community outreach or communication strategies. The finding that a small portion (15.5%) receives information from mothers-in-law, aunts, and other relatives' points to the potential influence of family networks. While the accuracy of information obtained from these sources

might vary, it underscores the importance of considering social and cultural factors in immunization communication strategies as confirmed by Bello et al (2021) in a study on the factors influencing the vaccination of children in Nasarawa State.

Immunization Related Knowledge of Mothers
Table 3: Immunization Related Knowledge of Mothers

Knowledge	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Time for first Immunization drop	I do not know	34	8.5
	At birth/before naming ceremony	339	84.8
	After the naming ceremony but before coming out	21	5.3
	At coming out/six weeks	6	1.6
	Total	**400**	**100**
Purpose of Immunization	Protects against the killer disease	376	93.2
	Form of contraception	2	0.5
	Provides spiritual protection	7	1.9
	I do not know	17	3.8
	Total	400	100
Vaccine Preventable Disease	Tuberculosis	190	47.5
	Meningitis	120	30
	Chicken pox	100	25
	Diphtheria	91	22.75
	Tetanus	86	21.5
	Whooping Cough	9	2.25
	Hepatitis	74	18.5
	Haemophiles influenza Type B	5	1.25
	Polio	158	39.5
	Measles	79	19.5
Amount of Vaccine Drop	1	2	0.5
	2	35	8.8
	3	36	9.0
	4	41	10.3
	5	32	8.0
	6	151	37.8
	7	9	2.3
	8	15	3.8
	9	10	2.5
	10	18	4.5
	None	17	4.3
	I do not Know	34	8.5
Number of Immunization Visits	1-3	108	27
	4-6	218	55
	7-10	55	14
	None	5	1.3
	I do not Know	14	3.5
	Total	400	100
Number of Vaccination Times	1-3	65	16
	4-6	229	57
	7-10	48	12
	None	15	3.8
	I do not know	42	10.5
	Total	400	100

Source: Field survey 2023

Six (6) variables were used in this study to examine mothers' 'knowledge on routine immunization'.

Knowledge of Time of Getting First Drop of Immunization

The results in Table 3 indicated that 84.8% of respondents correctly identified the appropriate timing for the first drop of immunization (at birth or before the naming ceremony). This demonstrated a commendable level of awareness about early childhood immunization among the majority of respondents. Timely vaccination is crucial in reducing the incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs), particularly during the neonatal and infancy periods when children are most vulnerable (World Health Organization, 2023). However, the finding that 8.5% of respondents are unaware of the recommended timing for the first immunization dose highlighted critical knowledge gaps. These gaps contributed to delayed vaccinations, which increased the risk of morbidity and mortality associated with VPDs. Studies have shown that parental knowledge significantly impacted immunization coverage, with inadequate awareness linked to missed or delayed vaccinations (Adeyanju et al., 2017; Nomhwange et al., 2022). Efforts to address these gaps should include targeted health education campaigns emphasizing the importance of timely immunization. Community-based interventions, such as leveraging local leaders and healthcare workers, can effectively disseminate accurate information and correct misconceptions about vaccination schedules (Obinna, 2021). Additionally, integrating immunization messaging into routine antenatal care can ensure that expectant mothers are well-informed.

Knowledge of the Purpose of Immunization

The results in Table 3 showed that a large majority of respondents (93.2%) perceived immunization as a means to protect against deadly diseases. This perception indicated a strong understanding of immunization's role in public health, aligning with global health objectives aimed at increasing vaccine acceptance and achieving high immunization coverage. By recognizing immunization as a protective measure against vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs), respondents are more likely to support and participate in immunization programs (Angus et al., 2021). However, a small portion of the respondents (3.8%) were unaware of the purpose of immunization, which suggested that some knowledge gaps remain. This lack of awareness could contribute to vaccine hesitancy, delayed vaccinations, or even refusal in certain households, particularly in contexts where misinformation is prevalent (Grace et al., 2024). Studies have demonstrated that improving knowledge about the benefits of immunization is a critical strategy to combat vaccine hesitancy and enhance vaccination uptake (Samuel et al., 2023). Therefore, addressing these gaps through targeted health education campaigns is essential for improving immunization rates and reducing vaccine-preventable diseases.

Knowledge on Vaccine Preventable Disease

Table 3 also revealed that 47.5% of respondents were aware of Tuberculosis (TB) as a major vaccine-preventable disease (VPD). Awareness levels for Polio (39.5%), Chicken pox (25%), Diphtheria (22.7%), Tetanus (21.5%), Hepatitis (18.5%), and Measles (19.5%) were significantly lower. The prominence of TB awareness may stem from sustained public health campaigns, its high prevalence in the region, and significant media interventions targeting TB control. However, the relatively low awareness of other VPDs highlighted a knowledge gap that could negatively impact immunization uptake for these diseases. This high TB awareness aligned with national efforts, such as Nigeria's collaboration with global health partners, to combat TB through awareness and immunization drives (Adepoju, 2020). Conversely, the lower awareness levels of diseases like Polio, despite its historical prevalence, could indicate reduced campaign visibility following Nigeria's polio-free certification in 2020 (WHO, 2020). Awareness gaps for Diphtheria, Tetanus, Hepatitis, and Measles may reflect limited community engagement and knowledge dissemination. Improving awareness of these VPDs is critical for enhancing vaccine uptake. Studies have shown that community knowledge strongly influences vaccination behaviours, with gaps often linked to limited access to health education and inequities in healthcare delivery (Olayinka & Marie, 2020). Targeted campaigns focusing on the less-recognized VPDs, particularly among caregivers and household heads, could address these gaps and encourage immunization compliance, ultimately reducing VPD-related morbidity and mortality.

Knowledge of the Amount of Drop of Vaccine

A total of 37.8% of respondents reported that their children received six doses of immunization, while 10.3% indicated four doses (Table 3). The recommended childhood immunization schedule in Nigeria

required children to receive multiple doses of vaccines to ensure full protection against vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs) such as polio, measles, and hepatitis B (National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA, 2021). The low percentage of children reportedly receiving six doses raises concerns about incomplete vaccination, which leaves children vulnerable to infectious diseases (Ozawa et al., 2016). While respondents' recall provided insights into immunization uptake, it is not always reliable due to memory lapses or lack of understanding of immunization schedules. Immunization cards remain the gold standard for verifying the number of doses received and should be prioritized in monitoring efforts (Brown et al., 2015). This discrepancy underscores the need to improve record-keeping and educate caregivers on the importance of adhering to the full immunization schedule to reduce VPD prevalence.

Number of Visits for Immunization
As indicated in Table 3, a total of 55% reported visiting healthcare facilities 4–6 times for their child's immunization. This suggests a strong adherence to the recommended immunization schedule, which requires multiple visits for vaccines such as BCG, OPV, Pentavalent, and Measles over the first few years of a child's life (National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA, 2021). A smaller percentage of respondents (27.5%) reported 1–3 visits, while 3.5% were uncertain about the number of visits. The variation in visit frequency can be attributed to several factors such as:
- Immunization Schedule Variability: Children may begin immunization at different ages or require catch-up schedules, influencing the total number of visits (Ali, Hart & Ismail, 2021).
- Facility Practices: Some healthcare centers consolidate multiple vaccines into fewer visits, while others may schedule separate visits for each dose (Dalhatu, Ghani & Bozkurt, 2015).
- Recall Limitations: Caregivers may not accurately remember the total number of visits due to the time elapsed since the initial immunization sessions (Ali et al., 2021).

Efforts to streamline vaccination schedules and enhance caregiver education about the process could help ensure better adherence and accurate tracking of healthcare visits.

Knowledge on Number of Times for Vaccination
Furthermore, findings on knowledge on the number of times for vaccination is presented in Table 3. The table indicates that 57% of respondents correctly identified that completing childhood immunization requires 4-6 visits. This finding is encouraging as it reflects a considerable level of awareness about the multi-dose nature of childhood immunization schedules, which typically involve multiple vaccines administered at different intervals to ensure full protection against vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs) (National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA, 2021). However, 16% of respondents believed only 1–3 visits were required, and 10.5% admitted they were unaware of the required number of visits. This gap in knowledge underscores the need for continued public health campaigns particularly utilizing the radio and social media platforms as a medium of information to ensure that caregivers understand the complete vaccination schedule. Misconceptions about the number of visits may arise from inadequate communication by healthcare providers or limited participation in immunization-related discussions (Ali et al., 2021). Additionally, cultural or literacy barriers could hinder the comprehension of immunization requirements, emphasizing the importance of using diverse and accessible communication methods (Dalhatu, Ghani & Bozkurt, 2015). Consideration could thus, be given to the use of culturally appropriate materials and local languages to disseminate information about immunization schedules. Participation can also be encouraged through health talks and immunization outreach programs to address misconceptions, while also leveraging community health workers to reinforce messages about the importance of completing the immunization schedule.

Conclusion
The high awareness rate among respondents indicates strong community knowledge of where to access immunization services, which is vital for maintaining public health and achieving immunization goals. While the accuracy of information obtained from immunization sources might vary, it underscores the importance of considering social and cultural factors in immunization communication strategies. The majority of respondents correctly identified the appropriate timing for the first drop of immunization demonstrated a commendable level of awareness and knowledge about early childhood immunization. Addressing the knowledge gaps identified in this study will enhance immunization coverage and

contribute to better health outcomes for children in Nasarawa State, advancing efforts to eliminate vaccine-preventable diseases. Efforts to address these gaps should include targeted health education campaigns emphasizing the importance of timely immunization. Community-based interventions, such as leveraging local leaders and healthcare workers, can effectively disseminate accurate information and correct misconceptions about vaccination schedules. Additionally, integrating immunization messaging into routine antenatal care can ensure that expectant mothers are well-informed. Utilize traditional media (radio, town criers) and modern digital platforms to disseminate accurate information about the benefits and safety of vaccines. Nasarawa State government, through the Ministry of Information should intensify sensitization of mothers/caregivers to improve their knowledge on Routine Immunization through Radio and Television jingles and short dramatization of the need for immunization.

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BAN ON TWITTER AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN NIGERIA: YOUTHS PERSPECTIVES IN LAFIA TOWN, NASARAWA STATE

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Abstract
This study examined the views of youths in Lafia Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, on the implications of the ban on Twitter (now 'X') and how it affected freedom of expression in Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative research design, and from four (4) identified clusters, a random sampling technique was used to select 370 participants. Four points Likert scale rating was used to analyse the data. The findings highlighted the significant effects of Twitter ban on youths. It revealed that all indicators of challenges relating to freedom of expression on social media were rated with a mean score above the cutoff points of 2.5. It was also found that the ban on Twitter infringed on the rights of the people to freedom of expression, access and sharing of information under Section 39 Sub Section 1 and 2 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Also, the ban affected the economy badly and resulted in breaches on information flow between business associates, losses of jobs, investment hostilities and business failures. The Twitter ban in Nigeria significantly altered the online communication habits of youths as many have resorted to using Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) to bypass the ban and access Twitter. The Twitter ban in Nigeria has increased perceptions of government censorship among youths and has sparked concerns about freedom of expression and access to information. The study concluded that even though regulations of social media may be necessary, excessive restrictions will most likely constitute an attack on freedom of expression, a fundamental right of human beings which democratic regimes the world over seeks to uphold. It is recommended that, since governments are created for the welfare of citizens; it should respect the rights of the citizens as stated in Section 39 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Nigerian government should provide enabling environment where people will be able to use social media with moderate control.

Keywords: Ban, Twitter, Challenge, Youth Perspectives, Freedom of expression

Introduction
Technological revolution has changed the way people communicate. Twitter and YouTube were launched into the communication world in 2006 and 2007 respectively (Samur, 2019). However, once the platforms announced their entrance into the world of communication, diffusion and adoption followed immediately making them some of the most used social media platforms in modern times.

In a world, where mediated communication is fast becoming adopted, appreciated and useful, social media has become a driving force in bridging gaps and enabling information sharing. It has transformed society. Quoting Kietzmann et al., (2011), Paslawsky (2017) lends credence that by enabling perpetual communication, social media platforms have transformed society on a micro and macro level. Social media provides people across borders and social divides the opportunity to have effective and affordable communication and more. In the 21st century political landscape, social media presents citizens the opportunity to engage their leaders like never before. Coupled with the benefits of a broader form of communication enabled by new media platforms, people now do more and participate more in governance.

However, the abuse of the power of the liberal media spaces is alarming. Anderson and Rainie (2020), provide a better explanation to capture the moment. They asserted that the benefits of the internet have

been much celebrated in recent times just as there has been a period of "techlash" where several users have expressed worry that certain actors exploit (for the wrong purpose) opportunities provided – the speed, reach and complexity. Interestingly, social media has been identified as platforms that aid terrorism and encourage insecurity across different territories. Biyere (2020) asserts that terrorist groups such as ISIS and many more make use of social media as recruitment and propaganda spreading channels. In Nigeria, Boko Haram is also actively involved in the use of new media platforms in distribution of propaganda content, and the reach is unimaginably wide.

In spite of the numerous benefits of social media and its susceptibility to abuse, the issues surrounding regulation and how it infringes on the rights of people to free expression is a delicate one. There seems to still be genuine concerns about the way people use social media and the dangers it poses to others. Biyere (2020) points out that there is a thin line that exists between free speech and misuse of the same. According to Biyere, people have also raised questions as to how social media and the freedom of expression that flows with it contribute to ways people "incite violence, spread hate and infringe on the privacy of others".

There is a growing use of social media among Nigerians who found on these platforms, avenues to communicate with one another with little cost when compared to the amount paid to make voice calls. A Data Reportal 2021 report puts social media users in Nigeria at 33 million as of January 2021 (Kemp, 2021). Social media is giving the people the platform to have a voice in government – providing the space for citizens to discuss issues, organise themselves for a common purpose and hold leaders accountable (Chakrabarti, 2018). However, as pivotal as Twitter (now 'X') has become within Nigeria's digital ecosystem, it has not been without challenges. Instances of cyberbullying, fake news, hate speech, incitement of violence and unrest have marred its potential for positive impact. Users have faced issues related to privacy invasion, bullying, misinformation and character assassination. The platform's open nature allows individuals, including government officials, politicians and opposition party members, to express grievances, criticize government actions and engage in heated political discourse. This often occurs with minimal interference from Twitter moderators, even when interactions involve bullying, hate speech, misinformation, or incitement of violence (Mohammed & Adelakun, 2021).

Nigeria practices democracy and the citizen's value freedom as they have had a taste of both dictatorial regimes, and democratic administrations in the past. However, with the return to democracy in 1999, free expression has always taken important spaces in intellectual discourse. Attempts to infringe on free expression in Nigeria have always met with stiff opposition. According to Attoh (2016), "freedom of expression is regarded as a cornerstone of democracy which ensures the consolidation and development of democracy". In recent times, even in the midst of a democratic administration, free speech has been threatened with different pieces of legislation being put forward by Nigeria's legislative arm of government.

Expectedly, calls to regulate social media spaces have received a backlash from Nigerians both home and abroad. Two major bills were before the National Assembly of Nigeria for consideration – both geared towards regulating social media. Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulation Bill 2019 was sponsored in the Senate, just as a bill to establish the Independent National Commission for the Prohibition of Hate Speech Bill was also considered. Both bills were seen to target free speech, and to punish social media users for being able to express themselves – the hate speech bill proposes the maximum penalty of death for offenders. Interestingly, democratic principles do not support any form of muzzling of public speech or opinion unlike what obtains in dictatorial regimes. Therefore, the proposed regulations of social media by the Nigerian government seem to negate the principles upon which democratic governments are built. It is instructive to note that despite the progress made so far in passing the social media regulation bills, the question is; how easy is it to regulate social media? Thus, this study addressed the significance of the ban on Twitter as an act of regulation in respect to freedom of expression in Nigeria as stated in Section 39(1) of the 1999 Constitution which guarantees every citizen the right to freedom of speech and expression.

Methodology

The study setting is Lafia town, which is the headquarter of Lafia Local Government (LGA) and Nasarawa State. It is situated in the North-Central geo-political zone of Nigeria that is generally very warm and humid with dry and rainy seasons. Lafia town consists of three (3) structural units distinguished in terms of age of building as well as density of physical development and population. These sectors are the old town, Sabon Pegi area, and Millionaires/Bukan Sidi/Tudun Gwandara Area. The Local Government Area is predominantly agrarian with land area of 2,797.5 square kilometres. The United Nations-World Population Prospects estimated the population of Lafia LGA to be 374,000 in 2022.

The study adopted cluster or area technique and the target population was grouped on the basis of geographical cluster and occupational cluster. From these identified clusters, a random sampling was used to select 370 participants, using Taro Yamane (1967) formula for sample size determination. The responses from the four points Likert scale rating questionnaire were analysed using the measures of central tendency comprising the Mean and Standard Deviation. The Mean and Standard Deviation for each variable indicates the average level of agreement or disagreement and the variation in responses, respectively. The four points Likert scale rating is given values as follows: SA = Strongly Agree 4, A = Agree 3, D = Disagree 2, and SD = Strongly Disagree 1. To ascertain the decision rule; this formula was used:4+3+2+1 =10. Any score that was 2.5 and above was accepted, while any score below 2.5 was rejected. Therefore, 2.5 was the cut-off mean score for a decision taken.

Data Presentation and Analysis
Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents
Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	200	54
Female	170	46
Total	**370**	**100**
Age Range		
18-22	15	4
23-27	200	54
28-32	90	24
33-37	40	11
38 & above	25	7
Total	**370**	**100**
Location		
Bukan Sidi	96	26
Tudun Amba	91	25
Shinge Road	90	24
Fed. University Lafia	93	25
Total	**370**	**100**

A total of 370 youths participated in the study with males slightly dominating, 200 (54%) males and 170 (46%) females. Most (96%) of the respondents were aged 23 years and above. This suggests that Twitter is particularly popular among adults in the study area. The distribution of respondents' locations shows that, 96 (26%) were from Bukan Sidi, 91 (25%) were from Tudun Amba, 90 (24%) were from Shinge Road and 93 (25%) were from Federal University, Lafia.

Twitter Ban Antecedents in Nigeria
Table 2 provides data on how respondents described twitter ban antecedents in Nigeria. The mean of 3.34 indicates that, on average, they agreed that the Nigerian government banning of Twitter in the country was due to Twitter deleting a tweet by President Muhammadu Buhari. They also, agreed (3.04) that the Twitter ban significantly shaped youths' perceptions of the government's stance on freedom of expression. They further agreed (3.33) that Twitter ban significantly hindered Nigerian youths' ability to engage in political/social discourse, activism, and civic participation.

Table 2: Respondents Views on Twitter Ban Antecedents

Statement	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	X	STD
The Nigerian government banned Twitter in Nigeria due to Twitter deleting a tweet by President Muhammadu Buhari.	150	102	23	20	3.34	0.89
The Twitter ban significantly shaped youths' perceptions of the government's stance on freedom of expression.	125	91	39	40	3.04	0.99
The Twitter ban significantly hindered Nigerian youths' ability to engage in political/social discourse, activism, and civic participation.	160	100	25	10	3.33	1.25

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Furthermore, the analysis of Table 2 revealed that, Twitter ban antecedents are complex and multifaceted, involving political, historical, and social factors. Twitter was suspended in Nigeria on June 4, 2021, by the Federal Government, citing "persistent use of the platform for activities that are capable of undermining Nigeria's corporate existence". This suspension came after Twitter deleted a tweet by President Muhammadu Buhari, which was perceived as violating the platform's rules.

Political tensions: The Buhari administration has been criticized for its handling of political opposition, free speech, and human rights. A hypothetical example is how #EndSARS protest led to the brutal killing of many innocent people, denial of opposition party access to government media to express their views over some policies and programs of the government, Nnamdi Kanu's trial and many other issues. Twitter was seen as a platform for dissenting voices, and the government may have viewed it as a threat to their authority.

Buhari government had cited media regulation as a reason for banning Twitter in Nigeria. The government argued that they have been seeking to regulate social media to curb the spread of "hate speech" and "fake news". Thus, the government views twitter as the number one media that disseminate fake news. The government sees Twitter's suspension as a way to demonstrate their commitment to this goal. National security concern is another reason the government cited. The government cited security concerns, alleging that Twitter was used to mobilise protests and perpetuate violence. This may be linked to the #EndSARS protests, which were largely organised on social media.

Historical context: Nigeria has a history of suppressing free speech and press freedom, dating back to the military era. This ban may be part of a broader pattern of restricting dissenting voices.

International relations: The ban may also be linked to Nigeria's relationships with other countries, particularly the United States, which has been critical of Nigeria's human rights record. It is essential to

note that the suspension of Twitter in Nigeria raises concerns about censorship, free speech, and the role of social media in democratic societies.

Overall, the results in Table 2 aligns with the Guardian Newspaper of Thursday, June 3, 2021, report that President Buhari had in the tweet shared on Tuesday, 1 June, 2021, cited the Nigerian Civil War experience, which was fought between 1967 and 1970, and noted that most of those "Misbehaving" by burning electoral offices were too young to understand the gravity of war. The tweet which raises polemic by Nigerian on the president resulted in Twitter suspending the President's account, claiming the tweet "expresses intentions of self-harm or suicide" as stated on Twitter's usage policy. According to Njoku, Olumide, Daka, Ugoeze, Abuh, Nzor and Osibe, (2021) following the occurrence, Twitter deleted the message, and replaced the tweet with: "This Tweet violated the Twitter Rules, Learn More".

Challenges of Freedom of Expression on Social Media.
Table 3: Challenges Relating to Freedom of Expression on Social Media

Statement	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	X	STD
Government regulations on social media platforms in Nigeria affects freedom of expression.	120	105	45	25	3.00	0.70
The Twitter ban in Nigeria limits the freedom of speech of Nigerian youths thereby restricting their ability to express themselves, engage in public discussions, and access information freely.	85	145	36	29	2.58	0.97
The Twitter ban in Nigeria damages the country's image and reputation globally.	145	94	26	30	3.90	0.87
Reforms are needed to ensure that social media regulation in Nigeria upholds constitutional rights to freedom of expression.	160	80	35	20	3.00	0.93

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The results in Table 3 revealed that all indicators of challenges relating to freedom of expression on social media were rated with a mean score above the cutoff points of 2.5 and the standard deviation below one (1) indicating how close the opinions of the respondents were. The table revealed that most of the participants agreed (3.00), that government regulations on social media platforms in Nigeria affects freedom of expression. They also agreed (2.58), that Twitter ban in Nigeria limits the freedom of speech of Nigerian citizens, thereby restricting their ability to express themselves, engage in public discussions, and access information freely. They further agreed (3.90) with the opinion that Twitter ban in Nigeria is damaging the country's image and reputation globally. Participants agreed (3.00) with the opinion that reforms are needed to ensure that social media regulation in Nigeria upholds constitutional rights to freedom of expression.

The results in Table 3 showed that government regulations on social media platforms in Nigeria affects freedom of expression of the citizen (3.00). This indicates that social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp are among the most popular social media platforms youths in Nigeria use, banning this has consequently affected the freedom that citizens have under section 39 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It was acknowledged by participants that millions of people across Nigeria, especially youth, rely on social media to engage in discourse and to share and access information (Anyim, 2020). Banning any social media platform in Nigeria would negate citizens' freedom of expression and the press under Section 39 which states that "Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference". Sub-section 2: "without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1) of this section, every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate any medium for the

dissemination of information, ideas and opinions." Banning social media for whatever reason by the government must be explained to the citizen in detail. This position was supported by Ewang (2021), that the Nigerian Constitution and international human rights law, as set out in the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, protects the right to free expression and access to information and provides that any restriction to this right must be justifiable in a democratic society (Ewang, 2021). Moreover, social media platforms play a crucial role in promoting democratic participation, allowing citizens to express their opinions and to connect and share content, and banning this affects their constitutional rights.

Challenge of Twitter Ban on Freedom of Expression
Table 4: Twitter Ban as a Challenge to Freedom of Expression

Variable	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	X	STD
Nigerian youths perceive social media as an essential tool for promoting freedom of expression.	120	102	45	28	2.90	0.70
The ban has significantly impacted Nigerian youths' attitudes towards online speech.	85	119	57	34	2.68	0.99
The Twitter ban in Nigeria raises legal and constitutional concerns regarding youths' freedom of expression rights which includes potential violations of constitutional guarantees of free speech and access to information.	145	100	20	30	3.11	0.85

Source: Field Survey, 2024

According to Table 4, most participants (2.90) agreed that Nigerian youths perceived social media as an essential tool for promoting freedom of expression. They also, agreed (2.68) that the ban has significantly impacted Nigerian youths' attitudes towards online speech. The mean of 3.11 indicates that respondents agreed that Twitter ban in Nigeria raises legal and constitutional concerns regarding youths' freedom of expression rights which includes potential violations of constitutional guarantees of free speech and access to information. The suspension of Twitter in Nigeria by the Federal Government in June 2021 sparked intense debate about its implications for freedom of expression. This ban significantly challenged freedom of expression, which is a fundamental human right enshrined in the Nigerian constitution and international human rights instruments.

The study found that Nigerian youths perceived Twitter as an indispensable tool for promotion of freedom of expression, the ban on twitter has significantly posed a challenge to their freedom of expression. This finding corroborates the stands of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator, Samantha Power, who said the suspension was nothing more than state-sanctioned denial of free speech and therefore should be reversed immediately (Paulinus & Obi, 2021). Similarly, On June 5, 2021, US Diplomatic Mission issued a statement where it said the suspension of Twitter operation in Nigeria was an infringement on the rights of Nigerians to freedom of expression (Daily Sun, Thursday, June 10, 2021. P.6). According to former Governor of Benue State, Samuel Ortom he asserted that the suspension of Twitter is illegal and suppression of the fundamental rights of Nigerians and a gag on social media (Orji & Ejemba, 2021). Twitter ban has posed a great challenge to freedom of expression of the citizen and also affects their social and economic rights. Zibwel (2021) avers that there are certain laws that support free expression and stipulate that possible limits on such freedom must be justified as well as reasonable

Among the challenges that twitter ban poses to freedom of expression include:
i.   Twitter ban is a disproportionate restriction on freedom of expression, as it affects all Twitter users in Nigeria, rather than targeting specific individuals or content. Twitter ban also limits citizens' access to information, as Twitter is a vital source of news, opinions, and public discourse. This

restriction undermines the right to freedom of expression, which includes the right to receive and impart information.

ii. Violation of international human rights standards: The Twitter ban violates Nigeria's obligations under international human rights law, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which protect freedom of expression. Banning twitter by the Nigerian government was not justified and cannot be justified. Nigeria's constitution and international human rights law, as set out in the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, protect the right to free expression and access to information and provide that any restriction to this right must be justifiable in a democratic society (Ewang, 2021). The ban may have a chilling effect on free speech, as citizens may self-censor their online activities to avoid retribution from the government. This chilling effect can lead to a broader suppression of dissenting voices and critical expression.

iii. Censorship: The suspension of Twitter constitutes a form of censorship, as the government is controlling what citizens can and cannot access. This censorship stifles free speech, creativity, and the exchange of ideas and diffusion of information.

Effects of Twitter Ban on Youths in Nigeria
Table 5: Effects of Twitter Ban on Youths in Nigeria

Variable	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	X	STD
Nigerian youths heavily reliant on Twitter for entrepreneurship, marketing, and jobs were impacted by losing vital channels for networking, advertising, and accessing employment opportunities.	130	100	45	20	2.63	0.98
The Twitter ban in Nigeria significantly altered the online communication habits of youths as many have resorted to using virtual private networks (VPNs) to bypass the ban and access Twitter.	85	149	37	24	3.19	0.83
The Twitter ban in Nigeria has increased perceptions of government censorship among youths and has sparked concerns about freedom of expression and access to information.	145	100	20	30	2.65	0.78

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 presents data on respondents' perceptions of the effects of Twitter ban on youths in Nigeria. Based on the Mean: 2.63, Standard Deviation: 0.98, the relatively low mean suggests that while there is some effect felt by the youths (respondents), it is not overwhelming. The standard deviation indicates that responses do not vary. Though some respondents feel strong effects of the ban and others feel very little. This implies that Nigerian youths heavily reliant on Twitter for entrepreneurship, marketing, and jobs were impacted by losing vital channels for networking, advertising, and accessing employment opportunities. This has a moderate influence on youths, with some feeling the effect more than others. They agreed (3.19) that, the Twitter ban in Nigeria significantly altered the online communication habits of youths as many resorted to using virtual private networks (VPNs) to bypass the ban and access Twitter. There was a strong agreement among youths (2.65) that the Twitter ban in Nigeria increased perceptions of government's censorship among youths and has sparked concerns about freedom of expression and access to information. This suggests that most youths feel bad about government decisions of banning twitter and how this affects the citizen's freedom of expression and access to

information. It is clear from Table 5 that Twitter ban in Nigeria had significant effects on Nigerian youth, who are a significant demographic of Twitter users in the country

These findings showed that Nigerian youths heavily reliant on Twitter for entrepreneurship, marketing, and jobs were impacted by losing vital channels for networking, advertising, and accessing employment opportunities. The Twitter ban in Nigeria significantly altered the online communication habits of youths as many have resorted to using virtual private networks (VPNs) to bypass the ban and access Twitter. The Twitter ban in Nigeria has increased perceptions of government censorship among youths and has sparked concerns about freedom of expression and access to information. These findings emphasise the economic effect of Twitter ban on Nigerian youths considering that President Muhammadu Buhari administration lacks economic direction and standard policy. According to Iyatse and Adepetun (2021), the suspension can slow commerce, cut productivity and ultimately cost jobs. In a report to Al Jazeera, Gbenga Sesan, Executive Director of the Paradigm Initiative, a Pan-African social enterprise working on digital inclusion and rights, opines that this ban will force investors out of Nigeria and also that global tech companies that want to invest in Africa are likely to consider a place like Ghana rather than Nigeria (Iyorah, 2021).

The President, Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), Steve Babaeko, observed that significant population of Nigerian youth earn their livelihood through Twitter, "some simply by being attack dogs or mouthpiece for politicians and the government" which by implication, income for those youths will be lost to the ban. On the other hand, unemployment among the youth segment currently stands at about 35%, depending on which state of the Federation one is looking at; with Twitter ban, the unemployment rate will worsen (Babaeko, 2021).

Some of the effects of the Twitter ban on Nigerian youth include:
i.   Restriction on political engagement: Twitter was a crucial platform for Nigerian youth to engage in political discussions, mobilise, and access information. The ban has limited their ability to participate in democratic processes and engage in political activism (Afolayan, 2021).
ii. Impact on mental health: Social media platforms like Twitter provide a space for young people to express themselves and connect with others. The ban has led to feelings of isolation, frustration, and anxiety among Nigerian youth (Olufade, 2021).
iii. Limitations on access to information: Twitter was a vital source of news, information, and educational resources for Nigerian youth. The ban has restricted their access to these resources, hindering their ability to stay informed and educated (Adibe, 2021). Banning social media for whatever reason by the government must be explained to citizens in detail. This position was supported by Ewang (2021), who posits that the Nigeria's constitution and international human rights law, as set out in the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, protects the right to free expression and access to information and provides that any restriction to this right must be justifiable in a democratic society.
iv. Economic implications: Many Nigerian youths rely on Twitter for business, entrepreneurship, and career opportunities. The ban has disrupted their economic activities, leading to financial losses and uncertainty (Nwosu, 2021).
v.   Impact on social capital: Twitter provided a space for Nigerian youth to build social capital, connect with peers, and develop social skills. The ban has disrupted these social networks and relationships (Ojukwu, 2021).
vi. Restriction on creative expression: Twitter was a platform for Nigerian youth to express their creativity, share their art, music, and writing. The ban has limited their ability to showcase their talents and connect with a global audience (Adeoye, 2021).
vii. Disruption of social support networks: Twitter provided a space for Nigerian youth to access support, advice, and resources from peers and mentors. The ban has disrupted these support networks, leaving many feeling isolated and disconnected (Eze, 2021).
These effects demonstrate the significant impact of the Twitter ban on Nigerian youth, highlighting the importance of social media platforms in their lives.

On a general note, this data suggests that Twitter ban in Nigeria has a varying but significant effect on youths' freedom of expression and access to information; particularly in entrepreneurship, marketing, jobs and businesses, which lost vital channels for networking, advertising, and selling their products. The ban also truncated the online communication habits of youths and it has increased perceptions of government censorship among youths and sparked concerns about freedom of expression and access to information. These findings highlight the significant effects of twitter ban on Nigerian youths.

Conclusion

The antecedent that led to Twitter ban was the deleting of President Muhammadu Buhari tweet concerning the Igbo people. That act angered the president leading to indefinite suspension of Twitter via the Minister of Information, Mr. Lai Muhammed. The study concludes that Twitter serves as one of the social media platforms used by citizens in Nigeria and its ban had affected the reality of citizens' freedom of expression and the press under Section 39 Sub Section 1 and 2 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended in 2011. It is recommended that since governments are created for the welfare of citizens; it should respect the rights of the citizens as stated in Section 39 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Nigerian government should provide an enabling environment where people will be able to use social media with moderate control.

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