

SECTION A

PREAMBLE

1**INTRODUCTION**

Perspectives on Nigeria's Development: Essays in Honour of Okechuku Onuchuku is a festschrift in honour of Professor. Okechuku Onuchuku, the Vice Chancellor of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. He is a celebrated multidisciplinary scholar with many years of work experience with peers across several disciplines, particularly peace and conflict studies, African studies, political science, environmental studies, public administration and education. However, his specific areas of specialisation are Economic Theory and Policy and Quantitative Economics (Econometrics and Mathematical Economics).

The book has 79 chapters, two of which handle preliminary issues, specifically introduction to the book and a brief profile of Professor Okechuku Onuchuku. These constitute chapters one and two, respectively, and are found in "Section A: Preamble."

The remaining nine sections house the 77 papers which constitute the core of this publication. Section B is labelled "Economic Perspectives." It is the longest section, with 21 chapters. It begins with Chapter Three, which is on "Trade Policy and Women Trading Skills Empowerment in the South-South Region of Nigeria." The article has Mercy Odibe, Sylvester Udeorah and Ijeoma Emele Kalu as authors. It examines the relationship between trade policy and women trading skills empowerment in the South-South region of Nigeria. It contends that AfCFTA (African Continental Free Trade Agreement) has influenced women trading skills empowerment. In Chapter Four, labelled "Corruption, Income Inequality and Economic Growth Metrix in Nigeria." Edward Wasurum and Oriji Esther Chimekwa investigate the effect of corruption on economic growth in Nigeria when moderated by income inequality for the period 1996Q1-2020Q2. They note that corruption in Nigeria is triggered by the expanding gap between the rich and the poor. Chapter Five, "Addressing the Challenge of Poverty and Income Inequality in Nigeria: The Role of International Bank for Reconstruction and Development." has Kingsley Simon Ekpete and Good Wilson as its writers. The paper is on the challenge of poverty and income inequality in Nigeria, with emphasis on the role of International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. It argues that the effort of the bank in reducing poverty and inequality in Nigeria is hindered by corruption from non-governmental organizations as well as government officials, dysfunctional relationship between the United Nations and the bank, the banks' homogenized policy prescriptions, bad implementation of the bank's policies and unrealisable policies.

Christian Nwenenda Worlu's "Sustainability Accounting and Economic Growth in Nigeria" is found in Chapter Six. It examines the relationship between sustainability accounting and economic growth in Nigeria and highlights the critical need for businesses

and governments to balance financial performance with social and environmental responsibilities. It contends that, by adopting sustainability accounting, Nigerian firms can mitigate the adverse environmental impacts of industrial activities. Chapter Seven is “Financial Capability of Households and Savings in Nigeria: Probit Regression Verification.” written by Simeon Gbimoie Nenbee and Jonah Olo Orji. This chapter looks at financial capability of households and savings in Nigeria. It posits that higher levels of financial literacy promote saving in formal banking institutions, while being female reduces the likelihood of saving. Chapter Eight is on “Solid Minerals and Economic Diversification in Nigeria.” In this chapter, Chioma Chidinma George-Anokwuru explores the potential of the solid minerals sector in fostering economic diversification, reducing dependence on petroleum and promoting sustainable economic growth, during the period 1990-2023. It asserts that the solid minerals sector offers a viable pathway for Nigeria’s economic diversification and long-term sustainability. Chapter Nine is dedicated to “Perspectives on Nigeria’s Development: The Road Maps of the Nigerian Livestock Sector towards Economic Development.” written by Godfrey Adokiye Kalio. It claims that the livestock sub-sector of agriculture has actually demonstrated that long-term economic growth and development can be achieved. The sector can serve as the primary driver of the economy and be a wealth-generating avenue of the nation.

Simeon Gbimoie Nenbee and Omorala Atunke King’s “Microfinance Banks’ Credits and the Performance of Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises in Lagos Island Local Government Area, Lagos State, Nigeria” is found in Chapter Ten. The paper examines the effect of microfinance banks’ credits on the performance of small and medium-scale enterprises in Lagos Island Local Government Area (LGA), Lagos State. It concludes that the availability of microfinance banks’ credits is a bold step toward achieving robust economic growth and development in Lagos Island LGA. Chapter Eleven accommodates “In Defence of Consumers’ Right to Choose: The Pathway to National Development.” authored by James U. D. Didia. It notes that customer satisfaction remains the core objective of businesses, and marketing serves as the primary mechanism for understanding, meeting and exceeding consumer expectations. It further claims that marketing is indispensable for upholding consumer choice, driving customer satisfaction, fostering national development and identifying consumer needs. Chapter Twelve is for “Mandatory Adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards and Income Smoothing in Nigeria: Do Growth Opportunities Matter?” written by Gospel J. Chukwu, Godwin I. Ebirien and Godpower W. Obah. It examines the effect of mandatory International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) adoption on income smoothing and explores the moderating role of growth opportunities in the IFRS-income smoothing relationship. It avers that mandatory adoption of IFRS has no significant effect on income smoothing.

Chapter Thirteen, written by Chibuzor C. Nwobueze and Emem Nyenwe, centres on “Diversifying the Niger Delta Economy: A Community-driven Approach of Participatory Empowerment for Sustainable Development.” The paper examines the potential of community-driven, participatory empowerment approaches in promoting sustainable development and diversification in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It posits that community-driven initiatives are crucial for fostering sustainable development and empowering local communities to take ownership of their development processes. “Effects of Export Diversification on International Liquidity: The Nigerian Example.” written by Ezebunwo Nyeche, Chioma Rosemary Ewubare Dennis and Lucky Orlu, is the focus of Chapter Fourteen. The study examines the effect of export diversification on international liquidity in Nigeria, from 1990 to 2023. It concludes that export diversification plays a significant role in increasing and enhancing international liquidity in Nigeria. It recommends that the Nigerian government should intensify efforts to diversify its export base. Chapter Fifteen centres on “Diaspora Remittances, Private-Sector Investment and Urban Poverty in Nigeria.” written by Robinson Monday Olulu and Ezebaraba Chike Michael. It investigates the effects of diaspora remittances and private-sector investment on urban poverty rates in Nigeria over the period 1980 to 2022. It asserts that remittances play a vital role in household finances. While there is a general association between increases in remittances and a decrease in the poverty rate, this effect lacks statistical significance, suggesting that other factors may influence this relationship. Chapter Sixteen is entitled “Promoting Entrepreneurship and SME Growth in Nigeria: Addressing Critical Issues and Bridging Intervention Gaps.” In it, Faith U. Onunaka, Ogechi E. Alpheaus, Abbah O. Eke and John U. Ihendinihu, argue that promoting entrepreneurship and the growth of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria is essential for driving economic development, job creation and poverty alleviation. Simplifying regulatory and tax policies is necessary to reduce bureaucratic barriers and create a more favourable environment for business growth.

The section continues with Chapter Seventeen, “Diversification of the Nigerian Economy beyond Oil.” Here, Good Wilson and Kingsley Simon Ekpote examine the other areas which Nigeria can get revenues from. They argue that, because of lack of political will and other factors, it is obvious that Nigeria is not ready to embark on serious diversification of its economy in preparation for the end of oil in the country. Beatrice E. Awortu’s “An Appraisal of Women Empowerment Programmes in Rivers State, 1999-2023” is found in Chapter Eighteen. The study is an evaluation of women’s empowerment programmes in Rivers State, Nigeria, from 1999 to 2023. It notes that, although significant progress has been made in areas like microcredit schemes, skills acquisition programmes and advocacy for women’s rights, there are still challenges, particularly cultural barriers, inadequate funding and limited institutional support. Chapter Nineteen concentrates on

“Economic Diversification: A Strategic Pathway for Poverty Reduction in Nigeria.” written by Itode James Krama and Kemkamma Bright Aborh. It investigates the impact of economic diversification on poverty reduction in Nigeria from 1991 to 2023. It notes that growth in agriculture and services reduces poverty, while expansion in manufacturing and political stability increase poverty in Nigeria. Chapter Twenty, labelled “Renewable Energy and Economic Growth in Nigeria: An Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) Approach.” has Nteegah Alwell, Isaac Olubiyi Oladosu and Terver Thomas Leonardrs as its authors. The chapter examines the effect of renewable energy on economic growth in Nigeria, during the period 1990-2022. It claims that renewable energy plays a significant positive role in driving economic growth in Nigeria. It then recommends that government and policy makers in the energy sector should make effective energy policies to diversify the sources of energy.

Chapter Twenty-one is devoted to “The Role of Entrepreneurs in Modern Economies.” written by Ijeoma Emele Kalu and Edughom Ikerom Hanson. It avers that modern economies can thrive only when the private sector contributes to development through entrepreneurial initiatives, and that entrepreneurship should be encouraged from infancy. In Chapter Twenty-two, “The Blue Economy and Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria.” Nteegah Alwell and Isaac Olubiyi Oladosu examine the effect of the blue economy on poverty alleviation in Nigeria from 1990 to 2023. They note that the blue economy plays a significant role in alleviating poverty in Nigeria. Therefore, they recommend that there should be implementation of government-led initiatives to promote sustainable fishing practices and expand aquaculture production. The last chapter in this section is Chapter Twenty-three. It contains Kingdom E. Orji’s “The Impact of Economic Cooperation on Diplomatic Relations: A Focus on Nigeria-China Bilateral Relations, 1971-2024.” It claims that the evolution of Nigeria and China economic relations has had a significant impact on diplomatic ties between the two countries. It has led to deepening of diplomatic ties, increased bilateral trade, increased Chinese investment in Nigeria, and fostered cooperation in many areas. However, Nigeria’s imports from China far exceeding its exports.

Section C, which handles “Peace and Conflict Perspectives.” has 4 chapters. The section commences with Chapter Twenty-four, which is on Ikem B. Adiele’s “The Pathology of Insecurity, Crime Management and Conflict Challenges in Nigeria.” The article examines dimensions of security and crime challenges in Nigeria. It notes that poverty, civil unrest, insurgency, terrorism and banditry plague Nigeria. They significantly disrupt economic development and exacerbate poverty levels. Chapter Twenty-five, written by O. Anthony Offor and Nelson Richard Percy, concentrates on “Implications of Boko-Haram Insurgency for Nigeria’s National Security 2011-2023.” It posits that addressing the Boko Haram insurgency requires a manifold approach that combines

military action with efforts to address underlying grievances, promote social cohesion, strengthen governance structures and enhance regional cooperation. International support and collaboration are also crucial in this regard. Chibuzor C. Nwobueze devotes attention to “Lethal Violence in Rivers State: Sources, Trends and Strategic Insights for Conflict Prevention.” in Chapter Twenty-six. The article analyses the sources and patterns of lethal violence in Rivers State, arguing that addressing the root causes of conflicts will reduce the escalation of violence. It adds that there is the need for collaborative efforts of government and families to address the threat to peaceful coexistence in the state through reorientation of people and promotion of the culture of non-violence. Chapter Twenty-seven, which concludes the section, is Okere Loveday’s “Outcome of Breakdown of Collective Bargaining.” It asserts that, when the union is unable to get management to agree to a demand it feels is critical, it may resort to a strike. It then suggests that conflict resolution interventions, such as mediation, arbitration and injunction, should be employed to avoid work stoppage.

Sixteen papers constitute Section D (Social Perspectives). The first of them is Chapter Twenty-eight, Chika Chibuzor’s “Effectiveness of Safety and Health Education on Environmental Health Challenges in Rivers State, Nigeria.” This study investigates the effectiveness of safety and health education on environmental health challenges in Rivers State, Nigeria. In the view of the paper, the current public health education strategies are insufficient in addressing the prevailing challenges. Many residents of the state lack awareness of the health risks associated with environmental pollution and the preventive measures they could take. Chapter Twenty-nine centres on “Value and Vested Interest: Implications for Community Development Practice in Nigeria.” written by Emmanuel Wichendu Oji. This paper centres on the implications of value and vested interest for community development practice in Nigeria. It shows that value and vested interest play significant roles in all facets of rural and urban communities. Stanley N. N. Mandah’s “Revitalizing the Public Library System for National Development” is situated in Chapter Thirty. The study focuses on the public library system in Nigeria. It argues for the revitalization of the library sector, as there is a direct relationship between public library and national development. Chapter Thirty-one is labelled “Character Education and Sustainable Development in the Niger Delta, Nigeria.” In this article, Chibuzor Chile Nwobueze examines the role of character education in promoting sustainable development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. He advocates the inclusion of character education in educational policies and community initiatives in order to build resilient communities and promote sustainable peace and development in the region.

Moreover, Chapter Thirty-two, “Advancement of Sustainable Natural Resource Management via Textile Consumption Habits in Nigeria.” written by Ngozi Kesiiah Okeke, concerns Nigeria’s sustainable resource management through the country’s textile

consumption habits. It avers that some organizations are already embracing the idea of sustainable resource management through the reuse of textiles encouraged by individual contributions of worn clothing. Chapter Thirty-three is devoted to Eze Ohaka's "Academic Leadership Personality Formation and Mentorship Acumen of Prof. Okechuku Onuchuku, Vice Chancellor of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt." The paper contends that leadership involves developing a vision for the organization, and aligning people with such vision. It emphasises that the management process involves strategic planning and proper organization of every aspect of an organisation. Chapter Thirty-four is "Women and the Leadership of Political Parties in Nigeria: Interrogating the Missing Link with UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security." written by James Okolie-Osemene and Rosemary Ifeanyi Okolie-Osemene. The paper examines the exclusion of women from the leadership of political parties in Nigeria from the perspective of UNSCR 1325. It stresses that, through adequate mobilization and sensitization, the limited participation of Nigerian women in political participation and electioneering processes can be addressed. Okere Loveday's "Review of Contemporary and Target Organizational Change Issues for Today's Managers" occupies Chapter Thirty-five. The paper reviews contemporary and target organizational change issues for today's managers. The issues include technology in the workplace, stimulating innovation, creating a learning organization and managing change. The study suggests that the real world is turbulent, requiring organizations and their members to undergo dynamic change if they are to perform at competitive levels.

Chapter Thirty-six is entitled "Quality Sustenance in Nigeria Educational System: A Case for Transformational Leadership." In it, J. B. Oduwole and I. A. Nwazuo examine the problems facing the education system, particularly policy issues, enrolment explosion, financial input, inadequate facilities, human resource input and decadence in standard, in relation to perspectives on Nigeria's development. They opine that quality instruction is lacking, which has seriously prevented the realisation of the lofty goals of the country's education philosophy. "Mathematics Education: The Tool for Innovative Entrepreneurship Teaching in Nigerian Schools." written by Nchelem Rosemary George, is the focus of Chapter Thirty-seven. The article examines entrepreneur, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial elements and some entrepreneurial ventures in Nigeria, in relation to mathematics. It concludes that entrepreneurship is fundamentally based on innovation. So, it should be taught making use of innovative instructional strategies. Chapter Thirty-eight captures "Promoting Digital Literacy and Inclusion: The Role of the Library." authored by Emmanuel Okwu and Onyema Nsirim. The chapter focuses on the roles of the library in promoting digital literacy and inclusion. It concludes that digital literacy and inclusion are necessary for navigating the digital world and the library is a formidable player in promoting digital literacy and inclusion. Eucharia Sotonye

Somieari-Pepple addresses “Teacher Education and Its Challenges in Nigeria.” in Chapter Thirty-nine. The paper is an overview of teacher education and its challenges in Nigeria. It asserts that teacher education in Nigeria plays a prominent role in shaping the quality of the nation’s education system, directly influencing the development of the country

Another chapter in this section is Maria Duononwi Abidiak’s “An Evaluation of Gender Inequality in Music Conducting in Nigeria for Sustainable Development.” found in Chapter Forty. It investigates the reasons for gender inequality in music conducting and how women can be encouraged to participate in the art in Nigeria. It concludes that many female music conductors in Nigeria shy away from the art even with their potential. Chapter Forty-one focuses on “Advocacy against Colourism in Nigeria.” In the paper, Eberechi Emmanuel-Okogbule considers manifestation of colourism in human society. It is the view of the paper that colourism will profoundly affect society unless decisive measures are implemented to combat it. Chapter Forty-two, “Women Development: Where They Were, Where They Are and Where They Are Going.” considers the concept of women development, its importance, strategies for promoting equal opportunity for women and empowering them. The author, Boma B. Obi opines that women development should be a continuum, and that women development will promote social justice and stability. In Chapter Forty-three, “Effective Nutrition Counselling for Vulnerable Groups (Pregnant Women) by Rural Health Workers in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria.” Stella O. Mandah devotes attention to nutrition in relation to pregnant women. The author asserts that food rich in iron, calcium, vitamins D, A and C are nutritive for pregnant women, increasing life expectancy and improving morbidity and functions. The article recommends that rural health workers should attend workshops and use modern facilities to teach pregnant women.

There are 6 papers in Section E: Political Perspectives. Chapter Forty-four, “Civil Military Relations in Nigeria.” written by Sophia Daniels, opens the section. The article identifies the key elements of Nigeria’s civil-military relations as establishing legal frameworks, implementing civilian oversight, enhancing transparency and accountability and promoting human rights. It notes that strengthening civil-military relations in Nigeria is essential to consolidating democracy, maintaining public trust and achieving national stability. Chapter Forty-five, tagged “Global Politics and Balance of Power in the 21st Century: Reflections on the Monroe Doctrine of 1823.” has B. T. Michael as its author. The paper examines the Monroe Doctrine (1823) and the balance of power politics in the 21st century. It contends that the doctrine’s core ideas of non-interference and the assertion of influence over a defined sphere intersect with global trends, including the rise of multipolarity and the resurgence of great power competition. Chapter Forty-six is for “The Political Elite and the Crises of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria.” authored by Chimaroke Mgba. It investigates the role of the political elite in Nigeria’s democratization.

It contends that the character of the political elite is responsible for the crises of democratic consolidation in the country.

Additionally, Nelson Richard Percy's "The Nexus between Diplomacy and Politics in the Conduct of International Relations" is located in Chapter Forty-seven. It opines that the relationship between diplomacy and politics is an important element in the conduct of international relations. Understanding this relationship provides a well-informed knowledge on the nature of how both elements interact as a key tool for political actors in international environment to achieve their objectives. Chapter Forty-eight is for "Good Governance and Its Pillars: Accountability and Civic Participation in Nigeria." written by Robert O. Dode and Tony A. Ijeomah. This study views accountability and civil participation as major pillars of good governance due to their importance in promoting and sustaining the socio-economic well-being of citizens. It notes that government institutions are weak, which constrains accountability and promotes civil participation. This limits good governance outcomes. Hycenth A. Ajie's "Corruption and Institutional Weaknesses in Nigeria" is situated in Chapter Forty-nine. This paper explores the relationship between corruption and institutional weakness as well as the relationship between corruption levels and economic growth. It asserts that a decrease in corruption raises the economic growth of an economy and vice versa.

Section F (Environment Perspectives) is made up of 9 papers. Henry Nyebuchi Malchiah opens the discussion with "The Shale Gas Revolution: Implications for Global Liquefied Natural Gas Trade." in Chapter Fifty. This paper examines the implications of the shale gas revolution for the global liquefied natural gas (LNG) trade. The shale gas revolution has transformed the energy landscape, particularly in the United States, by unlocking vast reserves of natural gas previously inaccessible through traditional extraction methods. Chapter Fifty-one ("Nutritional, Toxicological and Environmental Perspective of Nigeria's Development") has Joyce Oronne Akaninwor as its writer. It argues that man cannot survive or contribute to development without food. Good health, work performance/entrepreneurship, productivity and economic attainment cannot be achieved without good nutrition. Nutrition and good nutritional status relate to when a living organism provides itself or is provided with edible substances (containing all nutrients) in their required daily amounts as well as how the intake relates to health. Chapter Fifty-two, "Environmental Perspectives: Climate Change." has L. E. Didia and O. A. Ekpete as its authors. It posits that climate change caused by both natural and anthropogenic factors has become a serious threat to the collective survival of humans on earth. So, deliberate steps to guarantee that all human elements contributing to the current environmental problem are checked can help prevent climate change and its repercussions. Chapter Fifty-three, which is on "Harnessing Artisanal Crude Oil Refining in Nigeria: Panacea for Her Economy and Environment." has Onyinye Ifeoma Ochuba as

its writer. It claims that Nigeria is the third largest producer of crude oil in Africa, yet she is a net importer of refined crude oil, which the government has been subsidizing for decades until recently. It suggests that integrating artisanal refineries into the downstream of the petroleum industry in Nigeria is a pragmatic way of solving the problems of bleeding economy and bleeding environment.

Bieye Renner Briggs's "Sustainable Environmental Resource Management: An Imperative for Socio-economic Development of Nigeria" continues the section, in Chapter Fifty-four. It addresses causes of climate change. It also discusses the impacts of these various factors, their interplay, synergy and tension on climate change, and the potential mitigation and adaptation strategies. Chapter Fifty-five is devoted to "Population Growth, Poverty and Soil Degradation in Nigeria." written by Jebbin Maclean Felix and Gamage Difurotogu. The paper investigates the effect of population growth and poverty on soil degradation. It notes that population growth and poverty are major determinants of soil degradation in Nigeria. It recommends that one man should not have more than two children in order to regulate the population growth. Chapter Fifty-six is devoted to "Climate Change, Food Insecurity Risk and Human Development in Nigeria: Assessing the Role of Income." In the paper, Amaka G. Metu, Jacob Edeh, Uju R. Ezenekwe, Uchenna N. Anyanwu and Alex Orji examine the moderating role of income in the food insecurity-human development nexus in Nigeria from 1990 to 2023. The study asserts that climate change harms Nigeria's ecosystem through contributing to food insecurity, and thus affects the achievement of human development in Nigeria. It concludes that income will play a major role in countering the negative influence of food insecurity in Nigeria. Chapter Fifty-seven ("Energy Demand and Climate Change in Nigeria") examines the nexus between climate change (proxied by temperature) and electricity demand (aggregate electricity sector's demand) in Nigeria. In this article, Ijeoma Emele Kalu and Okorie Stanley assert that temperature possesses a dual impact on electricity demand in Nigeria due to the nature of economy and lack of access to electricity at homes. Chapter Fifty-eight is Boma Tubotamuno and Isaac Olubiyi Oladosu's "Energy Poverty and Industrial Sector Performance in Nigeria." This study explore the impact of energy poverty on industrial sector performance in Nigeria from 1990 to 2023. It concludes that energy poverty has a significant impact on industrial sector performance in Nigeria.

Section G of the book is on "Technical/technology Perspectives." Chapter Fifty-nine, "Technological Perspective on Nigeria's Development." written by I. Ogundu and N. A. Njoku, begins the section. It examines key sectors within Nigeria's tech landscape, including fintech, e-commerce, agritech and healthtech, which have seen significant growth in recent years. It opines that, by prioritizing digital infrastructure, improving access to funding and fostering a more inclusive and skilled workforce, Nigeria can position itself as a leading hub for tech innovation in Africa and globally. "Digital Supply

Chain Technologies.” written by John Ohaka and Mac-Kingsley Ikegwuru, is Chapter Sixty. This paper identifies the main elements that constitute the digital supply chain transformation and highlights the major requirements and obstacles facing the transformation. For digital transformation to be successful, the help of the economic system is needed. Chapter Sixty-one, “Self-awareness Skills as an Instrument for Artificial Intelligence in Delivering Business Education Programme in Nigeria.” has S. O. Wagbara and Odiri Frank Egajivwie as its authors. It argues that emotional, cognitive physical and behavioural self-awareness skills are veritable indicators of effective AI delivery in business education programmes. These skills are critical for efficient use of AI tools in teaching and learning as well as effective learner engagement. Silverline N. Igweagbara, Temple Chigozilem Orji, Saturday S. Vareba, Boma Aseobarichu Aberebuofori’s “Application of Digital Technologies for Effective Delivery of Building Technology as a Course in TVET Institutions in Nigeria” forms Chapter Sixty-two. This paper examines the need for digitalization of Building Technology as a course in institutions running TVET programmes. It recommends that workshops should be organized for building technology teachers in all TVET institutions in Nigeria so as to enable them to digitalize the delivery of the course Building Technology. Chapter Sixty-three, “Perspective of Technology Education on Nigeria Economic Development.” has Reagan N. Robinson as its author. It observes that technology education plays a crucial role in modern learning by preparing individuals for a digitalized and technology-driven world.

Part of the section is Stanley N. N. Mandah’s “Understanding the Concept of Information and Communication Technology [ICT].” which is Chapter Sixty-six. The article opines that ICT is a topical issue that requires serious attention by every individual. It has come to stay and ought to be applied at each point in time. The old or new technologies can be applied to achieve a specific objectives. Chapter Sixty-five focuses on “Digital Trust: A Roadmap to Strengthening Organisational Survival of Commercial Banks in Rivers State.” written by Dumo Nkesi Opara and Seth Odu. The paper examines how digital trust strengthens organizational performance of commercial banks in Rivers State, Nigeria. It argues that commercial banks’ continuous implementation of multifactor authentication as well as customer engagement and protection against security threats, virtual risks and customer privacy will engender survival and competitive advantage. Chapter Sixty-six is entitled “AI-enabled Analytical Tools and Organizational Wellness of Commercial Banks in Rivers State, Nigeria: A Literary Discourse.” with Dumo Nkesi Opara and Iroanwusi O. Florence as its authors. It explores how AI-enabled analytical tools enhance organizational wellness of commercial banks in Rivers State. It stresses that AI-enabled analytical tools are mechanism which organizations can deploy to boost their financial health, product innovation and customer satisfaction.

In Section H, which comprises 3 paper, labelled Cultural Perspectives. In Chapter Sixty-seven, the first paper in this section, Harrison Iweka Nwachukwu's "Disruptions in Ukwuani and Ijaw Folklore" examines the evolution of African studies through the lens of Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore. The article focuses on the interplay between continuity and disruption across different historical periods. It notes that colonization, Western education, religion and modernization have influenced the preservation, adaptation or decline of oral traditions. Chapter Sixty-eight, "Globalization and Devaluation of African Culture: Convergence and Divergence." has Dienne Emimeke Henry as its author. It investigates the effect of globalization on African culture. It notes that the youth are the harbinger of change in any society but, in Africa, they continually have to struggle on whether to go with the global culture or stay with the devalued African culture. "Preserving Cultural Heritage and Traditions: The Textile Technology Paradigm." written by Chinwe Anyanwu and Chinedu C. Chukueggu, constitutes Chapter Sixty-nine. It argues that the textile technology paradigm offers veritable opportunities for immense exploration. Textiles serve as active or passive objects which convey information and can as well be regarded as billboards. Some iconic textile designs function as intentional metaphors for various agendas, communicating specific meanings and providing additional avenues for exploration.

Section I: Historical Perspectives begins with Chapter Seventy, "A Historical Analysis of State Violence in Nigeria: The Experience of the Orashi People." authored by Rufus Osaih. It posits that the Orashi people have faced decades of violence and human rights abuses perpetrated by oil companies and facilitated by the Nigerian state. This violence has resulted in significant human suffering, environmental degradation and economic displacement. Therefore, the article urges the Nigerian government and oil companies to take immediate action to address the human rights abuses and environmental damage inflicted upon the Orashi people. They should also work towards providing justice, compensation and reparations to affected communities. "Ogba and Her Neighbours: A Pre-colonial History of Concord and Discord." written by Rufus Osaih, forms Chapter Seventy-one. The article opines that the Ogba people have always had continuous interactions with their neighbours of Ekpeye, Ikwerre, Engenni, Obua/Odual and the Kalabari people from the precolonial times to the present. The intergroup relations promoted the cultivation and sustenance of friendly diplomacy between contiguous and far communities. These diplomatic relations culminated in cultural diffusion, direct borrowing and linguistic affiliation. Chapter Seventy-two, "Enhancing Diplomatic Relations of the Sahel States and the Rest of ECOWAS." has Dennis U. Ashara and Solomon Duru as its authors. It argues that the future of ECOWAS-Sahel relations lies in a shared vision that transcends national interests and prioritizes regional integration, peace and sustainable development. In Chapter Seventy-three, entitled "News Reportage and

Promotion of Peaceful Coexistence in Nigeria.” Ibiere Ken-Maduako and Okere Loveday examine the role of news reportage in promoting peaceful coexistence in Nigeria. It considers financial capability of households and savings in Nigeria, noting that higher levels of financial literacy promotes saving in formal banking institutions, while being female slightly reduces the likelihood of saving.

Section J (Linguistic and Media Perspectives) is the last section of the book. It has 6 articles. The first of them is Chapter Seventy-four and it is Gloria Eme-Worugji and Victoria Otonna Macaulay’s “Emergence of Technological Tools in English Language Pedagogy.” The article concentrates on the multifaceted impact of technology on language learning, particularly in the context of English language acquisition. It contends that there are many grey areas in language pedagogy where technology is useful, and that learning is faster and with wider reach when technology is employed. Chapter Seventy-five, “Effective Communication: Panacea for Peaceful Ethnic Relations in Nigeria.” has Isioma Christiana Nkenchor as its author. It explores the concepts of communication, effective communication, effective relations and the various ways in which effective communication can be utilized to achieve and sustain peaceful ethnic relations in Nigeria. It notes that promotion of dialogue, understanding, conflict resolution and social cohesion are effective communication techniques for peaceful ethnic relations. Williams W. Wodi’s “Nigeria: Repositioning the Mass Media in a Depoliticised Democratic Space in the Digital Age” is Chapter Seventy-six. The argument of this paper is that there cannot be true democracy without the people, and the people cannot make informed choices without a robust, free and independent media that does not pander to business interests. The mass media should serve as a robust platform for defending democratic values. Chapter Seventy-seven is devoted to Progress Umor Daniel’s “Social Media Postage of Sensationalism and Its Effects on Peaceful Co-existence.” It argues that sensationalism on social media or the mainstream media as regards information gathering and dissemination always encourages bias or is passionately encumbered with negative impressions of events rather than neutrality. Exposure to biased information creates mistrust among a group and leads to negative societal outcomes. Edwinah Amah, Belemenanya Friday Okocha and Mercy Finelady Ajienka’s “The Tapestry of Identity: Promoting Cultural Diversity within a Unified Nation.” Chapter Seventy-eight, is the penultimate chapter. It explores the intricate relationship between cultural diversity and national identity. It emphasises the crucial role of education in navigating this complex interaction. Education presents a powerful tool for reconciling cultural diversity and national identity. Kelechi Belinda Udeogu’s “Feminism Discourse on Twittersphere: The Digital Divide and Socio-economic Disparities in the Social Systems of Nigerian Women” is the last paper, Chapter Seventy-nine. It investigates the information and knowledge gap and the associated digital divide through feminism discourse on Twitter (now X). It

contends that socio-economic disparities also shapes the online involvements of viewpoints of the female and the general value of feminist engagement.

This book is a rich compilation of articles written by seasoned academics and researchers from various fields of knowledge. The perspectives presented are practicable and can engender economic growth and development if well utilised.

CHIBUZOR C. NWOBUEZE

2**PROFILE
of**

**PROF. OKECHUKU ONUCHUKU, DSSRS,
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FCIFIA, FIABBS, FIBAKM
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Professor Okechuku Onuchuku was born in Emohua in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria in the 1960s. His early education was in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. He attended the University of Port Harcourt, where he studied Economics. He was the best graduating student in the Economics Department in the 1990 set. He continued with his master's degree in the same course and university; he came out with Distinction in 1994. In 1998, he bagged his PhD. in Economics and proceeded to York University Canada, Schulich School of Business, Executive Education Centre, in 2009, to be certified in "Performance Indicator in Government Measurement and Management." His areas of specialization are Economic Theory and Policy and Quantitative Economics (Econometrics and Mathematical Economics).

Professor Onuchuku is a prolific writer. He has over 100 academic publications, including books, monograph, as well as articles in national and international journals. He also presented many conference papers in his field and other related fields. He is a member of many professional bodies in Nigeria and overseas and sits on the board of many reputable organizations. He is a life member of Nigerian Economic Society and was also a National Vice President of the society. He is Senior Fellow, Chartered Institute of Financial and Investment Analysts, Nigeria (FCIFIN); Fellow (Research), International Academy of Business and Behavioral Sciences (FIABBS), Hamden, Connecticut, United States of America; Fellow, National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria, FNIMN; and Fellow, Institute of Management Consultants, FIMC, among others.

He has many academic honours to his credit, and has served and still serving as adviser to many government agencies and international organisations, including FADAMA, USAID and World Bank. He was Head, Department of Economics and Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Port Harcourt. Professor Onuchuku was Director, University of Port Harcourt Business School and a member University of Port Harcourt Governing Council. He was also Chairman, Board of Directors, Rivers State Bureau on Public Procurement. Professor Onuchuku served as adviser to Rivers State Government on Government Programmes, Policy and Strategy. He was a Gold Medalist in Football, NUGA 1988 and NUGA 2004, as a goalkeeper and a team manager, respectively. He is currently the Vice-Chancellor Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

SECTION B

ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES

3

TRADE POLICY AND WOMEN TRADING SKILLS EMPOWERMENT IN THE SOUTH-SOUTH REGION OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between trade policy and women trading skills empowerment in the South-South region of Nigeria. The study examined three hundred and ninety-nine women entrepreneurs from a population of one hundred and ninety-one thousand, seven hundred and forty-five women entrepreneurs in the region. Two research objectives guided this study and the corresponding two hypotheses were formulated. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation was employed as the analytical tool in testing the formulated hypotheses. The study revealed that export promotion policy significantly influenced women trading skills empowerment. Furthermore, the study showed that AfCFTA (African Continental Free Trade Agreement) influenced women trading skills empowerment. Based on the findings and the reached conclusion, the study recommended that programmes under initiatives like **HerAfCFTA** and the **Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC)** should focus on a comprehensive approach that includes digital literacy, export regulations, e-commerce and financial management. The training sessions should be more region-specific, addressing the unique challenges and opportunities in the South-South region, such as the local industries of agriculture, oil and crafts.

Keywords: AfCFTA, skills development, export promotion policy, Nigerian export promotion council

1. Introduction

Nigeria, as Africa's largest economy, is home to a dynamic entrepreneurial landscape characterized by robust contributions from women. Women are integral to both formal and informal sectors, comprising about 41% of microenterprise ownership and 23% of small and medium enterprises (FATE Foundation, 2023). Their economic activities span agriculture, trade, services and manufacturing, making them vital drivers of growth. Despite their contributions, gender inequities in access to resources persist, particularly in accessing financial capital necessary for business expansion and sustainability (Women's World Banking, 2024). Women's entrepreneurship in Nigeria is not just about individual empowerment; it has broad implications for economic development, social equity and community resilience. A 2022 International Finance Corporation report highlighted that closing the gender gap in economic participation could increase Nigeria's

GDP by \$229 billion by 2025. This underscores the transformative potential of addressing barriers that hinder women's full economic participation.

The challenges Nigerian women face in securing business funding are multifaceted, rooted in structural, societal and cultural factors. A major issue is the patriarchal nature of asset ownership, where women are often excluded from owning land or properties that serve as collateral for loans (FATE Foundation, 2023). Studies revealed that the lack of collateral accounts for significant disparities in loan approvals between male and female entrepreneurs. Moreover, financial institutions in Nigeria often harbour implicit biases that favour male-led enterprises. Gendered assumptions about women's business acumen and risk profiles contribute to limited access to capital for female entrepreneurs. These biases are compounded by societal expectations, which often double the burden on women as they balance entrepreneurship with domestic responsibilities (Women's World Banking, 2024). Access to adequate funding is a critical enabler for business growth, innovation and sustainability. For Nigerian women entrepreneurs, it can mean the difference between operating a subsistence-level business and scaling to a competitive enterprise. Funding provides resources for acquiring advanced technologies, hiring skilled labour, expanding market reach and developing innovative products and services.

Empowering women with financial capital has ripple effects beyond individual businesses. Studies indicated that women are more likely than men to reinvest profits in education, healthcare and community development. Thus, providing funding to women entrepreneurs not only boosts economic productivity but also enhances social outcomes (IMF, 2022). Recent initiatives to enhance women's access to finance in Nigeria have shown promising results. Programmes such as gender-sensitive savings and credit schemes have been instrumental in bridging the funding gap. The Women's World Banking Initiative in 2022 collaborated with Nigerian banks to introduce savings products with optional credit for low-income women. The programme's success highlights the potential of tailored financial solutions to improve women's economic inclusion (Women's World Banking, 2024). Similarly, microfinance institutions have played a pivotal role in providing accessible loans to women entrepreneurs, particularly in rural areas. These institutions often adopt alternative lending models that do not require traditional collateral, thereby overcoming a key barrier faced by women. However, challenges such as high-interest rates and repayment pressures remain areas for improvement (World Bank, 2020).

To sustain and amplify the impact of funding for women entrepreneurs, many policy measures and innovative approaches are recommended. Firstly, adopting gender-lens investing practices can ensure that financial products and services address the unique needs of women entrepreneurs. This includes designing funding models that account for their dual roles as business owners and primary caregivers (FATE Foundation,

2023). Secondly, financial literacy and capacity-building programmes are crucial for empowering women to navigate the complexities of financial systems. Providing education on equity financing, digital payment systems and business management can enhance their ability to secure and utilize funds effectively. Thirdly, government and private-sector collaboration is essential to create an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs. Policies that enforce affirmative action in lending practices, reduce interest rates for women-led businesses and provide tax incentives for gender-inclusive financial institutions can drive systemic change (IMF, 2022).

In Nigeria, women entrepreneurs face significant challenges in accessing business funding. Despite the critical role they play in driving economic growth, only a small fraction of women-led businesses secure formal financing. For instance, studies show that women receive less than 10% of commercial loans in Nigeria, often due to restrictive collateral requirements, gender biases and limited financial literacy. Additionally, a substantial portion of women-owned enterprises operate in the informal sector, further limiting their eligibility for traditional financing mechanisms. These financial barriers perpetuate gender inequalities and stifle the potential of women entrepreneurs to contribute to national development (*Businessday*, 2023; We-Fi, 2023). Trade policies and skills development initiatives play a critical role in addressing the gender gap and empowering women in Nigeria. Women's participation in trade contributes significantly to economic development by enhancing household incomes and fostering inclusive growth. Despite their contribution, Nigerian women often face barriers such as limited access to markets, inadequate skills and restrictive regulatory environments, which hinder their full participation in both local and international trade.

In Nigeria, women entrepreneurs account for a significant portion of micro and small businesses but are underrepresented in formal trade activities. For example, only about 5% of female-led small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) engage in export activities, despite the interest of 40% of such businesses to enter international markets. Factors such as inadequate access to financial resources, lack of export training and limited inclusion in trade unions contribute to these challenges (Southern Voice, 2022). Recent trade policies, including initiatives under the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), provide opportunities for enhancing women's participation in trade. However, these policies must be paired with targeted skills development programmes to ensure women's readiness to compete effectively in new markets. Programmes such as the "SheTrades Initiative" and frameworks by the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) focus on building the capacity of women entrepreneurs through training and market access support (International Trade Centre, 2021).

Furthermore, investments in education and vocational training are essential to equip women with the skills needed to thrive in trade-related activities. Increasing women's involvement in trade unions and fostering gender equity in policymaking can

amplify their voices and address systemic biases that limit their economic opportunities. A comprehensive approach, integrating inclusive trade policies and targeted skills development initiatives, is crucial for empowering Nigerian women in trade and achieving broader economic goals (Southern Voice, 2022; World Bank, 2023). Research highlighted the potential of targeted trade policies to support women entrepreneurs in Nigeria by creating more inclusive trade frameworks, offering capacity-building initiatives, and ensuring gender-sensitive trade agreements (Akinmoladun, Fashola, & Ibrahim, 2023). For example, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), established in 2018, presents a unique opportunity for women entrepreneurs in Nigeria to access larger markets across Africa. However, scholars have argued that, without adequate policy measures, such as access to affordable financing, market information and skills development, the benefits of AfCFTA might not reach women entrepreneurs equitably (Adedeji & Oladipo, 2022). Moreover, trade policies must consider the socio-economic realities of women in Nigeria, such as the informal nature of many women-led businesses, which may limit their ability to fully engage with formal trade mechanisms (Ogunyemi & Akande, 2024).

Therefore, to ascertain the relationship between trade policy and women trade skills development, this study focused on how these policies (NEPC and AfCFTA) influence the ability of women to participate in international markets from the perspective of skills development. This is examined as conceptualized in Fig. 1.

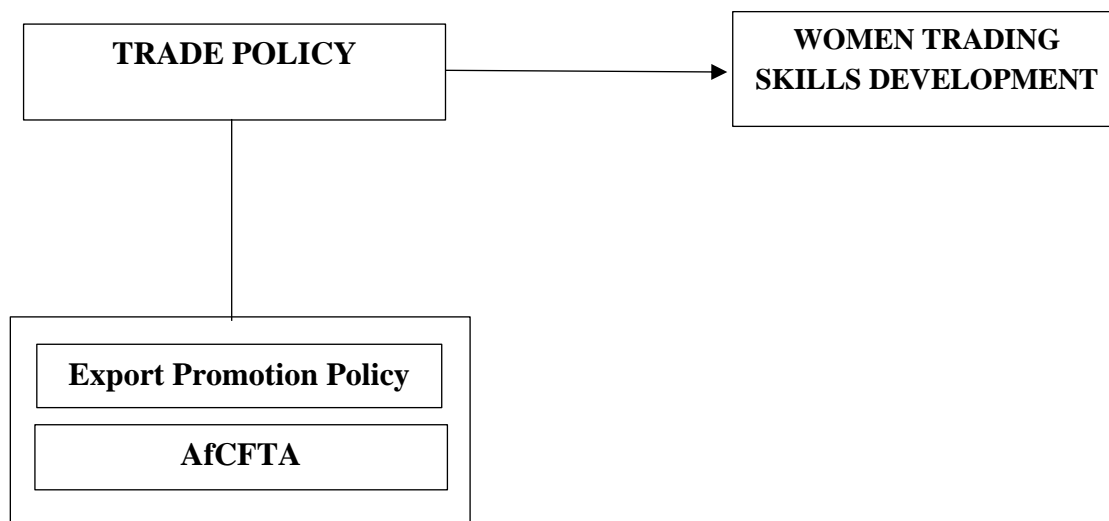


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework for the Relationship between Trade Policy and Women Skills Development

Source: Researcher's Conceptualization, 2024

The following questions were developed as a guide for this research:

- What is the relationship between Export Promotion Policy and women trading skills development in the South-South Region of Nigeria?
- How does AfCFTA influence women's trading skills development in the South-South Region of Nigeria?

Research Objectives

The following are the objectives of the study:

- Examining the relationship between Export Promotion Policy and women trading skills development in the South-South region of Nigeria; and
- Determining the influence of AfCFTA on women's trading skills development in the South-South region of Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between Export Promotion Policy and women trading skills development in the South-South region of Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between AfCFTA and women's trading skills development in the South-South region of Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

Trade Policy

One of the most widely accepted definitions of trade policy is that it refers to the set of governmental actions and strategies aimed at managing a country's external economic relations. According to Baldwin and Evenett (2021), trade policy is a collection of laws, regulations, and agreements that govern the movement of goods, services and capital across borders. Furthermore, they note the role of the state in shaping international trade through tariffs, subsidies, quotas and trade agreements. It is an active and strategic policy area that reflects a nation's political and economic goals (Baldwin & Evenett, 2021). Bown (2022) refines this definition by stressing the dynamic nature of trade policy, particularly in the light of trade wars and the rise of economic nationalism. He argues that trade policy is no longer merely a passive set of rules but rather an active tool for pursuing national interests, including economic security and domestic job creation. His perspective highlights how trade policy is used to regulate competition, protect nascent industries or achieve diplomatic objectives, reflecting a more interventionist approach to international trade.

A more globalized view is provided by Krugman (2023), who defines trade policy as a key mechanism in the broader context of global economic governance. He emphasizes the importance of trade agreements, such as those governed by the World

Trade Organization (WTO), in shaping the rules of international trade. For Krugman, trade policy is not only a domestic concern but also a tool for promoting multilateral cooperation and reducing trade barriers across the world. He situates trade policy as a key instrument in achieving international peace and economic cooperation, reflecting a liberal economic stance. In a similar vein, Bhagwati (2021) argues that trade policy, especially in the context of regional and global agreements, is a fundamental component of global governance structures. He contends that trade policy can promote peace by enhancing economic interdependence, which reduces the likelihood of conflict. Here, trade policy is viewed through the lens of promoting global public goods, such as stability and prosperity.

According to van Assche et al. (2023), trade policy is increasingly viewed as a tool for promoting sustainable development. They define it as a series of governmental actions that not only regulate international trade flows but also integrate environmental and social goals into trade agreements. More recently, the concept of trade policy has expanded to include national security considerations. In this context, trade policy is defined as an instrument of geopolitical strategy, where economic tools are used to achieve security objectives (Frieden, 2023). Liu and Zhou (2022) highlight how tariffs and other trade barriers are increasingly viewed as mechanisms to protect critical industries, reduce dependency on foreign supply chains and achieve technological superiority. This new dimension reflects the integration of trade policy with broader security policies, blurring the lines between economics and national defence.

Trade policy is increasingly recognized as a multipurpose tool that serves economic, geopolitical, environmental and social goals. It is no longer just about liberalizing trade; it also serves as a mechanism for achieving broader societal goals (Baldwin & Evenett, 2021; van Assche et al., 2023). In a study by Afolabi, Ajayi and Olaniyi (2021), trade policy is defined as the strategic approach adopted by the Nigerian government to regulate foreign trade activities with the aim of achieving macroeconomic goals, such as economic growth, poverty reduction and industrialization. This view aligns with the broader definition of trade policy as a government's plan for managing trade relations with the rest of the world, aiming to protect local industries while fostering growth (Afolabi, Ajayi, & Olaniyi, 2021).

Similarly, Igbalajobi and Ajibola (2023) emphasize the importance of trade policy in balancing external trade relations with the internal needs of economic self-sufficiency. According to them, trade policy in Nigeria is not only focused on export promotion but also on import substitution, aimed at reducing the nation's dependency on foreign goods. The government's active role in shaping trade policy, especially through tariffs and subsidies, is a critical aspect of economic sovereignty. According to Omojimate (2022), trade policy is perceived as a dual-purpose tool in Nigeria: a vehicle for opening up the

economy to global markets and a mechanism to support national development goals, particularly in the areas of industrialization and job creation. Trade policy in Nigeria has shifted from a protectionist stance to a more liberalized approach, especially after Nigeria's involvement in regional economic organizations, like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

However, the growing trend of trade liberalization has raised concerns regarding the vulnerability of local industries. As noted by Omojimate, while trade liberalization under AfCFTA and the World Trade Organization (WTO) framework is seen as a way to attract foreign investment, it has also exposed Nigeria to increased foreign competition, which, in some sectors, has negatively affected local producers. Therefore, Nigeria's trade policy is defined not merely as an economic strategy but also as a balancing act that seeks to foster competitiveness without undermining domestic industries (Omojimate, 2022). According to Nnadozie et al. (2024), trade policy in Nigeria is strongly influenced by political factors, including government priorities, international relations and global market dynamics. For instance, Nigeria's trade policy decisions are often shaped by its membership of international trade agreements, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the AfCFTA, and are designed to support its geopolitical interests. The strategic dimension of trade policy in Nigeria has been highlighted by Adediran and Akinola (2023), who argue that trade policy must also account for national security and regional political stability. They note that Nigeria's trade policy has evolved from focusing purely on economic outcomes to incorporating national security concerns, particularly in the light of rising regional tensions and the country's significant oil exports. Nigeria's trade policy cannot be fully understood without recognizing the intricate relationship between trade liberalization and political objectives.

As asserted by Kanu (2021), Nigeria's trade policy is increasingly being framed with attention to its potential impacts on environmental sustainability. This involves the inclusion of policies that discourage the export of raw materials while encouraging value-added processing, which supports both industrialization and environmental sustainability. Additionally, trade policy is increasingly being seen as a means of addressing social inequalities, particularly with regard to gender. Eze (2023) argues that the Nigerian government has begun to recognize the need for gender-sensitive trade policies that promote women's participation in both domestic and international markets. Trade policy, therefore, is also being defined as an inclusive tool aimed at achieving broader socio-economic equity.

According to Usman (2024), the lack of coherence and consistency in trade policy has been a persistent challenge in Nigeria. Trade policy decisions are often seen as short-term responses to immediate economic needs rather than long-term strategic planning. Furthermore, corruption and bureaucratic inefficiencies often hamper the effective

implementation of trade policies. For trade policy to fulfil its potential, Nigeria must develop a more coherent and transparent framework that aligns its economic objectives with global trade dynamics.

Trade Policy Dimensions

Export Promotion Policy

Export promotion strategies in Nigeria primarily target non-oil sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing and services. The policies include fiscal incentives, tax exemptions, export credit schemes and institutional support via agencies like the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) (Akeem, 2011). Theoretical frameworks such as comparative advantage and export-led growth guide these efforts, emphasizing the diversification of export products and markets (Todaro & Smith, 2011). Studies showed that export diversification is positively correlated with Nigeria's economic growth. Using econometric models, researchers found that non-oil exports, particularly in agriculture and manufacturing, significantly contribute to GDP. For instance, Matthee and Naude's regional analyses of sub-Saharan Africa suggest that diversified exports can stabilize revenues and reduce volatility associated with oil dependency (International Policy Brief, 2021).

Okunlola and Akinlo (2021) assessed agricultural export schemes, such as the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund (ACGSF), and identified improvements in export volumes but noted limited impacts due to insufficient funding and infrastructural deficits. Principal Component Analysis was used to construct an export promotion index, indicating positive but marginal effects on agricultural output growth. Exchange rate volatility remains a significant barrier to export promotion. Ikpesu and Okpe (2019) aver that stable exchange rates are essential for competitive pricing in international markets. Deregulation policies have had mixed impacts, with some studies showing adverse effects on agricultural exports due to inflationary pressures. The effectiveness of export promotion is hindered by weak institutional frameworks, corruption and inconsistent policies. Exporters face high transaction costs, limited access to finance and inadequate support services (Ajayi, 2022). Moreover, bureaucratic inefficiencies in the NEPC have slowed the implementation of critical initiatives. Abogan, Akinola, and Baruwa (2014) underscore the potential of non-oil sectors to drive economic diversification. Manufactured goods, solid minerals and services are underutilized despite significant potential, mainly due to infrastructure and market access limitations.

The SheTrades Nigeria Hub, launched in collaboration with the International Trade Centre (ITC), has emerged as a cornerstone initiative. Between 2018 and 2024, this programme trained over 7,800 women entrepreneurs in export readiness, product standardization and international trade practices. Empirical studies revealed that participants benefitted from improved market access and capacity to comply with

international trade regulations (*Daily Trust*, 2024; Clement, 2024). Clement (2024) further maintains that the major focus of the NEPC SheTrades initiative is a trade policy geared towards women capacity development on training on packaging and branding, access to export financing and grants, and networking opportunities with international buyers. Women in Export Development Programme (WEDP) was established to address gender disparities in Nigeria's export sector. By assigning women desk officers across NEPC regional offices, the programme provided tailored advisory services to women entrepreneurs. Researchers noted a 20% increase in export activities among female-led businesses engaged with WEDP between 2018 and 2022 (World Bank, 2023; Nnodim, 2024). The programme's components included export readiness workshops, assistance with navigating trade agreements, such as AfCFTA, and support for certification and compliance with international standards.

The Nigerian Export Promotion Council partnered Agrochains Consult to deliver in-depth training programmes for over 100 women-led businesses. The curriculum included global trade agreements, market dynamics and business scaling strategies. Six-month mentorship schemes ensured sustained guidance after training. Studies highlighted that 60% of the participants experienced measurable revenue growth within the first year after training (*Punch*, 2024; Ojo, 2024). Empirical data showed that NEPC facilitated grants and financial support for women-led SMEs. For example, the SheTrades initiative allocated significant funding to enhance women's export capabilities, directly impacting 7,800 enterprises by 2024. Financial barriers, a long-standing constraint for women exporters, have been mitigated through these targeted interventions (NEPC, 2024; Clement, 2024). Empirical evaluations indicated that NEPC programmes have significantly boosted women entrepreneurs' skills in branding, packaging and market intelligence. The training programmes have emphasized the importance of adapting to global standards, a critical factor in reducing export rejections (*Punch*, 2024; Clement, 2024).

Women's participation in NEPC programmes has translated into tangible economic outcomes. A 2023 study revealed that women-led SMEs engaged in NEPC initiatives, earning up to three times more than their domestic-only counterparts (WTO/ITC, 2023). Additionally, the participants reported increased business sustainability and job creation in their communities. Through compliance training and international networking opportunities, NEPC initiatives have improved the competitiveness of women entrepreneurs in global markets. For instance, the participants in the SheTrades Nigeria Hub successfully penetrated markets in Europe and North America, showcasing Nigerian products, such as textiles, crafts and processed foods (Nnodim, 2024).

AfCFTA

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), established in 2018 and became operational in 2021, is a significant step towards economic integration in Africa. It aims to create a single market for goods and services across the continent, enhance trade and boost economic growth. Nigeria, Africa's largest economy, officially joined AfCFTA in July 2019, signalling its commitment to regional economic collaboration. The AfCFTA is anchored to principles of trade liberalization, tariff reduction and enhanced regional integration. Its primary objectives include fostering industrialization, improving intra-African trade and enhancing global competitiveness. Studies underscored its alignment with Agenda 2063, a vision for inclusive economic growth on the continent. In the Nigerian context, these objectives align with national goals of diversification and reducing dependency on oil exports (Brookings, 2020; World Bank, 2021).

Nigeria's trade environment is characterized by a significant reliance on crude oil exports, with low levels of intra-African trade. Before AfCFTA, only 13.2% of Nigeria's exports were within Africa, reflecting structural trade barriers and limited export diversification (Brookings, 2020). The challenges include inadequate infrastructure, non-tariff barriers and concerns about foreign competition undermining local industries (Mhonyera & Meyer, 2023). Surveys of Nigerian businesses revealed optimism about AfCFTA's potential to reduce costs, expand markets and increase production capacity. However, there are concerns about the influx of substandard goods and unfair competition. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) particularly express mixed feelings, indicating the need for government support to leverage AfCFTA effectively (Brookings, 2020).

Women Skills Development

A common thread in the definitions of skills development is the emphasis on empowerment through knowledge acquisition and technical training. Guzmán Valle et al. (2024) describe women skills development as a dynamic process enabling women to achieve economic resilience, particularly in underserved sectors, like rural entrepreneurship. This approach integrates individual empowerment with broader systemic factors, such as access to technology and resources. Ng et al. (2020) broaden the definition to include social skills, leadership development, and entrepreneurial acumen. This holistic view ties skill enhancement to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to gender equality and poverty reduction. Similarly, BMC Women's Health (2023) highlights the role of digital literacy as a subset of skills development, framing it as essential in modern economies where ICT tools drive productivity and innovation.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), skills development encompasses training in technical, entrepreneurial and soft skills necessary

for economic participation and empowerment. It is closely tied to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 and 8, which emphasize gender equality and decent work for all, respectively (UNDP, 2019). Furthermore, the concept also emphasizes empowerment through education, technical training, and vocational guidance, tailored to bridging the gender gap in the Nigerian workforce. Education-focused definitions describe it as fostering the capacity of women to function as economic agents through literacy programmes and entrepreneurial training (Olawale & Olawale, 2017). Educational reforms, particularly adult literacy programmes and non-formal education, have also contributed significantly to skill acquisition among disadvantaged women, offering them pathways to self-reliance and reduced dependency on traditional roles (Maryann & Okonkwo, 2023).

Studies on skills development for Nigerian women identify its transformative impact. Women's skill acquisition programmes, such as tailoring, soap-making and ICT training, have been linked to poverty reduction and improved living standards. Odozi and Isah (2019) note that participation in such programmes increases household income and self-esteem among women. Additionally, frameworks like the Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (VET) model emphasize equipping women with hands-on skills, tailored to meeting local market demands. These programmes are often complemented by microfinance initiatives, providing capital for women to establish businesses (Muonagor & Okonkwo, 2023). Traditional gender roles often restrict women's participation in formal education and skills training, particularly in rural areas (Okoro & Okafor, 2018). Limited access to ICT resources disproportionately affects women, curbing opportunities for modern skills acquisition (Obi & Ogbuabor, 2020).

Empirical Review

Trade policies that facilitate market access often lead to increased employment opportunities for women. Research showed that exporting firms and industries integrated into global value chains (GVCs) employ a higher percentage of women. For instance, women constitute 33% of the workforce in exporting firms in developing economies, compared to 24% in non-exporting firms. These industries often invest in training programmes to upskill workers, which disproportionately benefits women in sectors like textiles and agribusiness (International Trade Centre, 2021; IMF, 2022). Empirical evidence from Nigeria demonstrates how trade openness positively impacts women's participation in formal labour markets, especially in manufacturing and service sectors. Free trade agreements (FTAs) that include gender-responsive clauses have been found to improve women's skills through targeted training programmes and capacity-building initiatives (UNCTAD, 2018).

Export-driven trade policies are associated with higher wages and better working conditions for women, incentivizing investment in their skills. Studies indicated that the average wage share of women in exporting firms is 6% higher than in non-exporting firms, reflecting better financial returns from skill acquisition (World Bank, 2022). In Nigeria, this dynamic is evident in the cocoa and garment sectors, where trade agreements have led to the establishment of training programmes focusing on technical skills. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has also been highlighted as a significant driver of women's skills development in Nigeria. By reducing tariffs and creating a unified market, the AfCFTA fosters competition and innovation, compelling firms to invest in workforce skills to meet international standards (UNDP, 2023).

The inclusion of gender-specific clauses in trade agreements has been gaining momentum since 2018. For example, the AfCFTA emphasizes women empowerment through capacity-building initiatives. These provisions ensure that women-owned businesses benefit from preferential trade terms and access to export markets. Furthermore, the creation of training hubs under these agreements enhances women's managerial and technical skills, preparing them for leadership roles in trade (UNCTAD, 2020; ITC, 2021). In addition, digital trade policies have played a transformative role in expanding women's access to e-commerce platforms. These platforms often offer training in digital marketing, financial literacy and supply chain management, essential for women entrepreneurs entering the global market (IMF, 2022). The AfCFTA has encouraged women to transition from informal to formal employment, particularly in agriculture and light manufacturing. This shift necessitates skill upgrading, which trade-driven programmes have partially addressed (UNDP, 2023). Trade facilitation programmes in Nigeria, such as the National Export Promotion Council (NEPC), have launched initiatives targeting women entrepreneurs. These programmes focus on enhancing export readiness through training in product quality, packaging and market analysis (ITC, 2021). Nigerian women have engaged in digital trade, supported by policies promoting Internet access and e-commerce literacy. This trend underscores the importance of integrating digital skills into broader trade-related training frameworks (IMF, 2022).

3. Methodology

In this study, the cross-sectional research design was adopted. Cross-sectional research design "is an observational research method where data is collected from a population, or a representative subset, at a single point in time" (Kumar, 2023, 12). According to Fink (2023:7), the cross-sectional research design "is used to assess the prevalence of outcomes from a population, identify relationships between variables, and understand current conditions or attitudes."

The population of this study, cut across women within the South-South region of Nigeria. The term population “refers to the entire group of individuals or elements that a study aims to understand or make inferences about, and it represents all subjects that meet the specific criteria defined by the research question” (Creswell & Creswell, 2023, 10). It included women employees in the six South-South states (Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta, Akwa-Ibom, Edo and Cross River States).

Table 1: Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in South-South Nigeria

States	Total MSME in:	Men Employment	Women Employment	MSME per state
Akwa Ibom (UYO)	1,357,412	28,213	46,546	1,887
Bayelsa (Yenegoa)	548,049	4,669	7,214	300
Cross River (Calabar)	1,020,384	31,592	25,979	1,456
Delta (Asaba)	1,560,679	26,618	31,694	1,524
Edo (Benin)	924,944	61,024	44,793	2,677
Rivers (Port Harcourt)	2,129,780	30,368	35,519	1,658
Total	7,541,248	182,484	191,745	9,502

Source: SMEDAN and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)

The total women employed in MSMEs in South-South, as shown in Table 1, was 191,745 women. This number was used as the total population in this study. The researchers adopted the simple random sampling technique. In the simple random sampling technique, the researchers randomly selected the sampling units that were included in the study because they were representative of the target population (Baridam, 2001). Taro Yamane’s formula was applied in determining the total sample size from the accessible population: The total sample size was calculated mathematically using Taro Yamane’s formula as shown below:

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

Using the proportional sample, the sample size was obtained as follows:

Where

n	=	Desired Sample size
N	=	Population size
l	=	Constant
e	=	Degree of error expected.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Therefore: } N &= 191,745 \\
 e &= 5\% = 0.05 \\
 \text{Thus: } n &= ? \\
 n &= \frac{191,745}{1 + 191,745(0.05)^2} \\
 &= \frac{191,745}{1 + 191,745(0.0025)} \\
 &= \frac{191,745}{480.3625} \\
 n &= 399
 \end{aligned}$$

The sample size for this study was three hundred and ninety-nine (399).

The individual MSMEs' sample size was scientifically determined and distributed for each of the MSMEs in South-South respectively using Bourley (1964) formula:

$$n_h = \frac{N_h * n}{N}$$

Where:

n_h = Sample size for each MSME

N_h = Population size for each MSME

N = Total population size

n = Total sample size

Table 2: Sample Size Distribution using Bourley's Technique (Proportional Allocation Formulae)

State	Women	Sample Size Distribution Using Bourley's Technique (Proportional Representation)
Akwa Ibom (UYO)	46,546	97
Bayelsa (Yenegoa)	7,214	15
Cross River (Calabar)	25,979	54
Delta (Asaba)	31,694	66
Edo (Benin)	44,793	93
Rivers (Port Harcourt)	35,519	74
Total	191,745	399

Field Survey Computed by the Authors (2024) and NBS/SMEDAN

The research obtained its data only from the primary source. The primary data were gathered through a questionnaire. Simple and direct questions were used throughout the questionnaire, and the complicated ones were avoided. The 4-point Likert scale was used to quantify the study's variables, including the predictor and criterion variables (4= very high, 3= high, 2 = low, and 1= extremely low). The 4-point Likert scale allows for distinct responses without overcomplicating the survey, thus improving response rates and data quality (Lee & Adams, 2024).

The criterion variable, which was women entrepreneurship capacity, was operationalized in women business partnership/networking, access to business funding and business start-ups, and measured against the predictor variable, which was trade policy. The data collected were coded, keyed in the computer and analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25. The hypotheses were examined using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation. Numbers were calibrated on SPSS version 25.0. The study's hypotheses were tested at 5 percent ($P < 0.05$) level of significance in a two-tailed test.

4. Analysis and Discussions

Table 3: Questionnaire Return Rate

S/N	Respondents Categories or Cluster	Number Administered	Number Returned	Percentage (%)
1	Akwa Ibom (UYO)	$n_b = 97$	70	72.16%
2	Bayelsa (Yenegoa)	$n_b = 15$	11	68.75%
3	Cross River (Calabar)	$n_b = 54$	36	66.67%
4	Delta (Asaba)	$n_b = 66$	51	77.27%
5	Edo (Benin)	$n_b = 93$	72	77.42%
6	Rivers (Port Harcourt)	$n_b = 74$	60	81.08%
	Total	$n_b = 399$	300	75%

Source: Researchers' Field Data (2024)

Table 3 shows that out of the 399 copies of the questionnaire administered to management and staff members of the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) registered women export firms in South-South sample, 300 were returned in usable form, representing 75% of the sample returned in usable form.

Hypotheses Testing

With regard to the three formulated hypotheses, the Spearman Correlation derived from the research instrument indicated the acceptability of the stated projections. The probability values were used as an indicator for rejection or accepting the significance of a hypothesis.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix for the Relationship between Export Promotion Policy and AfCFTA and Women Trading Skills Development in South-South Region of Nigeria

			WSkills	ExportPol	AfCFTA
Spearman's rho	WSkills	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.725**	.688**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	300	300	300
	ExportPol	Correlation Coefficient	.725**	1.000	.791**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	300	300	300
	AfCFTA	Correlation Coefficient	.688**	.791**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	300	300	300

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

Source: SPSS output, 2024.

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between Export Promotion Policy and women trading skills development in the South-South region of Nigeria.

Table 4 demonstrates a significant and positive relationship between export promotion policy and women trading skills development in the South-South Region of Nigeria. It also shows high correlation statistics in relationship, which implies a direct relationship. However, the null hypothesis was rejected and its alternative form accepted because the probability statistics indicated a value of 0.000, which was less than 0.05, at the 95% confidence interval for which the SPSS output were done. According to this, "Export Promotion Policy correlates to improved women trading skills development in the South-South region of Nigeria."

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between AfCFTA and women's trading skills development in the South-South region of Nigeria.

Table 4 demonstrates a significant and positive relationship between AfCFTA and women trading skills development in the South-South Region of Nigeria. It also shows high correlation statistics in relationship, which implies a direct relationship. However, the null hypothesis was rejected and its alternative form accepted because the probability statistics indicated a value of 0.000, which was less than 0.05, at the 95% confidence interval for which the SPSS output were done. According to this, "AfCFTA influences women trading skills development in the South-South region of Nigeria."

Discussion of Findings

Export Promotion Policy and Trade Skills Development for Women in the South-South Region of Nigeria

Export promotion policies integrate training as a core component to build women's competencies. Initiatives like SheTrades Nigeria Hub offer tailored training sessions covering export readiness, market entry strategies and crisis management. Women are also introduced to digital tools that facilitate international trade, thereby expanding their skills in digital marketing and e-commerce (NEPC, 2024; Southern Voice, 2024). Access to credit and international markets has been a persistent challenge for women in trade. Export promotion programmes often pair skill development with financial inclusion strategies, providing women-led businesses with financing options and export incentives. These initiatives are instrumental in preparing women entrepreneurs to meet global standards and penetrate new markets (ITC, 2024).

Gender-responsive trade policies have significantly enhanced the inclusivity of export promotion frameworks. By addressing structural barriers, such as regulatory constraints and discriminatory practices, these policies create a supportive environment for women traders. For example, initiatives under the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) emphasize gender equity in trade opportunities, fostering skill acquisition and entrepreneurship among Nigerian women (Southern Voice, 2024). Therefore, this paper affirms that export promotion policy influences women trade skills development in the South-South region of Nigeria.

AfCFTA and Women's Trade Skills Development in the South-South Region of Nigeria

One of the key areas through which AfCFTA influences women's trade skills development is capacity building. Programmes aimed at providing women entrepreneurs with technical, entrepreneurial and digital skills are essential to their success in cross-border trade. The HerAfCFTA initiative, launched by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), plays a crucial role in this regard. The initiative focuses on empowering Nigerian women-led MSMEs by offering training on trade regulations, digitalization and export procedures. In 2024, HerAfCFTA held workshops to enhance

digital literacy and equip women with the necessary tools to navigate e-commerce platforms for international trade (UNDP, 2024). This has led to increased confidence and competence in managing export businesses. Further, the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) has also partnered various stakeholders to provide export readiness training, specifically aimed at equipping women with the skills needed for global markets. These initiatives have provided women with greater knowledge of international trade rules, quality standards and logistics, all critical to successfully exporting goods within the AfCFTA framework (NEPC, 2024).

The promise of AfCFTA to facilitate greater market access has been instrumental in enhancing women's skills in navigating the complexities of global trade. Market research and support in identifying trade opportunities within AfCFTA countries are critical components of women's trade skill development. A 2023 study by Abubakar and Ibrahim indicated that women entrepreneurs in Nigeria, particularly those in agriculture and manufacturing, benefitted from increased access to market data and networks that helped them identify new opportunities for product distribution across African borders (Abubakar & Ibrahim, 2023). Additionally, trade fairs and business networking events organized under the AfCFTA framework provide platforms for Nigerian women to connect with potential clients, investors and partners. These events help women develop essential interpersonal and business networking skills, which are crucial for expanding their enterprises within the AfCFTA market. Networking also offers women the opportunity to learn from other successful entrepreneurs, further enhancing their trade skills (UNDP, 2024).

Despite the benefits of increased market access, many women entrepreneurs still face challenges in accessing capital for expanding their businesses. However, initiatives under AfCFTA have begun addressing this gap by providing financial support tailored for women entrepreneurs. Programmes such as the African Trade Finance Programme (ATFP), aimed at facilitating access to financing for SMEs in Nigeria, specifically target women-led businesses (Economic Commission for Africa, 2023). This access to finance has enabled Nigerian women entrepreneurs to scale their businesses and engage in larger volumes of cross-border trade. The promise of AfCFTA to simplify customs procedures and trade facilitation measures has been crucial for improving women's trade skills. Prior to AfCFTA, Nigerian women entrepreneurs faced numerous obstacles in exporting goods, including high customs duties and complicated procedures. The AfCFTA protocol aims to reduce such barriers, thereby making it easier for women to engage in international trade. This has provided women with an understanding of new trade facilitation mechanisms, such as simplified customs procedures and logistical support, which have enhanced their efficiency in handling export processes (Southern Voice, 2024).

However, challenges remain, particularly concerning the high cost of logistics, inadequate infrastructure and a lack of awareness about the full scope of AfCFTA benefits. Olamide et al. (2023) aver that, while some women entrepreneurs have benefited from these trade facilitation measures, many still lack the capacity to effectively navigate the new regulatory environment due to insufficient training and information on how to access these benefits. As part of AfCFTA's broader agenda to foster digital integration, Nigerian women entrepreneurs are also gaining important digital trade skills. The increased reliance on e-commerce platforms within AfCFTA's framework is enabling women to build essential skills in online marketing, digital sales strategies and e-payment systems. A significant portion of Nigerian women-led SMEs has been empowered through training programmes that focus on e-commerce and digital business operations (HerAfCFTA, 2024).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The relationship between trade policy, particularly export promotion and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and women's trade skills development in the South-South region of Nigeria is crucial for enhancing economic participation and empowerment. Over the years, various trade policies, including export promotion initiatives and the AfCFTA framework, have had a profound impact on the development of women entrepreneurs, especially those in the South-South, who face unique socio-economic challenges.

Export promotion policies, implemented by agencies like the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC), have provided essential capacity-building programmes for women entrepreneurs. These programmes, which focus on skills like export readiness, trade regulations, market access and financial literacy, have helped women in the South-South region enhance their trade competencies. As a result, women-led businesses in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and handicrafts have experienced increased participation in international markets, thus fostering economic independence and business growth.

The AfCFTA offers a larger, integrated market that significantly expands opportunities for Nigerian women in the South-South region. By reducing tariffs and trade barriers, it enables women entrepreneurs to access more regional markets, facilitating trade in goods and services across African borders. Programmes under AfCFTA, like the HerAfCFTA initiative, have been instrumental in training women on digital tools, e-commerce and logistics, helping them refine their trade skills and navigate the complexities of cross-border commerce. The promise of increased market access and

better trade facilitation is poised to bridge the gender gap in trade participation, providing Nigerian women, especially those in the South-South, with a platform for growth.

In conclusion, while trade policies like export promotion and AfCFTA have positively influenced the development of women's trade skills in the South-South region of Nigeria, sustained efforts are needed to overcome existing challenges. Strengthening women's access to digital tools, finance, and information on trade regulations will be critical to ensuring that the full potential of these policies is realized. Further, addressing socio-cultural barriers and providing robust support systems for women entrepreneurs will be essential for maximizing the opportunities that these trade policies offer.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the study recommends the following;

- Programmes under initiatives like **HerAfCFTA** and the **Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC)** should focus on a comprehensive approach that includes digital literacy, export regulations, e-commerce and financial management. The training sessions should be more region-specific, addressing the unique challenges and opportunities in the South-South region, such as the local industries of agriculture, oil and crafts.
- In order for the South-South region of Nigeria to maximize the benefits of AfCFTA and export promotion policies, it is crucial for the government and the private sector to invest in improving the logistics infrastructure in the region, which includes upgrading transport networks, establishing efficient trade routes and ensuring the availability of reliable customs and clearing services.
- Finally, AfCFTA and NEPC should introduce mentorship training. With this, women in the South-South region would benefit from targeted mentorship programmes with successful women entrepreneurs and industry experts who can provide guidance on scaling businesses, navigating trade regulations and overcoming barriers in international markets. This could help build confidence and enhance the trade skills needed to compete in the AfCFTA market.

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4**CORRUPTION, INCOME INEQUALITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
METRIX IN NIGERIA****By****Edward Wasurum**wasurumedward@yahoo.com**&****Orijj Esther Chimekwa**chime.ogolosingha@gmail.com**Abstract**

Building on the theoretical argument of the grease in the wheels and sand in the wheels' theories of corruption, this study investigated the effect of corruption on economic growth in Nigeria when moderated by income inequality for the period 1996Q1 - 2020Q2. The study adopted the Johansen cointegration framework, vector error correction model, impulse response function, variance decomposition and Granger causality test in estimating the effects of corruption on economic growth. This time series study revealed that the corruption perception index had a positive effect on the dependent variable, while foreign direct investment had a negative effect in the short run. Also, it was established that unidirectional causality ran from per capita income (PCI) to corruption perception index (CPI) and from gini coefficient (GINI) to per capita income (PCI). The impulse response function and forecast error decomposition showed that the introduction of income inequality and foreign direct investment made us accept the grease on the wheel's theory of corruption. Therefore, the study concluded that the menace of corruption in Nigeria is triggered by the expanding gap between the rich and the poor and that, in the short run, corruption leads to an increase in economic growth. This study highlights the cautious acceptance of the grease in the wheel's theory due to its long-run negative expectations in a fragile nation like Nigeria.

Introduction

Corruption is a global phenomenon that varies in intensity across countries (Montes & Luna, 2021). It is regarded as an extraordinary crime because it undermines social order by prioritizing the interests of a few at the expense of others (Yunan, 2018). Recent economic studies have highlighted the significant influence of corruption and income inequality on economic growth, prompting efforts to enhance institutional efficiency to mitigate corruption and inequality while fostering economic development (Amar & Pratama, 2020; Islam & McGillivray, 2020). World Bank (1992) identifies the roots of corruption as complex, deeply entrenched in the political and economic contexts of each nation.

Osoba (1996) attributes the institutionalization of corruption in Nigeria to the decolonization period, which influenced political activities, communication and competition. He argues that the government played a central role in fostering what has become known as “settlement syndrome.” Corruption is not confined to any specific governance system; it exists in democratic, dictatorial, feudal, capitalist and socialist societies (Dike, 2005). Economic growth is defined as an increase in an economy’s capacity to produce goods and services over time (Aiguh, 2013). Corruption is widely recognized as a factor that can significantly influence this growth.

Corruption is widely regarded as the root cause of Nigeria’s socio-political and economic challenges (Ebekozen, 2020). Studies have traced its pervasive presence to various political regimes (Aluko, 2021). Examples include cases involving prominent Nigerians such as Azikiwe and Adegoke Adelabu during the First Republic, Atiku Abubakar’s alleged Gulf War windfall, and scandals like the KBR and Siemens bribery cases. Notable incidents also include those of former officials like Tafa Balogun, James Ibori and Lucky Igbiniedion, who faced corruption charges involving billions of dollars. More recent examples include Babachir Lawal’s ₦200 million contract scandal, Abba Kyari’s alleged ₦500 million bribe from MTN and Abdulrasheed Maina’s alleged embezzlement of over ₦2 billion.

The conceptualization of corruption can be broadly viewed from two schools of thought. The first, known as the Grease in the Wheels Theory, suggests that corruption may accelerate economic growth by bypassing inefficiencies in bureaucratic systems (Méon & Weill, 2008). Conversely, the Sand in the Wheels Theory argues that corruption introduces systemic leakages that hinder economic growth (Leff, 1964; Mauro, 1995; Mo, 2001; Méndez & Sepúlveda, 2006). Both perspectives fail to adequately address the role of income inequality as a critical factor driving corruption, particularly in developing nations like Nigeria. Income inequality refers to disparities in resource distribution among individuals or groups, with a higher concentration of wealth typically held by a small fraction of the population (Ogbeide & Agu, 2015; Kopp et al., 2020).

Despite the establishment of anti-corruption agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), efforts to curb corruption have largely been unsuccessful. Transparency International (TI) reported that Nigeria scored 24/100 in corruption perception indices for both 2021 and 2022, indicating persistent challenges. Critics argue that anti-corruption campaigns often appear selective, with political officeholders frequently escaping accountability through plea bargains or affiliations with the ruling party.

Empirical studies on the relationship between corruption, income inequality and economic growth in Nigeria reveal mixed results. While some studies found a negative correlation between corruption and economic growth (Matthew & Adegboye, 2013;

Rotimi et al., 2013; Adinde & Stephannie, 2017; Abiloro et al., 2019), others claimed that corruption might, in certain contexts, spur growth (e.g. Onakoye & Folorunsho, 2015). These findings highlight a gap in the literature regarding the role of income inequality in shaping the relationship between corruption and economic growth.

To address this gap, this study examined the effect of corruption on economic growth in Nigeria, factoring in the influence of income inequality as a moderating variable. Using time series data from 1996Q1 to 2020Q2, sourced from the *Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletins* and World Bank development indicators, this study provides a comprehensive analysis.

The subsequent sections review the existing literature to frame the hypotheses, outline the model calibration and empirical analysis, and conclude with interpretations, discussions and summary of findings.

Literature Review

This study explores three key perspectives: the effect of corruption on economic growth, the effect of inequality on economic growth and the effect of corruption on economic growth when moderated by income inequality. While the first two perspectives have been extensively studied and are grounded in theoretical frameworks in both developed and developing countries, the third perspective has received limited attention and forms the core of this study. Before exposing these views, it is imperative to do conceptual clarifications.

Corruption

Corruption is a household word in Nigeria and so very easy to talk about, but like many other complex phenomena, it is difficult to define it in a concise and concrete term. According to Bussell (2015), there are a lot of different definitions of corruption. This is because different people interpret corruption differently due to differences in individuals, ideology, discipline, cultural background, level of exposure and political leaning. Urien (2012) says that corruption is coined from the Latin word *corruptus*, which in essence means “to destroy” or “to break.” For Waziri (2010), corruption comes from the Greek word *coropius*, meaning an aberration or a misnomer; hence, corruption is a negation or shift from the originally intended purpose or plan of what was established or designed to the extent that it has become an aberration or a misnomer Hornby’s (2010) *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English* defines corruption as dishonest or illegal behaviour, especially by people in authority, in return for money or to get an advantage; the act or effect of changing, or of being changed, for the worse; a departure from what is pure, moral, simple, or correct.

Forms and Types of Corruption

CBN (2006), as cited by Ola, Mohammad, and Andi (2014), divides corruption into seven distinct types: autogenic, defensive, extortive, investive, nepotistic, supportive and transactive.

1. Autogenic corruption is self-generating and typically involves only the perpetrator. A good example is what happens in cases of insider trading. A person learns of some vital information that may influence stocks in a company and either quickly buys or gets rid of large amounts of stocks before the consequences arising from this information come to pass.
2. Defensive corruption involves situations where a person needing a critical service is compelled to bribe in order to prevent unpleasant consequences from being inflicted on his interests. For instance, a person who wants to travel abroad within a certain time frame needs a passport in order to undertake the journey but is made to pay bribes or forfeit the trip. Personal corruption is used in defence.
3. Extortive corruption is the behaviour of a person who demands personal compensation in exchange for services.
4. Investive corruption is the provision of goods and services without a direct link to a specific favour in the present, but in anticipation of a future situation in which the favour may be required.
5. Nepotistic corruption refers to the preferential treatment of or the unjustified appointment of friends or relatives to public office in violation of the accepted guidelines.
6. Supportive corruption is a type that does not usually involve money or immediate gain but involves actions taken to protect or strengthen the existing corruption. For example, a corrupt regime or official may prevent the election or appointment of an honest person or government for fear that the individual or government might be probed by the successor(s).
7. And finally, transactive corruption refers to situations where two parties are mutually willing partners or participants in corrupt practises to the advantage of both parties. For example, a corrupt businessperson may willingly bribe a corrupt government official in order to win a tender for a certain contract.

Ogbonnaya (2015) identifies four types of corruption, as follows:

- Moral corruption: This is exhibited in sexual pervasiveness, greed, especially in interpersonal relationships, a loose or uncontrollable tongue that leaks secrets or slanders, indecent dressing or appearance, etc.

- Economic corruption includes manufacturing fake drugs, adulteration of drinks, piracy, which is copying another person's intellectual work to illegally enrich oneself (plagiarism), and fraud at all levels.
- Political and bureaucratic corruption is the illegal, unethical and unauthorised exploitation of one's political or official position for personal gain. It has to do with public affairs—goods, fortunes, agencies and resources. It is, therefore, corruption against the state or its agencies by a person holding an official position in pursuit of private or personal profit.
- Electoral corruption has to do with electoral frauds, such as election rigging, manipulation, ballot stuffing, registration of the underage, and many others. According to Urien (2012), there are different forms of corruption, but the two most critical are political corruption and bureaucratic corruption. Others are bribery, fraud, embezzlement, extortion, favouritism and nepotism.
- Political corruption is also called grand corruption. This takes place at the highest levels of political authority. It occurs when politicians and political decision-makers, who are entitled to formulate, establish and implement laws in the name of the people, are themselves corrupt. It also takes place when policy formulation and legislation are tailored to benefiting politicians and legislators. Political corruption is sometimes seen as similar to corruption through greed, as it affects the manner in which decisions are made, manipulates political institutions and rules of procedure, and distorts the institutions of government. Thus, government officials, political officials or employees seek illegitimate personal gains through actions such as bribery, extortion, cronyism, nepotism, patronage, graft and embezzlement. It also includes the purchase of votes with money, promises of office or special favours, coercion, intimidation and interference with the freedom of election. Corruption in the office involves the sale of legislative votes, administrative or judicial decisions, or government appointments. Also, disguised payment in the form of gifts, legal fees, employment, favours to relatives, social influence, or any relationship that sacrifices the public interest and welfare with or without implied payment of money is usually considered corrupt.
- Bureaucratic corruption: This occurs in public administration or at the implementation end of politics. This kind of corruption has been branded low-level and street-level. It is a kind of corruption that citizens encounter daily at places of work, like hospitals, schools, local licencing offices, police stations and tax offices. Bureaucratic petty corruption, which is seen as similar to corruption of need, occurs when one obtains a business from the public sector through an inappropriate procedure. Also known as "institutional corruption," corrupt actions or policies within an organisation that break the law, subjugate humans in unlawful

manners, discriminate against humans based on race, ethnicity, culture or orientation, or degrade other humans or groups for that institution's profit.

- Bribery: This is a payment in money or kind that is taken or given in a corrupt relationship. Kickbacks, payoffs, sweeteners, palm oil, and so on are examples of these.
- Fraud: This involves some kind of trickery, swindle, and deceit, such as counterfeiting, racketing, smuggling, forgery, and over-invoicing of government contracts (procurement scam).
- Embezzlement: This is the theft of public resources by public officials. It is when a state official steals from the public institution where she or he is employed. In Nigeria, the embezzlement of public funds is one of the most common ways of economic accumulation, perhaps due to the lack of strict regulatory systems.
- Extortion: This is money or other resources extracted through coercion, violence, or threats to use force. The police, customs officers, and other security officers are the main culprits of this in Nigeria.
- Favouritism: This is a mechanism of power abuse in the highly biased distribution of state resources. However, this is seen as a natural human proclivity to favour friends, family, and anybody close or trusted.
- Nepotism: This is a special form of favouritism in which officeholders prefer their kinsfolk and family members. It occurs when one is exempted from the application of certain laws or regulations or given undue preference in the allocation of scarce resources.

Measurement of Corruption

Given their illegal nature, corrupt transactions are typically cloaked in secrecy and therefore cannot be systematically recorded. Thus, no official aggregate statistical records (hard data) of the incidence of corruption exists. Statistics on the criminal prosecution of corrupt activities are as much or more an indicator of the legal tolerance of corrupt practises than of their prevalence in a given jurisdiction. For this reason, available aggregate measures of the prevalence of corruption rely on the perception of economic agents dealing routinely with government officials. Their assessments are recorded periodically and statistically processed in various ways to provide ordinal and cardinal measures of corruption under different jurisdictions (nations or territories).

The most prominent among these corruption measures are those used in most empirical studies of the impact of corruption on economic activities:

- The Corruption Perception Index (CPI), produced by Transparency International (TI),
- The Heritage Foundation (HF), produced by the Economic Freedom Index (EFI), and

- The Control of Corruption (CC) indicator, produced by the World Wide Governance Indicator (WGI), a project of the World Bank.

Given the similarities in their preparation methods, the correlation among these alternative indicators is very high. For example, the correlation coefficient between the most recent available Control of Corruption and the Corruption Perception Index indicators is 0.986 (0.986) and while these indicators have been widely used in empirical research, some authors have questioned the accuracy of these measures and the validity of their use in empirical research (Campbell 2013). However, notwithstanding the validity and reliability of perception indicators as measures of the reality of corruption, they remain a reference for people of both business and political leadership to make decisions, explaining their use in gauging the impact of corruption on the economy and they were used in this study.

Corruption Perception Index (CPI)

The CPI is an index published annually by Transparency International since 1995 that ranks countries by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys. It generally defines corruption as “the misuse of public power for private benefit.”

Research papers published in 2007 and 2008 examined the economic consequences of corruption perception, as defined by CPI. The researchers found a correlation between a higher CPI and higher long-term economic growth, as well as an increase in gross domestic product (GDP) growth of one point seven (1.7) percent for every unit increase in the country’s perception score (Huntington, 1968).

Income Inequality

The concept of inequality is at the heart of sustainable economic development. The gap between the rich and the poor may be a worldwide problem, but in Nigeria, the scale of inequality is extreme and worrisome. In one day, the richest Nigerian man can earn from his wealth eight thousand (8,000) times more than what the poorest spend on average in one year for their basic consumption (*Guardian*, 2001).

And the paradox of growth in Nigeria is that, as the country gets richer, only a few people benefit, while the majority continues to suffer from poverty and deprivation. Oxfam (2017), quoting the former Minister of Finance, Okonjo-Iweala, notes that “in Nigeria, it is clear that the top ten (10) percent of the population is capturing most of the growth, and the people at the bottom are being left behind. If we don’t put our minds to this problem, the whole economy may be in danger.” This disparity, she added, is such

that the amount of money that the richest Nigerian man can earn annually from his wealth is sufficient to lift two million people out of poverty for one year.

As Federal Office of Statistics (2011), cited by Aladejana, Alabi, and Bolaji (2019), puts it, the existence of income inequality in Nigeria is deep, severe and widespread. For example, in 2010, the distribution of aggregate household income revealed that about forty (40) percent of the population are low-income earners; only fifteen point seven (15.7) percent of aggregate households are average income earners, while twenty (20) percent of other households received forty-two point nine (42.9) percent of total household income. In support, CBN (2010) note that almost five percent (5%) of Nigerian families received sixteen (16) percent of aggregate household income, whereas the lowest twenty (20) percent received only four point seven (4.7) percent of aggregate household income over the years (Aladejana, Alabi & Bolaji, 2019).

Additionally, World Development Indicators (2013) and Central Bank of Nigeria (2013) claim that the level of income inequality astronomically rose from fifteen point seven (15.7) percent in 2016 to seventy-three (73) percent in 2011, 2012, and 2013. This implies that less than twenty-five (25) percent of Nigerians are actually living with poverty indicators in the economy. Because economic growth has created few opportunities for young people, there have been associated increases in violent crime as well as religious, interethnic and communal clashes. Poverty and inequality in Nigeria are caused not by a lack of resources, but by their misallocation and misappropriation, as well as by continued corruption and emergence of the political elite who are disconnected from the daily struggles of the average Nigerian.

Inequality, according to Ogbeide and Agu (2015), is a difference in the share of something between or among two or more people, with one or some having a larger share than the others. Income inequality is “an extreme disparity of income distributions with higher concentrations of the income usually in the hands of a small percentage of a population” (Kopps et al., 2020). When income inequality occurs, there is a large disparity in wealth between one population segment and another. This is the operational definition adopted in the paper.

Economic Growth

Economic growth is an increase in the production of goods and services over a specific period. It is an increase in an economy's capacity to produce goods and services from one period of time to the next (Aiguh, 2013). It is a positive change in the output, or production, of a country or an economy. The only way of ascertaining economic growth would be to calculate it as a numerical value. Therefore, economic growth is measured with the increase in per capita income of Nigerians over the study period.

Corruption and Economic Growth

Many studies have investigated the relationship between corruption and economic growth, employing gross domestic product (GDP) as a proxy for economic growth and the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) as a proxy for corruption. Olasehinde et al. (2018) and Nwankwo (2019) argue that corruption negatively affects economic growth in Nigeria. This implies that economic growth cannot be achieved without eradicating corruption, aligning with the Sand in the Wheels Theory. This theory posits that corruption undermines output by reducing investment and productivity levels (Mo, 2001; Gupta et al., 2002; Gyimah-Brempong, 2002). Similarly, other researchers, such as Dandume (2013), Ibraheem et al. (2013) and Ogbonnaya (2018), have noted the detrimental impact of corruption on Nigeria's economy.

Conversely, the Grease in the Wheels Theory, advanced by authors like Leff (1964) and Onakoye and Folorunsho (2015), argues that corruption can positively influence economic growth by circumventing bureaucratic inefficiencies. Using the Vector Error Correction Model (VECM), Onakoye and Folorunsho (2015) demonstrated a significant positive long-run and short-run relationships between corruption and economic growth. This perspective is further supported by studies such as Odubunmi and Agbelade (2014) and Rotimi and Obasaju (2015), which found unidirectional causality from corruption to economic growth. Matthew and Adegboye (2013) also identified directional causality in their analysis.

Income Inequality and Economic Growth

The second perspective, examining the linear relationship between income inequality and economic growth, has been explored in studies such as Nwosa (2019). Using the autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) estimation technique, Nwosa asserts that economic growth has a positive but insignificant impact on income inequality in Nigeria. Adinde (2017) identifies GDP, CPI, population growth, and education as determinants of income inequality in Nigeria. In contrast, Binatli (2012) argues that economic growth negatively affects income inequality, particularly when human capital development is considered.

Corruption, Income Inequality, and Economic Growth

The third perspective, which integrates the moderating role of income inequality in the relationship between corruption and economic growth, has been less explored. Abiloro, Olawole, and Adeniran (2019) used an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model and found that both corruption and income inequality significantly and negatively affect economic development. Building on this foundation, this study investigated the effect of corruption on economic growth in Nigeria, with income inequality as a moderating factor. To address gaps in the empirical literature, the study employed advanced econometric tools, namely the Vector Error Correction Model (VECM), impulse response function, and

variance decomposition function, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of these relationships.

Theoretical Link between Poverty, Income Inequality and Growth

According to Aladejana, Alabi, and Bolaji (2019), the work of Kuznets (1955) is perhaps the starting point for examining the link between poverty, income inequality and growth and development. According to Kuznets' hypothesis, growth and income inequality are related in an inverted U-shape curve. In the early stages of economic development, income inequality increases as a result of the shift of people from the large, relatively poor, and egalitarian agricultural sector to the small industrial sector that is richer but relatively unequal. In the latter stages, however, as a bulk of the population shifts to the urban sector, there is an increase in the relative wages of the poorer workers in both the urban and rural sectors, and various policies and measures are also implemented to reduce inter-sectional income inequality. Therefore, income inequality in the economy decreases in the latter stages of development. The implication of the hypothesis is that, if in the early stages, economic growth leads to more income inequality, then poverty might take many years to decrease in the developing world, like Nigeria.

Theoretical Literature

Sand and Grease in the Wheels Theories of Corruption

Sand and Grease in the Wheels theories of corruption was put in place by Leff (1964), Mauro (1995), Mo, (2001), Mendez and Sepulveda (2006). The theories state that corruption is harmful and important to economic growth at the same time. Meaning that corruption has asymmetric effect on economic development. For interpretational purposes, the theories will be presented separately.

Sand in the Wheels Hypothesis (SWH), as noted by Mauro (1995) and Mo (2001), states that corruption is very harmful to economic development. Distortions caused by corruption mitigate more profound distortions that are deeply rooted in the malfunctioning governance of the corrupted countries. The mirror image of this is strict SWH, saying that the effects of corruptions are frightening and that the worse is the quality of governance. Meon and Sekkat (2005) notes that corruption is found especially harmful if the quality of governance is poor. Thus, the idea of corruption as a lubricant in bypassing pre-existing distortions is definitely cancelled.

On the contrary, Meon and Weill (2008) find clear support for Grease in the Wheels Hypothesis (GWH) when considering the effects of corruption on aggregate efficiency instead of growth and investments. The disparity of these results is puzzling because one could expect that aggregate efficiency would be positively related to growth and investments. The proponents of GWH opined that further distortions caused by corruption mitigate more profound distortions that are deeply rooted in the

malfunctioning governance of the corrupted countries. In its strict form, GWH says that corruption is not only beneficial but also particularly so if the quality of governance is bad.

Theory of Relative Deprivation

The development of the concept of relative deprivation is often attributed to American sociologist Robert K. Merton, whose study of American soldiers during World War II revealed that soldiers in the military police were far less satisfied with their opportunities for promotion than regular soldiers. According to Townsend (1979), relative deprivation is the lack of resources to sustain the diet, lifestyle, activities and amenities that an individual or group is accustomed to, or that are widely encouraged or approved in the society to which they belong.

In the view of Runciman (1966), relative deprivation is the actual or perceived lack of resources required to maintain the quality of life—diet, activities and material possessions—to which various socio-economic groups or individuals within the groups have grown accustomed to, or are considered to be the accepted norm within the group. Measuring relative deprivation allows an objective comparison between the situation of the individual or group compared to the rest of society. It is used in the social sciences to describe feelings or measures of economic, political, or social deprivation that are relative rather than absolute (Bayertz, 1999).

The critics of this theory has pointed out that it fails to explain why some people who feel discontent fail to take action and join social movements. A counter-argument includes the fact that some people who are prone to conflict avoidance are short-term-oriented and that imminent life difficulties may arise since there is no guarantee that life improvement will result from social action (Kendall, 2005).

Gurr (1971) refers to relative deprivation as “the tension that develops from a discrepancy between the ‘ought’ and ‘is’ of collective value satisfaction, and this disposes men to violence.” Stawart (2002) redeveloped this argument by asserting that where social, economic, and political inequalities coincide with cultural differences, culture could become a powerful mobilising agent that can lead to a range of political disturbances, including violent conflict and civil wars. As averred by Langer (2005), the presence of severe horizontal inequalities does not produce wide-scale violence as such, but rather makes multi-ethnic countries more vulnerable to the emergence of violent conflict along ethnic lines.

The relevance of this theory to the study of corruption and economic growth in Nigeria arises from the suspicion that widening income inequality is the root cause of corruption in Nigeria. The application of this particular theory is intended to expose the true position of economic growth.

Empirical Literature

Aladejana, Atabi, and Bolaji (2019) examined the relationship between economic growth, inequality and poverty in Nigeria. The study used time series data from the World Development Bank, the *Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletins* and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) from 1980 to 2016. The study employed fully modified ordinary least square (FM-OLS) methods, unit root test, and Granger causality test. The Granger causality test revealed that the Gini-coefficient (Gini) was caused by the poverty rate (pov). Poverty rate (pov) and trade openness (OPEN) established a uni-directional relationship in the estimated model in Nigeria. The R-square (R^2) showed that forty-one percent (41%) of the changes in variation in real gross domestic product (RGDP) were explained by the predictor variables in the model. The result showed a positive relationship between trade openness and RGDP in Nigeria. The study concluded that inequality increased poverty levels while at the same time increasing economic growth during the study period. Also, poverty levels had a positive effect on income inequality.

The factorial research design was employed by Abiloro, Olawole, and Adeniran (2019) to empirically ascertain the impact of corruption and income inequality on the economic development of Nigeria. The data for the analysis were mainly secondary and obtained from World Bank Data, *Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Statistical Bulletins*, Transparency International and United Nations publications. Two control variables (education level and population growth) were introduced to minimise omitted variable bias. The study adopted the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model. The findings of the study revealed that both corruption and income inequality had a significant negative effect on economic development. The study, therefore, recommended that the government should intensify the battle against corruption in Nigeria through the use of forensic investigative skills to detect corrupt activities and use technological tools to develop institutional trust and block all international loopholes to discourage money laundering.

Nwosa (2019) examined the relationship between income inequality and economic growth in Nigeria and its implications for economic development. The study covered the period 1987-2017 and employed autoregression distributed lag estimation technique (ARDL). The result showed that economic growth had a positive but insignificant impact on income inequality in Nigeria. As a result, she advocated that the government should ensure equitable distribution of economic gains among the poor. The budgetary preparation and allocation should also be pro-poor and tailored to improving the welfare of the larger population and not further enriching the few rich ones. The study concluded that the implementation of the above and other welfare-enhancing policies would contribute to increasing the level of economic development in Nigeria.

Moreover, Odi (2019) empirically investigated the impact of corruption on the growth of the Nigerian economy using Granger causality and regression techniques. The study utilised GDP as a proxy for economic growth and CPI as a proxy for corruption. The study revealed that the level of corruption in Nigeria over the years has had a significant negative impact on economic growth in the country. This implies that the economy cannot grow without zero tolerance for corruption. The study recommended that policies that promote economic growth and reduce corruption and poverty should be encouraged, and that the activities or programmes of the anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria, such as EFCC and ICPC, should be strengthened.

Ogbonaya (2018) examined the effect of corruption on Nigerian economy. A cross-survey research design was adopted, and secondary data were extracted from the World Bank and Transparency International. The statistical tool used were multi-regression analysis and t-test for hypotheses testing, and the data analysis was done with the aid of SPSS version 20. The study found that corruption had a significant impact on Nigeria's economy. The study recommended that people be made aware of the evil of corruption right from the start, and the government should an example by prosecuting corrupt officials and, if possible, instituting a firing squad for those found guilty of the crime.

Further, Olasehinde et al. (2018) empirically assessed the relationship between corruption and economic growth in Nigeria within the period 1996-2017. The Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) unit root test, Johansen cointegration analysis, vector error correction estimation test, pairwise Granger causality and chi-square, and Wald test were used. The results obtained showed that there was a negative but significant relationship between corruption and economic growth in Nigeria. As a result, it was recommended that corruption be included in the school curriculum and that those involved in corruption face the death penalty after returning the money in their possession.

Adinde (2017) investigated the impact of income inequality on economic growth in Nigeria and examined whether the Kuznets curve holds. The Granger causality test result indicated that GDP Granger-caused income inequality in Nigeria. The multiple regression analysis was employed to estimate the relationship between the Gini coefficient, GDP, and other explanatory variables. The results indicated that GDP, CPI, population growth, and education were all determinants of income inequality in Nigeria. The findings from the research imply that, as economic growth increases, the level of income inequality actually worsens in Nigeria. The government was, therefore, advised to employ measures that would not only boost economic growth but also reduce the margin between the rich and the poor and ensure an equitable distribution of resources in the future.

Ezeanyej and Roland (2015) investigated the impact of corruption on economic development in Nigeria. Secondary data were obtained from World Bank reports on

Nigeria and Transparency International reports on corruption in Nigeria. The data were analysed using the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression technique. The result showed that corruption had a statistically significant negative effect on economic development and growth. As a result, it was recommended that the Nigerian government should strictly enforce anti-corruption codes as stipulated in the legislation that established anti-corruption agencies, without regard for the perpetrators' status or position in society.

Similarly, Onakoye and Folorunsho (2015) investigated the effects of corruption on the country's economic growth. The study utilised a time series data set from 1983 to 2012. Preliminary tests, including descriptive statistics, the ADF test, Johansen cointegration, and the Vector Error Correction Model (VECM) test, were deployed. The results revealed a significantly positive long-run and short-run relationships between corruption and economic growth. The result also suggested a unidirectional general causal relationship between corruption and economic growth, but economic growth did not cause corruption. The government was, therefore, enjoined to re-engineer its policies and procedures in order to simplify its bureaucracy and remove operational red tape.

Odubunmi and Agbelade (2014) investigated the causality between corruption and economic growth in Nigeria. Johansen cointegration test, Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) unit root test, Granger causality test, and ordinary least square (OLS) methods were employed on time series (secondary) data, covering 1990-2010. The result revealed that there was unidirectional causality from corruption to economic growth and that the level of corruption was a relevant determinant of the level of economic growth. And so, it was recommended that the activities of the anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria, such as the EFCC and ICPC, be strengthened and that the youth be reoriented on moral values.

Rotimi and Obasaju (2015) investigated the causes and effects of corruption without leaving out the dynamics of corruption. They also examined the relationship between corruption and Nigeria's economic growth by using the ordinary least square (OLS) method and the Granger causality method to measure the causal relationship between corruption and GDP. According to the study, corruption hampered and harmed economic growth. Therefore, the study recommended that public anti-corruption initiatives and public education campaign programmes be strengthened and motivated to address the causes of corruption rather than its effects.

In the same vein, Matthew and Adegboye (2013) investigated the relationship between corruption and economic growth in Nigeria, as well as its directionality. Ordinary least square (OLS) was used for estimation after checking the stationarity of all the series through Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) and Phillips-Perron (PP) tests. A broader causality test was applied for testing directional relationships. The result indicated that corruption damaged the economic growth of Nigeria, and a causal link prevailed between corruption

and growth. Consequently, in order to decrease corruption, possible anti-corruption policies should be adopted.

Ibraheem, Umar, and Ajoke (2013) investigated the impact of corruption on economic development in Nigeria. Secondary data were sourced from World Bank reports on Nigeria and corruption reports on Nigeria from Transparency International. The data were analysed using the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression technique. The hypothesis tested with respect to CPI was not accepted, implying that the tests were not statistically significant; CPI, a proxy for corruption, negatively affected economic development. It was, therefore, recommended that the Nigerian government should strictly enforce all anti-corruption laws.

Model

This study on the effect of corruption on economic growth, moderated by income inequality in Nigeria, deployed a modified version of Adenike's (2013) model of corruption and income inequality on economic development, with foreign direct investment (FDI) serving as a control variable. This framework is grounded in theoretical contributions by Leff (1964), Mauro (1995), Mo (2001) and Méndez and Sepúlveda (2006), which revolve around two contrasting schools of thought.

The first school of thought, represented by the Grease in the Wheels Theory, argues that corruption can enhance economic growth by overcoming inefficiencies in bureaucratic systems. Conversely, the second school of thought, supported by the Sand in the Wheels Theory, contends that corruption hampers economic growth by reducing efficiency, discouraging investment and distorting markets. The ongoing debate between these perspectives has left institutional scholars grappling with unresolved complexities.

In the Nigerian context, where poverty is widespread, and the disparity between the wealthy and poor is obvious, income inequality is hypothesized as a critical factor influencing the dynamics of corruption. Thus, this study incorporated income inequality, represented by the Gini Coefficient, as a moderating variable, with FDI acting as a control variable. FDI was included to account for the external influence of international income and business on corruption in Nigeria. It reflected the premise that individuals may engage in corrupt practices to emulate foreign lifestyles or investment behaviors.

This assumption aligns with Townsend's (1979) Relative Deprivation Theory, which posits that a lack of resources to sustain a socially accepted standard of living, activities and amenities can drive individuals or groups towards corrupt practices. The theory's relevance to the study lies in the proposition that widening income inequality in Nigeria is a fundamental cause of corruption. Its application aims to illuminate the relationship between corruption, income inequality and economic growth.

The study adapted the baseline endogenous growth model from Adenike (2013), where corruption and income inequality serve as explanatory variables, and FDI functions

as a control variable. This model forms the foundation for the empirical analysis, seeking to uncover the intricate relationship between corruption, income inequality, and economic growth in Nigeria. The dependent variable, economic development, is expressed as:

$$PCI = f(CPI, GINI, FDI) \quad 1$$

The linear form of the model is expressed as:

$$PCI_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CPI_t + \beta_2 GINI_t + \beta_3 FDI_t + U_t \quad 2$$

where

PCI = Per Capita Income

CPI = Corruption Perception Index

GINI = Gini-Coefficient

FDI = Foreign direction investment

β_0 = Constant term

$\beta_1 - \beta_3$ = Parameter estimates of the explanatory variables

U_t = Random disturbance term

A priori expectations are theoretical statements or criteria set by economic theories. For this research, it is expected that the level of corruption proxied by the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and income inequality proxied by the Gini Coefficient will have a negative effect on economic growth, while foreign direct investment will have a positive impact.

$\beta_1, \beta_2 < 0$ while $\beta_3 > 0$

Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Results

	lnPCI	CPI	GINI	lnFDI
Mean	1560.979	21.27577	45.16959	1.501386
Median	1960.000	24.00000	43.97500	1.616648
Maximum	2940.000	28.00000	56.00000	2.931336
Minimum	390.0000	6.900000	35.10000	0.502904
Std. Dev.	850.7891	5.679038	5.450921	0.657396
Skewness	-0.082017	-0.632615	0.438672	0.243613
Kurtosis	1.520261	2.061514	2.319217	1.909932
Jarque-Bera	8.958497	10.02965	4.984173	5.761951
Probability	0.051342	0.066390	0.082737	0.056080
Sum	151415.0	2063.750	4381.450	145.6344
Sum Sq. Dev.	69488844	3096.142	2852.404	41.48831
Observations	97	97	97	97

The mean values of the per capita income (PCI), corruption perception index (CPI), Gini coefficient (GINI), and foreign direct investment (FDI) in Nigeria were 1560.979, 21.27577, 45.16959 and 1.501386, respectively; the median value was 1960,000. The values were 24.00000, 43.97500, and 1.616648, respectively. The greatest values were 2940.000, 28.00000, 56.00000, and 2.931336; the minimum values were 390.0000, 6.900000, 35.10000, and 0.502904, respectively. The skewness values of -0.082017 and -0.632615 suggested that per capita income and the corruption perception index exhibited long left tails, whereas the skewness values of 0.438672 and 0.243613 indicated that the Gini coefficient (income inequality) and foreign direct investment displayed long right tails. The kurtosis values of 1.520261 and 1.909932 indicated a platykurtic distribution compared to normal, while the kurtosis values of 2.061514 and 2.319217 demonstrated that the corruption perception index and Gini coefficient were mesokurtic. The Jarque-Bera statistics values of 8.958497, 10.02965, 4.984173, and 5.761951, along with their corresponding probability values of 0.051342, 0.066390, 0.082737, and 0.056080, which exceeded the 0.05 threshold, suggested that the series adhered to normal distributions.

Table 2: Stationarity Test (Philip Perron)

Variables	Level		1 st Difference		Order
	T-Stat.	5% Critical Value	T-Stat.	5% Critical Value	
CPI	-2.483019	-2.891871	-4.140215	-2.892200	1(1)
FDI	-1.485288	-2.891871	-4.871810	-2.892200	1(1)
GINI	-1.150599	-2.891871	-2.908779	-2.892210	1(1)
PCI	-1.190259	-2.891871	2.992834	-2.892210	1(1)

Source: Authors' compilation from Eview-10.05

Table 2 presents the summary table for the stationarity test conducted using the unit root approach described by Philip and Perron (1987). All series or data employed in the empirical analysis of the effects of corruption, foreign direct investment, and inequality on economic development were non-stationary at level zero or mean-reverting. This means that, after being exposed to first differencing, the series in the equation became stationary. The non-stationary time series data were subjected to first differencing to make them stationary, according to the famed Box and Jenkins' (1987) statements. As a result, we conclude that all of the time series data were integrated at first order, or order

one (1). This supported the deployment of the cointegration approach established by Johansen and Juselius (1982). The Johansen test allows assessment of whether or not the series have a long-run cointegrating connection.

Table 3: Lag Selection Criterion

Lag	LogL	LR	FPE	AIC	SC	HQ
0	-1256.010	NA	23284918	28.31482	28.42667	28.35990
1	-544.7566	1342.590	3.819524	12.69116	13.25040	12.91658
2	-359.4075	333.2120	0.085164	8.885561	9.892201*	9.291309*
3	-354.5178	8.350898	0.109936	9.135232*	10.58927	9.721311
4	-344.4095	16.35505	0.126834	9.267629	11.16906	10.03404
5	-319.6666	37.80932	0.106023	9.071160	11.41999	10.01790
6	-278.7905	58.78810*	0.062207*	8.512146	11.30837	9.639222
7	-270.6413	10.98774	0.076971	8.688568	11.93218	9.995976
8	-254.2441	20.63465	0.080180	8.679642	12.37065	10.16738

Table 3 presents the lag selection criteria for analyzing the effect of corruption on Nigeria's economic growth. Lag selection is a critical step in econometric modelling, as it determines the number of prior observations (lags) of the variables to include in the analysis. This choice directly impacts the model's performance, accuracy, and ability to capture the dynamic relationships among variables. In the context of error correction models (ECMs) and vector autoregressive (VAR) models, the importance of selecting the optimal lag length cannot be overstated. A well-chosen lag length ensures that the model adequately reflects the temporal dependencies in the data while avoiding issues such as overfitting (too many lags) or underfitting (too few lags). Overfitting may introduce noise into the model, while underfitting risks omitting crucial dynamics. Among these, the AIC is widely regarded for its ability to balance model complexity and goodness of fit. It minimizes the information loss in the model by selecting the lag length that achieves the best trade-off between model accuracy and parsimony.

In Table 3, a lag length of three (3) was the most appropriate for the investigation. This conclusion was based on the guidance provided by the AIC, which minimized the criterion value at this lag length. By adopting lag length 3, the study ensured that the model captured the underlying dynamics of corruption, income inequality and economic growth in Nigeria without introducing unnecessary complexity or oversimplification. The chosen lag length was used in conducting the Johansen cointegration test, a methodology designed to identify the long-term equilibrium relationships among the variables. The test's accuracy and robustness relied significantly on the appropriate selection of lag

length, as it affected the test's ability to detect cointegrating vectors and model the interrelationships effectively. Thus, the use of lag length 3 as determined by the AIC ensured that the subsequent analysis was both statistically robust and empirically meaningful, enabling evaluation of the dynamics of the impact of corruption on Nigeria's economic growth with greater confidence.

Table 4: Johansen Cointegration Test

Hypothesized No. of CEO	Trace Stat.	Critical Values	Max-Eigen Stat.	Critical Value
None	50.30839	47.85613	29.43735	27.58434
At most 1	24.87104	29.79707	13.57206	21.13162
At most 2	11.29898	15.49471	7.410135	14.26460
At most 3	3.888842	3.941466	3.888842	3.941466

Source: Authors' compilation from Eviews 10.5

The Johansen cointegration output is displayed in Table 4. The Johansen test helped to identify whether or not there was a long-run link between the series in question. The outcome of the Johansen test was then utilised to select the relevant method of analysis. According to the test result, there was only one cointegrating relationship among the series in question. As a result, the null hypothesis which states that the series have no cointegrating relationship was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. In the long run, the series had at least one cointegrating equation. The trace statistic value of 50.30839 and the Max-Eigen value statistic of 29.43735 were greater than their critical values of 47.85613 and 27.58434, respectively. We proceeded with the estimation of the vector error correction mechanism (ECM) because there was at least one cointegrating link among the series (ECM). The vector error correction mechanism, a short-run test allowed identification of how quickly the long-run disequilibrium adjusted.

Table 5: Vector Error Correction Mechanism (VECM)

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-Statistics
Constant	0.025192	0.05534	0.45524
D(PCI(-1))	0.002581	0.00312	0.828301
D(PCI(-2))	-0.026700	0.01325	-2.01509
D(CPI(-1))	0.697231	0.20903	2.33554
D(CPI(-2))	0.042772	0.10964	0.39012
D(GINI(-1))	0.044960	0.14896	0.30183
D(GINI(-2))	-0.042924	0.01476	-3.04607
D(FDI(-1))	0.267007	0.44567	0.59911
D(FDI(-2))	-0.125487	0.44104	-0.28452

ECM (-1)	-0.057400	0.02561	-2.24131
R-squared	0.859176		
Adj. R-squared	0.844087		
Sum sq. resids	27012.71		
S.E. equation	17.93265		
F-statistic	56.94315		
Log likelihood	-399.4363		
Akaike AIC	8.711411		
Schwarz SC	8.981974		
Mean dependent	18.56383		
S.D. dependent	45.41548		

Source: Author's compilation from Eviews 10.05

The short-run coefficients and error correction terms derived from the empirical analysis provide valuable insights into the relationship between corruption, foreign direct investment (FDI), and Nigeria's per capita income (PCI). Below is an expanded explanation of the findings and their implications.

Model Fit and Explanatory Power

The R-squared value of 0.859176 indicated a strong model fit, implying that approximately 86% of the variations in per capita income can be attributed to the independent variables included in the model. Similarly, the adjusted R-squared value of 0.844087 confirmed that the explanatory power remained robust even after adjusting for the number of predictors. The remaining 14% of variation was likely due to external factors or noise, captured in the error term. This strong explanatory power points to the model's suitability for exploring the short-run dynamics of PCI.

Per Capita Income (PCI) Lagged Values

The second-year lag of PCI (PCI_{t-2}) exhibited a statistically significant negative effect on current PCI at a 5% significance level, with a coefficient of -0.026700 and a t-statistic of 2.01509 (above the threshold of 2). This finding suggested that a 0.0267% increase in lagged PCI resulted in a 0.0267% decrease in current PCI in the short run.

This counterintuitive result contradicts theoretical expectations, revealing potential systemic issues in Nigeria's economic structure. It indicates that per capita growth in Nigeria is not sustainable due to poverty, inflation and insufficient savings. Workers' limited income is primarily consumed, leaving little for savings or investment,

perpetuating low output and hindering further growth. This outcome highlights the structural imbalance in Nigeria's savings-investment relationship, driven by widespread poverty and economic inequality.

Corruption Perception Index (CPI)

The corruption perception index (CPI) exhibited a positive and statistically significant effect on PCI in the short run, with a coefficient of 0.697231 and a t-statistic of 2.33554. This finding indicated that a 0.69% increase in PCI was associated with a one-unit increase in CPI.

This result aligns with the Grease in the Wheel Theory, which posits that corruption can spur economic growth by bypassing bureaucratic inefficiencies. In the Nigerian context, this could imply that funds obtained through corrupt practices are reinvested within the economy, albeit informally, stimulating short-run growth. Additionally, the positive association may reflect societal normalization of corruption, where it is perceived as an acceptable means to achieving wealth or fund investments. This finding resonates with Onakoye and Folorunsho (2015) but contrasts with studies by Ezeanyej and Roland (2015), Adinde (2017), and others, who argue that corruption negatively affects growth.

However, the second-year lag of CPI had a positive but statistically insignificant effect on PCI, as indicated by a t-statistic of 0.39012, below the critical threshold. This implies that CPI's influence on PCI diminishes over time.

Gini Coefficient (GINI)

The coefficient of the second-year lag of the Gini coefficient (GINI_{t-2}) was -0.042924, indicating a statistically significant negative impact on PCI, with a t-statistic of 3.04307. This suggested that a one-unit increase in income inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, leads to a 4% decrease in PCI in the short run.

This finding aligns with the conventional view that rising income inequality suppresses aggregate demand, reduces savings and investment, and ultimately hampers economic growth. It underscores the adverse effects of inequality on Nigeria's economy, where high levels of income disparity exacerbate poverty and limit opportunities for inclusive growth.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

FDI exhibited both positive and negative effects on PCI in the short run, but neither was statistically significant, as the t-statistics (0.39911 and 0.28452) were below the critical threshold. This implies that FDI does not have a meaningful short-run impact on Nigeria's per capita income.

The lack of a significant relationship may be attributed to structural inefficiencies, weak institutions, or the inability to channel FDI into productive sectors. It highlights the

need for reforms to optimize FDI's contribution to sustainable economic growth in Nigeria.

Table 6: Granger Causality Result

Null Hypothesis:	Obs	F-Statistic	Prob.
CPI does not Granger-cause PCI	95	0.94196	0.3937
PCI does not Granger-cause CPI		6.39186	0.0025
GINI does not Granger-cause PCI	95	3.55104	0.0328
PCI does not Granger-cause GINI		0.68688	0.5058
FDI does not Granger-cause PCI	95	1.50273	0.2281
PCI does not Granger-cause FDI		1.86616	0.1607
GINI does not Granger-cause CPI	95	1.61303	0.2050
CPI does not Granger-cause GINI		0.24494	0.7833
FDI does not Granger-cause CPI	95	0.13801	0.8713
CPI does not Granger-cause FDI		0.64467	0.5272
FDI does not Granger-cause GINI	95	0.15214	0.8591
GINI does not Granger-cause FDI		0.18433	0.8320

The Granger causality test provided critical insights into the long-term relationships between PCI, CPI, the Gini coefficient (income inequality), and FDI in Nigeria. Below is an expanded interpretation of the findings.

Long-run Relationship between Per Capita Income (lnPCI) and Corruption Perception Index (CPI)

The Granger causality test revealed that changes in per capita income (lnPCI) had a causal influence on CPI in the long run, with a coefficient of 6.39186. This implies that fluctuations in Nigeria's per capita income significantly shape public perceptions of corruption.

This reversed causality indicates that rather than corruption directly influencing economic outcomes, the economic realities faced by individuals—such as changes in income—may

drive perceptions of corruption. For instance, when economic growth fails to translate into tangible benefits for the population, such as improved public services or reduced poverty, perceptions of corruption may increase.

This finding contrasts with short-run causality results, where the immediate effects of corruption may dominate. The discrepancy between long-term and short-term dynamics highlights the entrenched nature of corruption in Nigeria and suggests that the country's current per capita income levels are insufficient to support sustainable growth and address corruption effectively.

Granger Causality between Gini Coefficient and Per Capita Income (lnPCI)

In the long run, the Gini coefficient demonstrated Granger causality with per capita income, where a one-unit change in the Gini coefficient led to a 3.55104 variation in lnPCI. This finding underscores the significant negative impact of income inequality on Nigeria's economic performance.

Persistent income inequality widens the gap between the rich and the poor, reducing aggregate demand and weakening the savings-investment relationship. The reduced purchasing power of a large proportion of the population results in lower consumption, savings and investment, which collectively hinder economic growth. These dynamics confirm the consistency between long-run causality and short-run causality for the adverse effects of income inequality on PCI. This conclusion aligns with the findings of Odubunmi and Agbelade (2014) and Abiloro, Olawole, and Adeniran (2019), who also recognise the detrimental effects of inequality on Nigeria's economic performance.

Lack of Granger Causality between Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Per Capita Income (lnPCI)

The analysis found no evidence of Granger causality between FDI and PCI in either direction, indicating that foreign direct investment has not had a significant impact on Nigeria's per capita income, nor has PCI influenced FDI inflows. This result is consistent with short-run findings and highlights critical weaknesses in Nigeria's ability to harness FDI for economic growth. The lack of a significant relationship may be due to several factors, such as:

- **Low Volume of FDI:** The inflows of foreign direct investment may not be substantial enough to affect PCI meaningfully.
- **Sectoral Misallocation:** FDI may be concentrated in sectors that do not directly contribute to economic output or job creation, such as extractive industries.
- **Weak Institutions and Infrastructure:** Inefficient governance and inadequate infrastructure may limit the productivity and growth potential of FDI.

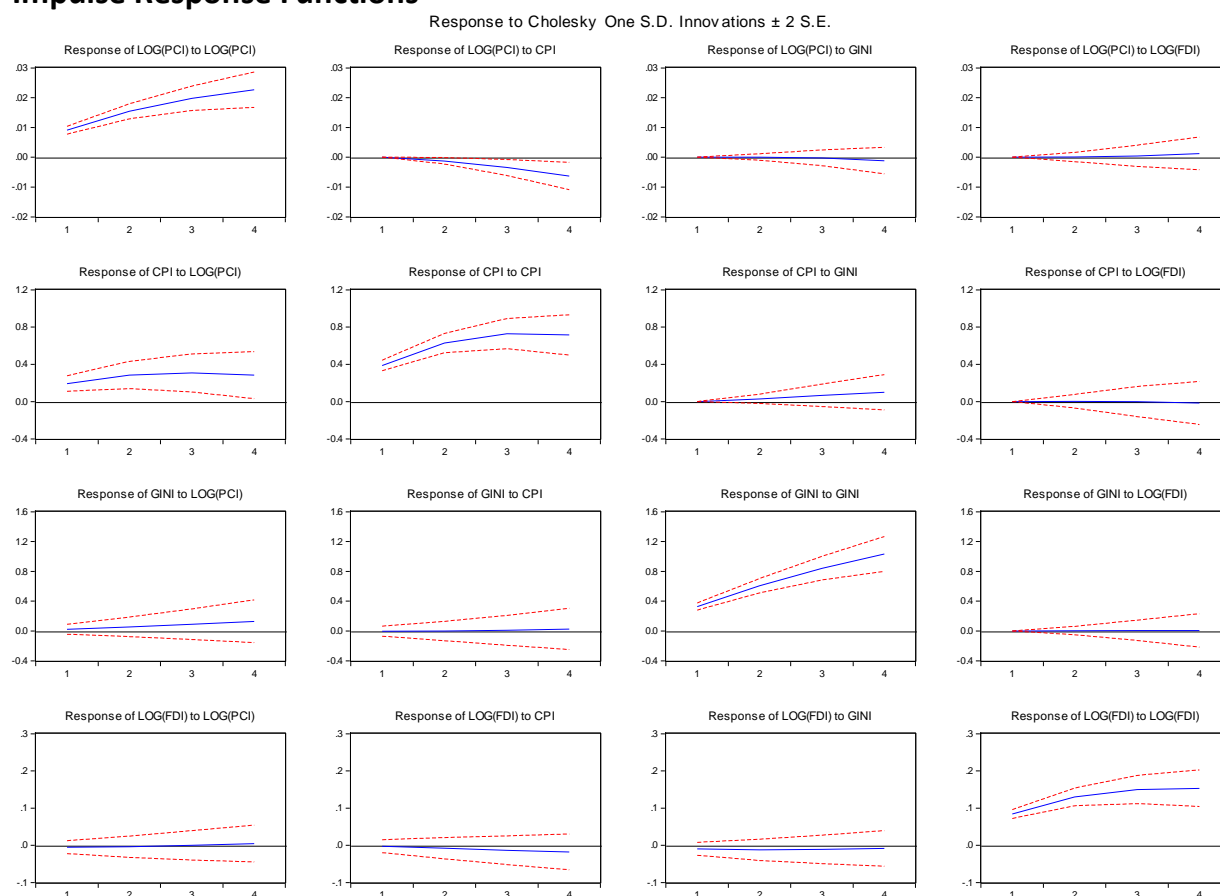
These findings suggest a need for strategic policy reforms to attract and channel FDI into sectors that can stimulate economic growth, generate employment and improve income distribution.

Implications for Policy and Development

The results of the Granger causality test provide the following policy implications:

- **Addressing Income Inequality:** Policies aimed at reducing income inequality should be prioritized. This includes social safety nets, progressive taxation, and investments in education and health care to empower lower-income groups.
- **Fostering Sustainable Growth:** Efforts to increase per capita income must focus on sustainable and inclusive growth. Addressing structural challenges such as poverty, inflation and weak savings-investment dynamics is critical.
- **Reforming FDI Policies:** Enhancing the effectiveness of FDI requires reforms to attract investment into productive sectors, improve governance and strengthen institutional frameworks.
- **Combating Corruption:** Long-term strategies to reduce corruption should focus on improving transparency, strengthening anti-corruption agencies and ensuring that economic policies yield tangible benefits for the population.

Impulse Response Functions



The response of PCI to a one-standard deviation shock on itself remained positive in both the short run and the long run, indicating a strong positive feedback effect on economic growth in Nigeria. However, PCI responded negatively to shocks in CPI throughout both

periods, while its response to shocks in GINI and FDI remained stationary until the next policy regime.

CPI showed a positive response to shocks in both PCI and itself from the short run to the long run, while its response to shocks in GINI and FDI remained stationary across both periods.

GINI's response to shocks in PCI and itself was positive in the short run and persisted into the long run. However, its response to shocks in FDI and CPI remained stationary across both periods.

FDI's response to PCI shocks was stationary, while its response to shocks in CPI and GINI started negative and stayed there until the next policy regime. However, FDI responded positively to its own shocks in both periods.

Overall, except for FDI's stationary response, all variables showed positive effects on economic growth following shocks. This presupposes that Nigeria's economic growth can be marginally influenced by income inequality and corruption, with potential growth stimulation through redirected corrupt resources.

4.0 Variance Decompositions Functions Variance Decomposition of LOG(PCI):

Period	S.E.	LOG(PCI)	CPI	GINI	LOG(FDI)
1	0.009062	100.0000	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000
2	0.017929	99.51373	0.483840	0.000968	0.001460
3	0.026914	98.08862	1.872871	0.009052	0.029454
4	0.035781	95.59548	4.157494	0.107918	0.139107

The variance error decomposition test indicated that PCI had a dominant endogeneity influence on itself, contributing significantly to its own forecast errors over both the short term and the long term. Specifically, PCI contributed 100.0000, 99.51373, 98.08862, and 95.59548 of the forecast errors, while other variables accounted for less than 5%. This suggests that, when properly utilized, economic growth in Nigeria is largely driven by its own internal dynamics, reinforcing the strong feedback effect of PCI on itself.

Variance Decomposition of CPI:

Period	S.E.	LOG(PCI)	CPI	GINI	LOG(FDI)
1	0.431727	19.89667	80.10333	0.000000	0.000000
2	0.813674	17.87936	81.99551	0.123828	0.001300
3	1.136874	16.43662	83.15938	0.403278	0.000722
4	1.376183	15.46003	83.74108	0.785947	0.012949

The variance error decomposition of CPI revealed that the variable exhibited a strong endogeneity influence on itself, with forecast error variances of 80.10333, 81.99551, 83.15938, and 83.74108 from the short run to the long run. In contrast, PCI showed a weaker exogeneity influence on CPI, contributing 19.89667, 17.87936, 16.43662, and 15.4603 to the forecast error variances of CPI across both periods. This suggests that corruption in Nigeria is primarily driven by the widespread pursuit of increased income at all levels.

Variance Decomposition of GINI:

Period	S.E.	LOG(PCI)	CPI	GINI	LOG(FDI)
1	0.327494	0.436815	0.006313	99.55687	0.000000
2	0.691631	0.682176	0.001810	99.31210	0.003918
3	1.093154	0.953503	0.005967	99.03474	0.005786
4	1.509575	1.237576	0.034620	98.72338	0.004420

The variance decomposition of the GINI index indicated that the variable exhibited a strong endogeneity influence on itself, with forecast error variances of 15.46003, 99.31210, 99.03474, and 98.72338 from the short run to the long run, while contributions from other variables were marginal. This suggests that the persistence of income inequality in Nigeria is a significant driver of corruption.

Variance Decomposition of LOG(FDI):

Period	S.E.	LOG(PCI)	CPI	GINI	LOG(FDI)
1	0.084726	0.369097	0.104666	1.341075	98.18516
2	0.155751	0.181082	0.282500	1.030106	98.50631
3	0.216819	0.093626	0.526263	0.798681	98.58143
4	0.266292	0.090890	0.812161	0.633991	98.46296

Finally, the variance decomposition of FDI showed that the variable of interest had a strong endogeneity influence on itself in the short run through the long run by emitting

98.18516, 98.58143, and 98.46296, while others contributed less than 2%. The implication is that FDI contributed to the increase in corruption as much as it increased economic growth in Nigeria.

Table 7: Diagnostic Checking

Lag	LRE* stat	df	Prob.	Rao F-stat	Df	Prob.
1	14.63305	16	0.5517	0.915509	(16, 235.9)	0.5520
2	7.939229	16	0.9507	0.489863	(16, 235.9)	0.9507
3	7.500433	16	0.9624	0.462369	(16, 235.9)	0.9624

The post-estimation checks estimation of the effect of corruption, inequality and foreign direct investment on per capita income in Nigeria is shown in Table 7. The goal of these calculations is to make sure that the OLS assumptions are not broken. First, the presence or lack of serial correlation was examined using the well-known edge-worth expansion adjusted likelihood ratio statistic in the estimated vector error correction mechanism (VEC). The classic residual normality tests with orthogonalization (Cholisky) and the test for the presence of heteroskedasticity in the model was used to determine the series' normality. The probability values of all the lag lengths 0.5520, 0.9507, and 0.9624 were more above the 5% statistically significant level, as buttressed by the serial correlation LM test. As a result, there is no evidence of serial correlation in the residual of the model's series.

VEC Residual Heteroskedasticity Tests (Levels and Squares)

Chi-sq	Df	Prob.
159.9506	180	0.8562

The joint test of heteroskedasticity showed that the residual had no heteroskedasticity, with a chi-square of 159.95.6 and a probability value of 0.8562, significantly higher than the 5% threshold. Finally, the residuals were not normally distributed, according to the joint residual normality test. This might have been a problem for the entire estimation, but because the approximation p-value in the normality test did not account for the coefficient estimated, the output was still correct.

Conclusion

After a careful review of the estimated equations, this study concludes as follows:

- The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) reduces economic growth by an average of -0.026700 and -0.036680, which is consistent with the Sand and Wheels theories of corruption proposed by Mauro (1995) and Mo (2001).
- At a tone of -6.37186, there is a one-way Granger causality running from per capita income to the corruption perception index (CPI).
- At the tone of 3.55104, there is a one-way Granger causality running from inequality to per capita income.
- The impulse response function shows that corruption perception has a strong exogeneity influence on itself from the short run into the long run.
- The shock to economic growth emanating from one standard deviation of corruption has remained in the positive regime, while that from foreign direct investment is in the negative region.

Therefore, we assert that the increase in corruption is caused by the expanding gap between the rich and the poor, which has resulted in a reduction in economic growth in Nigeria over the study period. This exposition is made irrespective of the increase in foreign direct inflows into the country. Hence, the following recommendations become imperative:

- i. The Federal Government of Nigeria should step up its game in the fight against corruption to free the wheel for the country's growth and development.
- ii. Foreign direct investment should be directed toward investments that have the potential to stimulate economic growth in Nigeria.
- iii. The gap between the rich and the poor should be closed through price control and increase in the minimum wage.

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5

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE OF POVERTY AND INCOME INEQUALITY IN NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Poverty and income inequality are among the most discussed issues in the modern economic literature and perhaps a central developmental challenge in developing countries, particularly Nigeria. This study addressed the challenge of poverty and income inequality in Nigeria, with emphasis on the role of International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. To achieve this objective, the paper was structured into six sections, comprising introduction, conceptual issues, the bank's efforts in addressing the challenge of poverty and income inequality, criticisms of the bank's policies and the challenge of poverty and income inequality, and the way forward. The study concluded that corruption from non-governmental organizations and government officials, homogenized policy prescriptions from the bank, bad implementation of the bank's policies, impracticable policies, dysfunctional relationship between the United Nations and the bank are the impeding factors challenging the efforts of the bank in reducing poverty and inequality in Nigeria. Since the poor are frequently not incorporated into the activities of World Bank-assisted projects in Nigeria, effort should be made by the bank to incorporate and engage the poor to have influence and share control over project development initiatives, decisions and resources which directly affect them in the economy during preparation, planning and implementation phases of such projects.

Keywords: Poverty, income inequality, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

1. Introduction

The idea of poverty and income inequality is a central issue challenging the sustainable development of less-developed countries, and has attracted the interest of global

communities and development scholars. The widening disparity between the affluent and the impoverished is a global issue; but, in Nigeria, the magnitude of poverty and economic inequality poses a grave and alarming danger to life. The paradox of growth and development in developing nations is that, as the nation becomes wealthier, only a few reap the advantages, while the majority persist in experiencing poverty and a lack of essential social and economic requirements, along with limited freedom of choice. Udeorah and Aborh (2018) assert that impoverished individuals exist without essential freedoms of choice. This statement characterizes the underdevelopment nature of Nigeria and Africa at large, as the people suffer from untold hardship emanating from low per capita income, high unemployment, rising prices of goods and services, and lack of freedom of making choices among other indices of underdevelopment.

According to Sen (2011), this does not characterize development because real development involves improvement of lives and ensuring the freedom of choice or control of one's life. In Nigeria, there is lack of freedom of choice and people live in a complete underdeveloped environment characterised by poverty, inequality, diseases, institutional lapses, etc. as noted by OXFAM (2017), the impoverished members of society are more vulnerable to illnesses, social ills, and institutional exploitation, among other issues. They often endure illnesses and struggle to afford sufficient food, shelter, education and overall welfare, which ultimately leads to mental and psychological despair.

As a result of low level of education, lack of occupation, age of the mother, malnutrition and the lack of income to face the challenge of poverty, Nigeria and other African countries often suffer from high level of infant and childhood mortality, and multiple incidences of inequality among the people (Nwosu, 2000). According to Clark (2015), over 70% of the populace in growing nations stay in distinctly unequal societies. There are diverse kinds of inequality, including gender, wealth, fitness and income forms. The most popular among them is income inequality and is a disturbing issue globally and more glaring in developing countries, like Nigeria. This possibly must have made Egbon (2017) to characterized Nigeria as a low per capita GNP country, with high incidence of poverty both in absolute and relative terms, especially widening income inequality gap, high infant and maternal mortality rate, low literacy rate as well as lack of clean water and poor sanitation.

A critical look at the political economy of Nigeria since independence would reveal that the high level of poverty and widening income inequality between the rich and the poor is a picture of the current nature of Nigeria's underdevelopment. Therefore, there is the need to consider the twin concepts of poverty and inequality in Nigeria's development agenda since they affect the entire economy and the residents. According to Ewghudjakpor (2008), poverty is a general issue that affects economy, politics and

personality, as such the intervention of the Bank in terms of policy, poverty alleviation and income inequality in Nigeria is necessary.

World Bank (2024) notes that the kind of reforms Nigeria has embarked on will require all the right partnerships and support to achieve the long-term goal of a prosperous economy where jobs are created and human development is significantly improved. The necessity for the World Bank's presence in Nigeria was underscored by the World Bank Country Director for Nigeria, Mr. Shubham Chaudhuri, in World Bank Report (2022). He asserted that significant efforts are required to elevate millions of Nigerians from poverty, including improvement in health and education, creation of productive employment, and expansion of social protection.

Furthermore, Wilson (2023) asserts that foreign assistance from financial institutions and advanced countries is needed to finance development when domestic savings are inadequate for the required amount of capital formation in a country.

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development is a vital organization that helps reduce poverty and support development in developing countries through development financing. It is important because it provides financial and technical assistance, promotes long-term economic development, helps countries meet infrastructure needs, combats corruption, shares knowledge and advises countries in areas such as health, education, nutrition, finance, justice, law and environment. According to Ndiyo and Ebong (2003), the Bank is saddled with the responsibility of monitoring development or setbacks in less-developed countries. These setbacks may include those of poverty, income inequality, infrastructure gaps and other challenges.

Does the World Bank adequately consult and facilitate the involvement of the impoverished in its initiatives and policies? This research argues that a significant issue in the World Bank-Nigeria relationship is the exclusion of the impoverished from World Bank project operations. Herbert and Odeniyi (2021) assert that economic growth must deliberately coincide with equality and the comprehensive involvement of the impoverished in initiatives aimed at alleviating poverty, constituting a sustainable approach to poverty reduction. The World Bank (2002) states that the institution does not participate in the actual implementation of development initiatives in the borrowing nations. It just disburses monies to the government or business entities to implement projects, which is an inadequate method of managing development initiatives. If it has assumed the responsibility of eradicating poverty in developing nations, it must be interested in the execution of the project for which funds were allocated. In Nigeria, numerous poverty alleviation initiatives, from Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) to the Agricultural Development Projects (ADP), have been implemented. However, these programmes have not effectively mitigated the issue of poverty in the country. This failure

has been ascribed to their short-term, top-down execution strategy for development initiatives, which is unsustainable in a corruption-driven economy, such as Nigeria.

Kolawole and Torimiro (2006), as cited in Herbert and Odeniyi (2021), identify several barriers at various levels that hinder the impoverished from genuinely participating in development activities. These barriers include institutional control, social stratification, limited economic capacity, unique experiences, lack of access to information, infrastructural efficacy, illiteracy and the quality of the project. This article examines the issues of poverty and economic inequality in Nigeria, highlighting the role of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in mitigating these challenges. The remainder of the article is organized as follows: conceptual concerns; the bank's initiatives to tackle poverty and income inequality; critiques of the bank's policies; the challenge of poverty and income disparity; and the proposed path ahead.

2. Conceptual Issues

The first of the conceptual issues to be clarified here is poverty. The term poverty is a multidimensional concept. As such, there is no definitive definition ascribed to it. Poverty is defined in several ways depending on the situation. It is often seen as the deficiency or absence of a certain quantity of personal goods or financial resources. World Bank (2011) defines poverty as the economic state in which individuals lack sufficient income to attain basic standards of life. It is characterized as the incapacity to attain minimal living conditions. In its most universal sense, it is the absence of vital demands, including food, shelter, medical care and safety (Bradshaw, 2007).

A further notion in this paper requiring elucidation is income inequality. Income inequality refers to the disparity in per capita household earnings across populations within or between nations. There is increasing apprehension over the connection between income disparity and the economic progress of emerging nations. This is likely attributable to the fact that development initiatives that overlook income disparity concerns are hindered by it. Ray (1998) posits that economic inequality arises when one individual has a greater income than another; despite both having the entitlement to choose material resources, one is deprived of the same opportunity. Income inequality is described as the inequitable distribution of income and earnings among individuals within a certain group, such as a community, company, economy or society. Todaro and Smith (2015) characterise income inequality as the unequal allocation of total national income across families, whereby the affluent get a much larger share than the impoverished. According to Ogbeide and Agu (2015), inequality pertains to the disparity in the distribution of a resource among two or more individuals, whereby the allocation to one or some exceeds that of others. Abiloro, Olawola and Ademira (2019), referencing Jorge

(2011), describe inequality as the condition of lacking equality, particularly with status, rights and opportunities.

Nonetheless, the concept is susceptible to ambiguity in public discourse, since it often has several meanings to different individuals. Kopp (2020) defines income inequality as a significant discrepancy in income distributions, characterised by concentration of wealth among a small fraction of the population. Income inequality manifests as a significant disparity in wealth across different segments of the population. Adinde (2017) defines income inequality as the discrepancy in income between affluent and impoverished people within a society. Jorge (2011) characterizes it as the disproportionate allocation of individual income among the diverse actors in the economy. Inequality refers to economic inequality. Research on economic inequality mostly concentrate on income. Such viewpoints also prevail in the discourse around the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) along with their corresponding targets.

A review of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development is also conducted. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, as noted by Kuziemko and Werker (2006), is a post-war institution tasked with assisting developing nations in overcoming poverty challenges. According to Vreeland (2007), the bank, a member of the World Bank Group and a specialized agency of the United Nations, was established prior to the UN's formation, thereby positioning it relatively separately within the United Nations system. Anyanwuocha (2008) states that the Bank was established to assist in the restoration and growth of economies devastated by conflict.

3. The Bank's Efforts in Addressing Poverty and Income Inequality in Nigeria

The efforts of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in financing the development needs of less-developed countries cannot be overemphasized. According to Oke (2018), the Bank pursues policies in the interest of the third world countries thereby fulfilling its mandate. The World Bank and the Third-World countries are development partners, whereas the developing countries depend on the World Bank for financial and non-financial resources to finance developmental needs, the World Bank serves as donor or helper to Nigeria and the rest of the developing countries. The poor countries refer to the United Nations agencies, bilateral donors, and the Bretton Woods institutions, such as the World Bank, as their development partners (Sachs, 2005).

Oke (2018) emphasizes that the Bank provides two primary categories of financial assistance to developing countries: investment loans and development policy loans. Investment loans are allocated for the advancement of economic and social development initiatives, while development policy loans are provided to fund or support a country's policy and institutional changes. Sachs (2005) states that the International Bank for

Reconstruction and Development, often referred to as the World Bank, offers loans, grants and policy assistance to poor nations. Anyanwuocha (2008) avers that the World Bank has allocated funds to West African nations, particularly Nigeria, for the advancement of agriculture, industry, electricity supply and education. It offers financial solutions to bolster Nigeria's economic policy framework. World Bank Report (2024) notes that the changes Nigeria has initiated need appropriate partnerships and assistance to achieve the long-term objective of a thriving economy characterized by job creation and substantial human development enhancement. Recently, the World Bank has intensified its assistance to ensure Nigeria adheres to its domestic reform initiatives by sanctioning a new financing package of US\$2.25 billion exclusively for the Reforms for Economic Stabilization to Enable Transformation (RESET) under the Development Policy Financing Program (DPF) and the Accelerating Resource Mobilization Reforms (ARMOUR) Program-for-Results (PforR). The two programmes are anticipated to provide prompt financial and technical assistance to Nigeria's urgent initiatives aimed at stabilizing the economy and enhancing support for the impoverished and economically vulnerable populations. It also bolsters Nigeria's ambitious, multi-year initiative to augment non-oil income and protect oil revenues to enhance fiscal sustainability and provide enough resources for the provision of excellent public services.

Another important objective of the World Bank is anchored to technical assistance and advisory roles to developing countries. It is widely known among the developing countries of the world, as it has provided technical assistances to countries for the purpose of planning and implementation of projects requiring high level of manpower. It helps in the provision of technical assistance and expert advice to member countries, such as Nigeria. This is done through its experienced personnel on projects and programmes (Anyanwuocha, 2008). It equally supports projects to improve service delivery infrastructure and livelihood opportunities. For instance, the World Bank has completed many projects in Nigeria to help eradicate poverty and reduce income inequality in Nigeria. Some of the selected and completed World Bank support projects in Nigeria between the years 2016 and 2023 are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Selected World Bank-assisted Projects in Nigeria from 2016 to 2023

Name of Project	Year awarded	Year completed	Cost Millions
Agro Processing Production Enhancement and Livelihood Improvement Support Project (Augmented agricultural production and assist small to medium-sized farmers).	2017	2023	US\$200

Better Education Service Delivery for All	2017	2022	US\\$611
Nigeria-Kaduna State Economic Transformation Programme for Results	2017	2021	US\\$350
Mineral Sector Support for Economic Diversification Project (MinDiver).	2017	2022	US\\$150
Mineral Sector Support for Economic Diversification Project (MinDiver).	2017	2022	US\$150
National Social Nets Projects	2016	2022	US\\$183
Natural Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (NEITI) Reporting Compliance.	2016	2017	US\$0.32

Source: World Bank Reports for Various Years

4. Criticisms of the Bank's Policies on Poverty Alleviation and Income Inequality

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development has faced serious criticism. Sachs (2005) posits that the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other donor organizations may function as partners, but they may also hinder the growth of impoverished nations in their efforts to combat poverty and other developmental issues. Critics assert that poorly executed free market policies, as promoted by the World Bank, are detrimental to economic progress. Shah (2006) and Oke (2018) asserts that the assumptions and framework of World Bank activities ultimately detrimentally affect the Southern nations, rather than advancing their development objectives. Caufield (1996) has also criticized World Bank's policies as highly homogenized, in the sense that different nations are given uniform prescriptions as remedy to the challenges of under-development. Similarly, Woods (2001) states that it has been proved that policies are not implemented rightly in the poorer nations. These policies are sometimes introduced to weaken the performance of the economies of the developing nations for the interest of the developed nations.

The Bretton Woods institutions are often criticized for forcefully tying developing countries loans to specific projects. The conditions in the projects of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) impose liberalization and have adverse effects on the sovereignty of the country concerned (Mosley, Harrigan and Toyce 1995; Chossudovsky, 1997). The World Bank has handed down impracticable policies to poorer nations through loans that encompass stifling aftermaths. Many of these nations have no choice other than to take loans for development tied with stringent policies for the recipient nations which they adopt hook, line and sinker. For instance, most of the loans collected by the Nigerian government were tied to some of the nation's natural resources or one project or the other.

The current system of operation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions is astonishingly dysfunctional to the point where the World Bank and IMF sometimes hardly speak with UN agencies even though they depend on one another. According to Sachs (2005), the rich countries have assigned the IMF and IBRD (World Bank) a privileged position in relation to other United Nations agencies, so much that they would have to call him (Prof. Jeffrey Sachs) simply to find out what the IMF was doing in a particular country. They lack the direct access to find out on their own. The rich countries follow the money in IMF and World Bank and control these two institutions much more than the United Nations.

Scholars have also criticized the World Bank in terms of application of development indices in the developed and developing countries. Oke (2018) avers that the economic indices applied for the developed nations are also recommended by the World Bank for development implementation in the Third-World countries. There has to be a clear distinction in the use of these indices, as the rate or speed of development in the two are different. The World Bank clearly believes in the power of Western economic policies but not mindful of the improvising nature of these policies to the already comatose economies of the South. According to Oke (2018), the policies of the World Bank are counter-productive to the development of developing countries whose economies do not always support the economic indices designed somewhere in New York.

Non-government organizations and the World Bank also relate harmoniously in alleviating poverty and closing income inequality gap of developing nations. However, some intellectuals in the Third-World countries, according to Moore (2007), have argued that the World Bank is deeply implicated in contemporary modes of donor and non-governmental organization-driven imperialism, and that its intellectual contribution functions primarily to seek to blame the poor for their economic and social condition. As reported by Oke (2018), the World Bank is naturally overbearing towards the poor as a result of the method of donor mechanism through the channel of non-governmental organizations. A critical examination of most of these non-governmental organizations and their operations with the World Bank in Nigeria revealed that corruption is their watchword; these non-governmental organizations lack accountability in remitting these funds to the target populations. As Shah (2006) and Knight and Pound (2006) argue, the corruption in the World Bank's operations is alarming and has raised serious concerns. The non-governmental organizations tend to divert funds meant for the development of the poorer nations and, in most cases, they practise kill-and-divide procedures when they receive development funds from these multilateral institutions. All these help in promoting poverty and income inequality rather than bringing lasting solutions to the menace.

5. The Challenge of Poverty and Income Inequality in Nigeria

In his address to the 48th World Health Assembly held in Switzerland in May 1995, Dr. Uchechukwu Madubuike, Nigeria's former Minister of Health aptly stated that "We shall never find answers to the problem of underdevelopment until we address the fundamental issue of poverty...." The above statement underscores the central position of this study, that it is poverty, among other indicators of underdevelopment, that leads to much of the cases of infant and child mortality and general state of ill health that are prevalent in Africa, hence the need to investigate poverty and inequality in Nigeria.

The World Bank's 2022 study indicated that 40% of Nigerians live below the national poverty level. A significant number of Nigerians, especially in northern Nigeria, experience illiteracy and lack access to essential social and economic infrastructure, such as electricity, potable water and enhanced sanitation. Employment does not convert the diligence of Nigerians into an escape from poverty, since the majority of workers are involved in small-scale home agricultural and non-agricultural companies; just 17 percent of Nigerian workers occupy pay positions that are most effective in alleviating poverty.

A further issue of poverty in Nigeria is the impact of climate and war disruptions. Climate and war disturbances disproportionately impact the impoverished in Nigeria. The impacts are escalating, exacerbated by illnesses; nonetheless, governmental assistance for homes remains minimal. Households have implemented perilous coping mechanisms, such as diminishing educational opportunities and curtailing food intake, which may adversely affect the long-term development of human capital, which is necessary to alleviate poverty and inequality. According to World Bank (2022), these concerns disproportionately impact some regions of Nigeria; the study illustrates this geographical disparity by presenting state-level information, which is essential due to Nigeria's federal system.

6. Conclusion and the Way Forward

The role of the World Bank in Nigeria cannot be underplayed. It has assisted Nigeria in areas of projects development, policy formulation and technical assistance to end poverty and inequality. However, these efforts seem unnoticeable due to high level of corruption from non-governmental organizations and government officials, homogenized policy prescriptions from the World Bank, bad implementation of World Bank's policies, impracticable policies, dysfunctional relationship between United Nations and the World Bank, etc.

As a way of addressing these challenges, the paper suggests the following:

It has been observed among other factors that the Bretton Woods institutions, especially the World Bank, lacks mutual and closer cooperation with the United Nations agencies in resolving developmental challenges, such as poverty and income inequality of

poor countries. To address the challenge of poverty and income inequality prevalent in developing countries, the World Bank and the UN specialized agencies should work harmoniously in addressing poverty and inequality issues since none of these institutions can do its work independently.

The impoverished are not included in the project efforts of the World Bank in developing nations, particularly Nigeria. Therefore, the World Bank should implement specific strategies and initiatives to reach and engage the impoverished population. World Bank (1996) claims that the impoverished should be empowered to exert influence and share authority over project development efforts, choices and resources that directly impact them throughout the preparation, planning, and implementation stages of the projects.

Economic policies designed in Washington DC, according to Oke (2018), may not be effective all over the world in addressing high level of poverty and inequality as well as other developmental needs of countries. A holistic overview of these policies will go a long way in addressing poorer countries. The World Bank needs to reflect on its basic objectives in the developing countries and introduce policies and conditions for the actualization of its core mandate of eradicating poverty through policies that best fit the poor in Third-World countries, like Nigeria. Only then can it be said that the global mandate of the World Bank in helping the poor countries alleviate poverty is fulfilled.

Economic reforms will play a major role in shaping poverty in Nigeria. World Bank Report (2022) suggests at least three kinds of long-term economic reforms to raise Nigerians from the challenge of poverty (i) macro-economic reforms, comprising fiscal, exchange rate and trade policy (ii) economic policies that will enable productivity of the farm and non-farm household businesses; and (iii) economic policies that will improve access to water, electricity and sanitation while strengthening information/communication know-how. As Nigeria's population expands and the disparity between the affluent and the impoverished increases, these reforms collectively could address significant economic challenges by diversifying the economy, generating employment, structurally transforming the economy, bolstering social protection programs and promoting other redistributive governmental policies. World Bank Report (2022) states that, "Implementing pro-poor initiatives necessitates unlocking fiscal space; reforming costly subsidies, including fuel subsidies, is essential, along with countervailing measures to safeguard the poor during the implementation of reforms."

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6**SUSTAINABILITY ACCOUNTING AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
IN NIGERIA**

By
Christian Nwenenda Worlu

Introduction

Nigeria, Africa's largest economy, has long relied on its oil and gas sector, which contributes significantly to GDP but also poses severe environmental challenges, including pollution and deforestation. The degradation of the environment, coupled with health implications from industrial emissions and unsafe water sources, has driven the need for sustainability-focused practices in corporate accounting. Over time, the realization grew that the unregulated exploitation of natural resources not only jeopardized environmental sustainability but also undermined public health, leading to reduced workforce productivity and economic stagnation (Abada & Worlu, 2022).

In the education sector, the lack of investment in sustainability awareness has limited the integration of environmental stewardship and health-conscious practices into corporate and public policies. Sustainability accounting began to emerge in response to these gaps, incorporating metrics to measure corporate impacts on the environment, health and social systems, such as education funding and community development. International frameworks, like the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), and the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 further spurred this development, emphasizing the importance of environmental sustainability, access to quality healthcare and equitable education for sustainable economic growth.

In Nigeria, regulatory developments, like the sustainability disclosure guidelines by the Nigerian Stock Exchange, have encouraged businesses to adopt sustainability accounting as a means for addressing their environmental footprints and social responsibilities. This approach has also become a vital tool for monitoring how companies contribute to health infrastructure and educational initiatives, particularly in communities affected by industrial activities. Historically, firms in the oil and gas sector have been scrutinized for their lack of transparency in addressing environmental and health impacts, leading to advocacy for stronger sustainability practices. Education has played a critical role in this evolution, as business schools and training programmes began emphasizing the importance of sustainability in corporate governance (Adegbite & Salami, 2023; Olawale & Agbaje, 2024).

Furthermore, the historical neglect of environmental protection has exacerbated public health challenges, including respiratory illnesses and water-borne diseases, which

have strained Nigeria's healthcare systems. Sustainability accounting has evolved to help companies mitigate these impacts by aligning their operations with environmental and social goals. Additionally, the increasing demand for accountability from international investors has pressured Nigerian firms to adopt sustainability practices that address not only economic returns but also contributions to health, education and environmental well-being.

The relationship between sustainability accounting and economic growth is now acknowledged as a symbiotic one, where responsible resource use and investments in human capital drive long-term prosperity. This paradigm shift is particularly relevant in sectors like agriculture and manufacturing, which are central to Nigeria's economic diversification efforts and have direct implications for food security, health and educational opportunities. As a result, sustainability accounting serves as a framework for businesses to balance profit motives with their responsibilities toward societal welfare and environmental conservation. This evolution underscores the need for a multi-stakeholder approach that includes government policies, corporate accountability and community engagement to achieve sustainable economic growth.

Despite progress, challenges remain, including weak regulatory enforcement and a lack of widespread understanding of the role of sustainability accounting in addressing interconnected issues of health, education and the environment (Yakubu & Bello, 2021; Okoro & Udo, 2023). However, the historical trajectory of sustainability accounting in Nigeria highlights its potential to transform economic systems, foster resilience and promote inclusive growth. By aligning corporate practices with the principles of sustainability, Nigeria can address pressing environmental and social challenges while unlocking new pathways for economic development. Incorporating sustainability accounting practices not only helps mitigate risks associated with environmental degradation but also contributes to building a more resilient economy. As such, the integration of sustainability into accounting frameworks is essential for fostering long-term economic stability and growth in Nigeria.

Overall, sustainability accounting in Nigeria represents a critical component of the country's economic development strategy. As businesses increasingly align their operations with sustainable practices, they contribute to the broader objective of ensuring that economic growth does not come at the expense of environmental health or social well-being (Ibrahim & Musa, 2021; Yakubu & Bello, 2021; Okoroafor & Uche, 2023). This evolving trend highlights the growing recognition of the need for a paradigm shift in how businesses in Nigeria approach growth, moving beyond short-term gains to long-term, sustainable prosperity.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Sustainability Accounting

Sustainability accounting refers to the process of measuring, reporting and managing an organization's environmental, social and economic impacts, alongside traditional financial performance. Adeola and Okon (2023) state that it involves integrating non-financial metrics, such as carbon emissions, waste management, resource usage and labour practices, into corporate accounting systems. Sustainability accounting aims to provide a more comprehensive view of a company's overall impact, encouraging transparency and accountability in business operations. It supports informed decision-making by offering stakeholders, including investors, consumers and regulators, insight into how companies manage risks and opportunities related to sustainability (Ugwu & Okeke, 2022; Okoro & Udo, 2023). Ultimately, sustainability accounting promotes responsible business practices that align with long-term value creation, environmental stewardship and social well-being.

Overview of Economic Growth in Nigeria

Nigeria, one of the largest economies in Africa, has experienced fluctuating rates of economic growth, largely driven by its oil and gas sector. In recent years, the country has struggled with economic challenges, such as low diversification, inflation, high unemployment rates and economic inequality, which have hindered its development. However, the government has made efforts to stimulate growth through policies that focus on non-oil sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing and services. Nigeria has also set ambitious goals for sustainable development, aiming to improve infrastructure, reduce poverty and increase human capital development through initiatives like Vision 20:2020 and National Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (Adeyemi & Fagbemi, 2021; Yakubu & Bello, 2021; Ibrahim & Musa, 2021). Despite these efforts, the country's economic growth remains susceptible to global oil price fluctuations and internal structural weaknesses, requiring a shift towards a more diversified, sustainable and inclusive economy.

The Relationship between Sustainability Accounting and Economic Growth

Sustainability accounting plays a critical role in fostering long-term economic growth by helping businesses manage their environmental, social and economic impacts. According to Okoroafor and Uche (2023), when companies integrate sustainability into their financial and operational decision-making, they tend to reduce inefficiencies, optimize resource use and minimize risks related to environmental degradation, which can ultimately contribute to sustained profitability and growth. Furthermore, businesses that adopt sustainability accounting practices are more likely to attract ethical investors and capital, boosting their capacity to grow. By promoting transparency and accountability,

sustainability accounting also encourages companies to contribute to broader societal goals, such as poverty reduction, gender equality and environmental protection, all of which are crucial for inclusive economic development (Obinna & Emeka, 2022; Nze & Eze, 2023). In the context of Nigeria, where economic growth is often hampered by resource mismanagement and social disparities, sustainability accounting can help guide businesses towards more responsible and resilient growth strategies.

The Role of Sustainability in Corporate Reporting

Sustainability has become an integral part of corporate reporting, as businesses recognize that traditional financial reports no longer fully capture their long-term value or the risks they face. In the view of Yakubu and Bello (2021), sustainability reporting enables organizations to disclose their environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance, offering a more holistic view of their operations and strategies. This type of reporting helps stakeholders, including investors, customers and regulators, evaluate how well a company manages sustainability issues, which is increasingly important in decision-making processes. In Nigeria, corporate sustainability reporting has gained importance due to growing awareness of the need for responsible business practices in the wake of environmental challenges, social inequality and governance concerns (Adeola & Okon, 2023). As a result, sustainability reporting not only enhances transparency but also contributes to building trust and improving corporate reputation, which are vital for long-term success and economic stability in the market.

Integrating Sustainability into National Economic Development Strategies

Integrating sustainability into Nigeria's national economic development strategies is essential for ensuring that economic growth does not come at the expense of environmental and social well-being. The Nigerian government has started to recognize the importance of sustainable development, incorporating it into policies aimed at reducing poverty, creating jobs and improving infrastructure while simultaneously addressing environmental concerns. By embedding sustainability into national planning, the government can create a framework that encourages private-sector investment in green technologies, renewable energy and socially responsible business practices (Adeyemi & Fagbemi, 2021; Ajayi & Olorunfemi, 2022; Udo, 2024). This integration fosters an environment where sustainable economic growth can be achieved through responsible use of resources and promoting social equity. However, this process requires aligning various sectors, improving policy coherence and building institutional capacity to manage sustainability challenges effectively.

The Impact of Sustainability Accounting on Corporate Performance

Sustainability accounting plays a crucial role in enhancing corporate performance by providing businesses with the tools to manage environmental and social risks, which can ultimately lead to financial gains. Eze and Nwachukwu (2021) state that companies that implement sustainability accounting practices are better positioned to optimize their resource use, reduce waste and mitigate environmental and social risks, all of which contribute to long-term profitability. Furthermore, businesses that adopt sustainability reporting often experience increased consumer loyalty, improved stakeholder relationships and better access to capital from investors who prioritize ESG factors. By integrating sustainability into their operations, companies can foster innovation, improve their market competitiveness and attract a growing base of socially-conscious consumers (Yakubu & Bello, 2021). Overall, sustainability accounting enhances not only a firm's reputation but also its bottom line, making it an integral part of corporate strategy for sustainable growth.

The Role of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Factors

Environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors are critical components of sustainability accounting, influencing both corporate performance and broader economic development. As noted by Udo (2024), the environmental aspect focuses on a company's efforts to minimize its carbon footprint, manage waste and conserve resources, which can lead to cost savings and improved environmental stewardship. The social dimension emphasizes the importance of ethical labour practices, community engagement and responsible supply chains, fostering trust and enhancing the company's social license to operate. The governance factor ensures that businesses are managed with integrity, transparency and accountability, which are keys to building investor confidence and ensuring long-term sustainability (Nze & Eze, 2023). As Nigerian firms and industries increasingly prioritize ESG factors, they not only improve their operational efficiency but also contribute to national economic development by encouraging inclusive growth and promoting environmental protection.

Stakeholder Engagement and Sustainable Economic Development

Stakeholder engagement is central to achieving sustainable economic development in Nigeria, as it ensures that the voices of various groups, including local communities, investors, employees and government entities, are considered in decision-making processes. Balogun and Adeyemo (2022) aver that effective stakeholder engagement allows businesses to identify and address social and environmental concerns, which can lead to more informed, responsible decisions that support long-term economic growth. By actively engaging stakeholders, companies can build stronger relationships, manage risks more effectively, and align their operations with broader societal goals. This

approach enhances corporate social responsibility and ensures that economic development is inclusive, equitable and resilient. In Nigeria, fostering dialogue among businesses, government and local communities is essential for creating a sustainable and stable environment where both business growth and social progress can thrive (Okoroafor & Uche, 2023).

Historical Development of Sustainability Accounting in Nigeria

The evolution of sustainability accounting in Nigeria can be traced back to the growing awareness of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues in the late 20th century, particularly in response to environmental degradation caused by the oil and gas industry. Initially focused on environmental accountability, this practice gradually extended to health and education, as stakeholders demanded greater transparency in addressing public concerns about pollution, healthcare access and education funding (Abada & Worlu, 2022). Over time, global frameworks, like Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), influenced Nigerian businesses to integrate sustainability metrics into their financial reporting. This shift was further driven by government policies and non-governmental organizations advocating corporate responsibility in addressing environmental sustainability, health equity and educational development. Today, sustainability accounting has gained momentum as a vital tool for ensuring long-term economic growth and addressing the intertwined challenges of health, education and environmental preservation (Adegbite & Salami, 2023; Olawale & Agbaje, 2024).

Regulatory Framework for Sustainability Reporting

The regulatory framework for sustainability reporting in Nigeria is shaped by international standards and domestic policies aimed at promoting transparency and accountability in corporate activities. The Nigerian Stock Exchange's sustainability disclosure guidelines have compelled listed companies to report on their ESG activities, including efforts to improve public health, educational access and environmental management. Regulators such as the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (FRCN) and the Federal Ministry of Environment have introduced policies to ensure businesses disclose their environmental impacts, investments in community health programs and contributions to educational initiatives. While these regulations have driven progress, enforcement remains a challenge, requiring stronger collaboration between government agencies and the private sector (Yakubu & Bello, 2021; Okoro & Udo, 2023). Effective implementation of these frameworks can help Nigerian firms align their operations with national goals for environmental conservation, health improvement and education development.

Adoption of Sustainability Accounting by Nigerian Firms

Nigerian firms have increasingly adopted sustainability accounting practices to address stakeholder demands for transparency in managing environmental, health and educational impacts (Balogun & Adeyemo, 2022). Large corporations, particularly in the oil, gas and manufacturing sectors, have begun integrating ESG metrics into their reporting, showcasing their efforts to reduce emissions, support healthcare initiatives and fund educational programmes. The shift is partly driven by global investor expectations, as firms that fail to demonstrate sustainability are less likely to attract foreign investments (Worlu, & Omodero, 2016). Adoption has also been bolstered by corporate recognition of the economic benefits of sustainability, such as enhanced brand reputation, risk management and operational efficiency. Despite these advances, smaller firms often struggle to adopt these practices due to limited resources, highlighting the need for targeted support to enable broader participation in sustainability accounting across industries.

Key Sectors in Sustainability Accounting: Oil, Gas and Manufacturing

The oil and gas sector, a cornerstone of Nigeria's economy, has faced intense scrutiny for its environmental impacts, making sustainability accounting critical in showcasing efforts to mitigate pollution and invest in health and education (Balogun & Adeyemo, 2022). Manufacturing companies are also key players, as they implement sustainability practices to minimize waste and emissions while addressing the health and educational needs of their workforce and surrounding communities. Both sectors have adopted reporting mechanisms to highlight initiatives such as funding healthcare facilities, providing scholarships and engaging in environmental restoration projects. These industries are beginning to recognize that long-term profitability depends on their ability to balance resource use with societal needs, such as improved access to healthcare and quality education (Yakubu & Bello, 2021; Okoro & Udo, 2023). However, the success of sustainability accounting in these sectors depends on consistent regulatory oversight and stakeholder engagement to ensure meaningful progress.

Benefits and Challenges of Sustainability Accounting in Nigeria

Sustainability accounting in Nigeria offers significant benefits, including improved corporate transparency, enhanced stakeholder trust and a better understanding of the social and environmental impacts of business operations. Companies that adopt these practices can identify cost-saving opportunities, such as energy efficiency and waste reduction, while also contributing to health programmes and educational development (Adegbite & Salami, 2023; Olawale & Agbaje, 2024).

However, challenges persist, such as limited expertise in sustainability accounting, inadequate regulatory enforcement and high cost of implementing reporting systems,

particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises. Despite these obstacles, the practice is gaining traction as businesses recognize its role in fostering resilience and ensuring long-term growth while addressing societal priorities, like healthcare, education and environmental protection. For sustainability accounting to fully realize its potential in Nigeria, there must be greater collaboration among the private sector, government and the civil society to overcome these challenges and build capacity across industries (Abada & Worlu, 2022).

Overview of Nigeria's Economic Growth

Nigeria's economic growth has been marked by periods of rapid expansion, particularly during oil booms, and stagnation, during global downturns or political instability. While the oil sector remains a primary driver, its environmental impacts, such as pollution and deforestation, have highlighted the need for sustainable practices to ensure long-term growth. Health outcomes, such as reduced life expectancy due to environmental degradation and inadequate access to healthcare, continue to challenge the workforce's productivity, which is critical for economic development (Balogun & Adeyemo, 2022). Similarly, insufficient investment in education hampers human capital development, reducing the country's ability to innovate and compete in a global economy. To achieve sustained growth, Nigeria must prioritize sectors that simultaneously address environmental concerns, improve healthcare access and enhance education quality, creating a resilient and diversified economy.

Key Drivers of Economic Growth in Nigeria

The primary drivers of Nigeria's economic growth include its abundant natural resources, a growing population, and expanding non-oil sectors, such as agriculture, telecommunications and manufacturing. However, these drivers are often constrained by environmental challenges, like deforestation and water pollution, which reduce agricultural productivity and limit access to clean water. Health challenges, including a high disease burden due to poor living conditions, directly affect labour productivity, while inadequate education systems fail to produce a skilled workforce to drive innovation (Worlu, & Omodero, 2016). Government initiatives that improve environmental stewardship, invest in public health infrastructure and enhance educational access are crucial to leveraging these growth drivers effectively. By addressing these interconnected issues, Nigeria can maximize the potential of its key sectors while ensuring equitable and sustainable development.

The Role of Public Policy and Government Interventions

Public policies and government interventions play a pivotal role in shaping Nigeria's economic trajectory, particularly through initiatives aimed at improving infrastructure,

healthcare and education (Balogun & Adeyemo, 2022). Environmental regulations, such as those targeting pollution in the oil and gas industry, are essential for mitigating ecological damage and promoting sustainable development. Investments in healthcare, such as building hospitals and improving disease prevention, enhance workforce productivity, while policies focused on education help develop the human capital needed for economic diversification (Abada & Worlu, 2022). However, inconsistent policy implementation and corruption often undermine these efforts, leaving gaps in addressing environmental degradation and social inequalities. To ensure impactful interventions, the government must adopt an integrated approach that prioritizes sustainability while addressing health and educational disparities across the country.

The Impact of Sustainability Practices on Economic Growth

Sustainability practices positively influence Nigeria's economic growth by fostering resource efficiency, reducing environmental degradation and enhancing social equity (Worlu, & Omodero, 2016). For example, businesses adopting sustainable practices in the oil and gas sector can minimize pollution, which directly improves public health outcomes and reduces healthcare costs. Similarly, companies that invest in education and training programmes not only build a skilled workforce but also empower communities to contribute more effectively to economic activities. By integrating environmental stewardship into business operations, firms can reduce costs, attract ethical investments and improve their competitiveness in global markets. Ultimately, sustainability practices create a ripple effect, driving economic growth while addressing the critical needs of health, education and environmental conservation (Adegbite & Salami, 2023; Olawale & Agbaje, 2024).

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Nigeria's Economic Growth

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer a comprehensive framework for promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth in Nigeria by addressing critical issues in health, education and environmental protection. SDG 3 emphasizes good health and well-being, aligning with Nigeria's need to improve access to quality healthcare to enhance labour productivity. SDG 4 focuses on quality education, crucial for developing the skills and knowledge needed for innovation and economic diversification. SDG 13 targets climate action, a pressing concern for Nigeria given its vulnerability to environmental challenges, like desertification and flooding (Abada & Worlu, 2022). By aligning national policies with the SDGs, Nigeria can achieve balanced economic growth that benefits all sectors of society while addressing its pressing environmental and social challenges.

Theoretical Review

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory was proposed by R. Edward Freeman in his seminal work *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach* in 1984. This theory posits that businesses should consider the interests and welfare of all their stakeholders—not just shareholders—when making decisions. The theory is closely linked to sustainability accounting because it advocates that businesses should account for their environmental, social and governance (ESG) impacts, ensuring that corporate actions benefit not only investors but also employees, customers, suppliers and the broader community. By incorporating stakeholder interests into business practices, companies can foster long-term sustainable growth that supports both economic development and social well-being (Balogun & Adeyemo, 2022; Adegbite & Salami, 2023; Olawale & Agbaje, 2024). However, critics argue that the theory can be too broad and vague, making it difficult for businesses to prioritize and manage conflicting stakeholder interests effectively, and that it may lead to inefficiency by diluting the focus on shareholder value and corporate profitability.

Sustainable Development Theory

Sustainable Development Theory was popularized by the Brundtland Commission in 1987 through its report *Our Common Future*, which defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. According to Ugwu and Okeke (2022), this theory is directly related to sustainability accounting, as it calls for businesses and governments to integrate environmental, social and economic factors into their accounting and reporting systems to ensure long-term sustainability. In the context of economic growth, the theory emphasizes that development should not be solely measured by financial gains but should also include environmental preservation and social equity, aligning with the principles of sustainability accounting.

However, critics argue that the theory's broad definition leaves room for ambiguity, making it challenging to implement in practice, particularly when economic growth and environmental protection seem to be at odds (Obinna & Emeka, 2022). Additionally, some contend that the theory overlooks the complexities of balancing economic development with the ecological limitations of the planet, which could lead to unrealistic expectations or insufficient action by policymakers and businesses.

System Theory

System Theory was initially developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in the 1940s as part of his work on General Systems Theory. Nze and Eze (2023) state that this theory suggests that organizations and processes should be understood as part of a larger, interconnected system, where changes in one part of the system can affect the entire entity. In relation to sustainability accounting and economic growth, System Theory highlights the

importance of recognizing the interconnectedness of social, environmental and economic factors, urging businesses to account for their broader impact on all aspects of society and the environment. It suggests that economic growth should be pursued in a way that considers the long-term health of the entire system, ensuring that business practices are sustainable and balanced with ecological and social needs (Okoroafor & Uche, 2023; Olawale & Agbaje, 2024).

However, critics argue that System Theory can be overly complex and difficult to apply practically, as it often requires a holistic approach that is challenging to implement in a business environment focused on short-term financial performance, and it may not always provide clear guidance on how to address competing priorities within a system.

Empirical Review

Adegbite and Salami (2023) examined the influence of sustainability accounting on inclusive economic growth in Nigeria using a survey of 200 financial managers across various sectors, analyzed through descriptive statistics and multiple regression techniques. The study found that firms practising sustainability accounting experienced improved stakeholder engagement and contributed to reducing inequality through equitable resource allocation. They concluded that sustainability accounting is instrumental in achieving inclusive growth by aligning corporate strategies with social and environmental goals. The authors recommended that Nigerian regulators develop comprehensive frameworks for sustainability accounting and offer incentives to firms demonstrating inclusive practices. Their findings highlight the potential of sustainability accounting to bridge economic and social gaps in developing economies.

Adeola and Okon (2023) investigated the relationship between corporate governance, sustainability reporting and economic development in Nigerian firms using panel data from 2015 to 2022 and employing Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) estimation. The study revealed that firms with strong corporate governance frameworks were more likely to produce high-quality sustainability reports, positively contributing to Nigeria's economic development. It concluded that corporate governance is a critical driver of sustainable economic practices in developing economies. It then recommended stricter enforcement of governance codes and sustainability reporting standards to promote accountability and growth. Their work highlighted the interplay between governance practices and broader economic objectives.

Moreover, Nze and Eze (2023) explored the impact of social sustainability practices on the corporate performance of Nigerian firms using a mixed-methods approach, combining survey data and financial performance indicators analyzed through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between investments in social sustainability initiatives, such as employee welfare and community engagement, and improved profitability and brand loyalty. They concluded

that prioritizing social sustainability enhanced long-term corporate success and fosters societal well-being. The authors recommended that firms should allocate substantial resources to social sustainability programmes and policymakers should incentivize such practices through tax reliefs. Their study emphasized the benefits of social sustainability for firms and communities.

Okoro and Udo (2023) investigated the role of green accounting practices in promoting sustainable economic growth in Nigeria using time-series data from 2000 to 2022 and employing the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model. Their findings showed a significant positive relationship between the adoption of green accounting practices and indicators of economic sustainability, such as reduced environmental costs and enhanced GDP growth. The study concluded that green accounting served as a vital tool for fostering a balance between economic advancement and environmental preservation. The authors recommended that Nigerian policymakers need to enforce green accounting standards across all sectors and incentivize firms adopting environmentally-friendly practices. Their research underscored the need for institutional reforms to support green economic policies in Nigeria.

Similarly, Abada and Worlu (2022) studied environmental pollution cost and financial performance of oil and gas upstream companies in Nigeria. The study found that environmental pollution costs did not significantly influence key financial performance metrics as return on assets (ROA), earnings per share (EPS) and net profit margin (NPM) in Nigerian oil and gas upstream companies. This finding suggests that the financial impacts of environmental remediation expenditures may not be directly reflected in these performance indicators, perhaps due to external factors such as regulatory leniency, market dynamics or the limited transparency of environmental reporting. Consequently, their recommendation of mandatory environmental reporting aims to enhance corporate accountability and provide stakeholders with a clearer understanding of how environmental costs integrate into overall corporate performance.

Worlu and Omodero (2016) studied the effect of human capital development on financial performance of banks in Nigeria, revealing no significant effect on profit after tax (PAT) and total revenue (TR), and a negative effect on net assets (NA). This suggests that current investments in employee training and welfare may be insufficient to drive meaningful improvements in financial outcomes, possibly due to suboptimal allocation of resources or ineffective implementation of development programmes. To address this gap, the study emphasized the need for banks to prioritize robust human capital strategies, ensuring that training and welfare initiatives are better aligned with organizational goals to enhance productivity and long-term financial performance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the relationship between sustainability accounting and economic growth in Nigeria highlights the critical need for businesses and governments to balance financial performance with social and environmental responsibilities. By adopting sustainability accounting, Nigerian firms can mitigate the adverse environmental impacts of industrial activities, such as pollution and deforestation, which directly affect public health and agricultural productivity. Integrating health initiatives into corporate strategies, such as funding healthcare facilities and improving community well-being, ensures a healthier workforce capable of driving economic activities. Similarly, investments in education through sustainability accounting empower communities, enhance human capital development, and prepare future generations to contribute meaningfully to national growth. Ultimately, sustainability accounting offers a pathway for Nigeria to achieve inclusive economic development by addressing environmental challenges, strengthening public health and fostering educational advancements in a cohesive framework.

Recommendations

1. The Nigerian government should enhance enforcement of sustainability accounting regulations to ensure companies address environmental impacts, invest in healthcare systems and contribute to educational development for inclusive growth.
2. Collaboration between the public and private sectors can drive initiatives that focus on improving environmental stewardship, expanding access to quality healthcare and funding educational programmes, thereby creating a sustainable economic foundation.
3. Stakeholders should be educated about the importance of sustainability accounting in linking corporate practices to environmental conservation, health improvements and educational advancement to foster holistic development.
4. Offering tax breaks and financial incentives to companies that prioritize sustainability efforts in reducing environmental harm, supporting health infrastructure and advancing education can encourage widespread adoption of such practices.
5. National economic strategies should incorporate sustainability accounting metrics to ensure environmental protection, enhanced public health services and equitable access to education as drivers of long-term growth.

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7**FINANCIAL CAPABILITY OF HOUSEHOLDS AND SAVINGS IN NIGERIA:
PROBIT REGRESSION VERIFICATION****By****Simeon Gbimoie Nenbee**

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Abstract

One option for promoting capital accumulation is through mobilization of savings. This chapter looks at financial capability of households and savings in Nigeria based on secondary data from 31,199 households' National Survey earlier conducted by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Probit Regression Model techniques in line with the Life-Cycle Hypothesis (LCH), which asserts that savings varies across life cycles. The analysis revealed that higher levels of financial literacy positively promoted savings with formal banking institutions. Older aged households seemed to exhibit greater propensity to save than others. On gender disparities, women exhibited lower likelihood of saving in formal financial institutions than men. In addition, smaller households saved more in formal banks than larger households that tended to face challenges that hindered their saving tendencies, leading to increased financial exclusion. These results underscore the need for policies aimed at promoting financial literacy, stable income sources and access to financial services, particularly in rural areas by the monetary authority in Nigeria. It is, therefore, recommended that the government and financial institutions should collaborate to implement nationwide financial literacy campaigns targeting diverse demographics, particularly in rural areas and among urban lower-educated groups. This can be achieved through establishment of more financial service outlets, such as microfinance banks, mobile money agents, flexible deposit accounts and low-fee accounts, to cater for rural needs, as well as introduction of social support programmes so as to promote savings culture in Nigeria.

Keywords: Financial literacy, Savings and households' financial capability

1. Introduction

Scholars have established the fact that the household represents a rational behaving entity. Thus, members of a household can jointly maximise their objective functions, especially spending decisions. However, the challenge of optimal spending decision of households could be daunting, requiring dual constraints on how much is spent on goods

and services and how much is saved at a given time. In this regard, the disposable income decision plays a crucial role to shaping savings direction and magnitude. Saving is the portion of after-tax income not spent on immediate consumption. Nenbee (2013, p.60) defines savings “as a fraction of disposable income not spent on consumption in the current period.” Households need to act in such a way that income is maximized for the advancement of economic welfare. The household prepares the spending structure of earned and unearned income for each period.

Chamberlin & Yueh (2016) argue that households serve two major purposes – employees and consumers –in the macroeconomic system. As employees, they labour for businesses in exchange for wages. As customers, they spend money on goods and services provided by businesses. Although these are regarded as the two primary tasks of the household sector, the cyclical flow of income demonstrates that households are also investors and taxes. Saving represents money that the household sector decides not to currently spend. According to United Nations (1993), a household is a small group of people who live in the same home, share some or all of their resources and income, and use specific products and services together, usually food and housing. Although specific charges against savings have been identified, such as the rate of inflation, government fiscal policy, real interest rate and household size, there are other determinants (McConnel & Brue, 2005), such as household debt, customary standard of living and wealth dispositions; these factors have traditionally influenced household savings patterns. However, changing economic and behavioural elements have resulted in a new discovery in the study of savings, opening up fresh perspectives on household savings behavioural patterns.

Households' savings are not without problems, especially in formal financial institutions. The global worsening state of households' savings in formal financial institutions could be linked to some credit market imperfections today. Savings patterns are seemingly perceived as a character trait of households in their income management decisions. In the last two decades, the Nigerian households, on average, seemed to grapple with reserved attitudes as well as “cold-feet posture” to advancing financial institutional services of savings.

Nigerian households, according to Lusardi (2010) and CBN (2015), suffer broader financial management challenges owing to low financial literacy. In Nigeria, low financial literacy has a substantial impact on saving behaviour, contributing to inefficient use of financial institutions and impeding economic advancement. In most cases, household members struggle to understand basic financial concepts, such as interest rates, inflation and loan terms, which limits their capacity to use savings and credit products successfully.

Udousoro, Eko & Ubong (2013) opine that households, especially those in rural and semi-urban centres, tend to prefer informal savings systems, like rotating savings and credit associations, which lack the security and benefits of formal banking institutions.

Today, income instability due largely to regional disparities (Hussaini *et al.*, 2021) pose significant challenges to household savings in Nigeria. This results in fluctuating disposable income, reducing the ability of households to set aside funds for future needs. Income instability, especially in rural areas, leaves households vulnerable to economic shocks. For example, agricultural households dependent on seasonal earnings face difficulty maintaining consistent savings. This problem is worsened by Nigeria's reliance on oil exports, which are subject to price volatility and impact national income levels, further exacerbating household instability (Odeh, Effiong & Nwafor, 2017). This issue manifests in the form of institutional limitations. Additionally, cultural and societal norms often restrict Nigerian women's mobility and decision-making, especially in some regions, reducing their ability to engage with formal financial institutions (Olaniyan & Bankole, 2005; Lusardi, 2010; CBN, 2019; Adeola, 2020) to save too. It is against this backdrop that this paper examined whether financial capabilities of household's impact savings based on the earlier institutional surveys conducted by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

2. Literature Review

The patterns and decisions households make regarding the portion of their income that are set aside rather than consumed immediately call for concern. Savings can be influenced by various factors, like income levels, household size, education, financial literacy and accessibility to financial institutions. In the context of formal banking institutions, household saving behaviour is operationalized as the decision to deposit money into savings accounts, fixed deposits or other savings products. Saving behaviour is shaped not only by economic factors but also by social norms, family dynamics and perceptions of future economic conditions (Akerlof & Kranton; 2020, Agba & Ogwumike, 2023).

Financial capability, to a large extent, can propel savings. It refers to a household's ability to make informed and effective financial decisions and encompasses financial literacy, access to financial products and the capacity to plan and manage finances efficiently. In Lusardi & Mitchell's (2017) view, financial capability is a critical factor in determining savings, especially in developing countries. In Nigeria, financial capability is a significant predictor of household participation in formal financial systems. Households with higher financial literacy and greater access to banking services are more likely to save in formal institutions (Klapper, Lusardi, & van Oudheusden, 2019).

Diverse theoretical viewpoints exist on the effects of financial capabilities of households on savings in an economy. One of such is the Life-Cycle Hypothesis (LCH), as popularised by Modigliani and Brumberg (1954). This theory assumes that individuals plan their consumption and saving behaviour over their lifetime. Younger individuals tend to save less and may even borrow to finance their consumption, as they anticipate higher future earnings, while middle-aged individuals save more as they reach their peak earning

years, preparing for retirement. Older individuals dissave, using their accumulated savings to fund retirement. However, the theory does not explicitly focus on gender. Empirical studies have shown differences in saving behaviour between men and women, potentially due to factors like income disparities, life expectancy and risk tolerance. Likewise, larger households may save less during the child-rearing years due to higher consumption needs, with the potential for increased savings as the household size decreases.

The Institutional Theory of Saving (ITS), proposed by William Beveridge, looks at how institutional factors, such as government policies, financial infrastructure and social norms, influence saving behaviour. Households with access to institutional support, such as government benefits, tax incentives or employer-sponsored retirement plans, may be more inclined to save. Secure income sources that are supplemented by institutional mechanisms further enhance a household's capacity and motivation to save. Hence, households closer to financial institutions are more likely to use savings products, as the ease of access reduces the costs (time and travel) associated with saving. Positive attitudes towards financial institutions, driven by trust, perceived reliability and experiences, can enhance the likelihood of savings rates.

In view of the various theoretical viewpoints, there exist divergent empirical opinions, especially as related to socio-demographic determinants of households' savings in formal banking financial institutions. These views necessitated studies that have examined similar topics, methods and variables. For instance, Sultana & Hasan (2020) investigated gender variations in saving in Bangladesh, with a focus on how socio-demographic factors influence women's participation in formal banking. The study surveyed 1,500 women in both urban and rural regions, using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods based on logistic regression. Income, financial literacy, education, age, marital status and proximity to banking services were among the characteristics considered. The study found that financial literacy and education were major determinants of women's saving behaviour, with married women and those with higher education being more likely to save in formal institutions.

Mbuthia *et al.* (2021) examined the role of socio-demographic characteristics in influencing saving behaviour in Kenya's formal financial institutions. The study employed the cross-sectional survey design and data were collected from over 3,500 households across urban and rural settings. The key variables analyzed included age, gender, household size, income level, education and employment status using the Probit regression model. The findings indicated that age and income levels were significant predictors, with older and higher-income individuals more likely to save in formal institutions.

In a broader African context, Adebayo & Afolabi (2023) investigated the determinants of household savings in formal financial institutions across 10 sub-Saharan African countries. Using panel data analysis, the study indicated that education and

income were consistently significant predictors of formal savings across all countries studied, while regional economic disparities influenced the likelihood of household saving in formal financial institutions. The relevance of this study to the present research lies in its demonstration of how broader socioeconomic conditions, combined with individual demographic characteristics, shape saving behaviour across different African contexts.

Zins & Weill (2021) investigated financial inclusion and its determinants in West Africa, with particular attention paid to saving behaviour in formal banking institutions. The sample consisted of 5,000 respondents from Ghana, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire. A multinomial logistic regression model was used to assess how factors like proximity to banking institutions, financial literacy and household income influence saving practices. The findings showed that proximity to financial institutions was a significant factor, with those living in urban areas having better access and, therefore, higher saving rates.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Used and Source

The ex-post facto design was chosen in this study for its ability to examine causal relationships retrospectively by analyzing data collected after the occurrence of the phenomena of interest (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). The data utilized were sourced from secondary sources. They were data on the 31,199 households across Nigeria based on the national quarterly survey conducted in 2023 by the Central Bank of Nigeria (See *International Financial Inclusion Conference, 2023*). Table 1 indicates the various data sets used.

Table 1: Unit of Analysis – Multinomial Categorization

Dependent Variable	Unit of analysis
Savings –Financial Health	<i>Banking financial product (Y_{bi})</i>
Independent Variable(s)	Unit of Analysis – Ordinal Categorization
Financial Literacy	<i>Access, usage and cost of banking financial products</i>
Demographic Factors	<i>Age and Gender</i>
Self-efficacy (Household size)	<i>Small household size, which is household with 1-4 persons, Normal household size, which is household with 5-6 persons, Large household size, consisting of 7-10 persons and Very large household size, consisting of above 10 persons</i>
Socioeconomic Factors	<i>Formal sources of income: salaries/wages Personal sources of income: These are income from profits of entrepreneurs or individual business, rent, pension, dividend, return on investments in the formal</i>

	<p>sector, less the agro-sector.</p> <p><i>Informal sources of income: These are wages due to individual engagement in handy occupations (e.g. hairdressing, tailoring and mechanic), etc.</i></p> <p><i>Agricultural sources of income: These are income from subsistence/small-scale, commercial/large-scale farming, trading of own agricultural output, etc.)</i></p> <p><i>Transfer as sources of income: money from foreign resident household member(s), etc.)</i></p>
Attitude (Proximity)	Closeness and affordability of financial products

Source: Authors' Compilation (2024)

3.2 Analytical Framework

The model used in this paper follows the framework of Sodipo *et al.* (2022), who utilized two variables to model financial inclusion in Nigeria. In the model, the baseline was specified as:

$$Y_{bi} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 FLS_{i1} + \alpha_2 FAP_{i2} + \alpha_3 X_{i3} + \mu_i \quad (1)$$

where Y_{bi} = Banking financial product, FLS = Financial literacy score in the saving behaviour of households, FAP = financial product accessibility score, α_i = parameter estimates, and μ_i = noise. This paper re-modified the model on the assumption that the two-factor influencers serves a necessary but no sufficient condition in determining savings of households in Nigeria today. Thus, the model was re-modelled by incorporating critical influencers to households' savings decision in Nigeria. Hence, the Generalized Linear Model was fashioned as:

$$Y_{bi} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 FLS_{1i} + \alpha_2 SEH_{2i} + \alpha_3 SAH_{3i} + \alpha_4 X_i + \mu_i \quad (2)$$

where all the variables are as earlier defined: FLS_{1i} = Financial Literacy Score, SEH_{2i} = Self-efficacy of Household, and SAH_{3i} = Savings Attitude of Household. More specifically, from equation (2), the Index equation (2) was

$$\Pr(Y_i = 1 | X_i) = g(\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \dots + \beta_n X_n) \quad (3)$$

Equation (3) defines the conditional probabilities of $Y_i=1$ (i.e. Y occurring) given X. Accordingly, β_i are the parameters to be estimated in the models

For a more compact representation,

$$\Pr(Y = 1 | X) = g(X\beta) \quad (4)$$

In the Logit form, equation (4) can be expressed as a Linked Function of

$$\Lambda(X\beta) = \frac{\exp(X\beta)}{1 + \exp(X\beta)} \quad (5)$$

Equation (5) serves as the cumulative (logistic) distribution function (cdf) and it ranges between zero and one for all values of $(X\beta)$. Although the non-linearity of $\Lambda(X\beta)$ might violate the use of the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) estimator, this paper assumed away such weakness. Rather, the focus was on how the Nigerian households' savings responses are predicted by financial indicator capability; the response variable is binary (Yes/No) for inquiries demanding respondent answers in determining the outcome of their savings decision from formal banking financial institution in Nigeria. Therefore, the model is expressed as follows:

$$Y_{bi} = \beta_{b0} + \beta_{b1}\overline{FLS}_i + \beta_{b2}\overline{SEH}_i + \beta_{b3}\overline{SAH}_i + \beta_{b4}\overline{X}_i \quad (6)$$

Equation (6) shows households' financial health, which measures savings response of households as predicted by extent of financial knowledge and awareness, households' level of self-efficacy, attitude to savings, demographic and socio economic influences. In sum, the model examines the probability of savings in terms of whether Nigerians own either of savings, current, loan and domiciliary accounts with either deposit money banks (DMBs) or microfinance banks. Thus, the paper relied upon equation (7):

$$Y_{ni} = \beta_{n0} + \beta_{n1}\overline{FLS}_i + \beta_{n2}\overline{SEH}_i + \beta_{n3}\overline{SAH}_i + \beta_{n4}\overline{X}_i \quad (7)$$

4. Results and Discussion

This paper used basically two methods of analysis – descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, like Probit (z-score) techniques, for the analysis of the variables in equation (7). The descriptive statistics focused on the behaviour of data series using mean values, while the Probit (z-score) was deployed to analyse the objective of the study.

4.1: Pre-estimation and Descriptive Survey Analyses

Table 2: Survey Sample Distribution and Comparison with the Households National Survey 2020

		Frequency	2023 Survey Sample Ratio	2020 Survey Ratio	Differenc e in Ratio
Gender	Female	15264	51.9	51.0	0.9
	Male	14143	48.1	49.0	-0.9
	Total	31198	100.0	100.0	0.00
Location	Urban	8047	27.3	26.8	0.5
	Rural	21360	72.7	73.2	-0.5
	Total	31198	100.0	100.0	0.00

Source: Authors' Computation (2024), using SPSS version 27

The demographic characteristics of the respondents, as seen in Table 2, focused on gender and location. The table reveals that females constituted 51.9% of the sample,

slightly higher than the 2020 National Survey ratio of 51.0%, with a marginal difference of 0.9 percentage points. Males accounted for 48.1%, which was slightly lower than the 2020 survey ratio (49.0%) – *a difference of -0.9 percentage points*. This slight deviation might be attributed to sampling technique shifts. Empirical studies often highlight the importance of achieving gender balance in surveys, as disparities can influence the generalizability of findings. The close alignment of the survey ratios with national benchmarks suggested that the sample was broadly representative in terms of gender distribution and could be adopted for the present study.

About 27.3% of the respondents resided in urban areas, while 72.7% were in rural areas. These proportions closely aligned with the 2020 National Survey, which reported urban and rural distributions of 26.8% and 73.2%, respectively. The dominance of rural respondents aligns with theoretical findings that underscore the significant proportion of rural households in many developing countries (Table 2). The minor variations between the survey sample and national ratios underscore the robustness of the sampling methodology, supporting theories of probability sampling that aimed at representativeness (Babbie, 2020, Eze & Anigbogu, 2023). Similarly, Smith & Jones (2019) highlight that aligning sample distributions with national benchmarks enhances the validity of conclusions drawn from such surveys. In summary, the survey's gender and location distributions closely mirrored the national data and formed the basis of further analysis about sample distribution across the various geo-political zones in Nigeria in Table 3.

Table 3: Sample Distribution across the Six Geo-Political Zones

Details	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
North-Central	5845	18.7	18.7	18.7
North-East	5166	16.6	16.6	35.3
North-West	5888	18.9	18.9	54.2
South-East	4397	14.1	14.1	68.3
South-South	4995	16.0	16.0	84.3
South-West	4907	15.7	15.7	100.0
Total	31198	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors' Computation (2024), using SPSS version 27

Table 3 illustrates the distribution of the sample across the six geo-political zones (regional representation). The North-West zone recorded the highest frequency of participants, 5,888 (18.9%); while the North-Central zone followed closely, with 5,845 (18.7%); and then the North-East (5,166 (16.6%)). The northern regions contributed 54.2% to the overall sample, suggesting a balanced but slightly higher representation from these areas compared to the southern zones.

The South-South contributed 4,995(16.0%); while the South-West recorded 4,907(15.7%). The South-East had the least representation, with 4,397(14.1%). Combined, the southern regions accounted for only 45.8%. Table 3 aligns with theoretical expectations of proportional representation in studies focusing on diverse socio-political contexts. The distribution also reflects empirical patterns observed in similar studies, such as (Sodipo *et al.* (2020). The slightly higher representation from the northern zones is in tandem with earlier population density trends and demographic studies. These outcomes called for further insights into the analysis of various income sources in Table 4.

Table 4: Analysis of Saving Patterns and Income Sources

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Formal Sources of Income	2334	7.5	7.5	7.5
Personal Businesses	12192	39.1	39.1	46.6
Informal Sources	2431	7.8	7.8	54.4
Agro-Sources	6767	21.7	21.7	76.0
Dependent/Transfer	7474	24.0	24.0	100.0
Total	31198	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors' Computation (2024), Using SPSS version 27

Table 4 provides a summary of the five types of income sources analysed in this study. It indicates that 39.1% of the respondents derived their income from personal business, while only 7.5 per cent earned wages and salaries through formal employment. Notably, 21.7% of the respondents obtained their earnings from agriculture-related businesses, and 24.0% received income or transfers in the form of gifts, pensions, remittances, etc. Individuals relying on personal business income may exhibit different saving patterns compared to those dependent on formal employment. Recipients of income from agriculture-related businesses or various transfers could demonstrate distinct saving attitude influenced by variability of their income sources.

Table 5: Analysis of Financial Capability Indicators and Households' Savings

	Model I
Financial Literacy Score	0.2305*** (92.72)
Demographic factors	
<i>Respondent Age</i>	-0.0015** (-2.12)
<i>Being A Female</i>	-0.0321 (-1.48)
Household Size: (Self-efficacy)	
<i>1-4 Persons</i>	0.2445*** (8.80)

5-6 Persons	-0.1053*** (-3.58)
7-10 Persons	-1.0074*** (-24.54)
Socioeconomic factors	
<i>Sources of Income:</i>	
Wages/Salaries	0.1066** (-2.06)
Personal Business	0.0596 (-0.98)
Income from Agro-Business	0.0982 (-1.82)
Transfer Income	-0.1770*** (-3.26)
<i>Education of Respondent:</i>	
No Formal Education	0.0030 (0.07)
Primary Education	-0.0042 (-0.10)
Secondary Education	0.0366 (0.64)
Post-secondary Education	0.0078 (0.12)
University Education	0.1157*** (2.58)
Proximity to financial products and services (Saving Attitude)	
Living in the rural Area	-0.1722*** (-7.98)
<i>Regional Dummy</i>	
North-East	-0.0054 (-0.16)
North-West	0.1550*** (4.70)
South-South	0.5273*** (13.65)
South-West	0.6339*** (16.84)
South-East	0.2862*** (7.76)
Constant	-2.6570** (-31.97)
$y = Pr(\text{Bank})$ (predict)	0.8468
No. Observations	31198

Note: *, ** and *** indicates significance at 10%, 5% and 1%, respectively; t-values are in parenthesis.

Source: Authors' Computation (2024), using SPSS version 27

Table 5 provides the multi-model approach for understanding the various factors influencing saving decisions. It shows that financial literacy promotes savings positively (23.06%) in formal financial institutions. This result indicates that higher financial literacy significantly improves the likelihood of saving in formal banks as noted by Adetunji & David-West (2019) and Isola & Olaoye, (2022). Demographic factors had varying effects on households' savings with Nigerian financial institutions. For instance, the age of the respondents had a negative and significant effect (-0.0015**), suggesting that older individuals are less likely to save (see Baidoo *et al.*, 2018). Gender, however, showed a

nuanced effect: being female slightly reduced the likelihood of saving in formal banks by 3.21%. This reflects a gender disparity, with men more engaged in formal savings than women. Additionally, smaller household sizes (1-4 persons) promoted savings of about 24.4%. Households with 5-6 members showed a negative and significant effect (-0.1053***), while financial burdens associated with moderate-sized households hindered savings. In contrast, households with 7-10 members exhibited a highly negative and significant effect (-1.0074***), reinforcing the fact that larger households struggle to save.

Table 5 further indicates the fact that income from employment had a substantial positive impact on savings in formal banks (0.66%) and having regular wages and salaries increased savings when compared with irregular income sources of 17.70%. Particularly, income from personal businesses and agro-businesses showed an insignificant effect, suggesting variability in earnings, which limits saving. Educational attainment, particularly holding a university degree, significantly enhanced savings in formal banks (11.57%), which is consistent with previous studies (Ikue *et al.*, 2022). Also, residing in rural areas significantly reduced the propensity to save in formal banks (7.22%), in alignment with Baidoo *et al.* (2018) and Adegboye & Oladapo (2022).

5. Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the outcome of the analysis revealed that higher levels of financial literacy promoted saving in formal banking institutions, while being female slightly reduced the likelihood of saving. Smaller household sizes (1-4 persons) promoted saving than those with 5-6 members showed a negative and significant effect (-0.1053***), while financial burdens associated with moderate-sized households hindered saving. Income from formal employment and higher educational attainment, especially holding a university degree, were strong promoters of saving, while residing in rural areas negatively affected the likelihood of saving.

These results underscore the need for policies aimed at promoting financial literacy, stable income sources and access to financial services, particularly in rural areas. It is, therefore, recommended that the government and financial institutions should collaborate to implement nationwide financial literacy campaigns targeting diverse demographics. This can be achieved through establishment of more financial service outlets, such as microfinance banks and mobile money agents, particularly in rural regions, that offer savings products, and introduction of social support programmes to promote saving culture.

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Abstract

Nigeria, historically reliant on oil revenue, faces increasing economic vulnerability due to fluctuations in global oil prices. This paper explored the potential of the solid minerals sector in fostering economic diversification, reducing dependence on petroleum and promoting sustainable economic growth. The study covered the period 1990-2023 using time series data on real gross domestic product (RGDP), solid minerals production (SMP), trade openness (TOP) and foreign direct investments in the solid minerals subsector (FDI). Using the ARDL regression method, the study found that there was a positive and significant relationship between real gross domestic product and SMP, TOP and FDI, indicating the potential of the sector in economic diversification. The study concluded that government's intervention in this subsector can significantly improve the economy. It recommended that solid minerals miners be harmonized and encouraged through policies that adequately protect their interests.

Keywords: Solid Minerals, Economic Diversification, Trade Openness, Mining Subsector, Foreign Direct Investment

Introduction

Nigeria's economy has long been dependent on crude oil, which accounts for the majority of government revenue and foreign exchange earnings (Ayodele et al., 2013). However, the volatility of oil prices, environmental concerns, and the global transition towards renewable energy sources have intensified the need for economic diversification. Over the years, successive governments have emphasized diversification efforts, yet tangible progress remains limited (Nwogwugwu et al., 2021).

Adekanmbi & Wolf (2024) maintain that the solid minerals sector presents a viable alternative to oil dependence. Nigeria is endowed with over 40 different types of solid minerals, including limestone, gold, coal, bitumen and iron ore, which are distributed across various states. These resources, if well harnessed, have the potential to drive industrialization, attract foreign investment, generate employment and enhance

government revenue (Ichime et al., 2024). Despite these advantages, the sector remains underdeveloped, contributing less than 1% to Nigeria's GDP.

Nigeria's economy urgently requires diversification due to the persistent decline in global oil prices, which has significantly impacted national revenue and budget sustainability (Obafemi, 2022). In the 1970s and 1980s, Nigeria experienced an economic boom, allowing it to provide loans, aid, and even support anti-apartheid efforts in South Africa. During this period, solid minerals played a crucial role in the economy, with Nigeria ranking among the world's top producers of tin, columbite and coal, as early as the 1940s. Had the country maintained its focus on agriculture and solid minerals, it could have emerged as one of Africa's leading economies today (Udeh et al., 2021).

However, the discovery of oil in 1956 shifted government priorities from an agriculture-based economy to an oil-dependent one (Adegbe et al., 2023). As oil prices surged, the government neglected other sectors, including solid minerals. The mining industry, regulated under the 1999 Mining Act and managed by the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development, remains largely state-controlled. Consequently, both agriculture and solid minerals have suffered significant declines in output (Kalagbor & Harry, 2021).

Solid minerals, unlike liquid minerals, are extracted in their natural solid state from underground deposits. Okezie (2016) defines them as naturally-occurring deposits mined by individuals, state governments or the federal government. Nigeria faces substantial financial challenges due to declining crude oil revenues, and with no immediate reversal in sight, diversifying into other revenue sources is imperative. One key sector with immense potential is solid minerals. According to Nwaobi (2011), a previous administration aimed for the sector to contribute 5% to GDP by 2015 and 10% to national revenue by 2020. Karande & Kulkarni (2016) note that, while the government has completed a 100% aerial geo-physical survey of the country, detailed geoscience data is still needed to accurately estimate Nigeria's solid mineral reserves.

According to Dantata (2011), Nigeria is richly endowed with vast deposits of solid minerals, spread across different geographical regions. As of today, the country has identified 44 distinct mineral types in commercial quantities, located in over 450 sites (MSMD, 2016). Given these abundant resources, the development of solid minerals presents a significant opportunity for economic growth, revenue generation, job creation and poverty reduction. Akonji & Wakili (2013), along with Edeme et al. (2018), emphasize that solid mineral development is essential for Nigeria's economic diversification, as it has the potential to drive rapid economic expansion and provide a crucial source of employment.

Solid minerals play a vital role in the economic and social development of many countries (Okezie, 2016). However, some studies suggested a paradox wherein nations rich in natural resources, particularly non-renewable resources, such as minerals and

fuels, often experience slower economic growth and poorer development outcomes compared to resource-scarce countries (Akujuru, 2015). Research on the environmental impact of solid mineral exploitation in Nigeria indicated that natural resource abundance can sometimes hinder economic growth. Supporting this argument, Sachs & Warner (1977) found that resource-rich nations tended to experience slower economic growth between 1970 and 1990. Their study concluded that, after controlling for various factors, mineral wealth was not a decisive factor for economic progress and, in some cases, was negatively correlated with growth.

Sunday et al. (2021) further explain that this trend occurs because heavy reliance on natural resources can lead to the neglect of other key economic sectors, reducing their competitiveness. This over-reliance can also lead to fluctuations in revenue due to market volatility as well as mismanagement by corrupt or inefficient government institutions. Similarly, Awe et al. (2023) highlight that governments primarily benefit from the rents generated by resource exploration, which can lead to increased corruption, inefficient bureaucracies and reduced investment in public goods, such as infrastructure.

Edame & Efeiom (2013) argue that natural resources can create a “paradox of plenty” by fostering economic dependence and weakening other productive sectors, such as manufacturing and human capital development. The poor performance of Nigeria’s non-oil sector over the past four decades is a testament to this challenge. Between 2011 and 2012, the oil sector grew by approximately 8%, whereas the non-oil sector recorded a negative growth rate of -0.35% (OECD, 2010). This persistent trend led Ogbonna (2013) to stress the importance of reducing Nigeria’s dependence on oil revenues by expanding the solid minerals sector.

A balanced and effective mobilization of resources is crucial for economic growth (Tsenkwo & Aiyelabowo, 2023). Despite Nigeria’s wealth in human and natural resources, successive governments have prioritized crude oil exploration and exportation, often at the expense of other productive economic activities. Historically, revenue from solid minerals has contributed only a small fraction of total government income. For example, in 1972, the oil sector accounted for 54.4% of total revenue, while solid minerals contributed 45.6%. By 1974, oil revenue had surged to 82.1%, with solid minerals contributing only 17.9%. Following the global oil price downturn in the late 1970s, the share of oil in total revenue dropped to 61.8% in 1978, while the non-oil sector’s contribution rose to 38.2%. However, since 1984, oil revenue has consistently dominated, reaching 88.6% in 2006, compared to just 11.4% from the non-oil sector. By 2009, oil accounted for 78.8% of government revenue, while the non-oil sector contributed only 21.3% (CBN, 2010). This trend has resulted in overconcentration on petroleum, neglecting other revenue-generating sectors.

Despite these challenges, the solid minerals sector offers significant economic benefits that should not be overlooked (Polycarp et al., 2023). Mining industries are considered key drivers of economic growth, particularly in promoting diversification and fostering higher social and economic well-being. However, in many developing countries, the contribution of solid minerals to economic growth remains minimal (Adetoro & Adetoro, 2021). To achieve sustainable development, Nigeria must transition away from a mono-economy and make economic diversification a top priority. Besides the previously mentioned advantages, enhanced solid mineral development could improve infrastructure, reduce poverty and inequality, and create employment opportunities (Polycarp et al., 2023).

Africa contributes significantly to the global supply of key minerals, including 90% of diamonds, 81% of cobalt, 62% of platinum, 70% of gold and 50% of magnesium and chromium (Hyde & Jenkins, 2016). Despite its abundant resources, Africa accounts for only 2% of the world's industrial output (United Nations, 2014). Nigeria, which was among the world's 50 richest countries in the 1970s, has now fallen to one of the 25 poorest (Lamido, 2015). The country remains the ninth-largest oil producer and sixth-largest exporter yet hosts the third-largest population of poor people globally (Ehinomen & Adeleke, 2012).

While the oil sector accounts for approximately 90% of Nigeria's export earnings, the emerging trend, as noted by Onodugo (2013), suggests that economic growth has failed to translate into job creation and poverty reduction. This is largely due to the concentration of oil wealth in the hands of less than 1% of the population. The country's continued reliance on crude petroleum has not only hindered sustainable economic growth but has also exacerbated unemployment and poverty at an alarming rate. The severity of this crisis is evident in the intense competition for limited job opportunities, particularly among graduates. A striking example is the 2012 Immigration recruitment saga, where overcrowding led to stampedes and fatalities (Adeduntan, 2022).

Moreover, the oil sector operates in isolation, disconnected from other industries, offering little or no multiplier effect on the broader economy (Godwin & Ubong, 2015). The situation has worsened to the extent that many state governments struggle to pay workers' salaries due to declining oil revenues. Most states remain dependent on federal allocations, making them highly vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices. As a result, the number of Nigerians living below the poverty line of \$2.15 per day has surged dramatically, even as the country is regarded as Africa's largest economy and ranks 26th globally (Suberu et al., 2015). The concentration of national wealth in the hands of few privileged individuals is unsustainable, underscoring the urgent need for a more equitable distribution of resources through economic diversification.

As Tsenkwo & Aiyelabowo (2023) note, the adverse effects of over-reliance on oil have intensified calls for diversification, shifting the economy toward non-oil sectors (Godwin et al., 2015). The solid minerals sector, in particular, holds immense potential to drive Nigeria's economic transformation. Asu (2013), cited by Godwin and Ubong (2015), quotes Femi Adesina as emphasizing that Nigeria must "envision and evolve a nation beyond oil or perish." He affirmed that, "Nigeria must now diversify, or die."

Ideh et al. (2021) claim that if the solid minerals sector had received even a fraction—just one-third—of the attention given to the oil industry, Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 goals might have been achieved well ahead of schedule. The country is endowed with vast solid mineral resources, spread across its entire geographical landscape, with proven reserves in billions of metric tons (MMSD, 2010). Proper investment in this sector would ensure that no state or region is left behind in the quest for economic growth. However, due to decades of neglect, Nigeria currently loses over \$200 million in foreign exchange annually by importing minerals that are locally available. Nasir (2014) highlights how this neglect has led to the importation of essential minerals such as barites—widely used in the oil industry—resulting in billions of dollars in unnecessary foreign exchange losses.

Despite Nigeria's vast solid mineral resources, the sector's contribution to GDP remains minimal compared to other sub-Saharan African nations, such as Botswana, Namibia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa (David et al., 2016). The dominance of petrodollars has sidelined this potential economic powerhouse. The "Dutch disease" phenomenon (Auty, 1993) has severely constrained Nigeria's ability to achieve its full growth potential. It is a stark embarrassment that Africa's largest economy, the world's most populous Black nation, has failed to establish a sustainable development trajectory despite its abundant resources. This reality underscores the critical need for a strategic shift toward economic diversification, making this study both relevant and necessary.

Egba et al. (2023) suggest that, to reverse this trend, Nigeria must invest in skilled manpower, develop infrastructure, enhance security and create policies that support mining investments. With proper strategies, the solid minerals sector can become a major driver of economic growth and development, ensuring long-term sustainability and reducing the nation's dependence on oil.

Therefore, this paper examined the role of solid minerals in economic diversification. It did this by analyzing its potential contributions, prevailing challenges and strategic interventions needed to optimize its benefits.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research was to investigate the impact of solid minerals in the quest for economic diversification in Nigeria, 1990-2023. The objectives were to:

- determine how solid minerals production can improve the real gross domestic product of Nigeria;
- investigate the relationship between trade openness and the real gross domestic product of Nigeria; and
- analyse the relationship between foreign direct investments in the solid mineral subsector and real gross domestic product.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between solid mineral and the real gross domestic product?
2. How does trade openness impact on the real gross domestic product?
3. Do foreign direct investments in the solid mineral subsector affect real gross domestic

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between solid minerals production and real gross domestic product

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between trade openness and real gross domestic product

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between FDI in solid mineral subsector and real gross domestic product in Nigeria.

Literature Review

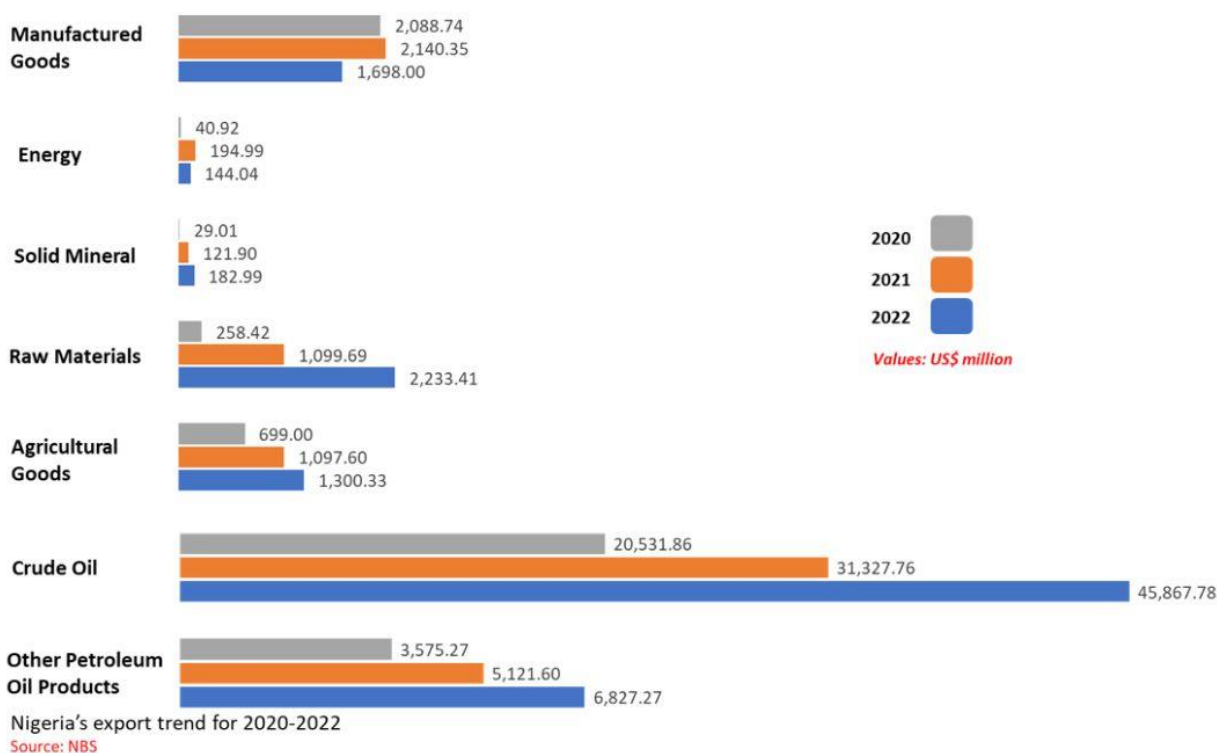
The concept of economic diversification has been extensively explored in the economic literature. Scholars argue that economies overly dependent on a single commodity, such as oil, are highly vulnerable to external shocks, leading to macroeconomic instability (Nwogwugwu et al., 2021). Resource-rich countries often suffer from the “resource curse.” wherein dependence on natural resources hinders industrial development and economic transformation (Abayomi et al. 2022; Adegbe et al., 2023)) indicate that.

Many studies on Nigeria’s diversification efforts highlighted the need to develop non-oil sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing and solid minerals. Adebayo (2019) posits that the solid minerals sector remains an untapped goldmine capable of fostering sustainable economic growth. Similarly, Iledare & Adenikinju (2020) emphasize that inadequate infrastructure, policy inconsistencies and a weak regulatory framework have hindered the sector’s development.

The Nigerian government has introduced policies such as the National Policy on Solid Minerals and the Mining Roadmap to facilitate sectoral growth. However, Onwualu et al. (2021) argue that ineffective implementation, limited investment and illegal mining activities continue to impede progress. Available data from the National Bureau of

Statistics revealed that solid minerals performed the worst among all the sectors from 2020 to 2022.

Fig 1: Contribution of crude oil export to the GDP



Source: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) Trend Analysis (2023)

According to NBS (2023), the performance of crude oil towards economic contribution has been the highest amongst all the sectors in the country. As the chart shows, crude oil and other petroleum products outperformed other sectors, such as solid minerals, raw materials and the agricultural sector. This implies that the crude oil subsector is still the highest generator of foreign exchange in Nigeria. This has put undue pressure on the upstream and downstream subsectors of the oil sector, neglecting the other key sectors of the economy and thereby making diversification a difficult macroeconomic goal.

The Dutch Disease Model and the Role of Solid Minerals in Economic Growth

The Dutch Disease model of the 1970s and 1980s presents differing perspectives on the reliability of natural resources in driving economic growth (Abayomi & Olufemi, 2022). A key argument is that economic emphasis should shift from natural resource extraction to the manufacturing sector, which would lead to a more diverse division of labour and, ultimately, a higher standard of living. The model illustrates how economies dominated by natural resource sectors often experience employment distribution imbalances, with

resources being reallocated between traded and non-traded sectors. Such sectoral shifts can have long-term implications for economic growth (Ross & Werker, 2024).

Many studies have explored the impact of solid mineral mining on economic sustainability. Roderick (2001) examined this issue through qualitative analysis, concluding that, with appropriate policy responses, the benefits of mining can be sustained even as mines decline due to resource depletion. According to Roderick (2001), mineral wealth can continue to contribute to economic development through investments in education, healthcare, social institutions and physical infrastructure. However, if these challenges are not addressed, mining can become a “resource curse” rather than a driver of growth.

The Solid Minerals Sector in Nigeria

Nigeria is endowed with over 40 different types of solid minerals, including limestone, gold, coal, bitumen and iron ore, spread across various states (Nwogwugwu et al., 2021). Despite this wealth, the sector contributes less than 1% to the national GDP due to underutilization, policy inconsistencies and inadequate infrastructure.

Challenges Facing the Solid Minerals Sector

Funding

Cynthia (2023) mentions insufficient funding, from local and foreign sources, as one of the key drawbacks of the subsector in Nigeria. Insufficient funding has hindered detailed surveys to determine the actual value of Nigeria’s solid mineral deposits. Okezie (2016) identifies funding as one of the mining sector’s biggest challenges, preventing the collection of reliable data. Mining licenses in Nigeria lack sufficient valuation, making them ineligible as loan collateral—unlike in advanced economies (Adekanmbi & Wolf, 2024). Cynthia (2023) suggests that the government should facilitate the use of solid mineral licenses as collateral to attract investment.

Power Supply

The mining industry requires substantial electricity to operate heavy equipment (Cynthia, 2023). The Federal Government has plans to develop commercial energy generation through hydro, coal and natural gas (Kearney & Bensaheb, 2017), but proper implementation is crucial. Henry (2014) asserts that coal could contribute 30% to Nigeria’s power generation if well implemented and managed. Power infrastructure must extend to rural areas where most mining activities take place (Cynthia, 2023).

Transportation Infrastructure

Azubuike et al. (2023) claim that a well-developed mining industry relies on efficient transportation networks for equipment mobilization and mineral export. There are

ongoing road and rail projects, but they do not align with mining site locations. Hyde & Jenkins (2016) emphasize the need for an integrated infrastructure plan to support the mining sector, particularly linking mining sites to export zones, thereby reducing the cost of transportation for businesses.

Lack of Skilled Professionals

For Nigeria to compete in the global solid minerals market, it must invest in skilled manpower (Cynthia, 2023). Hyde & Jenkins (2016) argue that a nation's greatness is determined by its talent pool and ability to add value to resources. Mogbo (2016) highlights that those countries like Japan and Israel, despite having limited natural resources, thrive due to a strong professional workforce. Nigeria must prioritize technical education and indigenous technology development to harness its mineral wealth effectively (Ayodele et al., 2013).

Security Concerns

In the view of Henry (2014), insecurity remains a major obstacle to mining operations, reducing sector contributions to the economy. The government must prioritize security for miners and ensure safe mining environments to attract investment. This is especially true for the northern and eastern regions where security situations have deteriorated, leading to mass exit of miners (Abayomi & Olufemi, 2022). The consequence of this is the reduction in employment and income generation, reinforcing the already fragile security situation in the regions.

Policy and Market Access

There is a need for a comprehensive policy framework to encourage mining investments (Ichime et al., 2024). The government should improve road networks for site accessibility and establish marketing boards to facilitate the export of solid minerals (Lamido, 2015).

Nigeria's Economic Challenges and the Need for Diversification

Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has been facing struggle for sustainable economic growth (Akawu et al., 2024). Despite experiencing significant GDP expansion over the years, the country continues to grapple with widespread poverty, highlighting the inequitable distribution of national wealth. The heavy reliance on crude oil—accounting for over 90% of total foreign exchange earnings before the decline in global oil prices (Otiotio, 2014)—has led to an unstable, oil-dependent economy. The volatile nature of oil price fluctuations has contributed to Nigeria's disjointed economic growth, leaving a large portion of the population in extreme poverty and deprived of basic necessities (Suberu et al., 2015).

Global oil price instability, combined with erratic economic growth, has resulted in Nigeria missing crucial opportunities to be free from underdevelopment despite its

abundant natural and human resources (Suberu et al., 2015). For decades, Nigeria has relied on crude oil as its primary revenue source, fostering a monolithic economy despite persistent developmental challenges. This dependence has yielded little benefit for the general population, as evidenced by the phenomenon of “jobless growth” (Nasir, 2014), where economic expansion does not translate into improved employment opportunities or higher living standards. Between 2003 and 2014, the country generated over \$600 billion in foreign exchange from oil revenues (Abejide, 2025), yet economic hardship remains widespread.

To address these challenges, Cynthia (2023) suggests that Nigeria must undergo a fundamental economic transformation. Diversification is widely regarded as the most viable strategy for achieving sustainable development, mitigating economic volatility and harnessing the country's full resource potential (Suberu et al., 2015). A well-executed diversification strategy would enable Nigeria to maximize its vast natural resources, strengthen economic linkages across industries, drive technological advancement, attract foreign investment, lower operational costs, enhance national competitiveness and improve the standard of living (Ayodele et al., 2013).

The Solid Minerals Sector as an Avenue for Economic Growth

Many scholars have studied the importance of economic diversification in Nigeria. According to Adekanmbi & Wolf (2024), one of Nigeria's most promising opportunities for economic diversification lies in the solid minerals sector. Historically, solid minerals were a major economic driver, playing a key role in Nigeria's pre-oil economy. During the colonial period and the early years of independence, mining and mineral extraction significantly contributed to national development, supporting industries, infrastructure and the civil service. Before oil was discovered in commercial quantities, solid minerals were the backbone of the economy, with revenues from mining sustaining critical sectors (Abayomi & Olufemi, 2022).

Today, Nigeria is endowed with 44 commercially viable mineral types spread across over 450 locations nationwide (MSMD, 2016). This widespread resource distribution presents a unique opportunity, as mining activities can be conducted in virtually all states, promoting broad-based economic benefits (Sunday et al., 2021). The sector holds immense potential to generate employment and wealth, with the capacity to create over five million jobs (Transformation Agenda, 2014). Currently, the industry directly employs about 450,000 people and supports additional two million jobs indirectly. Its contribution to GDP grew from an average of 0.37% in 2011-2012 to over 12% in 2012-2013 (Transformation Agenda, 2014), reflecting a double-digit growth rate. These figures indicate that the solid minerals sector could serve as a buffer against oil price fluctuations and economic instability (Kalagbor & Harry, 2021).

Before Nigeria's oil boom in the 1970s and 1980s, solid minerals, such as coal, tin and columbite played a crucial role in economic development (Awe et al., 2023). Coal, for instance, was the primary energy source for power generation and railway transportation, while Nigeria was once the world's leading producer of tin and columbite, with revenues from mining fuelling economic growth (Akongwale et al., 2013). As Adekeye (1999) observes, coal and tin were among Nigeria's top foreign exchange earners during the colonial period and early post-independence years. Other minerals, including limestone, gold, marble and clay, were also mined for local use, with proceeds funding key social programmes, such as free education. Even today, many of these minerals command high prices in global markets, reinforcing the sector's economic viability (Tsenkwo & Aiyelabowo, 2023).

The solid minerals industry is widely recognized as a key driver of economic growth and development, with the potential to improve both social and economic well-being (Bridge, 2008). According to the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) audit report (2007-2010), the industry generated ₦2.21 billion in royalty payments, ₦51.4 billion in taxes, and N173.94 million in ground and surface rent payments. Additionally, ₦122.92 million was collected in levies, while the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) reported that 1,618 export transactions by 86 companies generated ₦8.91 billion in revenue during the same period (NEITI, 2013).

The Way Forward

Despite these promising figures, Ideh et al. (2021) argues that Nigeria has yet to fully harness the potential of its solid minerals sector. With the right policies and political commitment, the industry could become a major pillar of economic diversification, reducing the country's dependence on oil while creating jobs and fostering sustainable development. To achieve this, Egba et al. (2023) suggest that the government must establish an enabling environment that encourages private sector participation, strengthens regulatory frameworks and ensures transparency in resource management. By prioritizing the revitalization of the solid minerals sector, Nigeria can unlock new economic opportunities and pave the way for a more resilient and prosperous future (Mbah et al., 2019).

Progress in Nigeria's Solid Mineral Sector

According to Adetoro & Adetoro (2021), the previous administrations made several advancements in solid mineral mining, which the current government should build upon. They include the following:

- Establishment of the Nigerian Mining Cadastre Office to oversee the sector
- Development of a strategic roadmap for mining industry growth
- Nationwide airborne geophysical surveys to identify mineral deposits

- Waivers on customs and import duties for mining equipment
- Tax holidays of three to five years for solid mineral miners
- Free transferability of funds, retention of earned foreign exchange and competitive tax rates.

Nwogwugwu et al. (2021) submit that, when effectively utilized, Nigeria's solid mineral and agricultural sectors can drive employment, foreign exchange earnings and economic growth. The country already plays a significant role in global agricultural exports, particularly in commodities such as cocoa, rubber, cashew nuts and sesame (RMRDC, 2016). Similarly, Nigeria is endowed with various untapped solid minerals, which, if properly harnessed, could substantially boost the economy (Nwogwugwu et al., 2021).

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Byrd et al. (2016), that outlines four essential principles for solid mineral mining in developing nations:

- ***Economic Exploration***

The cost of mineral exploration should be significantly lower than the potential economic benefits (Mbah et al., 2019).

- ***Economic Exploitation***

The cost of extracting minerals should not exceed the expected financial returns (Byrd et al., 2016).

- ***Supportive Legal Environment***

Governments must implement favourable policies that encourage both exploration and extraction (Chukwuma et al., 2018).

- ***Stable Ethnic Relations***

Local communities must be willing to support mining activities within their regions (Mbah et al., 2019).

This framework briefly highlights the key challenges facing both solid and liquid mineral mining in Nigeria, making it suitable theoretical foundation for this study.

Empirical Review

Ayodele et al. (2013) analyzed the economic implications of Nigeria's over-reliance on crude oil revenue at the expense of other productive sectors such as solid minerals and agriculture. Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods, the study demonstrated the untapped potential of the solid minerals sector in significantly contributing to Nigeria's economic development. The sector, if properly harnessed, could reduce poverty through job creation, enhance industrial linkages and mitigate the risks associated with

the mono-product nature of Nigeria's economy. The study emphasized the necessity of strengthening the country's solid mineral policies and fostering a conducive environment for private sector investments.

Nwogwugwu et al. (2021) examined the relationship between solid mineral exploitation and economic growth in Nigeria using time series data from 1980 to 2020. Employing the canonical cointegrating regression (CCR) model, the study revealed that solid mineral production had a significant positive impact on economic growth. Increased solid mineral production facilitated investments in intermediate and capital goods, leading to a rise in aggregate demand and overall economic expansion. Additionally, the study found that solid mineral exports played a crucial role in economic growth, while excessive mineral depletion negatively impacted business confidence and long-term sustainability. Based on these findings, the study recommended enhanced government support for research and technological advancements in the sector to optimize production and sustain economic growth.

Similarly, Adekanmbi & Wolf (2024) explored the competitive dynamics of Nigeria's extractive industry, identifying key determinants, such as technology, expertise, infrastructure, capital availability and policy frameworks. While the oil and gas sector historically benefited from strong governmental support and foreign partnerships, the solid minerals sector remained underdeveloped due to outdated technologies, weak infrastructure and inconsistent policies. A SWOT analysis revealed that many mining operations suffered from inefficiencies, environmental hazards, and community conflicts. The study highlighted the need for improved infrastructure, sustainable mining practices and policy reforms to foster competitiveness and investment in the solid minerals sector.

Ichime et al. (2024) investigated the long-term impact of Nigeria's non-oil sector on economic growth using a time series dataset from 1980 to 2016. They employed an ordinary least squares (OLS) estimation approach. Their findings indicated that Nigeria's non-oil sector, including solid minerals, made a suboptimal contribution to sustainable economic growth. The study argued that diversification beyond oil dependence was crucial for economic resilience. To achieve this, the study recommended policy measures that encourage private sector investment, industrialization of non-oil sectors and fiscal transparency to enhance investor confidence and economic stability.

Obafemi (2022) analyzed Nigeria's historical efforts to diversify its economy and the challenges limiting these initiatives. The study highlighted that despite numerous policy interventions, the anticipated benefits of diversification remained largely unrealized due to poor implementation and failure to consider Nigeria's unique economic context. Using a multivariate vector autoregressive (VAR) model covering the period 1960-2019, the study found that, while expanding economic activities into resource-based sectors like solid minerals was necessary for diversification, it was not a sufficient

condition. Instead, a comprehensive diversification strategy should incorporate sectoral interlinkages, technological innovation and tailored policy frameworks to drive long-term economic growth.

Akawu et al. (2024) investigated the impact of telecommunication and solid mineral revenues on economic growth in Nigeria using the autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) methodology. Analyzing time series data from 1986 to 2022, the study found a bidirectional causality between solid mineral revenue and economic growth, as well as a unidirectional causality from telecommunication sector revenue to GDP. The ARDL regression results indicated that solid mineral and telecommunication sector revenues significantly contributed to economic growth, while tax revenue from the telecommunication sector had a positive but statistically insignificant effect. The study recommended increased budgetary allocations to the mining sector and improvements in telecom infrastructure and regulatory frameworks to optimize revenue generation and sectoral performance.

Moreover, Udeh et al. (2021) addressed Nigeria's dependence on oil revenue and the need for economic diversification. Using descriptive statistical methods to analyze secondary data, the study established a positive correlation between economic diversification and sustainable growth. It identified structural weaknesses in Nigeria's mono-product economy and emphasized the necessity of investing in other sectors, such as solid minerals. The study concluded that achieving economic diversification requires concrete policy actions, infrastructural investment, and an enabling business environment to foster long-term economic stability.

Adegbie et al. (2023) examined the effect of economic diversification on sustainable growth in Nigeria using time series data from 1990 to 2020. The study found a significant positive relationship between GDP growth rate and sustainable development, while infrastructural expenditure, though positive, had an insignificant effect. The findings highlighted the importance of optimizing tax revenue utilization and maximizing resource allocation across various economic sectors. The study recommended a holistic approach to economic diversification, emphasizing resource maximization, infrastructure investment, and improved tax policies to drive long-term sustainability.

Azubuike et al. (2023) explored the potential of a Mining Resource Corridor (MRC) in Nigeria as a strategy for economic diversification. The study argued that MRCs can catalyze mineral extraction, transportation, processing and infrastructural development, integrating multiple economic sectors to generate employment and inclusive growth. Drawing lessons from Mozambique's MRC experiences, the study emphasized the need for strong institutions, adequate infrastructure, stakeholder participation and government commitment to successfully implement an MRC in Nigeria. It concluded that a well-planned MRC could reduce poverty and accelerate economic transformation.

Futher, Kalagbor & Harry (2021) assessed Nigeria's Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) in promoting economic diversification. The study utilized secondary data from the National Bureau of Statistics and the Central Bank of Nigeria to analyze the impact of the ERGP on non-oil exports and industrialization. The findings indicated that, while ERGP implementation accelerated industrialization, it did not substantially reduce Nigeria's dependence on oil and gas. The study recommended increased investments in infrastructure, human capital development, and research and development to enhance Nigeria's diversification efforts.

Olumide et al. (2013) investigated Nigeria's non-oil sector, focusing on solid minerals. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, their study highlighted the sector's significant potential to drive economic growth. They argued that the solid mineral industry could serve as a major source of employment, reducing poverty and addressing the structural limitations of Nigeria's economy. Their findings emphasized the need for strong sectoral policies and a government-led effort to create an enabling environment for private-sector participation.

In the same vein, Adekeye (2010) examined the impact of conflict on mining in Nigeria, noting that the potential gains from developing the mining sector far outweigh the losses incurred due to its neglect. Also, Agba (2007) conducted an economic analysis of resource sustainability in the mining sector, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. His findings underscored the benefits Nigeria stands to gain from solid mineral development, and advocated policies that foster private sector investment in mining.

Akongwale (2013) applied both qualitative and quantitative methods to demonstrate that the solid mineral sector has the capacity to contribute significantly to Nigeria's economy. His study found that expanding the sector could generate employment and alleviate poverty, particularly through its forward linkages with other industries. Also, it could help Nigeria reduce its vulnerability to global oil price fluctuations, which have historically impacted the country's economic stability. However, realizing this potential requires strengthening Nigeria's existing solid mineral development policies and creating a conducive investment environment for private-sector participation.

Sada (2012) supports this view, emphasizing the need for reforms to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability in the sector. Effective mineral development can also facilitate infrastructural growth, as the extraction process often requires construction of roads, buildings, railways, pipelines, power lines and communication networks. While mining companies have made considerable investments in social and infrastructural development in some communities, the "enclave" nature of mining in

developing countries often limits broader economic benefits to the extractive industry (Breckenridge, 2008; Matti, 2010).

These empirical studies underscore the critical role of the solid minerals sector in Nigeria's economic diversification. However, achieving its full potential requires a multi-faceted approach involving policy consistency, infrastructural investment, research and development, and private sector engagement.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a quasi-experimental research design. This was to establish causal relationships between variables by manipulating an independent variable without randomly assigning participants to different groups. Unlike true experimental designs that rely on randomization, quasi-experimental designs are often chosen when random assignment is impractical or ethically challenging. This approach enables researchers to examine interventions in real-world settings while maintaining a degree of control over variables (Eng et al., 2022).

Model Specification

$$RGDP = f(SMP, TOP, FDI) \dots \dots \dots equ \quad (1)$$

The functional equation above was stated econometrically as:

$$RGDP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SMP_t + \beta_2 TOP_t + \beta_4 FDI_t + \varepsilon_t \quad equ \quad (2)$$

RGDP = real gross domestic product (dependent variable). This represents the economic performance of the country within the period of study.

TOP = trade openness represents the ease of buying and selling of commodities between Nigeria and other economies. The degree of trade openness determines the extent to which other goods and services are traded in.

SMP = solid mineral production as measured in their monetary values. This is the nexus of the study, representing other natural resources that can be mined, such as coal and gold.

FDI = foreign direct investment into the solid minerals' subsector. This also represents the financial resources attracted from other countries' investors into the solid minerals subsector of the Nigerian economy.

β = Constant term

Apriori expectations: $\beta_1 - \beta_3 > 0$

Estimation Procedure

ARDL Bounds Testing Method

Pesaran et al. (2001) originally proposed the ARDL bound test to determine if employed variables are cointegrated in the long run. When variables have breaks in I(2) but are

integrated in mixed order, such as $I(1)$ or $I(0)$, this technique can be used. The process leading up to this technique was tested and subsequently adopted in the study.

Pre-estimation Test

The ADF and PP are used to avoid spurious regression thereby subjecting each of the variables used to unit root test so as to determine their orders of integration since unit root problem is a common feature of most time series data (Amaefula, 2021). Augmented Dickey Fuller ADF) and Phillip Perron (PP) test the null hypothesis to know if there is absence of random walk in the models. The decision rule is based on failure to reject the null hypothesis of no random walk when all variables are stationary of the order Level; otherwise, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, which thus leads to the test for cointegration.

Sources of Data

Secondary data were used in this study. The data came from the publications of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) 2023 and the World Development Index (WDI) 2024. These data spanned 1990 to 2023.

Data Presentation and Result Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

	LOG_RGDP_	LOG_SMP_	LOG_TOP_	LOG_FDI_
Mean	9.380403	2.647081	2.922566	2.958027
Median	10.05372	2.542080	2.883308	3.087930
Maximum	10.82824	4.288204	3.454738	4.056643
Minimum	6.048927	1.684176	2.440879	0.254642
Std. Dev.	1.333868	0.641813	0.195191	0.879205
Skewness	-1.093993	1.129214	0.341263	-1.349072
Kurtosis	3.106498	3.715948	3.987149	4.910533
Jarque-Bera	6.398168	7.484102	1.920408	13.66265
Probability	0.140800	0.123705	0.382815	0.001079
Sum	300.1729	84.70661	93.52211	88.74080
Sum Sq. Dev.	55.07266	12.76965	1.181088	22.41704
Observations	33	33	33	33

Source: Authors' computation using Eviews (2025)

According to George (2018), descriptive statistics provide a summary of the dataset, offering an initial understanding of its characteristics and assessing its suitability for further analysis. In the model, the descriptive statistics suggested that the variables were generally normally distributed, as indicated by the probabilities associated with their

Jarque-Bera statistics. The data also exhibited a leftward skew, while kurtosis values showed that RGDP, SMP, and TOP displayed moderate kurtosis (mesokurtic), whereas FDI was leptokurtic, with a value exceeding 3. This implies that, apart from FDI, the variables are largely free from significant outliers and conform to a normal distribution, supporting their appropriateness for the study's analysis.

Unit Root Analysis

According to Ringga et al. (2025), unit root tests are statistical methods used to determine whether a time series contains a unit root, which indicates non-stationarity. The presence of a unit root suggests that the time series is not deterministic in nature and may exhibit long-term trends or random walks.

Non-stationary time series present challenges in statistical analysis, as their mean and variance can change over time, making it difficult to identify consistent patterns or trends (Nishi & Kurozumi, 2023). Unit root tests help researchers assess stationarity, providing a clearer understanding of the data's characteristics and ensuring the reliability of further analysis (Nishi & Kurozumi, 2023).

Variables	At levels (Prob)	First difference (Prob)	Comments
LOG_RGDP_	0.1250	0.0048	I(0) Stationary at first difference
Log_SMP_	0.1429	0.0010	I(1) Stationary at first difference
LOG_TOP_	0.0017	0.0000	I(0) Stationary at levels
Log_FDI__	0.2200	0.0021	I(1) Stationary at first difference

Source: Authors' computation (2025)

The unit root tests indicate that while some of the variables were stationary at both levels and first difference, the others were stationary at first difference. This suggests that the AutoRegressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model is the most suitable analytical approach for the study. This aligns with the findings of Rehman et al. (2020), who also employed the ARDL model due to the combination of stationarity at levels and first differences in their unit root analysis.

Bounds Test for Cointegration

The bounds test for cointegration tests for long-term relationship between the dependent and the independent variables used in the study (Rehman et al, 2020).

Bounds Test for Cointegration

F-Bounds Test		Null Hypothesis: No levels relationship		
Test Statistic	Value	Signif.	I(0)	I(1)
			Asymptotic: n=1000	
F-statistic	11.29554	10%	3.47	4.45
K	3	5%	4.01	5.07
		2.5%	4.52	5.62
		1%	5.17	6.36

Source: Authors' computation from Eviews (2025)

The bounds test for Cointegration for the model examined revealed that there was long-term relationships amongst the variables used. Using their F-stat at 5% confidence interval, the model revealed that the F-statistics were higher than their 5% asymptotic variables, indicating that there was a long-run relationship amongst the variables used in the model.

ARDL ECM Tests

ECM Regression

Case 5: Unrestricted Constant and Unrestricted Trend

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	3.303465	1.489058	2.218493	0.0198
@TREND	-0.006789	0.906595	-0.074884	0.6540
D(LOG_SMP_(-1))	1.733640	0.776501	-2.232630	0.0000
D(LOG_TOP_(-1))	2.372393	0.179011	2.012189	0.0000
D(LOG_FDI_(-1))	4.789913	2.372223	2.019166	0.0000
CointEq(-1)*	-0.178239	0.081623	-2.183685	0.0000
R-squared	0.728661	Mean dependent var		0.122236
Adjusted R-squared	0.660225	S.D. dependent var		0.316059
S.E. of regression	0.252798	Akaike info criterion		0.253121
Sum squared resid	1.405946	Schwarz criterion		0.493091
Log likelihood	1.582870	Hannan-Quinn criter.		0.334476
F-statistic	4.660258	Durbin-Watson stat		1.865558
Prob(F-statistic)	0.007071			

Source: Authors' computation using Eviews (2025)

The ARDL ECM results of the model showed the relationships between the dependent and the independent variables over the period. The result revealed that the R-square, which showed the goodness-of-fit, was 72.9%. This indicates that 72.9% of the changes in the dependent variable were caused by the changes in the independent variables. The f-test also revealed that the model, taken as a whole, was statistically significant. This implies that the model is reliable for the current analysis. The model equally showed that the error correction mechanisms (ECM) was -17.8%. This implies that there is 17.8% annual speed of adjustment of the variables to equilibrium.

Serial Correlation Tests

Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test:

F-statistic	2.001220	Prob. F(2,33)	0.1512
Obs*R-squared	4.434844	Prob. Chi-Square(2)	0.1089

Source: Authors' Computation Using Eviews (2025)

The serial correlation helps to understand how (and if) a variable affects itself when lagged (Chen, 2022). The implication is that, if a variable affects itself over time, this will result to spurious results and cannot be used for predictive purposes (Schork, 2022). The serial correlation results for the model revealed that there was no issue of serial correlation among the variables used. This is shown by the probability of the F-stat being more than 0.05.

Heteroskedasticity Tests

Heteroskedasticity Test: Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey

F-statistic	1.302349	Prob. F(7,19)	0.3019
Obs*R-squared	8.754450	Prob. Chi-Square(7)	0.2708
Scaled explained SS	4.276486	Prob. Chi-Square(7)	0.7474

Source: Authors' computation using Eviews (2025)

The heteroskedasticity test reveals the variability of the variance or error term of the time series over the period (Raza et al., 2023). As one of the assumptions of regression analysis, heteroskedasticity shows that the error terms of the variables are not the same (and cannot be) if the analysis will be reliable (Daryanto, 2020). As the results indicated, the probabilities of the f-stat were greater than 0.05. This means that there is no reason to believe that the variables are homoskedastic.

Tests of Hypotheses

The results of the ARDL ECM were used for testing of the hypotheses.

There is no significant relationship between solid minerals production and real gross domestic product

The analysis revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between RGDP and SMP over the period. As SMP increased by a unit, RGDP increases by 1.733640 and vice versa. The analysis also revealed that SMP was statistically significant, as shown by the t-values prob (0.0000). We, therefore, accepted the alternative hypotheses, and concluded that there was a significant relationship between SMP and RGDP over the period.

There is no significant relationship between trade openness and real gross domestic product

The analysis indicated that there was a positive relationship between TOP and RGDP over the same period. As TOP increased by a unit, RGDP increased by 2.372393 and vice versa. The analysis revealed that TOP was statistically significant, as shown by the t-values prob. <0.05. We, therefore, rejected the null hypothesis, and concluded that there were significant relationships between TOP and RGDP over the period.

There is no significant relationship between FDI in solid mineral subsector and real gross domestic product in Nigeria.

The analysis revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between FDI and RGDP. As FDI increased by a unit, RGDP also increased by 4.789913 and vice versa. The analysis indicated that FDI was statistically significant, as shown by the t-values prob (0.0000). Therefore, we rejected the null hypothesis, and concluded that there were significant relationships between FDI and RGDP over the period.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the analysis indicated significant relationships between RGDP and key variables relating to solid minerals development. The positive and significant relationship suggested that, as solid minerals variables increased, RGDP also rose and vice versa, lending strong credence to the importance of solid minerals as an alternative towards economic diversification of Nigeria. This further implies that the development of this subsector can significantly shift the economic well-being of Nigeria from solely relying on crude oil towards other untapped but economically viable solid minerals located in various states of the nation.

The study showed that solid minerals production had a positive and significant relationship with RGDP. This impact on the RGDP was estimated at 1.733640 percentage points, indicating that, if the production of solid minerals in Nigeria was increased by a

unit percentage point, the RGDP is estimated to increase at 1.73 percentage points and vice versa. This shows a strong indication of the possibilities inherent in the solid minerals production subsector. Improvement in this subsector is expected to improve the non-oil exportation and foreign exchange contribution to the government. This result agrees with the findings of Nwogwugwu et al. (2021), who also note that the solid minerals exploration has the potential to turn Nigeria's economic woes into economic fortune while shifting the focus from oil-reliant economy to non-oil reliant economy.

In addition, the study found a positive and significant relationship between TOP and RGDP. This suggests that as TOP increased, RGDP tended to increase and vice versa. The results imply that RGDP responds positively to changes in TOP, indicating that trade liberalization is a key aspect of economic diversification. The findings of this study are consistent with those of Maduaka (2014) and Ohwofasa & Ekaruwe (2023), that also found a positive and significant relationship between trade openness and RGDP. They emphasize the need for managed trade liberalisation in order to ensure robust economic diversification in Nigeria.

Finally, the study revealed a positive and significant relationship between FDI inflow in the solid minerals production subsector and the RGDP over the period. The study found that as FDI in this sector increased by a percentage unit, RGDP improved substantially by 4.8 percentage points and vice versa. The study revealed that the FDI inflows into the subsector had the highest impact on RGDP, implying that the development of the subsector has the potential of attracting foreign direct investment – which is a form of raising foreign currencies for the economy. The finding of the study agrees with Ayodele et al. (2013), who note that FDI has a positive and significant relationship with the RGDP as a means of economic diversification in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The solid minerals sector offers a viable pathway for Nigeria's economic diversification and long-term sustainability. By addressing existing challenges and implementing strategic reforms, the country can unlock the potential of its mineral resources to drive economic growth, industrialization and sustainable development. The study recommends that the solid minerals miners be harmonized and encouraged to produce more. Improving and increasing their production capacities will lead to increment in the RGDP. One way of doing this is through provision of fiscal incentives for miners while establishing a centralized mining database. Policy makers should also ease trade liberalization to improve trade openness. This has the potential of growing the real GDP. The FDI into the subsector can be encouraged through enhancing security of mining sites, ensuring that investors have access to their money and giving foreign investors tax incentives as a means of attracting their investments into the subsector.

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9**PERSPECTIVES ON NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENT: THE ROAD MAPS OF THE NIGERIAN LIVESTOCK SECTOR TOWARDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT****By****Godfrey Adokiye Kalio**

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Introduction

Worldwide, agriculture, especially the livestock sector, provides livelihood for more people than any other industry (Upton, 2001). The livestock sub-sector in Nigeria is the second largest of the agriculture sector, contributing an average of 9.2% agricultural growth between 1960 and 2020 (Uzonwanne et al., 2023). This sector is the largest source of animal protein, including dairy and poultry products. The economic importance of the sub-sector is evident through food supply, job and income creation as well as provision of hides as raw material for the faster-growing urban population (Uzonwanne et al., 2023)..

The livestock sector provides over half of the value of the world's agricultural output and one-third of this is in the developing countries, including Nigeria. According to Upton (2001), the rapid growth in the demand for livestock products, in the developing countries, is viewed as a 'food revolution.' In these countries, livestock products are costly in relation to staple foods. So, the developing country's consumption levels are still low, but will increase with rising incomes of individuals. Consequently, the growth in consumption are at the expense of the increasing net imports of all the livestock products.

Livestock contribute to rural livelihoods, employment and poverty relief. They integrate with and complement crop production, embody savings and provide a reserve against risks (Upton, 2001). Some livestock have special roles in traditional culture. However, there are growing concerns that the traditional role of the livestock sector is too narrow. If we wish to understand the roles of the livestock sector in economic development, we need to have a broader view and recognize the numerous ways in which the livestock sector links up with and plays important roles in other sectors of the Nigerian economy (Praburaj, 2018). Therefore, the road maps of the Nigerian livestock sector towards economic development can be explained by the significant roles livestock can

play in enhancing and improving the livelihoods of the Nigerian populace, as captured in Fig 1.

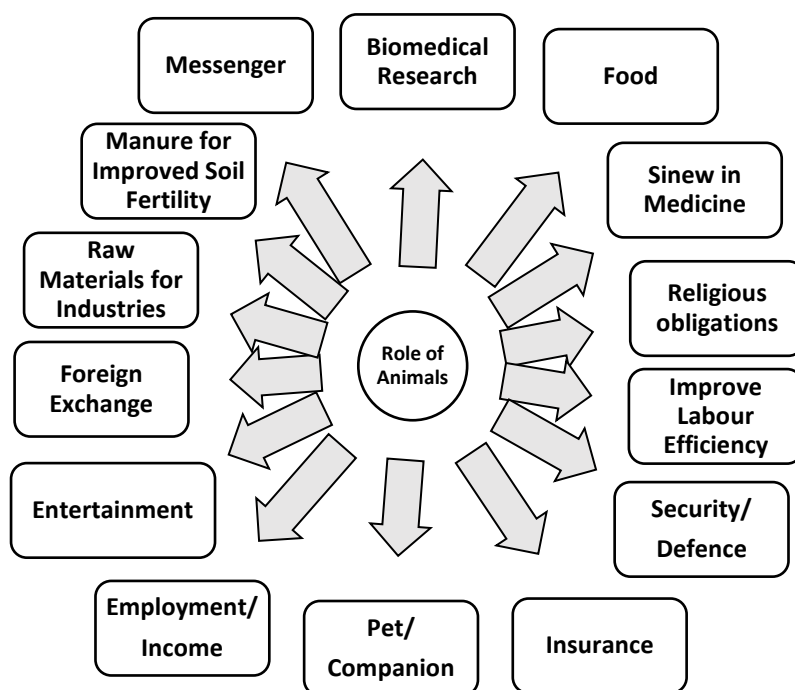


Figure 1: The role of farm animals

Therefore, this article discusses the major contributions or road maps of the livestock sub-sector of agriculture that can bring about economic growth and development in Nigeria:

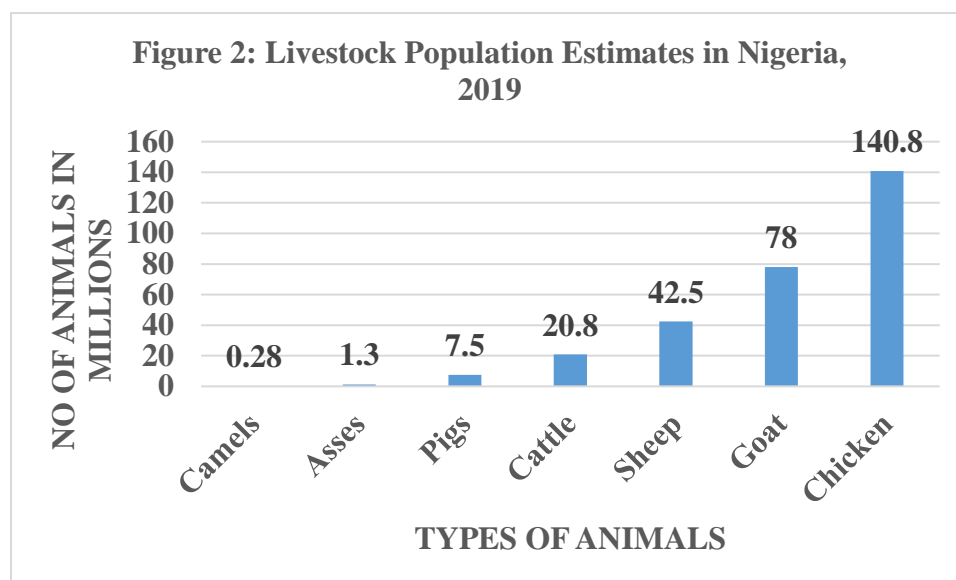
Enhancing Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Earnings

The Nigerian livestock sub-sector is one of the largest in Africa, with a very rich biodiversity involving the practice of breeding and raising animals (cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and poultry) for food, fibre, labour and other products (Bogoro, 2020).

FAOSTAT (2019) estimates that the country possesses 1.3 million asses, 0.28 million camels, 20.8 million cattle, 140.8 million chickens, 78 million goats, 42.5 million sheep and 7.5 million pigs (Fig 2). The sub-sector serves as a source of livelihood, with 42% of the population owning livestock as source of food to millions of Nigerians both in the rural and urban areas. Furthermore, livestock accounts for about 9% of the agricultural GDP (FAO, 2019). The production system in the sector is largely dominated by the extensive or pastoral system. However, the poultry sector is the most commercially oriented, with 21% of the animals raised under intensive system compared to 1.0% of cattle under similar system (FRN, 2007, cited in Bogoro, 2020).

The net worth of the Nigerian poultry industry is estimated at 1.7 billion USD (FRN, 2007, quoted in Bogoro, 2020) compared to dairy, with an annual import bill of 1.3 billion USD (NLTP, 2019). This suggests that commercialization is a pathway to self-sufficiency in food production. The country provides a large market for livestock and livestock products because of its huge population. The demand for poultry meat, beef and milk is projected to increase by 253%, 117% and 577%, respectively, by 2050 compared to the 2015 level (FAOGPS, 2018, cited in Bogoro, 2020).

Increase in population alongside increase in relative earnings in Nigeria will translate into increased demand for livestock products. This shows huge potential for growth in the demand for livestock and livestock products in Nigeria. This, if properly harnessed, can bring about economic development.



Innovations Focused at Improving Animal Nutrition in the Livestock Sector for Economic Development

Innovations in the livestock sector have mostly focused on improving animal nutrition to enhance livestock productivity. The development of balanced and affordable feed formulations by research innovations in the livestock sector has enhanced the growth and productivity of livestock. Researchers in the livestock sector have explored and adopted the use of locally available feed resources, such as crop residues and agro-industrial by-products (Kalio, 2017; Kalio and Ingweye, 2018; Kalio, 2019; Kalio et al., 2020), nutraceuticals, phytogenic feed additives and plant extracts, to reduce feed costs and improve the sustainability of livestock production systems (Ikoroma et al., 2022). By improving animal nutrition, research efforts have contributed to the overall efficiency and

sustainability of livestock farming to encourage the economic growth and development of livestock farmers.

Ensuring Animal Protein Security through the Livestock Sector for Economic Development

Animal protein security is a critical aspect of food security in Nigeria, with the sole intention of providing adequate nutrition, health and economic development. Nigeria has a growing demand for animal protein (meat, milk, egg and fish) due to population growth and socio-economic disparities (Kalio, 2024).

The primary sources of animal protein in Nigeria are through livestock, such as cattle, poultry, sheep and goats. Nevertheless, the livestock sector is affected by inefficiencies in production due to high cost of feed and feeding stuffs, processing and distribution, leading to insufficient supply and high prices of animal products. Additionally, disease outbreaks, inadequate infrastructure and limited access to inputs further intensify the challenges faced by livestock farmers. To address these issues and enhance animal protein security and economic development, intensive efforts have been put in place to improve productivity, animal product quality and resilience. These initiatives include promoting modern farming practices, providing access to veterinary services and healthcare, as well as enhancing the genetic potential of livestock breeds through selective breeding by technology adoption.

Effective Disease Control and Management among Farm Animals in the Livestock Sector to Enhance Economic Growth and Development

Another critical aspect where the livestock sector has made significant impact is in the area of effective disease control and management. The prevalence of infectious diseases among livestock, such as Newcastle, avian influenza, infectious bursal disease and coccidiosis, in poultry, and foot-and-mouth, anthrax, brucellosis, bloat, Peste des Petitis Ruminant (PPR), and trypanosomiasis disease, in cattle, sheep and goats, constitute major threats to food security in Nigeria (Kalio, 2018). Researchers have developed vaccines and improved diagnostic tools to detect and control these diseases more effectively. By reducing the incidence of livestock diseases, these advancements have helped to maintain healthy animal populations, thereby ensuring a steady supply of animal products and ensuring animal protein security.

Ensuring Growth and Poverty Alleviation through the Livestock Sector for Economic Development

Supporting smallholder livestock farmers, who constitute the majority of livestock producers in Nigeria, is crucial for inclusive growth and poverty alleviation that can enhance their economic growth and development. This can be made possible by empowering farmers with training, credit facilities and market linkages to enhance their

capacity to raise healthy and productive animals sustainably. Furthermore, government intervention in the provision of infrastructure, such as roads, cold storage facilities and market centres, can improve the efficiency of livestock value chains, reduce post-harvest losses and ensure fair prices for both producers and consumers that improve their well-being, thereby enhancing economic development.

Promoting Alternative Sources of Animal Protein to Enhance Economic Development

Efforts to promote alternative sources of animal protein, such as fish farming and insect rearing, can diversify the protein supply and reduce reliance on traditional livestock farming, as well as provide multiple streams of income for livestock farmers. Aquaculture, in particular, has significant potential for expansion, given the abundance of Nigeria's water resources in coastal areas. By investing in fish hatcheries, pond construction and fish feed production, individuals can boost domestic fish production and enhance food security while creating employment opportunities in rural areas.

Promoting Sustainable and Environmentally Friendly Practices to Enhance Economic Development

Sustainability in livestock production also involves addressing the environmental impacts of animal agriculture (Woke and Kalio, 2023). Research in the livestock sector has led to the development of sustainable grazing practices, manure management techniques and waste recycling methods. For instance, the integration of livestock and crop farming systems, known as mixed farming, has been promoted to enhance nutrient recycling and helped to reduce environmental degradation. Additionally, research approaches in livestock sector have focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from livestock through dietary modifications and improved manure management practices. These efforts are essential for environmental sustainability and human survival (Kalio and Ebebi, 2023). This can help to accelerate livestock productivity, leading to economic development.

Improving the Livelihoods of Smallholder Livestock Farmers to Enhance Economic Development

Research activities conducted in the livestock sector has also played a vital role in improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Nigeria, through the provision of access to improved livestock breeds, disease control measures and better management practices (Kalio, 2024). The research initiatives of researchers in the livestock sector have empowered farmers to enhance their productivity and income. This, in turn, has contributed to rural development and poverty reduction, as livestock farming has been perceived as a significant source of livelihood for many rural households in Nigeria, which has helped to foster economic growth and development.

Addressing the Issue of Food Safety to Enhance Economic Development

Research activities conducted in the livestock sector has addressed the issue of food safety, which is crucial to public health and consumer confidence to promote consumer demand for livestock products so as to increase livestock farmers' income. In recent times, research efforts have focused on developing and implementing food safety standards and practices to ensure that animal products are free from contaminants and pathogens (Adeolu et al., 2019). This includes the establishment of proper handling, processing and storage plans for meat, milk and eggs. By ensuring the safety and quality of animal products, research innovations have contributed to protecting public health and enhancing the marketability of Nigerian livestock products both domestically and internationally to the economic growth and development of livestock farmers.

Collaborative Knowledge Sharing in the Livestock Sector for Economic Development

The direct contributions of research activities in the Nigerian livestock sector has fostered collaboration and knowledge sharing among livestock farmers, policymakers and multifaceted stakeholders. This collaborative approach has facilitated dissemination of research findings and adoption of best practices in livestock production (Kalio, 2020). This has also enabled the development of policies and programmes that support sustainable livestock farming and food security. This has broadened the knowledge base of livestock farmers to improve their productivity and increase their financial base, leading to economic growth and development.

The Integration and Use of Modern Technologies in the Livestock Sector for Economic Development

The integration and use of modern technologies in the livestock sector has further improved livestock productivity of livestock farmers. For instance, the use of biotechnology, information technology and precision agriculture techniques has revolutionized livestock production in Nigeria. For example, the application of genomic selection in breeding programmes has accelerated the development of superior livestock breeds (Goddard and Hayes, 2009). Similarly, the use of remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) has improved the monitoring and management of grazing lands and water resources (Shah Porun Rana and Moniruzzaman, 2023). These technological advancements have enhanced efficiency and effectiveness in the livestock sector, leading to more sustainable and productive livestock systems for economic growth and development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The livestock sub-sector of agriculture has actually demonstrated that long-term economic growth and development can be achieved, because it can serve as the primary driver of the economy and a wealth-generating avenue of the nation. By the nature and structure of the livestock sub-sector, it has the highest potential to contribute

substantially to economic development, by improving the GDP of Nigeria. It can also improve livestock farmers' earnings, improve animal nutrition, ensure animal protein security, ensure effective disease control and management and ensure growth and alleviate poverty. Besides, it can promote alternative sources of animal protein, promote sustainable and environmentally-friendly practices, improve the livelihoods of smallholder livestock farmers, address the issue of food safety, and ensure collaborative knowledge sharing and integration and use of modern technologies.

Based on the aforementioned, it will be rational and appropriate to place greater emphasis on further development of the sector through the following:

- Massive investment in critical infrastructure by government, such as roads, pipe-borne water, healthcare, education, silos and electricity, that will improve livestock productivity.
- Provision of adequate budgetary allocation to the sector by government and ensuring interest-free loans to livestock farmers dwelling in rural and urban areas to encourage commercial production.

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10**MICROFINANCE BANKS' CREDITS AND THE PERFORMANCE OF SMALL
AND MEDIUM-SCALE ENTERPRISES IN LAGOS ISLAND LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA, LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA****By****Simeon Gbimoie Nenbee & Omorala Atunke King**

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Abstract

The economic literature contends that both public and private sectors can drive economic growth and development. This argument, in most cases, tends towards the private sector-led economic growth perspective. This paper examined the effect of microfinance banks' credits on the performance of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) in Lagos Island Local Government Area (LGA), Lagos State using primary and secondary data. A total of 297 copies of a questionnaire were used for analysis; the reliability of the questionnaire was tested using the Cronbach Alpha test. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and a non-parametric statistical tool (Chi-Square test). It was discovered that microfinance banks' credits had a significant positive effect on the output, employment generation and SMEs' profit (turnover) of the SMEs in Lagos Island LGA, and provided non-financial services, like trainings, advisory role and financial management skills. The policy implication of the outcome is that the availability of microfinance banks' credits is a bold step toward achieving robust economic growth and development in Lagos Island LGA, which correlates with the a priori expectation. The paper thus recommends that the government should be actively involved in credit creation and its availability to SMEs through channelling more funds to micro credit programmes, like micro-insurance scheme packages, to boost the micro credit value offered to SMEs by microfinance bank policy makers.

Keywords: Credits, Outputs, Employment and Financial Services**1. Introduction**

The quest for economic prosperity of countries seems to have diverse dimensions. In most countries, both the private and public sectors own enterprises, which are usually involved in promoting economic prosperity. However, much of the economics literature contends that the private sector is better equipped to drive the process of economic growth and development. This argument, in most cases, tends towards the private sector-led economic growth perspective.

Small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) are catalysts for economic growth and development but they are oftentimes obscured by multifarious inhibitors. These

inhibitors cover difficulty in accessing loans and advances from formal banking institutions, increasing level of insecurity, dearth of infrastructure, high cost of electricity and others. Despite these daunting challenges, the potential of SMEs to turn the economy of Nigeria into a global hub is still very high. This is abundantly expressed in the World Bank's (2013) report, cited in Chidume & Nenbee (2022). The report claims that SMEs bridge the dichotomy between urban and rural centres and contribute greatly to industrialization as well as economic growth and development.

However, Gyimah & Boachie (2018), Nenbee (2018) and Mutama & Omagwa (2019) argue that paucity of funds hampers such roles. The bridge-pie is the microfinance banks' pull of funds. As noted by Adegbola *et al.* (2022), in the case of Nigeria:

“The microfinance banks were established basically to provide financial services to the poor people so as to reduce the rate of poverty and improve the quality of living in the country. They were established to fix the access to credit and other resources for financially underserved people who are dependent on self-employment needing small loans and other resources to help kick start or expand their businesses.

The service of microfinance banks covers financial services such as acceptance of deposit, payment mechanisms, financial inclusion, micro-leasing, cash advance/micro loan, and insurance, among others. Their non-financial services are educating/training their customers on book keeping, preparation of business plan, business management, managerial functions and project management among others functions (Gyimah & Boachie, 2018; Nenbee, 2018; Mutama & Omagwa, 2019). Their role in financial intermediation includes their provision of funds to the financial undeserving units, with emphasis on SMES, and the acceptance of deposit from the surplus units in the economy (Ekpete & Iwedi, 2017). Microfinance is also seen as banking for the poor who account for more than 70% of the populace (Adeyokunnu, 2022). Agbim (2020) states that access to credit by SME owners brings about capital accumulation, credit creation and investment boom. The creation of SMEs has assisted the uneducated and low-income earners to create wealth and to generally improve their standard of living (Adeosun & Shittu, 2021).

Arising from the above, one important factor to consider about the survival and growth of SMEs is that of viable options for business growth and more accessibility to credits. This expectation seems to be far from reality, owing to diverse challenges. Adeyokunnu (2022) submits that the major obstacles that SMEs in Nigeria grapple with include lack of funds and lack of collateral equivalent of the credits. These have led many of them closing shop, resulting in loss of thousands of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled jobs across the country and investment capital, precipitating unemployment, low standard of living, high cost of living and poor economy.

These challenges seem not to halt in recent years, as shown in the report of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in 2020. According to CBN (2020), at the global scale, commercial banks shy away from financing SMEs because of perceived risks and uncertainties. In Nigeria, the competitive credit for SMEs has been worsened due to the fragile economic environment and lack of necessary infrastructures (CBN, 2020). In order to strengthen the performance, Nigeria has embarked on initiatives like providing internal/local finance through its agencies. These include Nigerian Industrial Development Bank (NIDB), Federal Ministry of Industries' Small-Scale Industry Credit Scheme (SSICS), Nigerian Bank for Commerce and Industry (BCI), and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

The sorry state of the performance of SMEs in Nigeria calls for concern. This concern perhaps might be heightened when one considers numerous scholarly works. For instance, Ofeimun, Nwakoby & Izekor (2018), Garba (2019), Bhola (2020) and Udobi-Owoloja, Iyiegbuniwe & Iyiegbuniwe (2020) indicate that there exists a correlation between the microfinance bank credit and the performance of SMEs in Nigeria. These authors unanimously agreed that there exists a positive impact on SMEs' growth, economic development, employment generation capacity, and return on investment. In view of the foregoing, this paper addresses the following question: What is the effect of microfinance credits on SMEs' output, employment generation and increment in SMEs profit (turnover) in Lagos Island LGA, Lagos State?

2. Literature Review

Microcredit entails small loans, while Microfinance is appropriate where NGOs and microfinance institutions supplement the loans with other financial services (savings, insurance, etc.). (Adeyokunnu, 2022) avers that microcredit is a component of microfinance in that it involves providing credit to the poor, but microfinance involves additional non-credit financial services, such as savings, insurance, pensions and payment services. Microfinance has many characteristics. Microcredit is defined as the initial or subsequent small loans advanced to low-income earners for the sustainability of those that are self-employed or who are small venture capitalists. The idea of a microcredit is that it is either for assisting an ongoing small business or to start one of quality bank delivery services that affects the poor in the rural and urban areas.

Small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) can source investible credits from microfinance banks. Researchers have shown that the SMEs are dynamic in nature. They play the role of poverty reduction, employment generation and more in rural areas. There are different theories on the activities of SMEs and microfinance credits. Some of the theories include the Pecking Order Theory (POT) and Financial Growth Theory (FGT).

The POT is traceable to the work of Myers and Majuluf in the year 1984. They posit that the traditional financing decisions are based on two theories, which are the Trade-off Theory and Pecking Order Theory. Theoretically, the trade-off model of capital structure is an assumption of a trade-off that exists between the tax advantages of using debt and agency costs. The use of debt will increase the value of the company only to a certain extent. The Pecking Order Theory directs the decision to choose company financing according to the level of financing. This concept minimizes the need for external financing.

Myers and Majuluf (1984) argue that business owners prefer to operate with internal funding (retained earnings), which is the cheapest and the most convenient when compared to sourcing funds externally (Debt and Equity). This is because of the high cost of capital and information asymmetry, in addition to dilution of control, that is associated with external funding. The theory states that firm's managers have scale of preference when sourcing funds and they also strive for an optimum capital structure. The theory attempts to avoid the resulting risk that a profitable investment project is foregone by seeking to finance it internally. If retained earnings are insufficient, they opt for debt first rather than equity finance, because debt providers, with a prior claim on the firm's assets and earnings, are less exposed than equity investors to errors in valuing the firm.

The FGT was propounded by Schumpeter (1911). The theory postulates that availability of finance may cause growth in the economy. The theory suggests that finance may increase growth by promoting technological innovations. Before any growth can be achieved, the availability of finance is imperative. If good institutional framework is put in place to enable entrepreneurs to access loan and credit facilities easily, economic growth and development will be attained. The main criticism of the theory is that the small firms' initial use of internal financing creates a unique situation in which capital structure decisions are made based on limited financing options. It is widely accepted that small firms have different optimal capital structures and are financed by various sources at different stages of their organizational lives. Berger and Udell (1998) assert that certain attributes of small firms influence the type of funds available to finance the firms' operations (See van Auken & Neeley, 1996; Hall et al, 2000; Romano et al., 2001).

Pei-Wen, Zariyawati, Diana-Rose and Annuar (2016) explored how microfinance in monetary and non-monetary terms has impacted the productivity of SMEs in Malaysia. Copies of a questionnaire were administered to SME owners that had accessed credit facility from microfinance banks. The outcomes revealed that credit from microfinance banks had a great influence on the earnings of SME owners in Malaysia.

The research of Mahumud, Minda and Ebrahim (2020) centre on the role of micro and small enterprises in employment creation and income generation in Samara-Logia Town, Afar Regional State. The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design. Questionnaire and interview were used as data collection instruments and the

responses obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools, such as tables and percentages. The study revealed that the growth rate of medium and small-scale Enterprises (MSEs) in the town contributed significantly to employment creation and income generation. Hence, it was concluded that MSEs have great contribution in reducing unemployment and providing income to owners and employees of MSEs.

Boateng & Gebregizabher and Akeem's (2019) assessment of the role of SMEs in local economic development (LED) was conducted in South Africa. Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire and use of random sampling. The results indicated that SMEs play a vital role in LED in South Africa. The study concluded that SMEs contribute to employment creation, wealth creation, poverty alleviation and income generation.

Gamo and Gollagari (2020) examined the role of local government in supporting micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) performance in Ethiopia. The study employed a mixed-method approach using both quantitative and qualitative data. Document analysis, narrative analysis, and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The result showed low level of employment and capital generation of MSMEs due to ineffective local government support.

The contributions of micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to income generation, employment and GDP in Ethiopia formed the focus of Weldeslassie, Claire, Kibron and Negasi (2019). A survey method was used to collect data. Qualitative and quantitative approaches were utilised to analyze the collected data. The study revealed that MSMEs in Ethiopia were the main sources of job and income, and they significantly contributed to the local, regional and national GDP and key policies to sustainability. The major obstacles of MSMEs in Ethiopia were development schemes, dependency on government and spoon-feeding mentality.

Mutuma and Omagwa (2019) measured the impact that microfinance services have on the performance of SMEs operating in Meru, Kenya, using a sample of 93 SMEs, copies of a questionnaire were administered to business owners and managers of SMEs. The descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis results established that microfinance services, most especially loan facilities, significantly influenced the growth of SMEs in Kenya.

Moreover, Amsi, Ngare, Imo and Gachie (2017) investigated the effect of microfinance credit on the financial performance of SMEs in Kenya using a sample of 210 SMEs. Data were randomly generated with the use of a self-administered questionnaire. The multiple regression model and Pearson coefficients correlation were deployed for analysis. The findings indicated that interest rate, collateral requirements, and repayment period had a negative effect on the financial performance of the SMEs, whereas entrepreneur orientation and credit amount had a positive effect on their financial performance.

Alnaa and Ahiakpor (2015), through survey data, evaluated the strategy which microfinance can employ to increase output among poor micro-entrepreneurs in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Data were gathered from 500 ladies engaged in agro-processing out of whom 250 were recipients of microfinance services. The outcome of the OLS method indicated that an improvement in the technical efficiency of microfinance recipients positively affected output growth.

Waithanji and Wakaba (2014) examined the effect of microfinance credit on the financial performance of small and medium enterprises in Kiambu County. They found that all SMEs borrowed investment capital and used it for the right purposes. Most of them did not have other sources of financing apart from microfinance institutions and they did not have other form of financing before they started receiving financing from microfinance institutions.

Further, Madole (2013) conducted a study on the role of microfinance institutions in the development of entrepreneurs in Africa. The study focused on entrepreneurs who wanted to run a business but could not afford a piece of equipment and merchandise. The research found that only 6% of Africans borrowed money to start a business, whereas 13% borrow to buy food, but 50% of the population lived with 1US\$ or less per day. Most of the Africans lacked the understanding of what it would take to be successful entrepreneurs. They lacked necessary technical management skills and confidence. They also lacked personal ambition and willingness for fear of sharing ownership, and failed to form partnership.

With regard to Nigeria, Olufolahun *et al.* (2023) examined the relationship between the efficiency of microfinance banks and performance of MSMEs in South-West Nigeria during the first six years of regulatory reforms (2012-2017). Using the panel vector autoregressive (PVAR) approach and Granger causality test, they discovered that the present level of efficiency of microfinance banks had an insignificant impact on the performance of MSMEs, suggesting a negligible role in the activities of MSMEs. The past efficiency level of microfinance banks could not explain the present level of performance of small businesses (PSB) and vice versa, suggesting that low level of efficiency of microfinance banks contributed to the poor performance of MSMEs.

Chidube and Nenbee (2022) assessed the impact of the activities of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) on the economic development of the Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria using the Small and Medium Scale Enterprises Survey Questionnaire (SMEQ), which focused more on employment generation and poverty reduction. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and logistic regression estimation. It was discovered that SME operators did not have increased access to basic socio-economic amenities. The output of the logistic regression indicated that an increase in firm size could improve the chances of SMEs fostering economic development in the local government.

Adegbola *et al.* (2022) examined the effect of microfinance banks on the economic development of Nigeria using secondary data obtained from *CBN Bulletins* and records of the National Population Commission from 1996 to 2019. The study used Vector Autoregressive (VAR) estimates to test the effect of the independent variables (microfinance banks' total loans and advances, total investments, and total deposits) on the dependent variable (per capita income). Johansen Co-integration results showed a relationship between microfinance banks and Nigeria's economic development in the long run. The VAR results indicated that the activities of microfinance banks had a positive but insignificant effect on Nigeria's economic development in the short term.

Similarly, Ogidi and Pam (2021) investigated the influence of financial inclusion on SMEs' growth in Nigeria. The descriptive research design was used and copies of a questionnaire were distributed to one hundred and fifty (150) SMEs, out of which hundred (100) copies were retrieved. The data were presented in tables and hypotheses were tested with chi-square statistics. The study claimed that most SMEs in Plateau State, Nigeria had access to loan facilities. The knowledge and acceptance of financial inclusion by customers positively affected the growth of SMEs.

Adeosun and Shittu (2021) examined how SMEs are formed and the impact on economic growth in Nigeria within the period 1990-2016. Secondary data were collated and error correction model and the Johansen co-integration technique were used to test for long-run relationship. The study revealed that the formation and increase of SMEs created employment opportunity, which positively boosted GDP and impacted the growth of the Nigerian economy.

Udobi-Owoloja, Iyiegbuniwe and Iyiegbuniwe (2020) examined the impact that bank credit facilities have on agro-based SMEs' performance in Nigeria during the period 1982-2016. The regression result of the analyzed secondary data collated showed that access to credit facility positively influenced agro-based SMEs in Nigeria, but poor infrastructure negatively affected it.

Anthony *et al.* (2020) focused on small and medium enterprises as a strategy for employment generation in Nigeria, using selected manufacturing companies in Delta State. The study found significant relationship between SMEs product branding and marketing, finance, policies and problems, and employment generation in Nigeria. The study further perceived sophisticated marketing techniques as an efficient way of ensuring competitiveness.

Tolulope and Olokundan (2018) studied the impact of SMEs on economic development, with data evidence from transiting economy. The descriptive research design was used to obtain data from a cross section of respondents in 60 domestically-sited enterprises located in different chosen states of Nigeria: 20 in each of Lagos, Anambra and Kano States. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire. . The

results suggested a significant interaction between the small and medium-scale enterprises and economic development in developing nations.

Lastly, Bhola (2020) investigated the influence of microfinance banks on the growth of SMEs in Nigeria. Forty-one (41) out of the 50 copies of the questionnaire administered were analyzed with Pearson's Chi-square statistic. The findings revealed that financial institutions had a role in enhancing the growth of MSMEs in Lagos State, notwithstanding the low level of entrepreneur's patronage of microfinance banks due to the exorbitant interest rate. It was further established that the cut-throat lending conditions imposed by banks posed a major hindrance to entrepreneurs' willingness to patronize loan services of banks.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Area

Lagos Island is a district in Lagos State, Nigeria. It is characterized by high-rise buildings and business. It is home to many of the city's largest wholesale markets (Idimota and Balogun Markets, etc.), and important sites (e.g. Wiki Voyage). It is also home to the National Museum of Nigeria, a central mosque, Glover Memorial Hall, Christ's Cathedral, the Oba's Palace and Tinubu Square –the site where the amalgamation ceremony of 1914 for unifying the Northern & Southern Protectorates took place.

Lagos Island (Isale Eko) today is the principal and central local government area (LGA) in Lagos State. It was the capital of Lagos State until 1957 and part of the Lagos Division. As of the 2006, Nigeria's population and housing census exercise, the LGA had a population of 209,437 with the area of 8.7 km² (*Wikipedia*, 2023).

3.2 Population of the Study

This paper sourced data from primary and secondary sources. The population covered all the registered SMEs and microfinance banks (MFBs) in Lagos Island Local Government Area. According to SMEDAN (2023), Lagos State has about 11,663 registered SMEs and about 5,373 are based in Lagos Island. Therefore, the target population for the study were the registered 5,373 SMEs managers and owners in Lagos Island LGA reported in the *Business Outlook Magazine* of 2022 December.

3.3 Sampling Technique

In this study, the multi-stage random sampling technique was adopted. The registered 5373 SMEs formed the population of interest. Judgmental (purposive) sampling was utilized appropriately to select the sample from the registered SMEs. To derive the target sample, Cocchran (1997) formula was applied:

$$n = \frac{NZ^2pq}{d^2(N-1)+Z^2pq} = \frac{5373(1.96)^2(0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05^2)(5373-1)+(1.96)^2(0.5)(0.5)} = \frac{5160.23}{14.3904} = 358.58 \quad (1),$$

where n - sample size, N = Population (5373), Z = desired confidence level (95%), which was 1.96 in the statistical table, d = precision of prevalence, and p = expected value (0.5), while $q = 1-p$.

Therefore, the sample size for the study was 360.

3.4 Instrument/Method for Data Collection

The instrument for the study was Micro Finance Banks Credit and Performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises Questionnaire (MFBCPSMEsQ). The list of all SMEs that benefited from their credit/financial services of MFBS, in no particular order, was obtained from the records of the MFBs. With the aid of the MFBCPSMEsQ, information was collected for analysis. From this list, three hundred (360) constituent beneficiaries of microfinance credit were purposively selected from the MFBs. The MFBCPSMEsQ contained diverse questions structured in a five-point Likert scale type of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D). The question items were divided into two sections. Section one covered respondents' personal and business information, while section two contains the structured questions on the objectives of the study.

3.5 Reliability of the Instrument

The same variables used and tested in previous research were involved. The reliability of the MFBCPSMEsQ was tested using the Cronbach alpha method. It was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. Chioma (2012) notes that reliability means consistency in measurement. The Cronbach alpha process, which is a coefficient of internal consistency, was used to establish the reliability in this study based on the responses and results got from twenty (20) SMEs measured on a Likert scale of 5 points. The acceptable $\alpha > 0.70$ as a conservative measure followed the earlier work of Renoui (2009).

3.6 Validity of the Research Instrument

Validity is a procedure adopted in ensuring that the instrument measures what it was designed to measure (Osundu, 2004). Validating the research instrument is essential to strengthen the essence of the research. The paper relied on the pilot test technique in order to establish the validity of the instrument. The same questionnaire was distributed to twenty (20) SMEs: firstly, the MFBCPSMEsQ was administered to ten (10) respondents and after two weeks, the second set of ten (10) respondents had the questionnaire administered to them.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics and a non-parametric statistical tool (Chi-Square test) were employed for analysis. The descriptive aspect involved data presentation in the form of tables, graphs and percentages. One advantages of this method is that, with the

percentage analysis and tabular description associated with it, the Chi-square formula is used mainly to compare two or more statistical data sets. The chi-squared test checks the existence of a difference between the observed value and the expected value. It uses the P-value, which is a short form for Probability.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Analysis of Response Rate of the Questionnaire Distributed

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution Response Rate

S/N	Number of Copies	Total		Percent
1	Copies of Questionnaire distributed	360		100%
2	Copies of Questionnaire retrieved		331	92%
3	Copies of Questionnaire not retrieved		29	8%
4	Copies of Questionnaires returned with Omissions	34		9.4%
5	Total number of Questionnaire suitable for Analysis	297		90.6%

Source: Authors' Computation (2024)

A total of 360 copies of MFBCPSMEsQ were distributed to the respondents but 331 were retrieved. From the collected copies, 34 were wrongly completed with essential questions omitted, making them unsuitable for the analysis. So only 297 (90.4% of the sample) were found suitable for analysis. Table 2 shows responses to the questions on the effect of microfinance bank credit on SMEs' output, employment generation, profit (turnover) and the non-financial services rendered by the MFBs before the data were analysed using percentages and Chi-square test.

Table 2a: Percentage Representation of Respondents' Responses

			SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
1	Microfinance banks' credits contributes to SMEs' output in Lagos Island	Frequency	143	129	14	0	11	297
		%	48.14%	43.43%	4.71%	0	3.70%	100%
2	Microfinance banks' credits have impacted SMEs positively in employment	Frequency	100	176	7	5	9	297
		%	33.67%	59.25%	2.35%	1.68%	3.03%	100%

	generation in the Island.							
3	The profit turnover of the SMEs has increased as a result of microfinance banks' credits availability in Lagos Island.	Frequency	87	164	15	18	13	297
		%	29.29%	55.21%	5.05%	6.06%	4.37%	100%
4	MFBs' training and development scheme have helped	Frequency	124	103	21	11	38	297
	in expanding the SMEs business in Lagos Island	%	41.17%	34.68%	7.07%	3.70%	12.79%	100%
5	The advisory function of MFBs has enhanced SMEs	Frequency	113	138	12	14	20	297
	productivity in Lagos Island	%	38.04%	46.46%	4.04%	4.17%	6.73%	100%

Source: Researchers' Analysis (2024)

4.2 Analysis of the Respondents' Responses to Microfinance Credits and SMEs' Output

A total of 143 persons, representing 48.14%, strongly agreed that microfinance banks' credits contributed to the output of the SMEs, 43.43% agreed to this fact, 4.71% were neutral, while 3.70% strongly disagreed that their output level increased as a result of their access to microfinance banks' credit (Table 2a). In Table 2b, the Chi-square results showed that the Pearson Chi-square value of text statistics was 631.098, with a P-value of 0.0001; no cell had an expected count less than 5. So the assumption was met and the P-value was less than the chosen significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). This indicated that the respondents strongly agreed that microfinance banks' credits contributed to the output of the SMEs. This result agrees with Ilegbinosa and Jumbo (2015) and Bello and

Mohammed (2015) that finance available to SMEs showed a positive relationship with economic growth (output level), while interest rate and inflation rate showed negative and positive influence on economic growth, respectively. The policy implication of the result is that microcredits are catalysts to the output growth of SMEs while high interest rates and inflation are inimical to it.

Table 2b: Chi-Square Test Result Analysis

COUNT			Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
14.00	Pearson Chi-Square		631.098 ^a	16	.000		
	Continuity Correction ^d		573.151	16	.000		
	Likelihood Ratio		593.816	16	.000		
	Fisher's Exact Test					.000	.000
	N of Valid Cases		28				
	N of Valid Cases		152				

Note: 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.00.

Source: Researchers' Analysis (Using SPSS 16.0)

4.3 Analysis of the Respondents' Responses to Microfinance Banks' Credits Made towards SMEs Employment Generation

As shown in Table 2a, 59.25% of the participants agreed that microfinance banks' credit contributed to the employment level in the local government, 33.67% strongly agreed, while 2.35%, 1.68% and 3.03% were respectively neutral, disagreed and strongly disagreed to it.

Table 2c indicates that the Chi-square value of 20.000, with a P-value of 0.002 and no cell having an expected count less than 5, met the assumption; the P-value was less than the chosen significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). This means that the respondents agreed that microfinance banks' credits impacted SMEs positively by increasing employment generation. This outcome disagrees with Nnabu, Udude and Egbeoma (2017), who examined how bank credits to SMEs affected the reduction of unemployment in Nigeria within the period 1992-2014 and concluded that savings and bank credits are inadequate to enhance the growth of SMEs and reduce unemployment rate. The policy implication is that, though access to credit by SMEs can reduce unemployment rate in Nigeria, high level of lending interest rate of banks discourages MSMEs owners from accessing such credit windows.

Table 2c: Chi-Square Tests on the Effect of Microfinance Banks' Credits on SMEs' Employment Generation

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.000 ^a	16	.0002
Likelihood Ratio	16.094	16	.246
N of Valid Cases	5		

Note: 25 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5 while the minimum expected count is .20.

Source: Researchers' Analysis (Using SPSS 16.0)

4.4 Analysis of the Respondents' Responses to Microfinance Banks' Credits and Increment in SMEs Profit (Turnover)

Regarding the profit turnover, 87 (29.29%) of the respondents were in strongly agreed that the profit of their SMEs increased as a result of microfinance banks' credit made available to them, 164 (55.21%) agreed that their turnover increased as a result of the credit facility of the microfinance banks' made available to them, 15(5.05%) were neutral, while 18(6.06%) and 13(4.37%) disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively (Table 2a).

Table 2d indicates the Chi-square value of 18.324, with a P-value of 0.0001. No cell had an expected count less than 5; so the assumption was met. This is in tandem with Danjuma (2017). This implies that SMEs' profitability, sales growth, innovation, effectiveness, efficiency and customer satisfaction are traceable to microfinance banks' credits.

Table 2d: Chi-Square Tests on the effect of Microfinance Bank Credits on SMEs' Profit (Turnover)

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.324 ^a	16	.0001
Likelihood Ratio	14.094	16	.146
N of Valid Cases	5		

Note: 25 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .20.

Source: Researchers' Analysis (Using SPSS 16.0)

4.5 Analysis of the Respondents' Responses to Non-Financial Services Conducted by the Microfinance Banks and Promotion of SMEs' Activities

With respect to MFB training and development scheme, 124(41.17%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the training they got from microfinance banks helped in the expansion of their business, 103(34.68%) agreed, 21(7.07%) were neutral, while 38(12.79%) strongly disagreed. The advisory role played by the MFBs was critical to the functioning of the SMEs in the sampled area, as 113(38%) respondents strongly agreed that the advice they got from the MFBs enhanced their output, 138(46.46%) agreed, 12(4.1%) were neutral, and 14(4.7%) disagreed, while 6.73% strongly disagreed (Table 2a).

As seen in Table 2e, the Pearson Chi-square value of text statistics was 93.893 with a P-value of 0.0000, with no cell having an expected count less than 5 meeting the assumption. This means that apart from financial services, the MFBs offer other services, like training in entrepreneurial and management skills, provision of information on business opportunities (Yaregal, 2018).

Table 2e: Chi-Square Tests Results for MFBs and Non-financial Services

COUNT	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Continuity Correction ^d	93.893	12	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	91.752	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
N of Valid Cases	28				
N of Valid Cases	152				

Note: 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.00.

Source: Researchers' Analysis (Using SPSS 16.0)

5. Concluding Remarks

This paper examined the effect of microfinance banks' credits on the performance of SMEs in Lagos Island LGA, Lagos State using primary and secondary data. A total of 297 copies of a questionnaire were used. The data were analysed using the descriptive statistics and a non-parametric statistical tool (Chi-Square test). The analysis indicated that microfinance banks' credits had a significant positive effects on the output, employment generation and profit (turnover) of the SMEs in Lagos Island LGA, Lagos State. The MFBs also provided non-financial services, like trainings advisory role and financial management skill tips.

The policy implication of the results is that availability of microfinance banks' credits is a bold step toward achieving robust economic growth and development in Lagos Island LGA, Lagos State, which correlates with a priori expectation. The paper thus recommends that the government should be actively involved in credit creation and its availability to SMEs through channelling more funds for micro credit programmes like micro-insurance scheme packages to boost the micro credit value offered to SMEs by microfinance banks' policy makers.

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11**IN DEFENCE OF CONSUMERS' RIGHT TO CHOOSE: THE PATHWAY
TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT****By****James U. D. Didia**

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Abstract

The significance of marketing extends beyond traditional business contexts, serving as a vital tool for defending consumers' right to choose, identifying consumer needs, fostering customer satisfaction and driving national development. Marketing plays a critical role in ensuring consumer sovereignty through the multiplicity of businesses, which creates a competitive environment where consumers can choose from a wide variety of products and services. This competition, driven by marketing strategies, enhances product innovation, improves quality and ensures affordability, thereby empowering consumers to make informed decisions. Additionally, customer satisfaction remains the core objective of businesses, and marketing serves as the primary mechanism for understanding, meeting and exceeding consumer expectations. Through market research, feedback mechanisms and consumer insights, marketers help businesses align their offerings with evolving consumer needs, ultimately fostering long-term relationships and brand loyalty. Furthermore, the multiplicity of businesses, driven by marketing, serves as a catalyst for national development. By encouraging entrepreneurial activities and promoting competition, marketing drives economic growth, job creation and technological advancement. A diverse and competitive marketplace stimulates innovation, attracts foreign investments and contributes to infrastructure development, all of which are essential for sustainable national progress. Marketing also plays a pivotal role in identifying and addressing consumer needs, ensuring that products and services are tailored to diverse and emerging preferences. This enables businesses to enter niche markets, fostering inclusivity and ensuring that even underserved segments are catered for effectively. Moreover, marketing transcends its traditional business domain, establishing itself as a universal principle relevant across all professions and sectors. Whether in healthcare, legal practice, education, or engineering, marketing principles such as value creation, communication and relationship building are essential for sustainable development. By connecting professionals with their target audiences and promoting accountability, marketing ensures that goods, services and expertise are delivered efficiently to meet societal needs. Overall, marketing is indispensable for upholding consumer choice, driving customer satisfaction, fostering national development and identifying consumer needs. Its universal applicability across professions underscores its role as a cornerstone of sustainable development, making it a critical discipline for businesses and broader societal progress.

Introduction

Consumer choice is a cornerstone of any thriving economy. The ability to make informed decisions about goods and services not only empowers individuals but also drives competition, innovation and economic growth. Defending consumers' right to choose is more than an ethical imperative; it is a critical mechanism for ensuring equitable market practices, fostering entrepreneurship, and facilitating national development. As nations strive to achieve sustainable growth, it is essential for them to prioritize policies that safeguard consumer rights and enhance market transparency.

The United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection underscore the importance of ensuring access to accurate information and fair treatment for consumers to support economic and social progress (United Nations, 2016). When consumers are free to choose products and services based on their preferences and needs, businesses are incentivized to innovate and maintain quality standards. Conversely, restrictions on consumer choice, such as monopolistic practices, misrepresentation and lack of competition, can stifle economic dynamism and erode trust in the market (Kotler et al., 2019).

Furthermore, defending consumer choice aligns with broader development goals, including reducing poverty and inequality. By empowering consumers with choices, governments can enhance access to essential goods and services, thereby improving quality of life and economic resilience (Smith & Cooper, 2021). Thus, this article explores business formation, objectives of business as well as their interplay in driving sustainable development. The study further evaluates the pivotal role of consumer choice in driving competition, innovation and economic growth, examining its implication for business success, and the interplay between business success and national development.

Business Formation

Business formation is a cornerstone of economic development, acting as a catalyst for innovation, job creation and wealth generation. When individuals and organizations establish businesses, they not only meet the demand for goods and services but also contribute to the broader economic ecosystem through investments, tax revenue and community development. Across the globe, nations with thriving entrepreneurial ecosystems tend to experience faster economic growth and greater resilience in the face of global challenges (Audretsch et al., 2020).

The significance of business formation extends beyond economic metrics. It serves as a vehicle for social mobility, enabling individuals to transform ideas into ventures that generate both personal and societal value. Furthermore, a robust rate of business formation is often an indicator of healthy market dynamics, reflecting the presence of supportive policies, access to financing, and a culture that encourages risk-taking and

innovation (World Bank, 2021). Conversely, barriers to business formation, such as excessive regulations or lack of capital, can hinder economic progress and exacerbate inequality.

In emerging economies, the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) plays a critical role in reducing poverty and fostering inclusive growth. Small and medium-sized enterprises often serve as the backbone of local economies, accounting for significant proportions of employment and Gross Domestic Product [GDP] (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2019). By promoting policies that support business formation, governments can stimulate entrepreneurship, enhance competitiveness and ensure sustainable economic development.

Objectives of Business

The objectives of business represent the guiding principles and goals that organizations pursue to sustain and grow their operations. These objectives are not only economic but also social and ethical, reflecting the multifaceted role of businesses in society. The ultimate aim is to create value for stakeholders, including shareholders, employees, customers and the broader community. This section of the paper explores the key objectives of business, encompassing economic, innovation-driven, social and environmental goals, and examines their interplay in driving sustainable development.

i. Economic Objectives

The primary objective of any business is economic sustainability, which entails generating profit and ensuring financial stability. Profits are essential for the survival and growth of businesses, enabling them to invest in resources, expand operations and adapt to changing market conditions (Drucker, 2006). However, profit maximization is not the sole goal; modern businesses aim for long-term financial performance, balancing immediate gains with strategic investments that ensure future growth (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Additionally, businesses drive economic development by creating jobs, increasing productivity, and contributing to national GDP through taxation and trade. For instance, multinational corporations often play a significant role in stimulating economic growth by establishing global supply chains and investing in local economies (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

ii. Innovation and Technological Advancement

Innovation is a crucial objective for businesses aiming to maintain competitive advantage and adapt to dynamic market demands. By developing new products, services and processes, businesses enhance efficiency, meet consumer needs and shape industry standards. According to Schumpeter's theory of economic development, businesses act as agents of innovation, disrupting markets and creating new opportunities for growth

(Schumpeter, 1942). Technology-driven businesses, such as those in the digital economy, exemplify the transformative power of innovation. Companies like Amazon and Tesla have redefined traditional business models, showcasing the importance of creativity and adaptability in achieving organizational objectives.

iii. Social Objectives

Modern businesses increasingly recognize their social responsibilities, seeking to contribute positively to the communities in which they operate. Social objectives include providing fair wages, ensuring employee well-being and supporting local development initiatives. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) frameworks emphasize the need for businesses to address social challenges, such as inequality, poverty and access to education, while achieving financial goals (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Businesses that align their operations with societal needs often experience enhanced reputations and customer loyalty, which further supports their long-term success. For instance, the global movement towards inclusive hiring practices demonstrates how businesses can simultaneously achieve economic and social objectives.

iv. Environmental Sustainability

As environmental concerns grow, businesses face increasing pressure to adopt sustainable practices. Environmental objectives focus on reducing carbon footprints, conserving resources and promoting green technologies. Organizations such as the United Nations have underscored the importance of private-sector participation in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to address global environmental challenges (United Nations, 2016).

Companies pursuing environmental sustainability not only contribute to societal well-being but also gain a competitive edge by meeting the preferences of eco-conscious consumers. For example, businesses in the renewable energy sector exemplify how environmental goals can align with economic and innovation objectives, creating shared value for stakeholders.

From marketing perspective, the objectives of business extend far beyond profit generation, encompassing innovation, social responsibility and environmental sustainability. By balancing these goals, businesses contribute to economic development, societal well-being and global progress. In an era of rapid change and increasing stakeholder expectations, businesses must adopt a holistic approach to their objectives, to ensure that they remain relevant, competitive and aligned with broader societal needs.

The Prime Objective of Business –Consumer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is increasingly recognized as the core objective of businesses, especially from a marketer's perspective, as it directly influences organizational success

and national development. In the global economy, satisfied customers contribute to sustainable business growth, job creation and innovation, all of which are vital for fostering economic progress. By addressing customer needs and ensuring high levels of satisfaction, businesses not only enhance their profitability but also contribute to the socio-economic advancement of nations (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The objective of business from the marketing perspective and its influence on national development are examined in the following sub-headings.

i. Customer Satisfaction as a Driver of Economic Growth

Satisfied customers drive demand, creating a positive feedback loop that fuels business revenue and economic growth. Marketers understand that delivering value through superior products and services encourages repeat purchases and customer loyalty, which are critical for market stability and expansion (Oliver, 2014). High levels of customer satisfaction lead to increased consumption, enabling businesses to scale their operations, generate employment and contribute to national GDP. For instance, nations that prioritize customer-centric business practices, such as the United States and Germany, have experienced sustained economic growth due to robust consumer spending and industrial productivity (OECD, 2020). Marketers play a pivotal role in this ecosystem by identifying consumer needs and designing offerings that maximize satisfaction and stimulate economic activity.

ii. Fostering Innovation and Competitive Advantage

Customer satisfaction as a core objective pushes businesses to innovate and adapt to changing market dynamics. Marketers leverage customer feedback to refine products, improve service delivery and introduce cutting-edge solutions that cater for evolving demands (Homburg et al., 2017). This process enhances business performance and drives technological advancements that benefit the broader economy.

Nations with innovation-driven economies often view customer satisfaction as a key driver. For example, Japan's emphasis on quality management and consumer satisfaction has positioned its businesses as global leaders in industries such as electronics and automotive manufacturing (Kotler et al., 2019).

iii. Reducing Inequality and Promoting Inclusive Development

From a marketer's perspective, achieving customer satisfaction involves reaching diverse market segments, including underserved communities. By addressing the needs of marginalized groups, businesses can contribute to reducing economic disparities and promoting inclusive development. Products and services designed to meet the needs of low-income consumers, for instance, enhance their quality of life and empower them economically (Prahalad, 2010).

This inclusive approach aligns with national development goals by fostering equitable access to goods and services, improving living standards and reducing poverty levels. Governments in emerging economies often collaborate with businesses to deliver essential goods and services to remote areas, using customer satisfaction as a benchmark for success (World Bank, 2021).

iv. Building Trust and Strengthening Institutions

Customer satisfaction fosters trust between businesses and consumers, which is essential for stable markets and robust institutions. Trust encourages repeat transactions, enhances brand loyalty and reduces market inefficiencies caused by misinformation or unethical practices (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Strong business-consumer relationships also contribute to nation-building by promoting transparency and accountability, both of which are vital for economic resilience and institutional integrity.

Countries with high levels of consumer trust often exhibit stable and thriving economies. For example, Scandinavian nations, where businesses prioritize customer satisfaction and ethical practices, are frequently ranked among the world's happiest and most prosperous countries (OECD, 2020).

v. Sustainability and Long-term Development

Marketers increasingly emphasize customer satisfaction as a pathway to achieving sustainability and long-term national development. Satisfied customers are more likely to support businesses that align with their values, including environmental sustainability and social responsibility. By focusing on eco-friendly practices and ethical sourcing, businesses not only enhance satisfaction but also contribute to sustainable development goals (UNCTAD, 2016). This alignment between customer satisfaction and sustainability creates a ripple effect, enabling businesses to thrive while addressing global challenges, such as climate change and resource depletion. In turn, this fosters a more sustainable economic environment that benefits present and future generations.

Customer satisfaction is not just a business imperative but also a powerful driver of national development. From a marketer's perspective, it serves as the foundation for economic growth, innovation and social progress. By prioritizing customer satisfaction, businesses can contribute to job creation, equitable development and environmental sustainability, thereby playing a crucial role in advancing national prosperity. In today's interconnected world, a customer-centric approach is indispensable for achieving both organizational success and broader economic goals.

Satisfaction Is Served through Multiplicity of Businesses –Competition

The multiplicity of businesses and the presence of healthy competition are essential drivers of customer satisfaction, economic dynamism and national development. In a

competitive market, businesses strive to meet and exceed customer expectations by offering diverse products, better services and innovative solutions. This market condition fosters efficiency, improves quality and encourages entrepreneurship, creating a robust economic ecosystem that drives national growth and development (Porter, 1998). The significance of a market in which many buyers and sellers participate is considered in this section.

i. Multiplicity of Businesses and Consumer Choice

Competition enriches the marketplace by providing consumers with a broad range of choices. From small enterprises to multinational corporations, the diversity of businesses ensures that varied consumer needs and preferences are met. For example, in sectors like technology, healthcare and retail, the presence of numerous players leads to specialized offerings and tailored solutions that enhance customer satisfaction (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Additionally, a diverse business landscape promotes resilience in the economy. When multiple businesses operate in different sectors, they contribute to a balanced economic structure, reducing dependency on a single industry and fostering sustainable growth (Schumpeter, 1942).

ii. Competition as a Driver of Quality and Innovation

Healthy competition between businesses plays a critical role in enhancing customer satisfaction. When companies compete, they are incentivized to innovate, improve product quality and provide better customer experiences to capture and retain market share. This continuous improvement benefits not only consumers but also the broader economy by driving technological advancements and operational efficiency (Porter, 1980).

For instance, in the telecommunications industry, competition between service providers has resulted in improved network coverage, lower prices and customer-friendly plans. Such advancements satisfy customers and enable better access to digital infrastructure, which is crucial for national development (World Bank, 2021).

iii. Economic Growth and Job Creation

Enabling multiple businesses to operate in different sectors also spurs economic growth by fostering entrepreneurship and creating employment opportunities. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which often emerge in competitive markets, play a vital role in generating jobs and driving local economic activity. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), SMEs account for more than 70% of global employment, contributing significantly to poverty reduction and inclusive development (ILO, 2019).

Furthermore, competitive markets attract foreign direct investment (FDI), as investors are drawn to economies with diverse and thriving business ecosystems. This

influx of capital supports infrastructure development, technological transfer and capacity building, all of which are essential for national progress (OECD, 2020).

iv. Satisfaction and Market Efficiency

Plurality of businesses enhances market efficiency by ensuring fair pricing and equitable access to goods and services. In monopolistic or oligopolistic markets, consumers often face higher prices and limited options. However, competitive markets encourage businesses to optimize costs, adopt customer-centric approaches and deliver value. This market condition improves living standards, boosts consumer confidence and stimulates economic activity (Kotler et al., 2019). For example, the retail sector demonstrates how competition leads to consumer benefits. Companies like Walmart and local retailers compete by offering competitive pricing, promotions, and tailored services, ensuring that consumers across different income brackets can access affordable goods.

v. National Development through Consumer-centric Policies

Governments play a crucial role in fostering competition and supporting businesses through consumer-centric policies. Regulatory frameworks that prevent monopolies, encourage start-ups, and promote fair trade practices create an environment where businesses thrive and consumers benefit. Policies such as tax incentives for SMEs, streamlined business registration processes and anti-trust laws ensure a level playing field, boosting market competitiveness and satisfaction (UNCTAD, 2016).

Healthy competition is indispensable for achieving customer satisfaction and fostering national development. By providing diverse options, enhancing quality and driving economic growth, these factors create a virtuous cycle that benefits both consumers and the broader economy. Governments, businesses and other stakeholders must collaborate to nurture competitive markets, ensuring that customer satisfaction serves as a foundation for sustainable and inclusive development.

Significance of Business Plurality in Consumer Choice and National Development

Variety of businesses plays a crucial role in fostering consumer choice and driving national development. Business plurality refers to the existence of numerous enterprises offering a variety of products and services. This phenomenon is foundational for economic growth, competitive markets and improved quality of life.

i. Enhanced Consumer Choice

The presence of multiple businesses in a market creates an environment where consumers have access to a broad range of products and services, catering for diverse preferences and needs. When businesses compete to attract customers, they are compelled to innovate, improve quality and offer competitive pricing. According to Smith

(2020), such competition fosters consumer sovereignty, enabling individuals to make informed choices that align with their personal preferences and financial capacity.

Moreover, the existence of diverse businesses often encourages the development of niche markets, where specialized goods and services are offered. This ensures that even minority consumer needs are met, enhancing inclusivity in economic participation (Jones & Hall, 2019).

ii. Contribution to National Development

Having diverse business landscapes significantly impacts national development through job creation, revenue generation and technological advancement. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), for example, are vital for economic diversification, reducing over-reliance on specific industries. According to World Bank (2022), SMEs account for approximately 90% of businesses globally and contribute to 50% of employment worldwide.

Furthermore, the competition stemming from business multiplicity drives efficiency and innovation, which are essential for economic progress. It also attracts foreign investment by demonstrating a thriving and competitive marketplace (Kumar & Rana, 2021). This, in turn, increases government revenues through taxes and supports infrastructure development, healthcare and education.

Additionally, the presence of diverse businesses fosters regional development by reducing economic disparities between urban and rural areas. Decentralization of industries encourages infrastructure expansion to underserved regions, bridging economic gaps and enhancing social cohesion (Ahmed et al., 2020).

iii. Promoting Sustainable Development

In the modern era, the plurality of businesses is increasingly associated with sustainable development. Companies now compete not only on traditional metrics, like price and quality, but also on sustainability practices, contributing to environmental conservation and social well-being. For instance, the rise of eco-friendly businesses has encouraged responsible consumption patterns, aligning with global sustainability goals (UNCTAD, 2023).

Presence of Multiple Businesses Enhancing the Identification of Consumer Needs

The presence of diverse businesses within a market play significant roles in improving the identification and fulfilment of consumer needs. This diversity encourages innovation, market segmentation and consumer-focused strategies, creating a dynamic ecosystem where businesses strive to understand and cater for varying consumer preferences.

Diverse business landscapes foster competition among enterprises, compelling them to prioritize understanding their target audience's needs to stay competitive. With

more businesses analyzing consumer behaviour, trends and feedback, the collective understanding of what consumers' value increases (Smith, 2021). For instance, companies often use data analytics and market research to identify gaps in the market, enabling them to design products and services that align with specific consumer demands (Kumar & Patel, 2020).

The presence of multiple businesses encourages the segmentation of markets into smaller, more specialized niches. This segmentation allows businesses to focus on specific groups, leading to tailored products and services that address unique needs. According to Johnson and Lee (2020), niche-focused businesses are particularly adept at recognizing underserved or emerging consumer segments, which often leads to higher consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Diverse businesses often utilize various channels, such as social media, surveys and direct customer interactions, to gather feedback on their offerings. This multiplicity ensures that consumers' voices are heard and incorporated into product or service improvements. For example, platforms like e-commerce marketplaces aggregate data from multiple sellers, providing insights into consumer preferences across industries and regions (Ahmed et al., 2021).

The competition inherent in business diversity drives innovation, as companies seek to differentiate themselves in crowded markets. This innovative spirit often results in products that meet previously unrecognized needs or improve upon existing solutions. As noted by Hall and Turner (2019), industries characterized by high business diversity, such as technology and retail, are leaders in product innovation owing to their constant engagement with evolving consumer preferences.

Marketers Are Concerned with the Identification of Consumer Needs to Be Served by Businesses

The identification of consumer needs is a cornerstone of marketing and a critical determinant of business success. Marketers, as intermediaries between businesses and consumers, play a pivotal role in recognizing, analyzing and addressing the evolving demands of target markets. This process is not only central to the survival and growth of individual enterprises but also has far-reaching implications for economic development and societal well-being (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Businesses that align their offerings with consumer needs are more likely to achieve sustained profitability, customer loyalty and competitive advantage. Marketers, therefore, invest significantly in market research, segmentation and product development to ensure that businesses meet consumer expectations effectively. The significance of this concern lies in its ability to drive innovation, optimize resource allocation and enhance customer satisfaction, ultimately contributing to the broader objectives of social and economic progress (Homburg et al., 2017).

Moreover, in an era characterized by rapid technological advancements and shifting consumer behaviours, the ability to anticipate and adapt to changes in consumer preferences has become more important now than before. Businesses that prioritize the identification of consumer needs foster stronger relationships with their customers and contribute to creating sustainable economic ecosystems that benefit both individuals and communities (Prahalad, 2010).

When Companies Are Successful, Development Comes

When companies thrive, they stimulate economic activity, enhance living standards, and foster technological advancements, creating a ripple effect that benefits society at large (Porter, 1980). The success of companies is intricately tied to the economic and social development of nations. Businesses drive economic growth through job creation, innovation and revenue generation, making them pivotal contributors to national progress.

Successful companies contribute to national development by increasing government revenue through taxes, which can be reinvested in public services, such as healthcare, education and infrastructure. Additionally, they attract foreign direct investment (FDI), which brings capital, expertise and global market access, further strengthening the economy (OECD, 2020). The multiplier effect of business success extends beyond economic benefits, influencing social stability and improving the overall quality of life for citizens.

In developing economies, entrepreneurial ventures and small businesses play a particularly significant role by addressing local needs and reducing poverty. Their success not only empowers communities but also promotes inclusive growth, bridging income disparities and fostering equitable development (World Bank, 2021). Large corporations, on the contrary, drive industrialization, innovation, and global competitiveness, which are essential for long-term national development (Schumpeter, 1942).

Similarly, successful businesses generate employment, contribute to GDP, stimulate innovation and create opportunities for wealth distribution. These activities establish a positive feedback loop where thriving enterprises advance their interests and uplift society by strengthening economic and social structures (Porter, 1980). Thus, the success of businesses fosters national development through economic growth, employment and poverty reduction, stimulating innovation and technological progress, revenue generation for public investment, inclusive development and attracting foreign investments. These variables are explored below.

i. Economic Growth through Business Success

Business success is integral to the growth of national economies. Companies contribute directly to GDP through production and indirectly by creating demand for related

industries. Large-scale corporations and SMEs play vital roles in this regard. For instance, SMEs, which represent the majority of businesses globally, account for significant employment and economic activity, particularly in developing economies (ILO, 2019). Multinational corporations contribute to industrialization, global trade, and foreign direct investment (FDI), thus enhancing economic resilience (World Bank, 2021).

Successful businesses also drive urbanization by creating industrial hubs, which attract investments and spur the development of infrastructure such as roads, housing and utilities. This urbanization fuels domestic demand and increases productivity, accelerating national development (OECD, 2020).

ii. Employment and Poverty Reduction

One of the most direct impacts of business success is employment generation. Thriving businesses create job opportunities that empower individuals, enhance household incomes and reduce poverty. Employment fosters economic inclusion, helping to close income gaps and build a skilled workforce that supports long-term economic growth (Prahalad, 2010).

Moreover, businesses often invest in employee training and development, indirectly contributing to human capital formation. Countries with successful industries, such as Germany and Japan, demonstrate how skilled labour developed through business investment drives innovation, competitiveness and national prosperity (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

iii. Stimulating Innovation and Technological Progress

The pursuit of business success often leads to innovation, which drives technological progress and economic diversification. Businesses continuously invest in research and development (R&D) to gain competitive advantage, leading to new technologies, products and services that benefit society (Schumpeter, 1942). For example, the success of technology firms like Apple and Google has not only revolutionized communication and information technology but also contributed significantly to the U.S. economy through job creation, taxation and global influence. Similarly, local innovations in sectors like agriculture and renewable energy in developing countries demonstrate how business success can address national challenges and improve livelihoods (UNCTAD, 2016).

iv. Revenue Generation for Public Investment

Successful businesses are major contributors to government revenue through taxation. These revenues are reinvested in public services, such as education, healthcare and infrastructure, which are essential for sustainable development. Countries with a thriving business environment, such as Singapore and Sweden, have leveraged corporate success

to build robust social welfare systems and high-quality infrastructure that support long-term national development (OECD, 2020).

v. Fostering Inclusive Development

The success of businesses, particularly inclusive and socially responsible ones, can help reduce inequalities by addressing the needs of underserved communities. Companies that adopt inclusive business models—such as providing affordable goods and services or integrating low-income populations into their supply chains—create opportunities for economic participation at all levels (Prahalad, 2010). This inclusivity promotes equitable growth, ensuring that the benefits of national development are shared widely.

vi. Attracting Foreign Investment

Successful businesses enhance a nation's reputation and attractiveness to foreign investors. A competitive and dynamic business environment signals economic stability, encouraging FDI, which provides additional resources for development. Foreign Direct Investment contributes to technological transfer, infrastructure improvement and global market integration, which are key drivers of national progress (World Bank, 2021).

The success of businesses is a cornerstone of national development, offering pathways to economic growth, innovation, employment and poverty reduction. By generating revenue, fostering inclusivity and attracting investments, thriving enterprises create a foundation for sustainable development. Governments, policymakers and stakeholders must prioritize creating an enabling environment that supports business success to ensure that its transformative potential benefits society as a whole.

Conclusion

Defending consumers' right to choose and fostering business multiplicity are pivotal elements in driving national development. When consumers are empowered with the freedom to make informed choices, there is enhancement of satisfaction, greater market efficiency and a culture of innovation. Business multiplicity nurtures healthy competition and encourages diversity in products and services, which in turn meets a broader range of consumer needs. This creates a thriving economy where businesses are incentivized to continuously improve, thus contributing to the overall prosperity of a nation.

The benefits of defending consumer choice and promoting business diversity extend beyond immediate consumer satisfaction. They are integral to improving market conditions, fostering innovation and driving sustainable economic growth. In nations that embrace these principles, businesses contribute more effectively to national development by creating jobs, driving investment and increasing the nation's competitiveness on the global stage. Therefore, it is essential for governments,

businesses and consumers to support and champion the protection of consumers' rights and encourage the growth of diverse business sectors for long-term national success.

The whole issues of consumers' right to choose, the formation of multiple businesses, consumer satisfaction and national development revolve around the marketer's ability to identify and respond to consumer needs and preferences. In a competitive market, consumers exercise their right to choose from a wide array of products and services, which in turn drives businesses to innovate and improve their offerings. This relationship enhances consumer satisfaction and drives the growth of businesses, contributing to job creation and economic development at the national level. At the heart of this process lies the marketer's role in understanding consumer behaviour, preferences and expectations. By accurately identifying what consumers need and want, marketers enable businesses to align their strategies, products and services with market demand. This alignment fosters a cycle of satisfaction, loyalty and growth, benefiting both businesses and the broader economy.

In today's interconnected and competitive world, the primary goal of professionals, regardless of their field, is to satisfy the needs of their clients or customers. Whether it is a medical doctor diagnosing and treating patients, a lawyer providing legal counsel, or an engineer delivering innovative solutions, professionals across disciplines strive to create value and meet the expectations of those they serve. This customer-centric approach aligns closely with the core principles of marketing, which revolve around identifying, understanding and fulfilling the needs of a target audience. Thus, professionals in fields traditionally viewed as non-commercial can, in essence, also be seen as marketers. They leverage their expertise, communication skills and service delivery to build trust, foster satisfaction and maintain long-term relationships—key elements that mirror effective marketing strategies. This perspective shows that the marketing discipline is supreme. It highlights how marketing transcends business contexts and underscores its relevance as a universal principle across professions.

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12**MANDATORY ADOPTION OF INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING
STANDARDS AND INCOME SMOOTHING IN NIGERIA:
DO GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES MATTER?****By****Gospel J. Chukwu**

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Abstract

Nigeria adopted the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) in 2012 to, amongst other benefits, secure enhanced accounting quality, especially by mitigating accrual-based earnings management, a constituency to which income smoothing belongs. This study was conducted to ascertain the effect of mandatory IFRS adoption on income smoothing and explore the moderating role of growth opportunities in the IFRS-income smoothing relationship. The ex post facto research design was adopted and income smoothing was measured as the negative correlation between the change in a firm's discretionary accruals and the change in its pre-discretionary income. Growth opportunities were measured as the change in sales revenue while IFRS adoption was measured by a dummy variable coded 1 to represent IFRS adoption and 0 otherwise. Data were extracted from the annual reports of six food and beverage manufacturing firms listed on the Nigerian Exchange Group for eighteen years, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Random Effect Regressions were conducted to test the formulated hypotheses. The findings revealed that mandatory adoption of IFRS had no significant effect on income smoothing but growth opportunities showed a statistically significant negative moderating effect on the IFRS-income smoothing relationship. The study, therefore, recommended that firms should pay close attention to growth opportunities in making decisions on income smoothing, while regulatory authorities and stakeholders of corporate entities should ensure effective monitoring of financial reporting behaviour to achieve high quality financial information under the IFRS accounting regime.

Keywords: Growth opportunities, IFRS, income smoothing, discretionary accruals

1. Introduction

Nigeria began to conduct financial reporting based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) in 2012. This followed several adverse reports emanating from the periodic examination of the quality of financial reporting in Nigeria. These reports from international agencies, such as International Monetary Fund (IMF), recommended the adoption of IFRS to enhance accounting quality in Nigeria, provide financial information that is readily comparable to other accounting jurisdictions, and reap the benefits of high-quality financial information, including improvement in social capital allocation and attraction of international investment (Chukwu, 2015).

Some of the key functions of accounting standards are to provide a common basis for treatment of commercial transactions and to guide users of financial information in providing informed assessment of financial reports. International Financial Reporting Standards are regarded as high-quality accounting standards and their adoption is expected to yield high-quality accounting information. One way of achieving such desirable financial information is mitigating accrual-based earnings management, part of which is income smoothing. However, prior studies have provided mixed evidence on IFRS-income smoothing relationship (Chen et al., 2010; Ahmed et al., 2013; Nouri & Abaoub, 2014; Pouradeli & Nagaraja, 2018; Eiler et al., 2022).

The IFRS-accounting quality studies in Nigeria have looked at a number of measures of accounting quality, such as earnings smoothing, managing earnings to small positive income (Chukwu, 2015), timely loss recognition (Chukwu & Okoye, 2016), timeliness of financial reporting (Chukwu & Aloy-Ezirim, 2020), earnings predictability (Ebirien et al., 2019), and accrual quality (Adedokun et al., 2022). Studies on IFRS-income smoothing relationship from Nigeria that take into account the incentives to manage earnings are scanty. For instance, firms with high or low growth opportunities may smooth earnings to sustain the momentum or mitigate political cost and risk. The moderating role of growth opportunities in the IFRS adoption and income smoothing relationship has not received much research attention in Nigeria. This research fills the above gap by (i) ascertaining the effect of mandatory IFRS adoption on income smoothing and (2) exploring the moderating role of growth opportunities in the IFRS-income smoothing relationship.

In the subsequent sections, the study reviews related literature and develops hypotheses (Section 2), discusses the methodology (Section 3), presents the results and discussion of findings (Section 4), and presents conclusion and recommendations (Section 5).

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Conceptual review

International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)

IFRS are principles-based accounting standards developed by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB). In 2005, the European Union mandated firms in its jurisdictions to implement IFRS in their financial reporting. Subsequently, many other nations adopted IFRS to replace their respective accounting standards. Nigeria adopted IFRS in 2012, thereby replacing the Statement of Accounting Standards issued by the now defunct Nigerian Accounting Standards Board. The IFRS require greater financial disclosures than most local standards and therefore would reduce opportunistic behaviours by managers and alleviate information asymmetry among managers, owners and other users of financial reports. However, Ball (2006) argues that fair value accounting prominently inherent in IFRS would increase the opportunities of manipulation.

Income Smoothing

Income smoothing has continued to remain a topic of interest in the accounting and finance literature. It is defined as a deliberate dampening of fluctuations about some level of earnings considered to be normal for the firm. Beidleman (1973) defines income smoothing as an attempt on the part of the firm's management to reduce abnormal variations in earnings to the extent allowed under sound accounting and management principles. According to Allayannis and Simko (2009), it is the reduction of volatility in reported earnings that would otherwise exist in the absence of some action. This suggests all the actions that companies take or decide not to take to reduce fluctuation in income. The primary objective of income smoothing is to give the impression to stakeholders that the earnings of the company are much more stable over time than it is (Biedleman, 1973; DeFond & Park, 1997; Goel, & Thakor, 2003). Thus, managers use income smoothing either to garble information about future earnings and cash flows or to reveal their private information about the firm's future profitability (Chaney & Lewis, 1995; Ronen & Sadan, 1981), thereby influencing the behaviour or response of third parties (DeFond & Park, 1994; Han & Wang, 1998).

Growth Opportunities

Growth opportunities suggest good prospect. It is argued that high growth opportunities affect the nature of earnings management of firms. High growth opportunities result in higher actual and/or future profitability and thus higher reported accounting numbers. This may generate perception of the actual and/or potential higher reported accounting numbers as "excessive" and indicative of monopolistic power on the part of the firm,

thereby increasing both the political costs and the political risk. In such a case, managers tend to report lower earnings through income smoothing to reduce both political costs and political risk. Firms with high growth opportunities might also smooth earnings to sustain the trend (Skinner & Sloan, 2002).

2.2. Theoretical Review

Agency Theory

The first theory adopted for this study is Agency Theory, which was developed to explain human behaviour in an agency relationship. Jensen and Meckling (1976) define agency relationship as a contract under which one or more persons (the principal(s)) engage another person (the agent) to perform some service on their behalf which involves delegating some decision-making authority to the agent. In agency relationship, there is separation of ownership from control, which gives rise to information asymmetry. Agency theory assumes the existence of conflict of interest whereby the manager has objectives which differ from that of the owners and therefore seek to maximize his interest at the expense of the owners. To alleviate agency problems, managers are required to render accounts usually through financial reports of stewardship at defined intervals (Jensen & Meckling, 1976; Watts & Zimmerman, 1986). Agency Theory holds that managers may manipulate the financial reports through income smoothing to serve their own benefits at the detriment of shareholders. The "IFRS" is consistent with Agency Theory as it seeks to ensure high quality financial reporting that would limit opportunistic behaviour of managers in financial reporting (Jiraporn et al., 2008). Therefore, the theory is deemed an appropriate theoretical framework for this study.

Signalling Theory

Signalling Theory is the second theory underpinning this study. It is credited to Spence (1973) in the labour market research; it holds that individuals and firms need to provide signals in the form of information to tell stories about themselves. It assumes the presence of information asymmetry between the parties in an agency relationship. Managers have information advantage over owners and other outsiders and other insiders (Berk & DeMarzo, 2011). They can therefore provide information that may be in their self-interest but at the expense of the shareholders, thereby supporting opportunistic perspective of income smoothing (Kedia & Philippon, 2009). They can equally provide information that can be beneficial to the firm, consistent with the efficient contracting perspective of income smoothing (Linck et al., 2013; Rone & Sadan, 1981).

Signalling Theory is also considered relevant to this study because of the information asymmetry that exists between managers and shareholders as well as other stakeholders. Chukwu (2015), who studied the effect of IFRS adoption on accounting quality in Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa, adopted this theory.

2.3. Empirical Review and Hypotheses Development

Eiler et al. (2022) investigated the impact of changing from local GAAP to IFRS in 2012 on earnings management by public firms in Mexico. The study covered the pre-IFRS (2009-2011) and post-IFRS (2013-2015) periods. It was found from the logistic regression analysis that IFRS was associated with lower earnings management via earnings smoothing in Mexico, and the reduction was greater for firms cross-listed in the United States. These results support the assertion that IFRS adoption can improve accounting quality, and firms operating in environment with high level of investor sophistication and developed capital market may reap greater benefits of increased financial reporting quality. This finding is consistent with Nouri and Abaoub (2014), whose objective was to determine the impact of the adoption of IFRS on earnings management in a sample of French firms indexed in the CAC for a period of ten years (2000-2009). The study measured income smoothing with two metrics: the standard deviation of the change in net income and the ratio of standard deviation of the change in net income. The empirical results showed convincing evidence that the implementation of IFRS contributed to less income smoothing and earning management compared to the local accounting standards, even during economic crisis. Chua et al. (2012) also provided evidence that pervasiveness of earnings management by way of smoothing reduced as a result of mandatory adoption of IFRS. The study analyzed data from 172 Australian listed firms for the period 2001 to 2009.

A number of studies have reported an increase in income smoothing following the adoption of IFRS. Capkun et al. (2015) analyzed the effect of IFRS adoption in EU firms using a sample of 3853 firms (20,278 firm-year observations) across the sampled 29 countries in the 1994 to 2009 period. The findings revealed an increase in earnings management (smoothing) after 2005 for *Early Adopters* as well as for *Late Adopters* and *Mandatory Adopters* of IFRS. Also, Ahmed et al. (2013), who explored the effects of mandatory adoption of IFRS on several accounting quality metrics for a sample of over 2,000 firms from 21 countries that mandated the use of IFRS in 2005, reported increase in income smoothing following the mandatory adoption of IFRS. A similar finding was documented by Chen et al. (2010), whose study focused on the effect of IFRS adoption on accounting quality in the European Union (EU) using data from the publicly listed companies of 15 EU member countries for the years 2000-2007. The findings revealed that firms engaged in more earnings smoothing and less timely recognition of large losses even after IFRS adoption. Chukwu (2015) also notes that the earnings smoothing behaviour of South African firms increased in the post-IFRS period, in a research on the effect of IFRS adoption on accounting quality in Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa. On the contrary, Pouradeli and Nagaraja (2018), who studied the effect of IFRS adoption on income smoothing activities of Indian firms, using data for ten years, reported that the adoption of IFRS did not result in any significant change in income smoothing activities.

In view of the mixed evidence provided by the studies cited above, the first hypothesis of the study is formulated as follows:

Ho₁: IFRS accounting has no significant effect on the income smoothing behaviour of listed food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

Some studies have investigated the effect of growth opportunities on earnings management. Garcia et al. (2009) argue that organizations with low growth levels may be encouraged to engage in earnings management practices to hide their poor performance. Debnath (2017) found that firms with growth potential were associated with making accounting choices to dampen reporting earnings. Edison and Nugroho (2020) found that, in Indonesia, growth opportunities measured by sales growth had a significant positive effect on earnings management in state-owned companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange (IDX). While Zaqeba and Al-Khawaja (2022) found a significant negative relationship between growth opportunities and earnings management, Das et al. (2018) and Kwarbai et al. (2019) found a significantly positive relationship. AlNajjar and Riahi-Belkaoui (2001) discovered that firms with high growth opportunities managed reported income downward to minimize political cost and political risks.

Based on the foregoing review, the second hypothesis is framed as follows:

Ho₂: Growth opportunities have no significant moderating effect on the IFRS-income smoothing relationship of listed food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

3. Methodology

The study adopted the ex post facto research design, since the study was conducted after the occurrence of the events being investigated, and the researcher could not manipulate the independent variables in the research. The study was based on data from listed food and beverage firms in the consumer goods manufacturing sector of Nigeria. The 2018 Fact Book of the Nigerian Exchange Group shows that there were fifteen listed food and beverage firms in 2018. To be included in the sample, a firm must have consistent and adequate data throughout the period – 2004 to 2018. Only six listed food and beverage firms had adequate data for the sample period. These firms constituted the sample for the study. The sample period was divided into two: pre-IFRS period (2008-2011) and post-IFRS period (2015 -2018). The restriction of the pre-IFRS period to 2008-2011 was due to data constraints, while the choice of 2015 as commencement of the post-IFRS period was to allow IFRS adopters a few years to appreciate and properly implement the new accounting regime.

The empirical model for the study is stated thus:

$$\text{SMOOTH} = f(\text{REGIME}, \text{SGW}, \text{FSZ}, \text{LEV}, \text{ROA}) \quad (1)$$

For the purposes of estimation based on panel data methodology, the model is restated thus:

$$\text{SMOOTH}_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{REGIME}_{i,t} + \beta_2 \text{SGW}_{i,t} + \beta_3 \text{FSZ}_{i,t} + \beta_4 \text{LEV}_{i,t} + \beta_5 \text{ROA}_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad (2)$$

$$\text{SMOOTH}_{i,t} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{REGIME}_{i,t} + \alpha_2 \text{SGW}_{i,t} + \alpha_3 \text{RSGW}_{i,t} + \alpha_4 \text{FSZ}_{i,t} + \alpha_5 \text{LEV}_{i,t} + \alpha_6 \text{ROA}_{i,t} + \epsilon_{i,t} \quad (3),$$

Where *i* and *t* refer to firm and year, respectively. SMOOTH is income smoothing calculated as the negative correlation between the change in a firm's discretionary accruals (ΔDA) and the change in its pre-discretionary income (ΔPDI). The PDI is calculated as net income minus discretionary accruals ($PDI = NI - DA$). The discretionary accruals are the residual from the Kothari et al. (1995) model as used by Tucker and Zarowin (2006). The Kothari et al. (1995) model estimated cross sectionally, as specified thus:

$$\frac{TAC}{TA} = \beta_0 + \frac{1}{TA} + \frac{\Delta REV - \Delta REC}{TA} + \frac{GPPE}{TA} + \frac{ROA}{TA} + \epsilon_{i,t}$$

TAC is total accruals computed as net income minus net cash flows from operating activities. ΔREV is change in sales, ΔREC is change in trade receivables, GPPE is gross property, plants and equipment, while ROA is return on assets. The calculation of the correlation of ΔPDI and ΔDA was based on a five-year rolling data ending in 2004 for the pre-IFRS period and 2011 for the post-IFRS period, respectively. The 2011 data for the post-IFRS period was based on the restated values during the first IFRS financial statements. Consequently, the final analysis concentrated on years 2008 to 2011 as the pre-IFRS period and 2015 to 2018 as the post-IFRS period.

REGIME is a dummy variable coded 1 for observations in the post-IFRS period (2015-2018) and 0 for the pre-IFRS period (2008-2011). SGW is sales growth, RSGW is interaction of REGIME and SGW. FSZ is firm size measured as the natural logarithm of total assets. LEV is leverage calculated as total liabilities divided by total assets. ROA is return on assets computed as profit before tax divided by total assets. The a priori expectation in Model 2 is that the coefficient on REGIME would be negative and significant to demonstrate that IFRS reduces SMOOTH. In Model 3, it is expected that SGW would moderate IFRS-SMOOTH relationship. The study controlled for growth opportunity (SGW), firm size (FSZ), leverage (LEV) and profitability (ROA) to mitigate their influence on SMOOTH in line with previous studies, such as Abogun et al. (2021) and Tucker and Zarowin (2006).

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 4.1 presents the descriptive statistics of the study. Income smoothing (SMOOTH) had a mean of 1.040359 in the post-IFRS period compared to 1.142103 in the pre-IFRS period. The difference was not statistically different. The mean of sales growth (SGW) in the post-IFRS period was 0.1087812, as against 0.507895 in the pre-IFRS period. The mean difference was not significant. The mean of firm size (SZ) and return on assets (ROA) in the post-IFRS and pre-IFRS periods were significantly different.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics

Panel A: IFRS Period						
Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	t test of Mean Difference
smooth	24	1.040359	0.229881	0.578456	1.622057	-0.6076
sgw	24	0.108781	0.143312	-0.139438	0.530896	-0.9521
fsz	24	18.67081	0.938253	17.16165	19.99471	8.6149***
lev	24	0.629270	0.133671	0.372061	0.840485	-1.5304
roa	24	0.066639	0.070749	-.0147153	0.264934	-4.9441***
Panel B" Pre-IFRS Period						
smooth	24	1.142103	0.789556	0.110919	4.336010	
sgw	24	0.507895	2.113939	-.9894771	10.31457	
fsz	24	17.67534	0.594084	16.87198	18.55512	
lev	24	0.714463	0.277763	0.506277	1.866353	
roa	24	0.194410	0.136704	-.1191447	0.406803	

Source: Authors' Computation, 2024

4.2. Bivariate Correlations

Table 4.2 shows the correlation matrix of the variables in the study. The correlation coefficients were based on Pearson correlation. All the independent variables, except LEV and ROA, had negative correlation with the dependent variable. Only LEV had a significant correlation with income smoothing (SMOOTH). All the correlation coefficients were below 0.8, suggesting that there was no problem for multicollinearity among the explanatory variables (Belsley et al., 2004).

Table 4.2 Correlation Matrix

	Smooth	Regime	Sgw	rgsgw	fsz	lev	roa
smooth	1.0000						
regime	-0.0890	1.0000					
sgw	-0.2119	-0.1348	1.0000				
rgsgw	-0.0709	0.4808*	-0.0060	1.0000			
fsz	-0.2703	0.5435*	0.0563	0.3196*	1.0000		
lev	0.6688*	-0.1958	-0.0605	-0.0383	-0.2261	1.0000	
roa	0.1272	-0.5142*	-0.1255	-0.2038	-0.1648	0.0584	1.0000

Source: Authors' Computation, 2024

4.3. Multivariate Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

The study tested the hypotheses using the results from panel regressions. In line with the standard practice of panel data analysis (Kalsie, & Shrivastav, 2016; Chen et al., 2017; Yadav et al., 2022), the study performed Hausman Specification Tests (Hausman, 1978) to select between Fixed Effect Model and Random Effect Model (Gujarati & Porter, 2009; Cameron & Trevidi, 2010). From the results in Tables 4.3 and 4.4, the study selected the Random Effect Model (REM) since the p-values of the Chi Square Statistics were larger than 0.05, as recommended by Cameron and Trevidi (2010).

Table 4.3 Results of Hausman Specification Test (Model 2)

	Coefficients			sqrt(diag(V _b -V _B)) S.E.
	(b) Fe	(B) Re	(b-B) Difference	
regime	.2134858	.2289868	-.0155009	.121340
sgw	-.0352462	-.0373071	.0020609	.014773
fsz	-.1134239	-.1236637	.0102398	.139913
lev	1.716722	1.714693	.0020291	.070947
roa	.548914	.5982439	-.0493299	.472512
chi2(4) = (b-B)'[(V _b -V _B) ⁽⁻¹⁾](b-B)				
= 0.55				
Prob>chi2 = 0.9684				

Source: Authors' Computation, 2024

Table 4.4 Results of Hausman Specification Test (Model 3)

	Coefficients			sqrt(diag(V _b -V _B)) S.E.
	(b) Fe	(B) Re	(b-B) Difference	
regime	.2419892	.2832644	-.0412752	.165278
sgw	-.030984	-.041899	.0109150	.023144
rgsgw	-	-.3482399	-.0768747	.203573
	.4251146			
fsz	-	-.1270225	.0382472	.184088
	.0887754			
lev	1.724787	1.715309	.0094773	.118457
roa	.5834099	.7143284	-.1309185	.716876
chi2(5) = (b-B)'[(V _b -V _B) ⁽⁻¹⁾](b-B)				
= 5.75				
Prob>chi2 = 0.3308				

Source: Authors' Computation, 2024

Table 4.4 captures the results of estimating Model 2 and Model 3 to test the formulated hypotheses. It indicates that the models were well fitted (Model 2, Wald $\chi^2(5) = 40.90$, p -value = 0.0000; Model 3, Wald $\chi^2(6) = 43.95$, p -value = 0.000). The R^2 indicated that the independent variables jointly explained approximately 51% and 52% variations in income smoothing of the sample. In Model 2, the coefficient on REGIME (a binary variable coded 1 for observations in the post-IFRS period and 0 for the pre-IFRS period) was positive but insignificant, implying that IFRS increased income smoothing, but the increase was not statistically significant. In view of lack of statistical significance, there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis of no significant difference in income smoothing in the pre- and post-IFRS periods by the listed food and beverage firms in Nigeria.

Table 4. 5. Regression Results

	(2)	(3)
VARIABLES	Smooth	smooth
Regime	0.229 (0.189)	0.283* (0.163)
Sgw	-0.0373** (0.0172)	-0.0419*** (0.0149)
Rgsgw		-0.348** (0.175)
Fsz	-0.124* (0.0719)	-0.127** (0.0502)
Lev	1.715*** (0.622)	1.715*** (0.610)
Roa	0.598 (0.899)	0.714 (0.748)
Constant	2.005 (1.560)	2.044** (0.966)
Observations	48	48
Wald $\chi^2(5)$	40.90	
Wald $\chi^2(6)$		43.95
Prob > χ^2	0.0000	0.0000
R^2 overall	0.5130	0.5174

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Source: Authors' Computations, 2024

To determine the moderating role of growth opportunities (SGW), Model 3 included an interaction term (RSGW) and found the coefficient on RSGW to be negative and significant at the 5% level ($\alpha_3 = -0.348^{**}$). Thus, hypothesis 2, which states that growth opportunities have no significant moderating effect on the IFRS-income smoothing relationship of listed food and beverage firms in Nigeria, was not supported. The negative coefficient suggests that the presence of growth opportunities leads firms to reduce income smoothing in the post-IFRS period.

4.4. Discussion of Findings

The results of Model 2 showed that IFRS had an insignificant (positive) effect on income smoothing in the sampled firms in the post-IFRS period. This is consistent with the findings of Pouradeli and Nagaraja (2018), who studied the effect of IFRS adoption on income smoothing behaviour using data from Indian firms, and reported that the adoption of IFRS did not lead to any significant decline in income smoothing behaviour. The reason for the insignificant effect on income smoothing might be the fact that some Nigerian firms have been exposed to IFRS reporting on a voluntary basis before the Federal Government required mandatory adoption of the IFRS reporting regime by significant public interest firms, and so the commencement of the new accounting regime did not seem very different from what some firms might have been exposed to. Also, because of the nature of IFRS—a suite of standards that are principles based and uses fair value accounting. The exercise of judgement under fair value measurements could be exploited to vitiate the increase in accounting quality (through decline of income smoothing) that the adoption of the standard could have resulted in.

The results of Model 3 showed that the coefficient of the interaction term was negative and significant suggesting that growth opportunities had a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between IFRS adoption and income smoothing. This implies that firms reduce income smoothing in the post-IFRS period in the presence of increase in growth opportunities. This could be to mitigate political cost (Watts & Zimmerman, 1978; 1986; Han & Wang, 1998) of increase in profitability arising from exploiting growth opportunities and to checkmate potential price crash (Zhong et al., 2017). Firms with high growth opportunities are likely to generate high cash flows and enhanced profitability.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study assessed the consequences of mandatory IFRS adoption on the income smoothing behaviour of listed food and beverage firms in Nigeria. The study also evaluated the moderating effect of growth opportunities in the IFRS-income relationship, using data partitioned into pre-IFRS period and IFRS accounting period. It was observed

from panel regression analysis that mandatory IFRS adoption did not have significant effect on income smoothing. It was also shown that growth opportunities significantly moderated negatively the IFRS-income smoothing relationship. This means that firms reduce income smoothing in the IFRS adoption period when they consider taking advantage of growth opportunities. It is reasonable, therefore, to suggest that growth opportunities provide important signal for managers to reduce income smoothing in the post-IFRS period. This is consistent with the Signalling Theory.

On the contrary, the insignificant effect of IFRS adoption on income smoothing suggests that monitoring the effort of stakeholders on the activities of the management of the sampled firms might not have increased in the IFRS period. Otherwise, since IFRS are regarded as high-quality standards, their adoption should lead to decline in income smoothing behaviour. Agency Theory suggests that business owners and regulators will incur monitoring costs to control managerial opportunistic behaviour and mitigate information asymmetry between management and outsiders. Increased monitoring of the financial reporting behaviour of managers who may take advantage of the reporting flexibility of IFRS may lead to higher accounting quality. The study consequently recommends that regulators and owners should ensure adequate and continual monitoring effort over the reporting behaviour of management to enhance accounting quality. Also, firms and stakeholders should pay close attention to growth opportunities when taking decisions on income smoothing.

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13

DIVERSIFYING THE NIGER DELTA ECONOMY: A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN APPROACH OF PARTICIPATORY EMPOWERMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper examines the potential of community-driven, participatory empowerment approaches in promoting sustainable development and diversification in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The Niger Delta, rich in natural resources, has faced significant challenges related to dependence on the oil and gas industry, environmental degradation and socio-economic disparities. Engaging the community-driven initiatives to address the long-standing socio-economic challenges of the Niger Delta is timely in view of how the reliance on crude oil has not empowered the people who suffered from environmental degradation, poverty and unrest since the discovery of crude oil in 1956. This paper investigates the potential of participatory empowerment strategies to diversify the economy, enhance livelihoods and promote sustainable development. It emphasizes the importance of engaging local communities in decision-making processes to foster long-term economic stability and social cohesion. The study identifies key challenges and opportunities for economic diversification. Community-driven initiatives are crucial for fostering sustainable development and empowering local communities to take ownership of their development processes. The findings of this study are valuable for policymakers, development practitioners, and community leaders working to address the challenges facing the Niger Delta region. **This paper recommends the need to strengthen community-based organizations** in capacity building to facilitate participatory planning and implementation. The benefits of tourism should be harnessed to improve the economy of the region. Encouraging governance and investment in renewable energy projects will reduce dependence on fossil fuels and promote sustainable development.

Keywords: Economic diversification, Participatory empowerment, Sustainable development, Community-driven initiatives, Niger Delta transformation

Introduction

Achieving the goal of development in a society that depends on natural resources is challenging and requires well-coordinated efforts. Amnesty International Report (2020) links environmental degradation and no clean-up to injustice in the Niger Delta, where

decades of oil production has left the people in a state of hopelessness. The negligence of the oil companies has not become a thing of the past.

The Niger Delta needs diversification because the socio-economic aspect of Nigerians largely relies on the revenues generated from the exploitation and exploration of crude oil. So, achieving this goal will benefit both the people of Niger Delta and Nigerians in general. The Niger Delta region, while rich in oil resources, has faced decades of environmental degradation, economic challenges, and social unrest owing to over-reliance on crude oil. Communities within the region have suffered from unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment. Diversifying the region's economy through community-driven approaches is critical to addressing these issues. Participatory empowerment strategies, which involve local stakeholders in decision-making and development processes, are seen as sustainable ways to foster economic diversification, improve livelihoods and ensure long-term development beyond oil dependency.

While the region cannot be blamed for the persistent reliance on the oil and gas industry that now affects sustainable development, the government cannot claim to have an idea on the problems and solutions to save the environment from further degradation. **Notable challenges plaguing the region have been identified. These are environmental degradation:** oil spills, pollution, and deforestation have caused severe damage to the Niger Delta's ecosystems, affecting livelihoods and biodiversity; **socio-economic disparities:** the region suffers from widespread poverty, inequality and lack of basic infrastructure, particularly in rural areas; **conflict and violence:** the Niger Delta has been plagued by conflict and violence, including militancy and protests against oil companies (Bodo & Gimah, 2019); and **lack of diversification:** the region's economy is heavily dependent on the oil and gas industry, making it vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices (Nwobueze, 2015; Nwobueze & Okolie-Osemene, 2018; Bodo & Gimah, 2019; Mackintosh, 2024). Out of all these challenges, environmental degradation and conflicts have been more destructive, by making it difficult for the people to enjoy sustainable peace.

The abundance of oil wealth contributed to the development of infrastructure in most parts of Nigeria that do not have any deposit of oil (Samuel & Tedheke, 2021). While the oil benefited other places, communities in the region struggle to overcome the lack and hopelessness caused by oil pollution, weak governance and infrastructure.

Research objectives

The objectives of the paper are to:

- assess the current socio-economic challenges faced by communities in the Niger Delta and their impact on sustainable development;
- explore community-driven participatory models that can promote economic diversification in the region;

- evaluate the effectiveness of empowerment programmes in fostering sustainable livelihoods;
- identify key barriers to the successful implementation of community-driven development initiatives; and
- suggest policy recommendations for enhancing participatory empowerment strategies for long-term development in the Niger Delta.

Theoretical Framework

This paper draws from significant theoretical perspectives to provide a deeper understanding of the factors influencing sustainable development and diversification in the Niger Delta. Dependency, sustainable development, resource curse and participatory development theories point to the urgent need for an end to the plague of underdevelopment and environmental instability in the region. Also, **Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA)** focuses on creating stable and long-term livelihoods by leveraging existing local resources, reducing vulnerability and promoting economic diversification. This aligns with the study's focus on empowering Niger Delta communities to diversify beyond oil dependency.

Dependency Theory: Dependency Theory can be used to analyze the relationship between the Niger Delta region and the global economy. This theory suggests that developing regions, such as the Niger Delta, are often dependent on developed countries and may be exploited through unequal trade relationships. The theory can help to understand the challenges faced by the region in diversifying its economy and achieving sustainable development.

Sustainable Development Theory: Sustainable Development Theory focuses on the need to balance economic growth, social development and environmental protection. This theory can be used to analyze the factors that contribute to sustainable development in the Niger Delta, such as community participation, resource management and institutional capacity.

Participatory Development Theory: Participatory Development Theory emphasizes the importance of involving local communities in decision-making and implementation processes. This theory can be used to analyze the effectiveness of community-driven approaches to development and the factors that contribute to their success or failure. It aligns with the idea of empowerment by ensuring that the people affected by development initiatives are key stakeholders in shaping their outcomes.

Resource Curse Theory: Resource Curse Theory suggests that countries with abundant natural resources may experience economic and political difficulties. This theory can be

used to analyze the challenges faced by the Niger Delta region due to its reliance on oil and gas.

Literature Review

The concept of economic diversification and community-driven development in resource-rich regions, such as the Niger Delta, has garnered significant attention in academic discourse. Such academic activities led to the production of relevant findings on the state of affairs in the region. Scholars like Sachs and Warner (1997) argue that over-reliance on natural resources, particularly oil, often results in economic stagnation and underdevelopment, a phenomenon termed the “resource curse.” This is evident in the Niger Delta, where decades of oil exploitation have resulted in environmental degradation, social unrest and economic inequality (Ikelegbe, 2005).

A notable aspect of development discourse is the Participatory Development Theory, which is rooted in the works of Paulo Freire (1970). It emphasizes the importance of involving local communities in decision-making processes. Chambers (1994) highlights that sustainable development can only be achieved when the marginalized are empowered to contribute to initiatives that affect them directly. In the context of the Niger Delta, participatory empowerment can help address the deep-seated grievances of local communities, fostering a sense of ownership in development projects (Ibaba, 2010). Development projects that address the needs of rural communities will reduce those issues that generate tensions, such as lack and want, poorly executed projects, divide and rule practice as well as exclusion of youths and women.

Community-Driven Approaches in the Niger Delta are relevant for the transformation of the region. Empirical studies have shown that community-driven development models can be effective in addressing local challenges. For instance, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) reported that community-led initiatives in areas such as agriculture, fisheries and small-scale industries have led to sustainable livelihoods in regions affected by environmental degradation. Such models align with the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (Chambers & Conway, 1992), which promotes economic diversification and resilience in vulnerable regions.

Resource dependence has not been helpful to the Niger Delta. Agbaje (2016), Ocheje (2019) and Adedeji (2018) examined the historical context of the Niger Delta region and its dependence on the oil and gas industry. Uzoamaka and Ogbonna (2018), Ibrahim (2014) and Olawale (2016) analyzed the environmental impacts of oil and gas extraction in the Niger Delta, including pollution, deforestation and biodiversity loss. There are socio-economic disparities which affect the ordinary people. Studies by Agbaje (2016), Adedeji (2018) and Ocheje (2019) examined the socio-economic disparities in the Niger Delta region, including poverty, inequality and lack of basic infrastructure. Onah

(2017), Uzoamaka and Ogbonna (2018) and Ibrahim (2014) identified the challenges faced by the Niger Delta region in diversifying its economy, including lack of investment, infrastructure constraints and limited skills development.

Some studies highlighted successful diversification initiatives in the Niger Delta, such as agriculture, aquaculture and tourism. For example, Okoye (2017) and Olawale (2016) examined the potential of these sectors for promoting sustainable development. Studies by Adedeji (2018) and Ocheje (2019) analyzed the role of government policies in supporting diversification efforts in the Niger Delta. Agbaje (2016), Adedeji (2018) and Ocheje (2019) examined the potential of participatory development approaches in empowering local communities and promoting sustainable development. Uzoamaka and Ogbonna (2018), Ibrahim (2014) and Olawale (2016) analyzed the role of community-based organizations in promoting diversification and addressing local needs.

Challenges of Economic Diversification in the Niger Delta

Despite the potential for community-driven development, challenges such as corruption, weak governance and infrastructure have hindered economic diversification in the Niger Delta. Nwosu and Ward (2016) note that, while various government-led initiatives, such as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), have been established to foster development, their impact has been limited due to poor implementation and lack of community involvement.

Sustainable development in the Niger Delta requires a multi-faceted approach that incorporates economic, social and environmental considerations. Amadi and Abdullah (2016) note that empowering local communities to drive their own development through participatory strategies is critical to achieving long-term sustainability. Such strategies not only promote economic diversification but also ensure that development is inclusive and responsive to the needs of local populations.

The literature underscores the need for a community-driven approach to diversify the Niger Delta economy. Participatory empowerment, coupled with sound governance, can unlock the region's potential for sustainable development, reducing its dependence on oil and fostering more resilient communities. This study seeks to build on this foundation, exploring how participatory empowerment can drive sustainable development in the Niger Delta.

The Need for Economic Diversification

Diversifying the Niger Delta economy is crucial to achieving sustainable development and reducing the region's vulnerability to oil price shocks. Diversification can create new job opportunities, improve livelihoods, reduce dependence on a single industry, facilitate community engagement in crisis management and promote urban peace and safety.

Community-driven Approaches:

Community-driven approaches to development have gained increasing recognition as effective strategies for promoting sustainable development and empowerment. By involving local communities in decision-making and implementation processes, these approaches can help to address the specific needs and priorities of the region.

Participatory Empowerment:

Participatory empowerment involves empowering local communities to take ownership of their development processes. This can be achieved through various mechanisms, such as community-based planning, capacity building and access to resources.

By adopting the community-driven approach to participatory empowerment, the Niger Delta region can leverage its diverse resources and strengths to achieve sustainable development and improve the lives of its people.

Notable Current Socio-economic Challenges Faced by Communities in the Niger Delta and Their Impact on Sustainable Development

The Niger Delta faces a number of socio-economic challenges that hinder sustainable development. The major ones are examined in this section.

Environmental Degradation: Pollution from oil spills and gas flaring has damaged farmlands and waterways, affecting livelihoods tied to agriculture and fishing. In addition, devastating effects of flood on both man and the environment as well as access to water security are a major challenge in the region with weak governance and infrastructure.

Unemployment and Poverty: Youth unemployment and poverty have continued to plague communities in the area to the extent that many of the companies and governments have attempted to establish some skills acquisition programmes for rural areas which are sometimes inadequate and do not fulfil the expectations of the people. Despite being rich in oil resources, the region suffers from high unemployment rates, leading to economic disenfranchisement.

Inadequate Infrastructure: Poor access to roads, healthcare and education services limits human capital development.

Militancy and Insecurity: Conflicts over resource control have exacerbated violence, further stalling economic growth and investment. Helmen (2011) notes that “a strand of the youth criminal groups are helping to deepen the political problem in Nigeria’s Niger-Delta; evidence shows that youthful criminal gangs are engaging in illicit activities such as oil bunkering, gun running and kidnapping.” On the motivations of non-state armed groups in the Niger Delta, Asuni (2009) asserts that some armed gangs in the Niger Delta are criminally motivated, others politically and ideologically driven, but the genuine

groups aim at addressing the grievances of the people arising from environmental pollution, economic underdevelopment and political marginalisation.

These challenges undermine long-term socio-economic stability and development. Thus, it is crucial to foster sustainable, diversified development models that engage communities in solutions.

Community-driven Participatory Models That Promote Economic Diversification in the Region

Community-driven participatory models for promoting economic diversification in the Niger Delta include the following:

- **Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA):** This engages communities in identifying and managing development projects, focusing on non-oil sectors, like agriculture and entrepreneurship.
- **Cooperative Societies:** They facilitate collective ownership of resources and profits, promoting economic activities, like fish farming and palm oil processing.
- **Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM):** This empowers local communities to manage natural resources sustainably.
- **Microfinance and Credit Schemes:** They provide financial services to small-scale entrepreneurs for diversification.
- **Local Content Initiatives:** These prioritize local workforce and businesses in regional projects.

These models encourage bottom-up development and economic resilience.

Community-driven Participatory Models for Economic Diversification in the Niger Delta

The Niger Delta region has rich potential for economic diversification beyond its reliance on the oil and gas industry. Community-driven participatory models can play a crucial role in unlocking this potential and promoting sustainable development.

Here are some effective models:

Key Barriers to the Successful Implementation of Community-driven Development Initiatives

There are notable barriers to community-driven development initiatives that can hinder their success. The critical ones are presented here.

Lack of Capacity and Resources:

Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM):

- **Empowering communities:** CBNRM empowers local communities to manage and conserve natural resources, such as forests, fisheries and wildlife.
- **Diversification opportunities:** CBNRM can create new economic opportunities through sustainable resource extraction, ecotourism and carbon credit trading.

- **Examples:** Initiatives like the Niger Delta Sustainable Development Initiative and the Niger Delta Development Commission have promoted CBNRM in the region.

Social Enterprises:

- **Community-owned businesses:** Social enterprises are businesses that prioritize social or environmental objectives alongside financial returns.
- **Diversification opportunities:** Social enterprises can create jobs, generate income and address local needs.
- **Examples:** Community-owned fish farms, agricultural cooperatives, and renewable energy projects.

Cooperatives:

- **Collective action:** Cooperatives enable communities to work together to achieve common goals.
- **Diversification opportunities:** Cooperatives can facilitate access to markets, finance and training, promoting diversification into sectors like agriculture, fisheries and tourism.
- **Examples:** Agricultural cooperatives and fishing cooperatives have been successful in the Niger Delta.

Microfinance Institutions:

- **Financial access:** Microfinance institutions provide financial services to low-income individuals and communities.
- **Diversification opportunities:** Microfinance can support small-scale businesses and entrepreneurship, promoting economic diversification.
- **Examples:** Many microfinance institutions operate in the Niger Delta, providing loans, savings and other financial services.

Value Chain Development:

- **Strengthening local production:** Value chain development involves supporting local producers at different stages of the production process.
- **Diversification opportunities:** By strengthening local production, value chain development can promote diversification into new markets and products.
- **Examples:** Initiatives to develop value chains for agricultural products, fisheries and handicrafts have been implemented in the Niger Delta.

These community-driven participatory models can empower local communities to take ownership of their development processes, promote sustainable livelihoods and contribute to the diversification of the Niger Delta economy.

Investing in Water Sports

Water sports, also known as aquatic sports or water activities, refer to recreational or competitive activities performed in or on water. These sports can be categorized into the following types:

Surface Water Sports:

1. Swimming
2. Surfing
3. Windsurfing
4. Kitesurfing
5. Paddleboarding
6. Kayaking
7. Canoeing

Sub-surface Water Sports:

1. Scuba diving
2. Snorkeling
3. Freediving
4. Underwater hockey
5. Underwater rugby

Towed Water Sports:

1. Water skiing
2. Wakeboarding
3. Tubing
4. Parasailing

Team Water Sports:

1. Water polo
2. Synchronized swimming
3. Rowing

Extreme Water Sports:

1. Cliff diving
2. Big wave surfing
3. Jet-ski racing
4. Whitewater rafting

Recreational Water Activities:

1. Boating
2. Fishing
3. Sailing
4. Snorkelling
5. Swimming laps

Therapeutic Water Activities:

1. Hydrotherapy
2. Aquatic therapy
3. Water aerobics

Competitive Water Sports:

1. Olympic swimming
2. Diving
3. Synchronized swimming
4. Water polo

Water sports offer numerous benefits, including:

1. Physical fitness
2. Stress relief
3. Social interaction
4. Mental well-being
5. Adventure and excitement

The economic value of water sports is substantial and growing. The global water sports market size is forecast to reach \$7.4 billion by 2027, growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 4.8% from 2022 to 2027.

This growth is driven by many factors, including the following:

- Increasing popularity of water sports: More people are participating in water sports, driving demand for equipment, lessons and travel.
- Health benefits: Water sports offer numerous physical and mental health benefits, attracting people seeking active lifestyles.
- Tourism growth: Water sports tourism is increasing, with travellers seeking unique experiences, like surfing, kayaking and scuba diving.

The water sports market is segmented into various categories, including the following:

- Architecture: Specialized/Single Activity and Multi-Activity

- Activities: Parasailing, Boating & Boat Racing, Canoeing, Jet Skiing, Wind Surfing, Kayaking, Rafting, River Trekking, Water Polo, Rowing, Scuba Diving, and Snorkelling
- Water sports will build dignified and productive citizenship and boost prosperity.

Effectiveness of Empowerment Programmes in Fostering Sustainable Livelihoods

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria has faced significant challenges in achieving sustainable livelihoods owing to its dependence on the oil and gas industry, environmental degradation, and socio-economic disparities. Empowerment programmes have been implemented to address these challenges and promote sustainable development.

Effectiveness of Empowerment Programs:

The effectiveness of empowerment programmes in fostering sustainable livelihoods in the Niger Delta region varies depending on several factors, including these:

- **Programme design and implementation:** Well-designed and implemented empowerment programmes can be effective in promoting sustainable livelihoods. These programmes should focus on building capacity, providing access to resources and fostering community participation.
- **Community involvement:** Empowerment programmes are most effective when they involve local communities in decision-making and implementation. This involvement ensures that the programmes are tailored to the specific needs and priorities of the region.
- **Addressing root causes:** Empowerment programmes should address the underlying causes of poverty and vulnerability in the Niger Delta, such as lack of access to education, healthcare and infrastructure.
- **Sustainability:** Empowerment programmes should be designed to be sustainable, so that they can continue to benefit communities long after external support is withdrawn.

Case Studies of Successful Empowerment Programmes:

1. **Community-based natural resource management:** Numerous community-based natural resource management programmes have been successful in promoting sustainable livelihoods in the Niger Delta. These programmes have helped to protect the environment, improve livelihoods and reduce dependence on the oil and gas industry.
2. **Vocational training and skills development:** Vocational training and skills development programmes have helped to equip individuals with the skills needed to pursue alternative livelihoods. These programmes have been particularly effective in promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment.

3. **Microfinance initiatives:** Microfinance initiatives have provided access to credit and financial services to vulnerable populations in the Niger Delta. These programmes have helped to create jobs, reduce poverty and empower women.

Challenges and Limitations:

Despite their potential benefits, empowerment programmes in the Niger Delta region face many challenges and limitations, the major ones are presented below:

- **Lack of funding:** Many empowerment programmes are underfunded, limiting their scope and impact.
- **Corruption:** Corruption can undermine the effectiveness of empowerment programmes, diverting resources and hindering their implementation.
- **Security challenges:** The Niger Delta region is prone to violence and insecurity, which can hinder the implementation and sustainability of empowerment programmes.
- **Limited capacity:** Local communities may lack the capacity to effectively manage and implement empowerment programmes.
- The misappropriation of funds on the part of beneficiaries has not been helpful.
- Poor infrastructure is a major challenge because many communities lack the infrastructure needed for empowerment.
- The negative attitude of people towards empowerment affects such programmes.
- **Limited human resources:** The need for professional skills in enhancing community development cannot be overemphasized. It is not disputable that there are some communities that lack the necessary skills and expertise to effectively plan, implement, and manage development projects. Lacking these skills is a drawback to their involvement when opportunities are available for the residents of the communities to be enlisted for projects that can enhance their skills and empower their communities.
- **Insufficient funding:** Inadequate funding can constrain the scope and impact of community-driven initiatives. Most communities in the Niger Delta require urgent budgetary allocation, which is usually not adequate, leading to problems arising from selective implementation of rural development by leaders at various levels.

Political Interference:

- **Corruption:** Corruption can divert resources and undermine the effectiveness of community-driven development initiatives.
- **Political patronage:** Political patronage can hinder the selection and implementation of community-driven projects.

Institutional Constraints:

- **Bureaucracy:** Complex bureaucratic procedures can delay the implementation of community-driven initiatives and reduce their effectiveness.
- **Lack of coordination:** Inadequate coordination between government agencies and communities can hinder the successful implementation of development projects.

Social and Cultural Challenges:

- **Traditional power structures:** Traditional power structures may hinder the participation of marginalized groups in community-driven development initiatives.
- **Cultural differences:** Differences in cultural values and perspectives can create challenges in achieving consensus and cooperation among community members.

Environmental Challenges:

- **Resource depletion:** Over-exploitation of natural resources can undermine the sustainability of community-driven development initiatives.
- **Climate change:** Climate change can pose significant challenges to the implementation of community-driven development projects, particularly in vulnerable areas.

Addressing these barriers is crucial for the successful implementation of community-driven development initiatives and ensuring their long-term sustainability. Strategies to overcome these challenges may include capacity building, improved governance and increased investment in community-driven projects.

Policy Recommendations for Enhancing Participatory Empowerment Strategies in the Niger Delta

To foster long-term development in the Niger Delta region, it is crucial to strengthen participatory empowerment strategies. The following are some relevant policy recommendations:

Strengthen Institutional Framework:

- **Decentralization:** Promote decentralization of power and resources to local governments to empower communities and enhance their participation in decision-making.
- **Community-based organizations:** Support the development and capacity building of community-based organizations to facilitate community-driven development initiatives.
- **Legal framework:** Establish a legal framework that recognizes and protects the rights of communities to participate in decision-making and benefit from development projects.

Invest in Human Capital:

- **Education:** Expand access to quality education, particularly vocational training and skills development, to equip communities with the necessary knowledge and skills for sustainable development.
- **Health:** Improve access to healthcare services to ensure a healthy and productive population.

Promote Good Governance:

- **Transparency and accountability:** Strengthen transparency and accountability mechanisms to reduce corruption and ensure that resources are used effectively.
- **Anti-corruption measures:** Implement measures to combat corruption and promote good governance at all levels.

Support Community-based Initiatives:

- **Financial support:** Provide financial support to community-based initiatives to help them implement their development projects.
- **Technical assistance:** Offer technical assistance and capacity building to communities to enhance their ability to plan, implement and manage development projects.

Address Environmental Challenges:

- **Sustainable resource management:** Promote sustainable resource management practices to protect the environment and ensure long-term viability of the region's natural resources.
- **Climate change adaptation:** Develop strategies to adapt to the impacts of climate change and build resilience in communities.
- The potential benefits of tourism will add value to regional development when environmental challenges are addressed.

Foster Partnerships:

- **Public-private partnerships:** Encourage partnerships between government, civil society organizations and the private sector to leverage resources and expertise.
- **International cooperation:** Seek international cooperation and support for development initiatives in the Niger Delta region.

Government and international organizations should increase funding for empowerment programmes to ensure their sustainability and impact. Quickly containing the security challenges facing the region is essential for creating a conducive environment for sustainable development and empowerment. Investing in renewable energy projects to reduce the region's dependence on fossil fuels and promote sustainable development.

Conclusion

The community-driven approach of participatory empowerment is one of the ways of actualising sustainable development in this 21st century, when resource governance has become challenging to governments. This paper has examined how the Niger Delta can transition from dependence to resilience, through capacity-building initiatives in the Niger Delta. Transitioning from dependence to resilience requires the acceptance of the reality and people's readiness to make changes that can transform their lives for community well-being.

The findings suggest that this approach can be effective in addressing the region's challenges, including dependence on the oil and gas industry, environmental degradation and socio-economic disparities. The following are the key findings from the study:

Participatory empowerment can empower local communities to take ownership of their development processes and address their specific needs and priorities.

The Niger Delta region has diverse resources and potential for diversification, including agriculture, aquaculture, tourism and renewable energy. Niger Delta communities could gain significantly from the efforts that are focused on sustainable development, such as **promotion of sustainable agriculture and aquaculture, development of the tourism sector and renewable energy that could transform the lives of the Niger Delta people. The advantages of these new developments are noteworthy. While** sustainable agriculture and aquaculture practices can reposition communities and help them achieve their economic goals, the advent and flourishing of the tourism sector would inject new businesses into the region and promote healthy competition that attract growth and new jobs for the youth.

Successful diversification requires addressing challenges such as infrastructure development, access to finance and capacity building. Government support is essential for creating an enabling environment for diversification and empowering local communities. It is necessary for government to continue supporting sustainable agriculture and aquaculture practices to diversify the region's economy and reduce dependence on oil and gas.

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following strategies for promoting sustainable development and diversification in the Niger Delta:

- **Strengthening community-based organizations:** This concerns supporting the development and capacity building of community-based organizations to facilitate participatory planning and implementation.
- **Investing in infrastructure:** It has to do with improving infrastructure, such as roads, electricity, and water supply, to support economic activities and attract investment.

- **Promoting sustainable agriculture and aquaculture:** This involves supporting sustainable agriculture and aquaculture practices to diversify the region's economy and reduce dependence on oil and gas.
- **Developing the tourism sector:** This concerns promoting tourism as a source of economic growth and job creation. The Niger Delta region has relevant tourism potentials and the sites should not be ignored, from waterways to oil sites and cultural attractions. The tourism potential in the Niger Delta region could restore the revenue from oil denied the Niger Delta communities.
- **Encouraging renewable energy:** This relates to investing in renewable energy projects to reduce the region's dependence on fossil fuels and promote sustainable development.
- **Strengthening governance:** This means improving governance and accountability at all levels and all times to create a conducive environment for investment and development.

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14**EFFECTS OF EXPORT DIVERSIFICATION ON INTERNATIONAL LIQUIDITY:
THE NIGERIAN EXAMPLE****By****¹Ezebunwo Nyeche, ²Chioma Rosemary Ewubare Dennis and ³Lucky Orlu**

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Abstract

This study empirically examined the effect of export diversification on international liquidity in Nigeria. The study covered a period of thirty-four (34) years using yearly data from 1990 to 2023. These data were sourced from Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) statistical bulletins, World Development Indicators of the World Bank and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) report. The study proxied export diversification by oil export, non-oil export, export diversification index and export concentration ratio, and measured international liquidity by foreign exchange reserve. The techniques adopted for data analysis were descriptive statistics, ADF unit root test, Johansen cointegration test and Error Correction Model (ECM). The result of the ADF unit root test revealed that all the variables were all stationary at first difference, that is integrated of order one [I(1)]. The Johansen cointegration test results showed that there was long-run relationship among foreign exchange reserve, oil export, non-oil export, export diversification index and export concentration ratio. The result of the ECM indicated that oil export, non-oil export and export diversification index had positive and significant effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria. On the contrary, export concentration ratio had a negative and non-significant effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study concluded that export diversification plays a significant role in increasing and enhancing international liquidity in Nigeria. It was recommended that the Nigerian government should intensify efforts to diversify its export base by supporting non-oil sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing and services. This can be achieved through targeted incentives, tax breaks and subsidized financing for non-oil exporters.

Keywords: Oil Export, Non-oil Export, Export Diversification Index, Export Concentration Ratio, Foreign Exchange Reserve

Introduction

Export diversification plays a key role in shaping a country's economic resilience and its ability to adapt to global market dynamics. For resource-dependent economies like Nigeria, the concentration of exports in a narrow range of commodities –predominantly crude oil–poses significant risk to macroeconomic stability. This reliance exposes the

economy to volatile global commodity prices, which can lead to fluctuations in foreign exchange earnings, fiscal imbalances and pressures on international liquidity. International liquidity, defined as the availability of foreign exchange reserves to meet external obligations, is crucial for maintaining currency stability, fostering investor confidence and ensuring smooth international trade. Similarly, Epstein (2005) defines international liquidity as a country's ability to meet its external financial obligations, including imports and external debt service.

One of the largest economies in Africa, Nigeria has relied heavily on its oil sector for export revenue. However, the vulnerability of the economy to fluctuations in oil prices and the need for sustainable development have prompted a shift towards export diversification. Nigeria's economy has long been dominated by the oil sector, with petroleum and its products accounting for a significant portion of the country's export earnings (Demirguc-Kunt & Serven, 2009). While this has brought substantial revenue, it has also exposed the nation to the volatility of global oil markets. In recent years, the Nigerian government has recognized the importance of diversifying its export base to mitigate the risks associated with overreliance on a single commodity.

Export diversification involves expanding the range of products and services that a country exports, reducing dependence on a specific sector. Export diversification and international liquidity are integral components of Nigeria's economic development strategy (Hausmann & Rodrik, 2003). The nation's commitment to diversifying its export base reflects a recognition of the need for a more resilient and sustainable economy. Efforts to maintain robust international liquidity underscore the importance of sound financial management in a globalized economic environment. Nigeria's efforts in this direction have focused on sectors such as agriculture, solid minerals and services. The aim is to create a more resilient economy capable of withstanding external shocks and fostering sustainable growth (Cecchetti and Kharroubi, 2012). Despite the potential benefits, export diversification in Nigeria faces various challenges. These include inadequate infrastructure, limited access to finance for non-oil sectors and the need for policy reforms to encourage investment in alternative industries (Manova, 2008). Overcoming these challenges requires concerted effort from the government, the private sector and international partners.

Successful export diversification can lead to job creation, poverty reduction and improved resilience to external economic shocks. For Nigeria, maintaining a healthy level of international liquidity is essential for economic stability and growth. Foreign exchange reserves, a key component of international liquidity, serve as a buffer against external shocks and ensure smooth functioning of international trade. As pointed out by Kabango and Paloni (2011), Nigeria has faced challenges in maintaining adequate international liquidity due to its dependence on oil exports. Fluctuations in oil prices directly impact the

country's foreign exchange earnings, affecting its ability to meet external obligations. To address this, the government has implemented various measures, including diversifying revenue sources and implementing prudent fiscal policies. The success of these initiatives depends on a combination of domestic reforms, international cooperation and a proactive approach to economic challenges.

Nigeria's economy has long been characterized by overdependence on crude oil as its primary export, which contributes over 80% of foreign exchange earnings and government revenues. This heavy reliance has exposed the country to severe external vulnerability, particularly during the period of global oil price volatility. Fluctuations in oil prices have repeatedly triggered foreign exchange shortages, balance of payment deficits and depletion of foreign reserves, undermining the country's international liquidity position.

Despite numerous policy initiatives aimed at diversifying Nigeria's export base, the country's non-oil sector remains underdeveloped and underutilized. Structural bottlenecks, weak industrial capacity, poor infrastructure and over-emphasis on resource extraction have hindered progress in this area. In addition, the narrow spectrum of exported goods and services constrains Nigeria's ability to tap into diverse international markets. This limited export product portfolio not only inhibits economic growth but also impedes the country's capacity to accumulate a robust international reserve that can act as a buffer during economic downturns.

Consequently, Nigeria's international liquidity remains precarious, leaving the economy susceptible to external shocks and financial instability. The persistent failure to achieve meaningful export diversification impact international liquidity in Nigeria, raising critical questions. This research, therefore, asked the following questions: To what extent does oil export affect international liquidity in Nigeria? How does non-oil export affect international liquidity in Nigeria? What is the effect of export diversification index on international liquidity in Nigeria? Does export concentration ratio affect international liquidity in Nigeria? The study explored the effect of export diversification on international liquidity in Nigeria over the period 1990 to 2023

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical postulation on the relationship between export diversification and international liquidity dates back to the work of classical economists. Ricardo (1817) proposed the theory of comparative advantage, arguing that a country should specialize in the production and export of commodities for which it has comparative advantage and import those for which it has comparative disadvantage. However, the Ricardo formulation has certain limitations. First, it failed to consider the role and impact of the structure and composition of trade in the development process. Second, it ignored other

factors required in production, such as capital and technology, considering only labour value.

Consequently, Heckscher (1919) proposed an extension of the Ricardo formulation by postulating exogenous differences in factor endowments as the basis for trade. The implication is that (African) developing countries would specialize in producing primary products in which they have a comparative advantage due to the abundance of land and unskilled labour. Indeed, an important thrust of what later became the Heckscher-Ohlin-Samuelson (HOS) framework is that employment would ultimately be re-distributed from the import-substituting sector to the export sector as a country specializes in the production and export of primary commodities. If trade could induce growth, then it might increase employment via derived demand. The issue then is, what would be the distribution of benefits of growth across the various factors of production?

The Stolper-Samuelson theorem, which proposes a one-to-one correspondence between prices of products and prices of factors, implies that trade liberalization would likely raise the demand for resources used in the production of commodity exports. Since many African countries have a comparative advantage in the export of labour-intensive commodities, an important implication is that trade liberalization would lead to an increase in labour employment. Protectionist policies would, therefore, limit production of the commodity and, hence, reduce employment. In contrast, trade policy, especially export liberalization, would stimulate employment in sectors that produce the commodity benefitting from liberalization. However, such a commodity need not be a primary product. Indeed, the production of resource commodities (mining) is likely to be relatively capital-intensive and would have little impact on employment. The basic issue, then, is the extent to which export diversification involves relatively labour-intensive production and, hence, greater employment than the production of primary products.

Labour theory suggests that greater labour attachment to firms in the form of full-time employment is likely to generate relatively meaningful employment and less vulnerable employment. Hence, if exports diversification provides such an outcome, then it is more desirable than specialization in primary products in this regard. Structural theories of economic development postulate that export diversification promotes sustainable growth and development (Chenery 1979). This view is predicated on the notion that a greater share of manufacturing tends to result in larger long-term growth in developing countries (Fosu, 1996). It is the manufacturing component that seems to be responsible for such long-term growth, with the primary share effect being nil (Fosu, 1996). One possible channel through which sustained economic growth and development are achieved by means of export diversification is the reduction in vulnerability to export and exchange rate shocks resulting from fluctuations in prices of primary commodities. Another is the backward and forward linkages often associated with such diversification.

Technology spillover has also been identified as a channel through which export diversification positively influences growth and employment (Agosin 2007). New technology, new knowledge and new practices are believed to be among the by-products of export diversification, resulting from the spillovers emanating from trade. Countries at low levels of technology can widen the scope of their technology frontiers and, consequently their comparative advantage, by imitating and adapting technologies they access through exports and value-addition.

There are also studies that have focused on the role of terms of trade in growth and employment. For example, the Prebisch-Singer hypothesis (Prebisch 1950) posits that, in the long term, terms of trade of agricultural commodities would decline relative to those of manufactures. To the extent that terms of trade have a positive effect on long-term growth, then a more diversified export that includes greater manufacturing would be beneficial for growth and employment. Underlying this hypothesis is the notion of lower respective income and price elasticity of demand associated with primary products compared with manufactures. The lower income elasticity implies that the relative price of primary products would fall in the longer term as the world becomes richer, resulting in less export revenues in the light of a relatively price-inelastic demand.

Empirical Review

Oladosu, Ibeinmo and Lasisi (2023) examined the effect of oil and non-oil exports on economic growth in Nigeria, covering a period of thirty-three years (1990 to 2022). The research was based on the Two-Gap Model. The research utilised time series data obtained from the statistical bulletins of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). The data analysis methods utilised were the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) statistic, Autoregressive Distributive Lag (ARDL) and the Error Correction Model. The major finding of the research was that oil exports had a significant and positive effect on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the short run and the long run. Likewise, non-oil exports had a positive and significant impact on GDP, both in the short and the long run. Nevertheless, exchange rate had a significantly negative impact on GDP in the short and the long run. The study concluded that both oil and non-oil exports had a positive and significant influence on the growth of the Nigerian economy.

Isiwu (2022) examined the impact of export diversification on economic growth in Nigeria from 1980 to 2020. The empirical results showed that export diversification had positive but insignificant impact on economic growth in Nigeria both in the short run and the long run. Similarly, domestic investment had positive impact on economic growth both in the short run and the long run. However, its impact was significant only in the short run. Exchange rate had negative impact on economic growth in the short run but its impact in the long run was positive, showing instability in the exchange rate movements in Nigeria. Openness of the economy had negative impact on economic growth both in

the short run and the long run. However, its impact was significant only in the long run. Democracy dummy had positive but insignificant impact on economic growth both in the short run and the long run.

Moreover, Nwosa (2022) examined the link between export diversification and economic growth in Nigeria from 1962 to 2019. The study utilized the Auto-regressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) technique. The results indicated that export diversification had a positive but insignificant influence on economic growth in Nigeria. It was concluded that export diversification is an insignificant determinant of economic growth in Nigeria. The above results imply that the oil sector still dominates the Nigerian economy while the diversification drive of the government has not been significant in other sectors of the economy. Thus, the study recommended the need for conscious economic policies that would promote the diversification of the entire non-oil sector of the economy.

Ugwo, Umeh and Ochuba (2019) investigated the impact of crude oil export on economic growth in Nigeria. The specific objectives were to determine if crude oil export contributes significantly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the economy, ascertain the extent to which crude oil export contributes to the economic growth in Nigeria and examine the relationship between crude oil export and economic growth in Nigeria. The study concluded that there is 32% (thirty-two percent) positive impact of crude oil export on economic performance in Nigeria.

The Johansen cointegration method was applied by Zafar and Mohammad (2018) to establish long-run relationship of economic growth with oil exports, imports and government consumption expenditure. The study found that economic growth had a positive long-run relationship with oil exports and consumption expenditure of the government. Further, there was a negative long-run association between imports and economic growth. Finally, the study recommended regulating imports and intensive efforts to diversify the economic base in import substituting industries.

Ajayi (2016) examined the impact of oil and non-oil exports on Nigerian economy. It reviewed the literature on the macroeconomic policy and the relative impact of oil and non-oil exports on the economy. It also reviewed the contribution of both oil and non-oil exports on Nigerian Gross Domestic Product over the years and compared the contribution of both oil and non-oil exports on Nigerian economy. This was necessitated by the need to understand the contribution of both oil and non-oil exports to Nigerian economy.

Aremu (2016) investigated the role of oil and non-oil exports on Nigerian economy over the period 1981 to 2015. The ADF and PP unit root test, Johansen cointegration test, Granger causality test, impulse response functions (IRF) and variance decomposition (VD) were used for analysis. The cointegration test indicated that GDP, oil and non-oil exports were cointegrated. The Granger causality test indicated short-run unidirectional causality

running from oil export to GDP. There were also bidirectional long-run causality relationship between oil export and GDP, and unidirectional long-run causality running from non-oil export to GDP. The results indicated that oil exports had inverse relationship with economic growth, while non-oil exports had positive relationship with economic growth.

Imoughale and Ismaila (2015) conducted a study on the impact of exchange rate on Nigeria non-oil exports from 1986 to 2013. They used augmented Dickey Fuller unit root test and Johansen cointegration. The results showed that appreciation of exchange rate had a negative effect on non-oil export. The study recommended that monetary authority should ensure exchange rate stability in order to stem inflation, which has adverse effect on non-oil exports. Using Auto regressive distributed lag (ARDL) estimation would have given a better result because it is a better technique when variables are stationary at different levels after unit root test.

The impact of non-oil export on economic growth in Nigeria was investigated by Oruta (2015) using ordinary least square (OLS). Data were got from CBN statistical bulletins for the period 1980 to 2010. It was discovered that the model was normally distributed and the error term was constant over time and the unit root test which was applied to check the stationary data, confirmed that the data were stationary after the analysis. It was also discovered that, generally, non-oil export had a significant impact on economic growth in Nigeria. The implication is that there was stable exchange in the country during the year under review. Durbin-Watson statistic indicated that the entire regression was statistically significant.

Moreover, Christophe, Omoniyi and Olufunke (2014) investigated effect of non-oil export on the economic development of Nigeria. The study applied the ordinary least square estimating technique. The result showed that non-oil export exhibited a significant positive relationship with per capita income. This implies that, if non-oil export volume is increased, there will be a significant improvement in the level of Nigerian economic development. However, other variables did not have individual significant impact on economic development but jointly they could significantly influence economic development. In addition, the result showed that the coefficient of trade openness was negative, indicating that Nigeria might not be benefiting enough by trading with other countries.

Onodugo, Ikpe and Anowor (2013) investigated the specific impact of non-oil exports to the growth of Nigerian economy using data for the period 1981 and 2018. The study adopted the Augmented Production Function (APF), employing the Endogenous Growth Model (EGM), in its analysis. The conventional tests for mean reversion and cointegration were employed. The findings revealed a very weak and infinitesimal impact of non-oil export in influencing the rate of change in the level of economic growth in

Nigeria. The study, apart from empirically providing information that has failed to give backing to recent claims of non-oil export-led growth in Nigeria, has also set a data benchmark for appraisal of possible improvements in future performances of non-oil export trade, with respect to its contributions to the growth of Nigerian economy.

Literature Gap

This study reviewed relevant empirical literature on export diversification and international liquidity in Nigeria. Based on the empirical studies reviewed, it was observed that many studies have emerged on the effect of export diversification on economic growth in Nigeria but none of the previous studies examined the effect of export diversification on international liquidity in Nigeria. This created a gap that this study filled. Therefore, this study empirically determined the effect of export diversification on international liquidity in Nigeria.

Methodology

Research design

This study adopted the *ex-post-facto* research design, as it was non-experimental in nature, and investigated effects of the independent variables (measures of export diversification) on the dependent variable (international liquidity) by using existing annual time series data spanning 1990 to 2023, which were sourced from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) statistical bulletins and the World Bank's development indicators database.

Model Specification

The model employed for this study was multiple regression model. It was built on the model of Oladosu, Ibeinmo and Lasisi (2023), with slight modifications. This model was further disaggregated as follows:

Functional Model

$$\text{FER} = f(\text{OEXP}, \text{NOEX}, \text{EDI}, \text{ECR}) \quad (3.1)$$

The log-log linear econometric form is stated below:

$$\log \text{FER} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \log \text{OEXP}_t + \alpha_2 \log \text{NOEX}_t + \alpha_3 \log \text{EDI}_t + \alpha_4 \log \text{ECR}_t + \varepsilon_t \quad (3.2),$$

Where

FER	=	Foreign exchange reserve
OEXP	=	Oil export
NOEX	=	Non-oil export
EDI	=	Export diversification index
ECR	=	Export concentration ratio
f	=	Functional relationship
α_0	=	Intercept

α_1 - α_4	=	Coefficients or parameters attached to the independent variables
ε_t	=	Stochastic or error term which captures the impact of variables that are not included in the model
ln	=	Natural logarithm

A Priori Expectation: : $\alpha_1 > 0$, $\alpha_2 > 0$, $\alpha_3 > 0$, $\alpha_4 > 0$.

Error Correction Model:

$$\Delta \ln(FER_t) = \alpha_0 + \sum_{t=1}^p \alpha_{1i} \Delta \ln(FER_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{2i} \Delta \ln(OEXP_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{3i} \Delta \ln(NOEX_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{4i} \Delta \ln(EDI_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{5i} \Delta \ln(ECR_{t-1}) + \delta ECM_{t-1} + \varepsilon_{1i} \quad (3.3),$$

Where: α_0 = constant parameter to be estimated; $\alpha_1 - \alpha_5$ = short run parameters; p = optimal lag for the dependent variable; q = optimal lag of the independent variables; Δ = first difference operator; \ln = natural logarithm; and ε_{1t} = error term. Further, the ECM_{t-1} defines the error correction term determined in the short-run analysis and δ serves as coefficient of the error correction term, defining the annual speed of adjustment level from its previous period's disequilibrium to re-establish long-run stability (equilibrium). This coefficient indicator of the ECM (Error Correction Model) is expected to be negative and significant.

Data Analysis Technique

In order to establish the short-run dynamic interaction among the time series variables under study, Error Correction Model (ECM) was used. This approach was chosen because all the variables from the unit root test results were stationary at first difference. That is, $I(1)$.

Results and Discussions

Unit Root Test

The Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) unit root test is summarized in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1: Results of Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test

Variable s	@ Levels			@ 1 st Differences			Order of Integrat ion
	ADF Statistic	5% Critical Value	Decision	ADF Statisti c	5% Critical Value	Decision	
$\ln FER_t$	-1.143784	- 2.9639 72	Not Stationary	- 5.2558 49	- 2.9571 10	Stationar y	$I(1)$

$\ln OEXP_t$	-1.940947	-	Not	-	-	Stationar	I(1)
		2.9540	Stationary	5.3509	2.9604	y	
		21		48	11		
	-1.102649	-	Not	-	-	Stationar	I(1)
		2.9540	Stationary	6.7929	2.9571	y	
		21		94	10		
$\ln NOEX_t$	-2.586606	-	Not	-	-	Stationar	I(1)
		2.9540	Stationary	5.9806	2.9604	y	
		21		58	11		
$\ln EDI_t$	-1.522318	-	Not	-	-	Stationar	I(1)
		2.9604	Stationary	9.8148	2.9604	y	
		11		99	11		
$\ln ECR_t$							

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2024

The results of the ADF Unit Root Test as shown in Table 4.1 indicates that at 5% level of significance, the Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) test statistics for foreign exchange reserve (FER), oil export (OEXP), non-oil export (NOEX), export diversification index (EDI) and export concentration ratio (ECR) were individually greater in absolute value than the individual critical values. This indicated that they became stationary at first difference and were integrated at order one [that is, I(1)]. Since all the variables were integrated of order one I(1), we therefore proceeded to establish or ascertain the existence or nonexistence of long-run cointegrating relationship among the variables in the equation using Johansen cointegration test.

Johansen Cointegration Test

The Johansen cointegration test result is presented in table 4.2 below:

Table 4.2: Cointegration Test Results

Hypothesized No. of CE(s)	Statistic	Trace		Maximum Eigen Value		
		0.5 Critical Value	Prob.**	Statistic	0.5 Critical Value	Prob.**
None *	82.39523	69.81889	0.0036	37.68201	33.87687	0.0167
At most 1	44.71322	47.85613	0.0958	26.76032	27.58434	0.0635
At most 2	17.95290	29.79707	0.5696	12.60234	21.13162	0.4894
At most 3	5.350562	15.49471	0.7705	5.086101	14.26460	0.7309
At most 4	0.264461	3.841465	0.6071	0.264461	3.841465	0.6071

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2024

The results of the Johansen cointegration as shown in Table 4.2 indicated that there existed one cointegrating equation for the trace and maximum eigenvalue equations, as the trace statistic and the eigenvalue statistic were greater than the 5% critical values at some levels. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no cointegration among the variables was rejected. Therefore, we concluded that a long-run relationship exists among all the research variables.

Error Correction Model (ECM) Analysis

The short-run dynamic relationship between export diversification and international liquidity was estimated using error correction model and presented in Table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3: Error Correction Model (ECM) Results

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	0.117556	0.077405	1.518724	0.1437
$D(\ln FER_{t-1})$	0.340266	0.192505	1.767566	0.0917
$D(\ln OEXP_t)$	0.990439	0.175503	5.643441	0.0000
$D(\ln OEXP_{t-1})$	0.404963	0.232393	1.742575	0.0960
$D(\ln NOEX_t)$	0.447352	0.123947	3.609211	0.0018
$D(\ln NOEX_{t-1})$	-0.362981	0.151241	-2.400012	0.0257
$D(\ln EDI_t)$	0.516140	0.122455	4.214929	0.0004
$D(\ln EDI_{t-1})$	1.111391	3.078994	0.360959	0.7217
$D(\ln ECR_t)$	-0.032187	0.161644	-0.199121	0.8441
$D(\ln ECR_{t-1})$	-0.230247	0.165208	-1.393684	0.1780
ECM(-1)	-0.375461	0.169880	-2.210151	0.0383

R-squared = 0.771933; Adjusted R-squared = 0.668091; F-statistic = 2.805771;

Prob(F-statistic) = 0.022257; Durbin-Watson stat = 1.764875

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2024

(a) Interpretation of the Parameters/Coefficients: The result in Table 4.3 showed that foreign exchange reserve (FER) was positively affect by initial level of oil export (OEXP). This means that foreign exchange reserve (FER) will increase by 0.990439 given a unit increase in oil export (OEXP). However, the initial level of oil export (OEXP) was statistically significant, given that its p-value of 0.0000 was less than 0.05 at 5% level of significance and its t-statistic value of 5.643441 was greater than 1.96. Therefore, it can be inferred that oil export (OEXP) has a positive and significant effect on foreign exchange reserve (FER).

Also, the result in Table 4.3 revealed that initial level of non-oil export (NOEX) had a positive relationship with foreign exchange reserve (FER). This means that foreign

exchange reserve (FER) will increase by 0.447352 given a unit increase in non-oil export (NOEX). However, the initial level of non-oil export (NOEX) was statistically significant, given that its p-value of 0.0000 was less than 0.05 at 5% level of significance and its t-statistic value of 3.609211 was greater than 1.96. Therefore, it can be inferred that non-oil export (NOEX) had a positive and significant effect on foreign exchange reserve (FER).

Similarly, the table shows that foreign exchange reserve (FER) was positively affected by initial level of export diversification index (EDI). This means that foreign exchange reserve (FER) will increase by 0.516140 given a unit increase in export diversification index (EDI). However, the initial level of export diversification index (EDI) was statistically significant, given that its p-value of 0.0004 was less than 0.05 at 5% level of significant and its t-statistic value of 4.214929 was greater than 1.96. Therefore, it can be inferred that export diversification index (EDI) has a positive and significant effect on foreign exchange reserve (FER).

In addition, the table indicates that export concentration ratio (ECR) had a negative effect on foreign exchange reserve (FER). This means that foreign exchange reserve (FER) will decrease by 0.032187 given a unit increase in export concentration ratio (ECR). However, the initial level of export concentration ratio (ECR) was statistically insignificant, given that its p-value of 0.8441 was greater than 0.05 at 5% level of significant and its t-statistic value of 0.199121 was greater than 1.96. Therefore, it can be inferred that export concentration ratio (ECR) has a positive and significant effect on foreign exchange reserve (FER).

b. Interpretation of Adjusted R-Squared: From the empirical results of the ECM analysis presented in Table 4.3, the adjusted R-squared obtained was 0.668091. This implies that, if the coefficient of determination is adjusted, approximately sixty-seven percent (67%) of the changes in foreign exchange reserve are attributable to changes in oil export, non-oil export, export diversification index and export concentration ratio, while the remaining thirty-three percent (33%) of the variation in the model is equally captured by the error term (unknown factors outside the model).

c. Significance of Overall Parameter (Estimated Model): Overall parameter tests overall significance of the model at 5% level of significance and joint significant effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable. To determine this, we compare the prob (F-statistic value) with the alpha value of 0.05. From the ECM result, prob (F-statistic value) was 0.022257 while the alpha value was 0.05. However, since the prob(F-statistic) value was less than the alpha value, we therefore concluded that the model estimated was statistically significant. This also means that oil export, non-oil export, export diversification index and export concentration ratio have joint significant effects on foreign exchange reserve.

d. Interpretation of ECM Coefficient and P-Value: From the result of the ECM in Table 4.3 above, it is obvious that the coefficient of the error correction term was significant and negative. This indicates that the ECM will be effective in correcting any deviations from the long-run equilibrium. Also, the coefficient of the ECM at -0.375461 implies that the speed of adjustment to long-run equilibrium is 38% when any past deviation will be corrected in the present period. This means that foreign exchange reserve adjusts rather slowly to changes in oil export, non-oil export, export diversification index and export concentration ratio.

Post-estimation Tests

The post-estimation tests results are summarized in the table below.

Table 4.4: ECM Model Post-Estimation Tests

Test	Statistics	P-Value	Null Hypothesis	Decision
A. Serial Correlation	0.375286	0.6921	H₀: No serial correlation	Do not Reject H ₀
B. Functional Form	0.570367	0.4589	H₀: Correctly specified	Do not Reject H ₀
C. Normality	1.977906	0.3719	H₀: Normally Distributed	Do not Reject H ₀
D. Heteroskedasticity	1.655072	0.1587	H₀: Homoscedasticity	Do not Reject H ₀

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2024.

In conclusion, post-estimation test results in Table 4.4 provided evidence that all the variables (foreign exchange reserve, oil export, non-oil export, export diversification index and export concentration ratio) in the model conform to the basic assumptions of ordinary least squares estimation.

Discussion of Findings

Oil Export and International Liquidity in Nigeria

The positive value of oil export indicated that oil export had a positive effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria. Also, the p-value of oil export, which was less at five percent significance level ($P < 0.05$) indicated that oil export had significant effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria. This finding implies that oil export has significant positive effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis. This finding is in line with the a priori theoretical expectation. It is also in agreement with the finding of Oladosu, Ibeinmo and Lasisi (2023), which stated that oil export has a

significant and positive effect on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in both the short and the long run.

Non-Oil Export and International Liquidity in Nigeria

The positive value of non-oil export indicated that non-oil export had a positive effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria. Also, the p-value of non-oil export, which was less at five percent significance level ($P_v < 0.05$) indicated that non-oil export had a significant effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis. This finding is consistent with the a priori theoretical expectation. This finding suggests that non-oil export has significant positive effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria. This is in agreement with Aremu (2016), who claims that non-oil exports have positive and significant relationship with economic growth.

Export Diversification Index and International Liquidity in Nigeria

The positive value of export diversification index indicated that export diversification index had a positive effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria. Also, the p-value of export diversification index, which was less, at five percent significance level ($P_v < 0.05$) indicated that export diversification index had a significant effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis. This result is in line with the a priori theoretical expectation. It implies that export diversification index has significant positive effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria. This is in tandem with the finding of Onodugo, Ikpe and Anowor (2020), that export diversification index is capable of improving Gross Domestic Product in Nigeria.

Export Concentration Ratio and International Liquidity in Nigeria

The negative value of export concentration ratio revealed that export concentration ratio had a negative effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria. Also, the p-value of export concentration ratio, which was greater, at five percent significance level ($P_v > 0.05$), indicated that export concentration ratio had a non-significant effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria. Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis. This finding is not in line the a priori expectation. It implies that export concentration ratio has an insignificant negative effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria. This is supported by Imoughele and Ismaila (2015), who assert that export concentration ratio has a negative affect Gross Domestic Product in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Concluding Remarks

This study examined the effect of export diversification on international liquidity in Nigeria from 1990 to 2023. The error correction method was employed to measure how

the explanatory variables influenced foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria. Based on the findings, it is evident that oil export, non-oil export and export diversification index has a positive and significant impact on foreign exchange reserve, while export concentration ratio has negative and non-significant effect on foreign exchange reserve. It is thus concluded that export diversification plays a significant role in increasing and enhancing international liquidity in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and the conclusion drawn, the following are recommended:

- Since oil export has a positive and significant effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria, the Nigerian government should intensify efforts to diversify its export base by supporting non-oil sector activities, such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services. This can be achieved through targeted incentives, tax breaks and subsidized financing for non-oil exporters.
- Since non-oil export has a positive and significant effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria, government should invest in capacity-building initiatives, innovation and technological upgrades for non-oil export industries to improve product quality and global competitiveness.
- Since export diversification index has a positive and significant effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria, government and the monetary authorities should design policies and implement targeted policies to increase the variety of goods and services Nigeria exports, thereby improving the Export Diversification Index.
- Since export concentration ratio has a negative and non-significant effect on foreign exchange reserve in Nigeria, government should establish robust monitoring mechanisms to track and reduce the export concentration ratio, ensuring that export revenues are not overly reliant on a single commodity (such as crude oil).

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15**DIASPORA REMITTANCES, PRIVATE-SECTOR INVESTMENT AND URBAN POVERTY IN NIGERIA**

By

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&

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This study investigated the effects of diaspora remittances and private-sector investment on urban poverty rates in Nigeria over the period 1980 to 2022. Utilizing data sourced from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2023), the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2022), and the World Development Index (WDI, 2020), the research employed a variety of econometric methods to analyze the relationships between these variables. The Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) and Phillips-Perron (PP) unit root tests were applied to assess the stationarity of the variables. The Bound test was to ascertain co-integration as well as the long-term relationships between the variables. The Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) regression approach captured both short-term and long-term dynamics. The results revealed that, while both remittances and private-sector investment had a short-term impact on reducing urban poverty, their effects were not statistically significant in the long run. This suggests that, while these factors may offer temporary relief to households in urban areas, they do not provide sustained poverty alleviation over extended periods. In the light of these findings, the study proposes some policy recommendations aimed at maximizing the potential of remittances and private investment for poverty reduction in Nigeria. The study recommended improving the infrastructure and efficiency of remittance transfer systems to reduce transaction costs and enhance the overall flow of funds. Lowering the costs associated with sending remittances would increase the financial support households receive, thereby providing more immediate relief to urban families and helping to alleviate poverty in the short term. Addressing structural issues, such as inadequate infrastructure, inefficiencies and corruption, is crucial to creating a more conducive environment for investment. Policymakers could incentivize private-sector growth by offering tax incentives, strengthening property rights and streamlining regulations. These measures could stimulate job creation, foster business growth, and contribute to long-term poverty reduction.

Keywords: Diaspora Remittances, Poverty, Investment, Inflation

Introduction

Diaspora remittances play a vital role in alleviating poverty, enhancing living standards and stimulating consumer spending in countries that receive them (Abduvaliew & Bustillo, 2020) Financial transfers from diasporans serve as a powerful catalyst for

economic growth, driving higher levels of investment and boosting productivity within recipient nations. In Nigeria, remittances from its diasporans have grown to be an increasingly important contributor to the country's economic landscape. The influx of funds from Nigerians abroad has not only supported household income but also influenced key economic sectors, making remittances a central factor in Nigeria's broader development strategy (Anyanwu & Erhjakpo, 2010). Remittances play a crucial role not only by providing vital foreign exchange earnings but also by acting as a significant driver of economic growth and development. A 2023 report from Agosto & Co., a Pan-African credit rating agency and research firm, forecasted that remittance inflows to Nigeria will reach approximately \$26 billion by 2025. This projected growth is expected to be strengthened by improved economic conditions in developed economies, which will, in turn, increase the income and savings capacity of Nigerians living abroad. The rising flow of remittances is likely to provide a substantial boost to Nigeria's economy, enhancing financial stability and creating opportunities for further development.

In 2021, Nigeria held the position of the second-largest recipient of remittances in Africa, receiving an estimated \$20.1 billion in diaspora transfers (Agusto & Co, 2023). This placed Nigeria just behind Egypt, which topped the continent with \$28.3 billion in remittance inflows. The substantial flow of remittances into Nigeria has become a crucial element of the nation's economic framework, playing a vital role in supporting household income levels. Additionally, these financial inflows contribute significantly to the overall economic stability of the country, providing a steady source of foreign exchange and bolstering domestic consumption and investment. Remittances play a crucial role in strengthening the economies of many developing nations, contributing significantly to poverty alleviation initiatives (Adams, 2014). In Nigeria, remittances from the diaspora have been instrumental in reducing poverty and offering support to families and communities. According to Agyei (2022), financial transfers help improve household living standards by increasing consumption levels, which, in turn, stimulates local economies.

Furthermore, remittances contribute to the country's broader development by fostering investment in key sectors, such as education and healthcare. The increased spending made possible by these funds not only boosts individual households but also supports overall economic growth, creating a ripple effect that drives social and economic progress across the nation. The inflow of remittances to Nigeria is expected to continue growing, reinforcing the importance of remittances as a critical source of income for many households and individuals across the country.

Beyond their direct economic impact, Nigerians living abroad also play a significant role in the nation's development. A large proportion of the diaspora consists of highly skilled and educated individuals, many of whom possess expertise in key sectors, such as education, healthcare and technology. These migrants have the potential to make

substantial contributions to the country's progress. By actively engaging with the diasporans, Nigeria can leverage their knowledge, skills and financial resources to foster sustainable development, driving innovation and improvement across various sectors of the economy.

Diaspora remittances to Nigeria have consistently shown an upward trajectory over the years, although the true extent of these inflows is likely underreported. A significant portion of the remittances originates from the large Nigerian diaspora community scattered across the globe. Given this, it is important to question whether the reported figures accurately reflect the full-scale of remittance activity from Nigerians abroad over the past decade. A publication by Financial Nigeria on January 6, 2021, highlighted the widely-held belief that the official data on diaspora remittances to Nigeria is significantly underreported. This discrepancy arises because a substantial amount of the remittance funds bypasses formal channels, leading to the underreporting of actual inflows. Consequently, the figures presented in official reports often fail to capture the true volume of remittances, resulting in inaccuracies due to the methods used for estimation. In its December 29, 2023 brief, the World Bank noted that, in countries with exchange controls creating a significant disparity between official and parallel exchange rates, migrants frequently opt to send a portion of their remittances through informal channels, as these offer more favourable exchange rates. According to Financial Nigeria (FN, 2024), inaccurate data on remittances is compounded by factors such as the role of International Money Transfer Operators (IMTOs). These operators receive remittance inflows in foreign currencies—primarily US dollars, British pounds, and euros—into offshore accounts. However, recipients in Nigeria are paid in naira at exchange rates set by the IMTOs, which are usually lower than those in the parallel market.

Given the identified shortcomings, do diaspora remittances actually reduce urban poverty in Nigeria? To what extent do private investments reduce the intensity and spread of poverty among urban dwellers. It is based on the foregoing that this study seeks to answer the question as to the extent diaspora remittances and private-sector investment have contributed to urban poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Literature Review

The Microfinance Theory of Diaspora Remittances revolves around the idea of leveraging the financial resources of the diaspora community to foster economic development in their home countries. This concept is grounded in the belief that migrants, who often leave their countries in search of better opportunities, possess a higher level of economic capacity and a greater willingness to invest in their countries of origin compared to other foreign investors. Unlike external investors who may be driven by profit motives, migrants are often personally interested in improving the well-being of their families and communities back home.

The theory posits that remittances, which are the funds sent by diaspora members to their families or communities, can play a crucial role in driving poverty reduction and supporting economic growth in developing nations. These financial transfers not only provide immediate relief to households but also have the potential to stimulate broader economic expansion by contributing to sectors such as education, healthcare and small businesses. As a result, diaspora remittances are seen as a powerful tool for empowering local economies and promoting long-term development in the countries from which migrants originate. The World Bank has observed that diaspora remittances have become a significant external source of funding for less-developed economies, surpassing other well-known forms of financial inflows, such as foreign direct investment (FDI) and official development assistance (ODA). These remittance flows have emerged as a crucial financial lifeline, contributing more substantially to the economies of many developing countries than other traditional forms of international financial support.

The Microfinance Theory of Diaspora Remittances emphasizes the transformative potential of these financial transfers. It suggests that, rather than simply providing immediate household support, remittances can be strategically channelled into productive and sustainable investments that contribute to long-term economic development. This approach can lead to meaningful improvements in various sectors, from small businesses and entrepreneurship to education and healthcare. By directing remittances into such investments, countries can stimulate economic growth and make significant strides towards poverty reduction, ultimately fostering a more resilient and self-sustaining economy.

Research has consistently demonstrated that remittances from the diaspora community play a significant role in reducing poverty, promoting economic growth and enhancing financial inclusion in their countries of origin. These financial transfers support individual households and have broader positive effects on national economies. For example, in nations such as Mexico, the Philippines and Haiti, remittances are a major contributor to both GDP and household income, helping to stabilize and expand these economies (Ratha, 2015). In many of these countries, remittances provide a vital source of income for millions of families, enabling them to meet basic needs, invest in education and healthcare, and even support entrepreneurial activities. As such, remittances have become a crucial tool for fostering economic resilience and promoting development in these and other developing nations.

Empirical Literature

Agyei (2022) investigated the socio-economic effects of remittances in Ghana, highlighting their dual impact on both macroeconomic growth and the intensification of social inequalities at the micro level. Using a combination of multiple linear regressions,

socio-political analysis and mixed-methods research, the study analyzed how remittances affect Ghana's GDP per capita, inequality trends and broader development policies.

Ekanayake and Moslares (2020) explored the relationship between workers' remittances, economic growth and poverty in 21 Latin American countries. The study utilized annual data from these countries spanning from 1980 to 2018. To analyze the causal effects of remittances on economic growth and poverty, the researchers applied Panel Regression Analysis (PRA) and the Fully Modified Ordinary Least Squares (FMOLS) approach. The central premise of the study is that workers' remittances have a significant impact on reducing poverty and driving economic growth, particularly in developing nations. Remittances play a key role in supporting the economies of Latin American countries, which are major destinations for migrant labour. The study hypothesized that remittances stimulate economic progress by boosting household consumption, investment and savings. Additionally, these remittances help reduce poverty by providing households with additional income for essential needs, such as food, healthcare and education.

Similarly, Abduvaliev and Bustillo (2019) conducted a study examining the impact of remittance flows on economic development and poverty reduction in 10 post-Soviet countries that are part of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Their research presented important findings, measuring the effects of total remittances on per capita GDP and the severity of poverty, while comparing these effects to those of other key external sources of capital inflows, such as foreign aid and foreign direct investment.

Tsaurai (2018) argues that remittances can significantly contribute to reducing poverty in labour-exporting countries. This optimistic perspective is based on the idea that remittances provide households with extra income, which can be used to enhance living standards. This increase in income typically leads to higher consumption and investment, which, in turn, stimulates economic growth and helps lift people out of poverty. However, Tsaurai (2018) also cautions that remittances could create a dependency syndrome, where recipient countries become overly reliant on these inflows, neglecting other important sources of income and economic growth.

Faiza and Mohd (2017) propose a theory that examines the impact of remittances on poverty reduction in Indonesia. According to their theory, an increase in income, driven by remittances, significantly improves the economic well-being of migrant households. This boost in income allows migrants to send money back home through conventional channels, such as banks or financial institutions. The remittances received by households in Indonesia can then be utilized to meet essential needs, invest in education, and fund productive ventures, ultimately enhancing the overall economic stability and prospects of the household.

Further, Azam (2016) conducted an extensive study on the impact of foreign remittances on poverty reduction, analyzing data from 156 countries between 1990 and 2014, including developed and developing nations. Using a panel model approach, the researchers examined the relationship between remittances and poverty levels, considering factors such as economic growth, education, trade and governance that could influence poverty rates. Their findings revealed that foreign remittances have a direct and statistically significant effect on reducing poverty, particularly in higher-income countries. The study showed that a 1% increase in remittances as a share of GDP led to a 0.24% reduction in the poverty headcount rate. One key channel through which remittances contribute to poverty reduction is boosting household income, which can be spent on essential needs, like healthcare, food and education, directly improving living standards and lowering poverty levels.

Nweke and Nyewusira (2015) propose a theory that underscores the transformative role of the African diaspora in advancing Africa's development. They highlight how the diaspora's presence in global economic and political centres can be harnessed to tackle key developmental challenges, such as poverty reduction. Using Group Theory as their analytical framework, they explored how the collective efforts of the diaspora can shape public policies and improve the socio-economic well-being of Africa.

Moreover, Barguelli and Zmami (2013) enhance understanding of the complex relationship between economic growth and the volume of total remittances. By categorizing countries according to their dependency on remittances and the scale of inflows, their research underscored the varying impacts remittances have on economic conditions. The study highlighted the need for policy frameworks that effectively channel remittance use towards national development objectives, particularly in areas like education and human capital development, to fully harness the growth potential of remittance inflows.

In the same vein, Acharya and Leon-gonzalez (2013) provide a comprehensive analysis of the conditional effects of remittances on poverty rates and inequalities, examining how these outcomes are influenced by factors such as the duration, scale and maturity of migration, as well as the extent to which lower-income households are involved in the migration process. Their findings highlighted the dual impact of remittances: while they can substantially alleviate poverty, they may also exacerbate inequality in specific situations. The study employed national and regional simulations to assess the broader socio-economic consequences of remittances, offering valuable insights into their complex role in shaping economic dynamics.

Anyanwu and Erhijakpor (2010) conducted a study examining the effect of foreign remittances on poverty reduction in selected African countries. Their research focused on

the growing inflow of remittances to less developed economies and explored the transformative role these funds play in recipient nations. The study covered 33 African countries between 1990 and 2005, using a panel dataset to analyze how remittances—measured as a share of GDP—affect various aspects of poverty. Through the use of advanced econometric methods to address potential endogeneity, the authors make a strong case for the significant poverty-reducing impact of remittances.

Brown and Jimenez (2008) focused on studying the impact of remittances on poverty reduction and income inequality by analyzing household data from Fiji and Tonga. Their research explored how remittances affect income distribution and poverty levels, with a particular emphasis on the methodological rigour of counterfactual scenarios. The findings indicated that remittances play a significant role in reducing poverty but have an unclear impact on income inequality. The study underscored the importance of factors such as reliance on remittances and migration history in influencing these outcomes.

Additionally, Pernia (2006) provides an in-depth analysis of how remittances affect household well-being, income distribution and regional development in labour-sending countries, particularly focusing on the Philippines. His study examined the dual role of remittances as both a crucial source of economic support for low-income households and a factor contributing to unequal benefits across different income groups. It also shed light on the personal sacrifices involved in migration. By employing a robust econometric approach and incorporating data on regional remittance patterns, Pernia offers valuable insights into the socio-economic effects of international migration.

Method of Analysis

This study estimated the urban Poverty Rate (URb POV) as the dependent variable, while considering various explanatory factors, such as Diaspora Total Remittance (REM), Private-sector Investment (PRI INV), Exchange Rate (EXR) and Inflation Rate (INF). The model was based on the framework established by Ekanayake & Moslares (2020), which posits that diaspora remittances impact urban poverty through foreign direct investment, exchange rates and total remittances. The model incorporated additional variables—namely inflation rate and private-sector investment—which are crucial for understanding the broader economic context in urban areas. The modified model thus provides a more comprehensive approach to analyzing the factors influencing urban poverty rates. The estimates from the model are presented as follows:

$$\text{URB POV} = [a_0 (\text{REM})^{a1} (\text{PRI INV})^{a2} (\text{EXR})^{a3} (\text{INF})^{a4}] \quad 3.1$$

Transforming equations 3.1 into mathematical and econometric models

$$\text{URBPOV}_t = \delta_0 + \delta_1 \text{REM}_t + \delta_2 \text{PRV INV} + \delta_3 \text{EXR}_t + \delta_4 \text{INF}_t + \mu_t \quad 3.2$$

A priori expectations: $\delta_2, \delta_3 < 0$ and $\delta_4 > 0$

Logging equations 3.2 for linearity

$$\text{URB POV} = \delta_0 + \delta_1 \ln \text{REM} + \delta_2 \ln \text{PRI INV} + \delta_3 \text{EXR} + \delta_4 \text{INF} + e \quad 3.3$$

Results

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics of the Model

	URB POV	REM	PRV INV	INF	EXR
Mean	42.06	8.78×10^9	8.68×10^{12}	18.95	115.66
Median	41.35	1.26×10^9	8.32×10^{12}	12.95	114.90
Maximum	63.00	2.43×10^9	1.58×10^{12}	72.84	425.98
Minimum	18.00	2424527.00	5.67×10^{12}	5.39	0.62
Std. Dev.	12.40	9.82×10^9	1.97×10^{12}	16.46	119.18
Skewness	0.07	0.35	1.21	1.88	1.03
Kurtosis	2.18	1.22	5.48	5.44	3.23
J-B	1.22	6.40	20.94	35.07	7.45
Probability	0.54	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.02
Obs.	42	42	42	42	42

Source: Result from E-view 12

The mean and median values were notably high, largely due to the substantial scale of private sector investment, which is measured in trillions. The mean and median figures for remittances reflected substantial inflows, though with significant variation. The average inflation rate, based on the mean and median values, was approximately 18.95%, with some fluctuation around this average. Similarly, the mean and median values indicated that the exchange rate was approximately 115.66 units of the domestic currency per unit of international currency.

Table 4.2: Results of the Unit Root Test

Variables	ADF Calculated Values		Table Values	PP Calculated Value		Table Values	I(d)
	Level	1 st -Diff.		Level	1 st -Diff.		
URB POV	-2.0705	- 3.9366***	-2.9350	-2.0441	- 3.8749***	- 2.9350	I(1)
REM	-0.9402	- 6.5315***	-2.9350	-0.9402	- 6.5315***	- 2.9350	I(1)
PRV INV	-2.2545	- 5.2705***	-2.9350	- 3.4775**	- 5.9602***	- 2.9350	I(1)
INF	- 3.0505**	- 6.6370***	-2.9350	- 2.9986**	- 10.6843**	- 2.9350	I(0)
EXR	-2.1588	- 5.4350***	-2.9350	-2.5471	- 5.8485***	- 2.9350	I(1)

Source: Result from E-view 12

This approach strengthened the reliability of the study's results and bolstered the credibility of its conclusions. Key variables, including URBAN Poverty Rate (URB POV), Remittances (REM) and Exchange Rate (EXR), were found to be integrated at I(1), meaning that their first differences are stationary. This implies that these variables have a short-term relationship and are unlikely to return to their original equilibrium or mean levels after experiencing a shock or disruption. On the contrary, the inflation rate (INF) was integrated at I(0), indicating that it is stationary at its level and does not require differencing to achieve stationarity. This distinction between the variables provides valuable insight into their dynamic behaviours and relationships over time.

Table 4.3: Cointegration Result of the Model of Urban Poverty and Remittances in Nigeria

F-Bounds Test		HO: No Long run relationship		
Test Statistic	Value	Significant.	I(0)	I(1)
F-statistic	2.887432	10%	2.2	3.09
K	4	5%	2.56	3.49
		2.5%	2.88	3.87
		1%	3.29	4.37

Source: Result from E-view 12

The cointegration analysis indicated that there was no statistically significant long-term relationship between urban poverty and remittances in Nigeria. This suggested that fluctuations or changes in one of these variables did not show a consistent, correlated pattern with changes in the other over extended periods. Such a finding offers valuable insights into the interplay between poverty levels and remittance flows, highlighting that the two factors do not exhibit a direct, lasting connection in the Nigerian context. This result can play a crucial role in shaping policy decisions aimed at poverty alleviation and economic progress. Specifically, it implies that poverty should be addressed through short-term strategies and interventions, as there is no substantial long-term link between poverty and remittance inflows to guide a broader, long-range approach.

Table 4.4a: Static or Long-run Model of the Relationship among Urban Poverty, Remittance and Private Investment in Nigeria, 1981 to 2022

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	-147.7683	310.3432	-0.476145	0.6377
LOG(REM)	-3.505899	2.027023	-1.729580	0.0947
LOG(PRV INV)	-13.82610	32.19157	-0.429494	0.6709
LOG(EXR)	9.884762**	4.207942	2.349073	0.0261
INF	-0.019971	0.138230	-0.144476	0.8862

Source: Result from E-view 12

Table 4.4b: ECM Model of the Relationship between Urban Poverty, Remittance and Private Investment in Nigeria, 1981 to 2022

Dependent Variable: D(URB POV)				
ECM Regression				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	-147.7683	36.35887	-4.064162	0.0004
@TREND	-0.850478	0.221199	-3.844862	0.0006
D(URB POV(-1))	0.468444	0.142350	3.290796	0.0027
D(REM)	-0.521732	0.185041	-2.819539	0.0087
DLOG(PRV INV)	11.52839	5.253357	2.194481	0.0367
DLOG(PRV INV(-1))	-8.797283	4.487989	-1.960184	0.0600
ECT(-1)	-0.346733	0.085361	-4.061971	0.0004
Model Diagnostics				
R-squared	0.493802	Adjusted R-squared		0.398890
Schwarz criterion	5.873496	Akaike info criterion		5.574908
F-statistic	5.202722***	Durbin-Watson stat		2.102595

Source: Result from E-view 12

Tables 4.4a and 4.4b present the results of the ARDL (Autoregressive Distributed Lag) static model and the Error Correction equation, which are pivotal for understanding the complex relationships between fluctuations in the Urban Poverty Rate (POV), Remittances and Private Investment in Nigeria. These tables offer a comprehensive analysis of how these key variables interacted over both the short and long term. Additionally, the inclusion of inflation and exchange rate as control variables enhanced the depth of the analysis, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of how these external factors influence the relationships between the primary variables under study. This approach helped to contextualize the effects of remittances and private investment on urban poverty by accounting for broader economic conditions that could impact the dynamics at play.

The moderateness of the model is demonstrated by the R-Square value of 0.493802 and an Adjusted R-Square of 0.398890, both of which highlight the model's capacity to reliably account for a substantial portion of the variability in the dependent variables. These statistical measures provide strong evidence of the model's effectiveness in capturing the key relationships and dynamics within the data. Furthermore, the careful selection of this model, which was based on the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), reflects a rigorous and methodologically sound approach to model selection. The choice of AIC over other alternative criteria emphasizes the study's commitment to employing the most reliable and efficient method to ensure the robustness and accuracy of the

analysis. This thorough methodological process enhances the credibility and validity of the findings, ensuring that the conclusions drawn from the model are both trustworthy and well-supported.

Moreover, the Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.102595, which exceeded the R-Square value of 0.493802, suggested that there was no issue of spurious correlation in the model. This finding further strengthened the credibility of the model's results. The absence of spurious relationships is crucial, as such false correlations can lead to misleading interpretations, undermining the relevance and usefulness of the analysis for policymakers and stakeholders. Additionally, while the Adjusted R-Square of 0.398890 was slightly lower than the R-Square of 0.493802, it still fell within an acceptable range, reaffirming the model's strong explanatory power. This insight is particularly valuable for policymakers, as it offers evidence-based perspectives on the key factors influencing poverty rates, remittance flows, and private investment, thereby guiding more informed and effective decision-making for promoting sustainable economic development in Nigeria. Finally, the significance of the statistic value of 5.202722 further emphasizes the overall statistical significance of the model, confirming its reliability and robustness in explaining the relationships under investigation.

Conclusion

We found that a one-unit increase in remittances is associated with a reduction of about 3.505899 units in the change in the urban poverty rate, assuming all other factors remain constant. However, it is crucial to highlight that this coefficient is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), indicating that changes in remittances may not have a meaningful or long-term effect on variations in the urban poverty rate in Nigeria. Remittances play a vital role in household finances. While there is a general association between increases in remittances and a decrease in the poverty rate, this effect lacks statistical significance, suggesting that other factors may influence this relationship. Economically, remittances can help alleviate poverty by supplementing household income for needs, such as consumption, education, healthcare and investment. However, the absence of statistical significance implies that additional variables, not captured in the model, might impact the link between remittances and poverty rates. Despite this, the negative coefficient supports the theoretical idea that remittances can reduce poverty in Nigeria. The lack of long-term significance is consistent with the cointegration analysis, which showed no enduring relationship between poverty and remittances in the country. Therefore, the insignificance of this finding aligns with the broader context of our analysis.

Recommendations

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

- Since remittances positively improve poverty levels of Nigeria in the short term, there is need to improve the infrastructure for remittance transfers to reduce costs and increase efficiency. By making it easier and cheaper for Nigerians abroad to send money home, households can receive more financial support, helping to alleviate short-term poverty and boost household income stability in the long term.
- Policy makers should adopt a multifaceted approach to poverty reduction. While remittances and private investment can contribute to poverty alleviation, they should not be viewed as panaceas. Efforts should also focus on improving the broader economic environment by enhancing the quality of education, healthcare and infrastructure.
- Social protection programmes that support vulnerable populations, especially in urban areas, could help mitigate the negative effects of poverty in the short term. A more integrated policy framework that addresses both immediate needs and long-term structural challenges is essential to achieving sustainable poverty reduction in Nigeria.
- Promote private investment with structural reforms: Implement policies that attract and sustain private investment by addressing structural constraints, such as inadequate infrastructure, bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption. Incentives, like tax breaks, improved property rights, and streamlined regulatory processes, can stimulate private-sector growth, creating jobs and reducing poverty in the long term.
- Comparative studies across different regions of Nigeria are necessary to explore regional variations in the effects of remittances and private investment on poverty. This can help identify region-specific factors and tailor interventions to local contexts for more effective poverty reduction.

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16**PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMALL & MEDIUM SCALE ENTERPRISE
GROWTH IN NIGERIA: ADDRESSING CRITICAL ISSUES AND
BRIDGING INTERVENTION GAPS****By****Faith U. Onunaka, Ogechi E. Alpheaus, Abbah O. Eke,****&****John U. Ihendinihu**

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1.0 Preamble

Entrepreneurship and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a vital role in economic development, serving as engines of job creation, innovation and poverty reduction. In Nigeria, SMEs contribute significantly to GDP and employment, yet they face numerous challenges, including limited access to finance, infrastructural deficiencies and regulatory bottlenecks.

This chapter provides an in-depth exploration of the key issues affecting the growth of SMEs in Nigeria, assessing existing interventions, policy gaps and practical solutions for sustainable entrepreneurship development. Through theoretical insights, empirical evidence and real-world case studies, readers will gain a comprehensive understanding of how to foster a more supportive environment for SMEs and entrepreneurship in Nigeria.

2.0 Background Information

Entrepreneurship and SMEs are widely recognized as critical drivers of economic development, job creation and innovation, particularly in developing economies, such as Nigeria. According to World Bank (2022), SMEs are the backbone of the Nigerian economy, playing an essential role in urban and rural development. SMEs account for an estimated 96% of all businesses in Nigeria, employing over 84% of the national workforce and contributing approximately 49% to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021; Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria, 2022).

However, despite the critical role SMEs play in Nigeria's economic framework, they continue to face multifaceted challenges that hinder their growth, sustainability and ability to scale. Among the most significant barriers are limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, weak regulatory environments and inadequate market access.

The challenge of financing is particularly pervasive, with many SMEs unable to obtain the capital necessary for expansion due to high interest rates, stringent collateral requirements and the complexity of securing loans. In addition, poor infrastructure, particularly in the areas of electricity, transportation and digital connectivity, imposes severe constraints on their operations, reducing productivity and limiting their ability to compete both domestically and internationally.

While various interventions have been implemented to address these challenges, such as government initiatives, like the National Enterprise Development Programme (NEDEP) and the establishment of microfinance banks, persistent gaps remain in addressing the systemic issues that hinder the growth of SMEs. These interventions, although valuable, have yet to deliver the desired comprehensive impact due to inadequate execution, insufficient coordination and a lack of long-term sustainability. As such, there is an urgent need for more targeted, innovative and sustainable solutions that can address the unique challenges faced by Nigerian SMEs and promote an enabling environment conducive to entrepreneurship and business growth.

This essay critically assesses the key challenges confronting SMEs in Nigeria, evaluates the effectiveness of existing interventions, identifies gaps in policy and practice, and proposes strategic solutions aimed at fostering a more supportive ecosystem for entrepreneurship and SME development. By addressing these issues comprehensively, it is possible to unlock the full potential of Nigeria's SMEs sector, thereby fostering sustainable economic growth, creating employment opportunities and contributing to the broader goal of national economic development.

3.0 Critical Issues Affecting SMEs in Nigeria

Access to Finance

A major constraint to the development of SMEs in Nigeria is the limited access to finance. Many SMEs struggle to secure funding due to high interest rates, stringent collateral requirements and inadequate financial literacy among entrepreneurs (Okonkwo & Adegbite, 2021). According to Ayuba and Zubairu (2021), many entrepreneurs struggle to secure loans due to high interest rates, stringent collateral requirements and the risk-averse nature of financial institutions. A report by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2022) revealed that only about 15% of SMEs in Nigeria have access to formal credit facilities. This lack of financial access impedes the ability of SMEs to scale operations, invest in new technologies and enhance productivity.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) introduced various intervention funds, including the SME Credit Guarantee Scheme (SMECGS) and the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Fund (MSMEDF). However, access to these funds remains

limited due to bureaucratic bottlenecks and inadequate awareness among business owners (CBN, 2022).

Microfinance institutions, commercial banks, and government-backed funding schemes have attempted to bridge this gap, but the impact remains minimal due to inefficiencies in fund disbursement and bureaucratic bottlenecks. Alternative financing models, such as venture capital, angel investment and crowdfunding remain underdeveloped in Nigeria, further constraining financial accessibility for SMEs. Adeosun and Shittu (2021) highlight that the lack of venture capital and angel investors further exacerbates financial constraints. Additionally, commercial banks in Nigeria require collateral of up to 150% of the loan amount, making it difficult for SMEs to secure credit (Nwokah & Ahiauzu, 2020). This financial exclusion stifles innovation, limits scalability and impedes the overall growth of SMEs.

Infrastructural Deficiencies

Infrastructure plays a crucial role in business development, yet Nigerian SMEs operate under severe infrastructural constraints. Power supply remains erratic, forcing businesses to rely on expensive generators and limited access to digital connectivity increases operational costs and reduces competitiveness by an estimated 30% (World Bank, 2022). Poor road networks and inefficient transport systems limit market accessibility and increase the cost of logistics (Adebayo & Yusuf, 2021). Internet penetration and digital infrastructure, essential for modern business operations, remain underdeveloped in rural areas, further limiting the growth potential of SMEs. A survey carried out by the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN, 2022) revealed that 70% of SMEs rely on alternative power sources, such as generators, which significantly inflate production costs. Poor road networks also hamper the movement of goods and services, resulting in delays and increased logistics expenses (UNDP, 2023). Consequently, SMEs in Nigeria struggle to compete with their counterparts in other emerging economies with better infrastructure (Eze & Nwachukwu, 2022).

Regulatory and Policy Challenges

In Nigeria, SMEs operate in a complex and often hostile regulatory environment characterized by multiple taxation, excessive bureaucratic processes and inconsistent policies (Eneh, 2020). Multiple and arbitrary taxations discourage entrepreneurship, forcing many businesses into the informal sector, where they miss out on government incentives and financial support (Ajayi, 2021).

Complex and inconsistent regulatory environment in Nigeria impedes the ease of doing business. Multiple taxation, bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption create an unfriendly business climate (Etuk et al., 2021). According to the World Bank's Ease of

Doing Business Report (2023), Nigeria ranked 131st out of 190 economies, highlighting the difficulties in business registration, obtaining permits and tax compliance.

The Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) has made efforts to simplify business registration through online platforms. However, regulatory burdens, such as excessive licensing fees, cumbersome tax regimes and inconsistent policies still discourage the participation of SMEs in the formal sector (Ogunleye & Adebayo, 2022). A fragmented regulatory framework further creates uncertainty, limiting investments and discouraging entrepreneurship (IMF, 2023).

Skill and Capacity Deficiencies

Many Nigerian entrepreneurs lack the managerial, financial and technical skills necessary for business success. A study by Nwosu and Oladipo (2021) found that 60% of owners of SMEs in Nigeria have no formal business training, resulting in poor financial management, inadequate marketing strategies and suboptimal business decision-making. Training programmes provided by government agencies and private-sector actors have attempted to address this gap but often lack scalability and sustainability (Ibrahim & Akinbode, 2023).

Many Nigerian SMEs suffer from poor managerial skills and inadequate technical expertise. Limited entrepreneurial education leads to inefficient business operations and poor decision-making (Adeosun & Shittu, 2021). A study by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO, 2022) found that 60% of the failure of SMEs in Nigeria stem from inadequate business planning and financial mismanagement.

The lack of digital literacy and e-commerce integration further restricts the expansion of SMEs into global markets. In the post-pandemic digital economy, many businesses struggle to leverage technology for efficiency and market penetration (Nwokah & Ahiauzu, 2020). Bridging the skill gap through targeted capacity-building initiatives is crucial for fostering resilience and growth of SMEs.

4.0 Existing Interventions and Their Limitations

Numerous government and private-sector initiatives aim to support SMEs in Nigeria. However, these interventions face implementation challenges and fail to yield the desired impact.

Financial Support Programs

Many initiatives, including the CBN's SME Credit Guarantee Scheme and the Bank of Industry (BOI) SME Loan Programme, aim to improve financial access for SMEs. However, access remains limited due to poor awareness, bureaucratic hurdles and high interest rates (Olawale, 2022). Fintech solutions, such as digital lending platforms, have begun to

fill this gap, but their reach is still constrained by low digital literacy among owners of SMEs (Akinyemi, 2023).

Capacity Building and Training Initiatives

Government agencies, such as the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), and NGOs have implemented entrepreneurship training programmes, but many lack practical applicability and are not tailored to industry-specific needs. There is a growing need for mentorship and incubator programmes that provide hands-on experience and business networking opportunities (SMEDAN, 2021).

Policy Reforms and Regulatory Interventions

Recent reforms, including the enactment of the Finance Act 2021, have sought to ease the tax burden on SMEs by introducing exemptions and simplified tax structures. However, policy inconsistencies and implementation challenges continue to deter the growth of SMEs (Adedayo, 2023). The Ease of Doing Business Reforms introduced by the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) has improved business registration. However, taxation and licensing processes remain cumbersome (World Bank, 2023).

5.0 Empirical Review

Adebayo and Yusuf (2025) examined the impact of entrepreneurial research and development on the growth of SMEs in selected states in Nigeria. The study revealed that increased engagement in research and development significantly enhances competitiveness and expansion of SMEs. The study suggested that SMEs should invest in R&D initiatives to drive innovation and long-term growth.

Ibrahim and Musa (2025) explored entrepreneurial orientation as a driver of sustainability in Nigerian SMEs. The findings showed that entrepreneurial traits such as innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking contribute to business sustainability. The study recommended that SMEs should cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset to achieve long-term success and resilience.

Similarly, Ojo and Oladipo (2024) examined the impact of innovation and business support services on the growth and development of SMEs. The study revealed that access to business support services and a strong innovation culture positively influenced the success of SMEs. The study recommended that SMEs should leverage available support programmes and prioritize innovation to improve their growth prospects.

Okoye and Eze (2024) explored the influential factors affecting the growth of SMEs in developed and developing economies. The findings indicated that access to finance, quality infrastructure, supportive regulatory frameworks and strong managerial capabilities are key determinants of the success of SMEs. The study recommended that

policymakers should focus on improving these areas to support sustainable SME development.

Moreover, Nwankwo and Okeke (2023) explored the sustainability and determinants of entrepreneurship propensity among Nigerian graduates. The study identified access to finance, entrepreneurial education and mentorship as key drivers of entrepreneurship among graduates. It recommended improving financial access, expanding entrepreneurial education and increasing mentorship opportunities to encourage more graduates to become entrepreneurs.

Eze and Chinedu-Eze (2023) examined the Nigerian entrepreneurial ecosystem and its impact on MSMEs' transformational entrepreneurship. The study identified gaps in policy coherence, infrastructure and access to finance as major barriers to the growth of SMEs. The study recommended developing coherent policies, improving infrastructure and enhancing access to finance to foster entrepreneurial success.

Further, Afolabi (2022) examined lean entrepreneurship and SMEs' practices in a post-COVID-19 economy in Nigeria. The study revealed that adopting lean entrepreneurship practices helped SMEs improve operational efficiency and resilience during the pandemic. It recommended that SMEs should implement lean strategies to enhance adaptability and efficiency in uncertain economic conditions.

Adeosun and Shittu (2021) investigated learning and innovation in youth-owned small businesses. The study found that entrepreneurial self-efficacy and continuous learning positively impacted innovation in youth-owned SMEs. The study emphasized the importance of fostering a culture of continuous learning and mentorship to enhance entrepreneurial success among young business owners.

Ogunode and Oloyede (2020), examined entrepreneurship marketing and the performance of SMEs in Nigeria. The study revealed that entrepreneurial marketing significantly influenced the growth of SMEs, but many businesses still relied on traditional marketing methods, limiting their reach and competitiveness. The study highlighted the need for SMEs to adopt modern marketing technologies and strategies to enhance their market presence and overall performance.

Lastly, Etuk, Etuk and Michael (2020) examined the role of SMEs in Nigeria's economic development. The study found that SMEs contributed significantly to job creation and economic growth but faced challenges such as inadequate financing and poor infrastructure. The study recommended addressing financing constraints and improving infrastructure to enhance the contributions of SMES to economic development.

6.0 Bridging the Gaps: Practical Solutions

i. Enhanced Access to Finance

- **Targeted Financial Products:** Financial institutions should develop more loan products that offer lower interest rates, flexible repayment plans and minimal collateral requirements. Tailoring financial products to the needs of SMEs will reduce the barriers that prevent many entrepreneurs from accessing capital.
- **Development of Venture Capital and Angel Investor Networks:** Establishing and expanding venture capital and angel investor networks specifically for SMEs can provide the equity financing necessary for start-ups and growth-stage companies. These networks should also offer mentorship and business development support to enhance the capacity of SMEs.
- **Microfinance and Credit Guarantee Schemes:** Strengthening microfinance institutions and integrating credit guarantee schemes can provide SMEs with the necessary financial support, particularly for small businesses that may not qualify for traditional bank loans.

ii. Infrastructure Development

- **Improved Electricity Supply:** One of the most critical constraints for Nigerian SMEs is unreliable power supply. The government should prioritize investments in power infrastructure and encourage public-private partnerships to ensure a more stable and affordable electricity supply. This would reduce operational costs and improve productivity.
- **Expansion of Transportation and Logistics Networks:** Improving road networks, ports, and transportation infrastructure is crucial for ensuring the smooth movement of goods and services. Efficient transportation systems would reduce delays, lower operational costs and enable SMEs to expand their market reach.
- **Expansion of Digital Connectivity:** The government and private sector should collaborate to expand Internet infrastructure and digital platforms in urban and rural areas. Providing affordable, reliable Internet access can unlock opportunities for SMEs to engage in e-commerce and online marketing, leading to access to global markets.

iii. Regulatory and Policy Reforms

- **Streamlining Business Registration and Taxation Systems:** Simplifying the process for business registration, licensing and tax compliance will reduce the bureaucratic hurdles that SMEs face. An efficient one-stop shop for business registration and a clear, transparent tax system will encourage more individuals to start and formalize their businesses.

- ***Tax Incentives for SMEs:*** The government should introduce targeted tax incentives, such as tax breaks for new SMEs or reduced taxes for businesses that demonstrate growth and job creation. This would allow SMEs to retain more capital for reinvestment into their operations.
- ***Protection of Intellectual Property (IP):*** Strengthening IP laws and enforcement mechanisms can encourage innovation among SMEs. By protecting their inventions, trademarks and patents, SMEs can secure their competitive edge in the marketplace.

iv. Capacity building and Entrepreneurial Education

- ***Skills Development and Entrepreneurial Training:*** Establishing and expanding educational programmes focused on entrepreneurial skills, financial management, digital marketing and innovation are essential. These programmes should be designed for both aspiring entrepreneurs and existing business owners to enhance their business acumen and operational effectiveness.
- ***Partnerships with Universities and Incubators:*** Collaboration among universities, research institutions and business incubators can provide SMEs with access to research, new technologies and innovation support. These partnerships can also help SMEs in product development, design and commercialization.
- ***Mentorship and Networking Opportunities:*** Building a robust mentorship ecosystem where experienced entrepreneurs, investors and business professionals guide SMEs through challenges can significantly improve the survival and success rates of SMEs. Networking events, workshops and digital platforms can connect SMEs with mentors, potential partners and investors.

v. Market Access and Export Promotion

- ***Facilitating Access to Domestic and Global Markets:*** Government policies should encourage local procurement initiatives that prioritize purchasing from SMEs. Additionally, SMEs should be supported in accessing export markets through trade missions, export financing and market research services that identify viable international opportunities.
- ***E-commerce and Digital Marketplaces:*** Facilitating access to e-commerce platforms is essential in today's global economy. The government and private sector should create digital ecosystems that enable SMEs to sell their products online, thus expanding their customer base beyond local markets. Partnerships with platforms like Jumia, Konga or even international platforms, like Amazon, could be explored.
- ***Public-Private Partnerships for Market Linkages:*** Establishing collaborative platforms that connect SMEs with larger corporations, local governments and

other market players can improve market access. These linkages can provide SMEs with valuable business opportunities, including supply chain partnerships and larger contracts.

vi. Fostering Innovation and Technology Adoption

- **Support for Innovation and R&D:** The government and private sector should increase investment in research and development (R&D) for SMEs. Encouraging SMEs to innovate, particularly in product and service development, can provide them with a competitive edge locally and internationally.
- **Incentivizing Technology Adoption:** To remain competitive, SMEs must embrace modern technologies, such as cloud computing, enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, and digital tools for marketing and sales. Incentive programmes and subsidies that reduce the costs of adopting these technologies can help SMEs increase productivity and streamline operations.

vii. Strengthening SMEs Ecosystem Collaboration

- **Multi-Stakeholder Involvement:** A sustainable SMEs ecosystem requires collaboration among various stakeholders, including the government, financial institutions, the private sector, NGOs and development partners. By working together, these groups can create an enabling environment for SMEs through policy reforms, financial support and capacity-building initiatives.
- **Creating a National SMEs Council:** Establishing a National SMEs Council could provide a unified voice for SMEs in Nigeria. This council could engage in advocacy, policy development and identification of key priorities for the SMEs sector, thereby ensuring that their concerns are addressed at the highest levels of government.

7.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

Promoting entrepreneurship and the growth of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria is essential for driving economic development, job creation and poverty alleviation. However, SMEs face challenges such as limited access to finance, poor infrastructure and regulatory obstacles. Addressing these issues through targeted interventions like SMEs-friendly loan programmes, microfinance initiatives and credit guarantees can help small businesses overcome financial constraints and expand. Improving infrastructure, particularly in electricity, roads and digital connectivity will enhance productivity and efficiency. Entrepreneurial education and training are also vital in equipping business owners with skills in financial management, digital marketing and innovation, which are crucial for competing in the global economy.

Simplifying regulatory and tax policies is necessary to reduce bureaucratic barriers and create a more favourable environment for business growth. Expanding market access through local procurement policies, e-commerce platforms and export promotion initiatives will help SMEs compete domestically and internationally.

For sustainable development, a collaborative multi-stakeholder approach involving the government, financial institutions, the private sector and development organizations is critical to building a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem. With strategic reforms and proactive policies, Nigeria can unlock the full potential of its SMEs sector, paving the way for a prosperous economy.

7.2 Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

4. To enhance access to finance and credit facilities, the government should collaborate with financial institutions to create SMEs-friendly loan programmes with lower interest rates and flexible repayment terms. Expanding microfinance banks and digital lending platforms can provide alternative funding sources, while increased grants and subsidies, especially for start-ups and women-led businesses can stimulate entrepreneurial activity. Additionally, strengthening credit guarantee schemes will reduce lending risks for banks, encouraging more financial institutions to support financing of SMEs.
5. To strengthen entrepreneurial education and training, the government should integrate entrepreneurship education into the national curriculum at all levels, from secondary to tertiary education. This initiative will equip future entrepreneurs with the necessary skills in business management, financial literacy and digital marketing. Public-private partnerships should be fostered to provide targeted business development training programmes, especially in bookkeeping, marketing and strategic management. Establishing SMEs hubs and incubation centres will provide new entrepreneurs with mentorship, training and networking opportunities. Additionally, expanding training programmes through agencies like SMEDAN, particularly in rural areas, will ensure that entrepreneurs in underserved regions have access to vital resources and the knowledge needed to build successful businesses.
6. To improve infrastructure and digital connectivity, the government should prioritize investments in alternative energy sources, such as solar and hydro-power, so as to provide SMEs with a more stable and reliable power supply. This would reduce the reliance on the erratic national grid and allow for uninterrupted business operations. Furthermore, expanding broadband Internet access across urban and rural areas is crucial for enabling digital businesses and e-commerce

platforms to thrive. Ensuring affordable data plans will facilitate seamless digital transactions and business operations.

The government should also focus on the development of SMEs-friendly industrial parks, which would offer shared resources, like electricity, water and waste management services, thereby reducing operational costs for businesses. In addition, improvements in road networks and logistics infrastructure are necessary to ensure smoother supply chains, reduce transportation costs, and enhance SMEs' access to local and international markets.

7. To reform regulatory and tax policies, the government should streamline business registration processes by establishing a digital one-stop portal for registration, licensing and compliance. This would simplify and expedite the bureaucratic procedures that often hinder business formation and growth. The introduction of a unified tax structure with lower tax rates will help reduce the financial burden on SMEs. Targeted tax incentives, such as tax breaks and holidays for start-ups in key sectors, like manufacturing and agribusiness, will encourage entrepreneurship and business expansion.
8. To expand market access and export opportunities, the government should introduce export promotion initiatives, such as trade fairs and international buyer matchmaking programmes, to connect SMEs with global markets. Strengthening the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) will facilitate greater access to regional markets, offering SMEs more growth opportunities. The government should also foster e-commerce adoption by providing digital training for business owners, improving logistics infrastructure and enacting supportive policies that ease online sales. Additionally, prioritizing local content policies that integrate SMEs into government procurement processes will boost domestic market participation, providing SMEs with a reliable customer base and driving further business growth.

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17

DIVERSIFICATION OF THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY BEYOND OIL

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1. Introduction

Economic diversification has long been seen in many quarters as a policy priority for low- and middle-income economies. For instance, in a 2017 speech about economic diversification in Africa, the then Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Lagarde (2019) stated that “promoting economic diversification is akin to weaving a beautiful traditional fabric.” It means weaving an economic fabric that is more complex, more resilient and more beneficial to all families and communities. Similarly, in 2020, the former governor of Kenya’s Central Bank, Ndung’u noted that Africa has made socioeconomic progress in the last two decades, but economic diversification would have laid a more solid foundation for accelerated development.

While the idea that diversifying a nation’s economy offers protection against economic volatility may not be new, it is certainly experiencing a resurgence. For instance, the seminal works by economists like Prebisch (1950), Singer (1950) and Michaely (1958) highlight the importance of shielding an economy from excessive aggregate price shocks. This line of scholarship has equally been further developed by Ghosh and Ostry (1994), Gutierrez de Pineres and Ferrantino (1997), Acemoglu and Zilibotti (2001), Bleaney and Greenaway (2001) and Koren and Tenreyro (2007).

The view that diversifying trade partners could safeguard a country against external demand shocks has also gained traction (Jansen, Lennon and Piermartini, 2009; 2016). Beyond protection against shocks, economic diversification is increasingly recognized as essential for economic development, especially in low-income and

resource-dependent countries, as it can help fuel economic growth and poverty reduction (Ramey and Ramey, 1995; Al-Marhubi, 2000; de Ferranti, Perry, Leaderman and Maloney, 2002; Melitz, 2003; Funke and Ruhwedel, 2005; Haumann and Klinger, 2006; Hausmann, Hwang and Rodrik, 2007; Agosin, 2007; Mcmillan and Rodrik, 2011; and Papageorgious and Spatafora, 2012).

Economic diversification also matters because, generally, it is accompanied by industrial upgrading due to technology diffusion and movement towards higher productivity sectors and better paying jobs. For instance, Freenstra and Kee (2008) assert that, on average, a 10 percent increase in export variety leads to a 1.3 percent increase in productivity due to better use of resources and improved allocative efficiency. Also, economic diversification can also be accompanied by or lead to the emergence of regional growth poles, as sectors may transition more quickly than others. These growth poles can become significant sources of government revenue and can catalyse new industries in the country, which can attract capital, spur skill acquisition among the labour force, and sometimes achieve economies of scale, including joining global value chains.

Equally, the dangers that await economies that are not diversified have been highlighted. For instance, Usman and Landry (2021) have pointed out that economies that are not diversified often experience a decline in growth, accompanied by weak institutions as well as stunted efforts at structural and economic transformation. It is equally argued along this line that economies weakened by a lack of diversification are susceptible to global crises such as a pandemic.

However, from the 1970s to date, the Nigerian economy is often described as a mono-product economy, depending solely on petroleum or crude oil. For instance, the petroleum industry accounts for about 5.5 percent of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 70 percent of budget revenues and 95 percent of foreign exchange earnings (Statista, 2024). The Nigerian economy is heavily dominated by the oil and gas sector. Because the sector generates high levels of export earnings for the country, the government revenue is highly dependent on oil prices. But very few jobs emerge in the sector.

Given the above scenario, the pertinent question is, why is the Nigerian economy not diversified to take advantage of economic diversification as highlighted above and thus escape from the woes of economies not diversified? In other words, why is the Nigerian economy still depending on oil alone in spite of the advantages of economic diversification highlighted above and the attendant cost of non-diversification? Addressing this question is the main focus of this paper. The paper is structured into seven sections. Following the introductory section, section 2 takes care of conceptual issues. Sections 3 X-rays the Nigerian economy before the discovery of oil, while the Nigerian economy during the oil era is considered in section 4. Section 5 attempts to draw lessons

from other countries, while section 6 attempts to project what the Nigerian economy should be after the oil. Section 7 is the concluding part.

2. Conceptual Issues

The concept to be clarified here is economic diversification. Diversification has specific meanings in different contexts, such as finance, business, economics and climate change. For instance, in the context of business, it refers to the practice of varying products, operations, etc. in order to spread risk, as well as expand and exploit spare capacity, among others. Thus, business diversification is the strategic expansion of a company into new products, services or market to reduce risk, capture new opportunities and enhance overall business resilience.

In finance, diversification is the process of allocating capital in a way that reduces the exposure to any particular asset or risk. It is said to be a strategy that mixes a wide variety of investments within a portfolio in an attempt to reduce portfolio risk. It is most often done by investing in different asset classes, such as stocks, bonds and real estate.

In the context of climate change adaptation, it is a strategy to diversify away from vulnerable products, market and jobs toward income sources that are low-emission or more climate resilient. In regional planning policies context, it refers to the attempt to provide regions with an adequate variety of industries.

Economic diversification is defined by the United Nations as the process of shifting an economy away from a single income source toward multiple income sources from a growing range of sectors and markets. According to Usman and Landry (2021), traditionally, economic diversification involves transitioning from dependence on one or a few commodities, such as crude oil, minerals and agricultural production to a broader range of sources of production, employment, trade, revenues and expenditures. Among economists, the process that is most closely associated with the policy objective of economic diversification is structural transformation, which is characterized by rising productivity, sustained growth and broader development. It is structural transformation that facilitates the diversification of sources of production and employment, international trade, revenues and expenditures through various dimensions. And structural transformation itself involves the movement of a country's productive resources from low productivity activities, such as primary agriculture to higher productivity activities in the industrial and/or services sector(s). As noted by Monga and Lin (2019) structural transformation is exemplified by a declining share of agriculture in production and employment, a shift of workers from low to high average productivity sectors, and increases in efficiency and productivity.

Typically, economic diversification falls into two categories, namely product or gross domestic product diversification and export diversification. While the former refers

to diversification in terms of sectoral contributions or employment and output or the goods and services the economy produces, the latter refers to diversification in terms of the main goods and services sold to trading partners, or in terms of introducing new products into an economy's export portfolio and breaking into new markets.

However, in recent times, a third category of economic diversification "fiscal diversification" has been introduced into the literature. Fiscal diversification involves expanding the sources of government revenues and the targets of public expenditures (Usman and Landry, 2021). It refers to an increase in the number of economic sectors that contribute meaningfully to government revenues and are targeted by government expenditures. The share of a government's budget collected from various sectors can represent a crucial measure of fiscal diversification. For instance, various sources of finance are available to governments, including taxation, internal and external borrowings, currency issuance and development assistance. Fiscal diversification, therefore, entails reducing dependence on one or a few sources, especially the extractive industry, by generating more varied and sustainable domestic revenue mobilization. It can also involve expanding the tax base and taxation instruments or leveraging underused tax instruments. Both components of fiscal diversification are important, as taxes represent the most sustainable sources of revenue for government.

3. The Nigerians Economy before Oil

Nigeria was a giant in the mining, agriculture and fishing sectors before the discovery of crude oil. According to Smith (2018) and Okotie (2018), there was a healthy economic competition among the then four regions of the country, as each exploited its comparative advantage by focusing on the cultivation and production of specific set of cash crops. For instance, groundnuts, cotton, hides and skin were produced in the then Northern Region; cocoa and coffee were produced in the then Western Region; palm oil and kernels (palm produce) in the then Eastern Region; and rubber and timber in the then Mid- Western Region. The above listed cash crops from the regions were exported and accounted for 80 percent of the country's foreign exchange earnings and 50 percent of government revenues (Okotie, 2018). Agriculture equally catered for 95 percent of the food needs of Nigerians, contributed 64.1 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and employed over 70 percent of the country's labour force. Thus, according to Smith (2018) and Okotie (2018), Nigeria was reasonably self-sufficient in food production and carved a respectable niche for itself as a major exporter of a bouquet of cash crops, ranging from groundnuts, palm oil, cocoa, rubber, cotton to hides and skin.

The dominance of agriculture in the Nigerian economy then could be seen from its contributions. For instance, Nigeria export crops like cocoa, palm produce, groundnuts, cotton, rubber, timber and copra, before the discovery of oil. The exportation of these

agricultural products also helped Nigeria in taking gigantic strides towards her economic growth, culminating in development of sites and structures particularly in the health and education sectors. For example, Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), formerly called University of Ife, Ile-Ife, was established with proceeds from cocoa, timber and rubber exports, just as the 26-storey Cocoa House in Ibadan was built with proceeds from cocoa export of the then Western Region. In short, in the Western Region, the Western Nigeria Marketing Board became the fiscal arm of the regional government, as it became financier of development projects in the region through the Region's Development Corporations (Ajayi, Samuel and Oladiti, 2017).

Similarly, in the Northern Region, proceeds from the exportation of groundnuts, cotton, hides and skin through the Marketing Board contributed funds for the development of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria, Hamdala Hotel, Kaduna, Kaduna Textiles and Bank of North. In the Eastern Region the Marketing Board, through the exportation of palm produce and copra, provided funds to fund government institutions in the region as well as extended grants to the Eastern Nigeria Finance Corporation, which provided the take-off grant of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), financed an agricultural training and research centre at Umudike, invested in the African Continental Bank and the Nigerian Cement Company at Nkalagu

Still, as part of the dominance of agriculture in the Nigerian economy before oil was discovered was the issue of self-sufficiency in food production. For instance, the variety of crops grown were immense, including sorghum, rice, cassava, sweet potato, cashew, yam, taro, millet, corn and plantain, which served as staple foods. In terms of trading in the staple foods, it is largely north-south between different ecological zones and also between major urban centres in the Southeast and Southwest. For instance, the south region supplies plantains, cassava, kolanuts and fruits to the North, which, in turn, supplies beans, onions and livestock among others to the South. Fishing was also important to supply the required protein.

Nigeria equally depended on mining to a large extent before the discovery of oil. Nigeria is endowed with vast reserves of natural resources, such as energy minerals, like coal and lithium, metallic minerals, like gold and lead-zinc, and industrial minerals, like limestone and barite. The country was a major exporter of tin, columbite and coal in the 1960s up to the early 1970s, when crude oil export took over.

4. The Nigerian Economy in the Oil Era

The fundamental question here is, what is the state of the Nigerian economy in the era of crude oil or oil for short? Before we attend to this question, it is necessary to throw some light on the history of the discovery of crude oil in the country.

The history of oil exploration in Nigeria dates back to 1903, when the Nigerian Bitumen Corporation conducted exploratory work in the country. But as a result of World War 1, the firm's operations were stopped. However, due to lack of technological and financial resources of the small oil companies that initiated the idea, larger and stronger oil companies took over the exploration of commercial oil in the country. In the process, licenses were given to D'Arcy Exploration Company and Whitehall Petroleum, but none of these two companies found oil of commercial value and they returned their licenses in 1923 (Frynas, 1999). However, a new license covering 920,000 square kilometres (357,000 square miles) was given to Shell D'arcy Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria, a consortium of Shell and BP, then known as Anglo-Iranian Company, and it began exploratory work in 1937.

The association was granted license to explore oil all over the territory of Nigeria but the acreage allotted to the company in the original license was reduced in 1951, and then between 1955 and 1957. However, drilling activities started in 1951, with the first test well drilled in the Owerri area, but oil was found in non-commercial quantities at Akata near Eket in 1953 (Frynas, 1999). But before the Akata find, the company had spent much money (around £6 million) on exploratory activities in the country.

However, in the pursuit of commercially available petroleum, Shell-BP found oil in Oloibiri, in the old Rivers State (now in Bayelsa State), Nigeria, in 1956. Other important oil wells discovered during the period were Afam and Bomu in the Ogoni territory. Production of crude oil began in 1957, and in 1960, a total of 847,000 tonnes of crude oil was exported. Towards the end of the 1950s, non-British firms were granted licenses to explore for oil; for example, Mobil (1955), Tenneco (1960), Gulf oil (later Chevron) (1961), Agip (1962), and Elf (1962).

Since the discovery of crude oil in Nigeria, the Nigerian economy and budget have been largely supported from the income and revenues generated from the petroleum industry. For instance, a series of world oil price increases from 1973 produced rapid economic growth in transportation, construction, manufacturing and government services. Currently, the petroleum industry accounts for about 92 percent of the value of all exports, 95 percent of foreign exchange earnings, 70 percent of budget revenues, but only about 5.5 percent of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, in spite of the dominance of the petroleum industry on the Nigerian economy as reflected in the foreign exchange earnings and government revenues, the petroleum industry has come with a multiple of negative effects on the Nigerian economy. According to Doris Dokua Sasu (2024), while it is on record that the Nigerian economy is heavily dominated by the oil and gas sector, as the sector generates high levels of export earnings for the country, it is making government revenues highly dependent on oil prices. Although the main commodity export is crude oil, very few jobs emerge from the sector. In short, the highest

contributors to Nigeria's GDP are agriculture (21.96%), industry (23.65%) and services (54.39%).

Because the emergence of oil led to a great influx of rural people into the urban areas or centres, agricultural production stagnated to the extent that cash crops, such as palm produce, peanuts (groundnuts), cotton and rubber are no longer significant export commodities. In addition, from about 1973 to date, Nigeria is forced to import such basic commodities as rice and cassava for domestic consumption. In short, food insecurity is a major problem in Nigeria under the era of crude oil production.

One of the two most enduring negative consequences of crude oil in Nigeria is the issue of corruption and its devastating effects. Khan (1994) summarizes the situation thus:

However, it was during the years of Gowon and his successors Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo, known officially as the Heads of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria who ruled amidst the oil boom of the 1970s that the political economy of petroleum in Nigeria truly became characterized by endemic patronage and corruption by the political elites, which plagues the nation to this day. At both state and federal government levels power and therefore wealth has typically been monopolized by select lobby groups who maintain a strong tendency to 'look after their own' by financially rewarding their political supporters.

The review adds that:

At the state or community level this means that interest groups in power will reward and protect their own; this is typically based on ethnic/tribal or religious affiliation of the interest group. The heavy patronage based on tribal affiliation has fueled ethnic unrest and violence throughout Nigeria but particularly in the Niger Delta states, where the stakes for control of the immense oil resources are very high.

The review concludes that:

At the federal level political elites have utilized patronage to consolidate power for the ruling government, not only by rewarding their political friends in the federal government but also by paying off major interest groups at the state or tribal level in order to elicit their co-operation. Inevitably, these financial favours are distributed unequally and inefficiently, resulting in concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a small minority. Nigeria is ranked by the corruption perceptions index 136th out of 180 countries total.

The above narrative has been the situation in the country.

The last enduring negative consequence of the petroleum industry in Nigeria is the environmental issue. The petroleum industry has constituted numerous hazards, which include bio-accumulation of toxic substances, pollution of the aquatic environment, and

high rate of dilapidation of soil structure and texture, health hazards, high level of imbalance in the ecosystem and a high level of toxicity in humans and the environment.

5. Lessons from Other Countries

Before we delve into examining what other countries have done in this regard and lessons to be learnt from them, it is important to look at strategies of economic diversification that are commonly used. According to the World Bank (gsglobalpartners.com), the following strategies are a vital foundation to successful economic diversification:

- i. Implementing an appropriate incentive framework for business: This is predicated upon a transparent and predictable business and investment climate. For example, by removing bias against exporting and ensuring effective competition in key markets, businesses are well placed to thrive.
- ii. Investing in infrastructure and coordinated policy reforms to reduce trade costs: Reducing trade costs is critical to countries being able to integrate themselves within the global economy and successfully diversify as a result.
- iii. Re-allocating economic resources to support new activities: Crucial to this are things like labour-market policies and the provision of financial assistance to businesses and industries.
- iv. Introducing policies to target specific market, policy and institutional failures: These policies also help businesses flourish. For instance, a lack of regulation around overseas standards may be holding organizations back from successfully exporting their products and services abroad.

A careful look at the strategies highlighted above shows that they can neatly be keyed into the three strategies of “State Economic Development.” namely entrepreneurial, industrial recruitment and deregulation policies, in American states. An entrepreneurial approach focuses on new firm and technology development; an industrial recruitment strategy emphasizes financial incentives for the relocation or expansion of existing enterprises; and a deregulation approach minimizes governmental control over private enterprises. Thus, the entrepreneurial strategy appears to boost new business incorporations and the industrial recruitment strategy reduces business failures.

The role that “citizenship by investment programmes” play in economic diversification has been highlighted. Funding for economic diversification comes from many sources and an increasingly large one is citizenship by investment programmes. Citizenship by investment (CBI) is a way to obtain citizenship of a country via a large investment in that country that is consistent with the laws, rules and regulations of that country. Depending on the country, the processes for receiving CBI varies. In the United States, for instance, an investor must invest a significant amount, typically \$800,000 to \$1,000,000 in a new commercial enterprise. Furthermore, the investment must lead to

the creation of at least ten full-time jobs for U.S workers. It must also be demonstrated that the investment will be sustainable for at least two years. With investor contributing huge amounts of money to a nation's economy in return for citizenship, these programmes can help fund economic diversification efforts, with many actually having dedicated diversification funds that applicants can invest in. For example, Dominica's CBI programme has an Economic Diversification Fund that helps the country transition from agricultural reliance.

Economic diversification is most associated with the attempts by lower and middle-income countries to transform their economies. An example of this would be diversifying away from lower productivity sectors, like agriculture, to higher productivity industries in the industrial or services sectors. Many countries have diversified within existing industries to help diversify their economies overall. For example, Malaysia has broadened its agricultural industry away from mainly rubber to become one of the world's biggest palm oil producers. Equally, Chile leveraged its previously "local-only" Salmon sector to become a leading exporter of the fish, now accounting for over a quarter of the planet's production.

Economic diversification is equally a key strategy for high income countries, with the likes of China, the UK and Switzerland scoring high on the Global Economic Diversification Index (EDI). In particular, those with service-led economies perform well on the index, thus helping such countries catch up with the more industrialized nations (gsglobalpartners.com).

Other countries to learn from are Costa Rica, Gabon, Georgia, India, Senegal and Vietnam (IMF, 2024b). These countries were chosen because, on the one hand, their governments were all concerned with promoting economic development through diversification, and, on the other hand, the countries represent a wide range of geographical regions and income levels. Thus, each country presents a unique set of economic conditions, circumstances and practices that shaped their strategies for development and diversification.

The lessons from these six countries are as follows:

Costa Rica demonstrates the power of a strategic policy shift toward export orientation and trade liberalization, a focus on human capital development, and establishing specialized institutions to overcome market failures and attract foreign investment.

Gabon demonstrates some success in reducing dependence on oil, including by attracting foreign direct investment, but a failure to broaden the revenue base has created fiscal challenges.

Georgia illustrates the potential payoff to market-friendly policies and to improving public governance, but also the need to maintain the momentum of structural reforms. India illustrates solid diversification results owing to the availability of skilled labour, improvements in the business environment and the promotion of software clusters, including through investment incentives.

Senegal highlights the importance of policy efforts to address infrastructure gaps, improve the business environment and increase value addition, but also the fiscal cost of tax incentives.

Vietnam demonstrates a successful shift from an agrarian to an industrial economy through broad-based policies, including investment in education backed by macroeconomic stability. However, the government strategies, including the relatively large role played by state-owned enterprises and the occasional emphasis on specific sectors and products, were not constitutively successful.

Consequently, the IMF's advice has focused on improving human capital and infrastructure, reducing trade barriers, promoting international trade integration and moving up value chain. Also important is strong interest by the authorities in both horizontal and vertical policies to promote diversification.

6. The Nigerian Economy after Oil

Our concern in this section is to project what the Nigerian economy should be after oil. But before we go into that, factors that can influence economic diversification or the prerequisite for economic diversification, as provided by IMF (2024b), will be considered. These factors include macroeconomic stability, the quality of infrastructure, workforce skills, access to credit, the regulatory environment and income equality.

The key factors potentially constraining the observed level of diversification include government failure to provide macroeconomic stability, especially through appropriate monetary, fiscal and macroprudential policy frameworks; to support the development of quality infrastructure, a skilled workforce, and access to financial services; to foster effective transparent and accountable governance, including an appropriate regulatory environment; and ultimately, to ensure broad-based opportunities for the entire population, including through gender responsive policies to help reduce disparities in human capital accumulation and resource allocation (Akcigit and Nicolas, 2021). In short, what governments do or fail to do can create barriers to diversification or help mitigate the impact of such barriers (IMF, 2024b).

Having looked at the factors that influence economic diversification or the drivers of diversification and the role of government (IMF, 2014; 2024a; Cherif et al., 2022) in economic diversification, we now to proceed to the Nigerian economy after oil. The

fundamental question here is, given the prerequisites for economic diversification as highlighted by IMF (2014; 2024a) and Cherif et al. (2022), is Nigeria ripe or ready for economic diversification beyond oil?

The answer to the above question is neither direct “yes” nor “no.” It requires a survey of efforts by the Nigerian government at diversification, if any, and why they failed. It has been argued that the way toward Nigeria’s better future is economic diversification and that the diversification should be designed principally around agriculture, mining and manufacturing, amongst other sectors. Okotie (2018) asserts that there is an urgent need for diversification of the Nigerian economy from its present crude oil-dependent system. Other sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, mining and manufacturing, should be given an opportunity to thrive and support revenue from petroleum, especially now that the price is nosediving.

A school of thought posits that, as long as other sectors like agriculture, manufacturing and mining are neglected, Nigerians will continue to walk in the chains of debt, hunger, lack and poverty. From the foregoing it is obvious that the issue of the need for economic diversification is not new and available records show that there have been efforts at that. With respect to the mining sector, successive governments at the federal level have demonstrated some level of commitment to revamping the sector, with minimal successes recorded. For example, in 1999, new national focus and strategy on mining evolved and it culminated in the enactment of the Nigerian Minerals and Mining Act (the Act or NMMA) in 2007, among other policies effort. However, these efforts only led to a stunted growth in the sector, with the sector’s contribution to the nation’s GDP remaining less than one percent as at 2023.

To further demonstrate government’s commitment to enhance the sector’s contribution to GDP and facilitating the diversification of the economy, the erstwhile Ministry of Mines and Steel Development issued a revised sector growth and development road map (Roadmap for the Growth and Development of the Nigerian Mining Industry) in 2016. The objectives were to address the key challenges identified in the sector and outline strategies for rapid development and utilization of key minerals and metals. One of the targets of the road map was the growth of the sector’s total contribution (direct and indirect) to Nigeria’s GDP to 10 percent in 2026. Pursuant to this target, the Government launched a ₦30 billion intervention fund to open up the sector to multinational companies. The fund was to be used to promote exploration and research. Despite these significant efforts, only traction was achieved across the mining value chain, as the sector only contributed 0.77 percent to the GDP in 2023, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

In the area of agriculture, on 4th December 2017, BBC Africa, Abuja news raised a question: “Can Nigeria’s yams power a nation? (Ishaq Khalid, 2017). The above question emanated from the statement of Mr. Audu Ogbe, the then Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, that the biggest hope for Nigeria was the exportation of yam tubers to Europe and the United States of America. According to the Minister, it was hoped that exporting more yams would diversify Nigeria’s oil-dependent economy, which had plunged into its worst recession in a quarter of a century because of falling global oil prices. The exportation was also expected to provide young people in particular with jobs in agriculture.

However, it is on record that the exportation of yams did not go beyond the pictures in the media in that December 2017. After that month, nobody has heard about Nigeria’s exportation of yams to Europe as an attempt to diversify the Nigerian economy. All is political propaganda.

From the foregoing, the efforts so far made have not yielded positive dividend because of lack of “government will” and politicization of the efforts. Consequently, if we take a look at the prerequisites for successful diversification process, as highlighted by Akcigit and Nicolas (2021), Cherif et al (2022) and IMF (2014; 2024a), we do not need a prophet to know that Nigeria is not ripe or ready to undertake economic diversification of its economy.

7. Concluding Remarks

In concluding this paper, the following points should be noted carefully:

First, Nigeria depended mainly on agriculture and to a little extent on mining before oil was discovered.

Second, since the emergence of the petroleum industry, agriculture and the mining sectors have not featured prominently again in the Nigerian economy, as all eyes are on the oil revenues that are shared among the states of the federation.

Third, although some efforts have been made to revamp the agriculture and mining sectors of the economy on the pages of newspapers, in reality, such efforts were mere political propaganda.

Fourth, the prerequisites for a successful economic diversification, as highlighted by Akcigit and Nicolas (2021), Cherif et al (2022) and IMF (2014; 2024a), cannot see the light of day in Nigeria.

Finally, it is safe to conclude that Nigeria is not ripe or ready to embark on diversification of its economy in preparation for the end of oil in the country.

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18**AN APPRAISAL OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES IN
RIVERS STATE, 1999-2023****By****Beatrice E. Awortu**

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Email: bawortu@yahoo.com**Abstract**

This study provided a comprehensive appraisal of women's empowerment programmes in Rivers State, Nigeria, from 1999 to 2023. Over the past two decades, various initiatives have been implemented by government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international development partners to address gender inequality, enhance women's socio-economic status and promote their participation in governance and decision-making processes. This research evaluated the effectiveness, challenges and outcomes of these programmes, focusing on key areas, such as education, economic empowerment and political participation. The study used the primary, secondary and multidisciplinary approaches to source the data needed for the study. It employed the Empowerment Theory as a template for analysis. The findings revealed that, while significant progress has been made in areas like microcredit schemes, skills acquisition programmes and advocacy for women's rights, persistent challenges, such as cultural barriers, inadequate funding and limited institutional support, have hindered the full realization of programme objectives in the state. The study also highlighted the need for more inclusive and sustainable strategies to address the root causes of gender inequality in the region. The paper recommended strengthening policy frameworks, increasing investment in women-focused initiatives and fostering partnerships between stakeholders to ensure the long-term success of empowerment efforts. It concluded that women empowerment initiatives in Rivers State yielded positive impact, though there were reservations in certain key areas.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Gender Equality, Rivers State, Socio-economic Development, Policy Evaluation

Introduction

Women empowerment has been a central theme in global, national and regional development discourse, reflecting the need to promote gender equality, enhance women's participation in economic, social and political spheres, and reduce systemic discrimination. The concept of women empowerment encompasses the process by which

women gain increased access to resources, decision-making power and control over their lives (Kabeer, 2005). In Nigeria, various policies and programmes have been initiated to address gender disparities and improve the socio-economic status of women. Rivers State, one of Nigeria's most economically significant states due to its oil-rich resources, has witnessed various women empowerment programmes, particularly from 1999 to 2023, under different political administrations.

Despite being a major economic hub, the state continues to experience gender-based inequalities, limiting women's access to education, employment and leadership opportunities (Afolabi, 2008). Since the return of democracy in 1999, successive administrations in Rivers State have implemented a variety of initiatives aimed at improving women's livelihoods, including microfinance schemes, vocational training, educational support, health interventions and political inclusion strategies. These initiatives aim to address gender disparities, enhance women's participation in economic and political spheres and improve their overall well-being. However, the effectiveness of these programmes remains a subject of debate, necessitating an appraisal of their impact over the years. This paper, therefore, provides an appraisal of women empowerment programmes in Rivers State from 1999 to 2023, examining their objectives, implementation strategies, outcomes and challenges.

Statement of the Problem

Women empowerment is a crucial component of sustainable development, social inclusion and economic growth. In Rivers State, various empowerment programmes have been initiated by the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international agencies between 1999 and 2023. These initiatives have focused on improving women's access to education, healthcare, skills acquisition, financial inclusion and political participation. However, despite these efforts, gender disparities persist in key areas, such as economic opportunities, leadership representation and socio-political inclusion. One of the major concerns is the effectiveness and sustainability of these empowerment programmes. Many initiatives suffer from poor implementation, inadequate funding, corruption and lack of proper monitoring and evaluation. As a result, some beneficiaries experience only short-term benefits, with little long-term impact on their economic independence and social status. Additionally, cultural and structural barriers, including patriarchal norms, limit the extent to which women can fully utilize the opportunities provided by these programmes.

Furthermore, there is limited empirical evidence assessing the overall impact of these women empowerment initiatives in Rivers State. The absence of comprehensive data on the success rates, challenges and areas needing improvement makes it difficult to determine the true effectiveness of these programmes. It is on this premise that this study seeks to critically appraise the women empowerment programmes in Rivers State

from 1999 to 2023, examining their achievements, challenges and prospects for enhancing women's socio-economic and political participation.

Significance of the Study

An appraisal of women empowerment programmes in Rivers State is significant for multiple reasons. First, it provides an evidence-based assessment of policy effectiveness, shedding light on the successes and failures of past initiatives. Second, it contributes to academic discourse on gender and development, particularly within the Nigerian context. Third, the study has practical implications for policymakers, development agencies and civil society organizations seeking to enhance the impact of women empowerment programmes. Finally, understanding the barriers to women's full participation in socio-economic development can help in designing more inclusive and sustainable policies.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative approach to examine the impact of women empowerment programmes in Rivers State. Primary data were collected through interviews involving beneficiaries of various empowerment initiatives, policymakers and stakeholders. Secondary data were sourced from government reports, policy documents, scholarly articles and statistical data from organizations, such as the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on women's issues in Nigeria. Descriptive, historical analytical methods were employed to analyze the data and evaluate the effectiveness of different programmes over the years.

Literature Review

Women Empowerment

According to Kabeer (1999), women empowerment is "the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such ability." This definition highlights the importance of choice, agency and access to resources that enable women to take control over their lives. Empowerment involves access to three interconnected dimensions: resources (economic, social, and human), agency (the ability to define and pursue one's goals), and achievements (the outcomes of such efforts). Kabeer's definition places emphasis on agency and decision-making power, arguing that empowerment is not merely about receiving resources but also about gaining the ability to use them effectively. This perspective aligns with the broader framework of human development, where empowerment is seen as an essential component of social and economic progress (Sen, 1999).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines women empowerment as "the expansion of people's capabilities and choices so that they can live lives they value" (UNDP, 2010). Within this broader perspective, economic empowerment

is considered crucial for women's ability to participate in decision-making at household and societal levels. For Rowlands (1997), empowerment involves "not only economic and political aspects but also a sense of self-worth, confidence, and the ability to effect change in one's personal and social life." This definition highlights empowerment as a psychological and social transformation, where women gain confidence and agency to challenge societal norms that perpetuate gender inequalities.

Theoretical Framework

Empowerment Theory

This theory provides a framework for understanding and evaluating initiatives aimed at increasing individuals' or groups' ability to exert control over their own lives and resources. This theory, as developed by scholars such as Rappaport (1987) and Zimmerman (1995), emphasizes the importance of psychological, social and political empowerment in fostering self-determination and agency. Thus, the empowerment theory operates at multiple levels—individual, organizational, and community—and highlights how power dynamics influence participation and access to resources (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). The theory argues that empowerment is a process through which marginalized individuals and communities develop the skills, confidence and opportunities necessary to challenge existing inequalities and improve their socio-economic conditions (Lord & Hutchison, 1993).

Therefore, with respect to the topic of study, it is crucial to examine how women empowerment initiatives have enhanced women's participation in economic, social and political spheres. Women empowerment in Rivers State has been promoted through various programmes, including skill acquisition, microfinance schemes and political inclusion projects. However, the effectiveness of these programmes depends on their ability to provide women with real decision-making power, economic independence and a supportive socio-cultural environment. The theory helps to analyze whether these initiatives have merely provided access to resources or have actively challenged structural barriers to gender equality. For instance, while some programmes may have increased women's financial inclusion, their impact on long-term economic autonomy and leadership roles remains a critical area of assessment. Moreover, factors such as patriarchal norms, political instability and resource constraints in Rivers State may have influenced the success or limitations of these initiatives. Thus, by using the Empowerment Theory as a guiding lens, this study critically examined the effectiveness, sustainability, and transformative potential of women empowerment programmes in Rivers State between 1999 and 2023.

Historical Evolution of Women Empowerment Programmes in Rivers State

The history of women empowerment programmes in Rivers State reflects a gradual but significant shift in addressing gender inequality and promoting women's participation in socio-economic and political spheres. Following Nigeria's return to democratic governance in 1999, Rivers State, like other states in the country, began to prioritize gender-sensitive policies and programmes. The early 2000s saw the establishment of initiatives aimed at improving women's access to education, healthcare and economic opportunities. For instance, the Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency (RSSDA), established in 2007, included components focused on women's economic empowerment through skills acquisition and microcredit schemes (Ndukwe, 2010). These programmes were designed to reduce poverty and enhance women's capacity to contribute to the state's development. However, during this period, efforts were often fragmented and lacked a comprehensive framework to address systemic gender disparities.

The mid-2000s to the early 2010s marked a more structured approach to women empowerment in Rivers State. The administration of Governor Rotimi Amaechi (2007-2015) introduced many gender-focused initiatives, including the Rivers State Women Development Centre (RSWDC), which provided training in entrepreneurship, ICT and vocational skills (Chuku, 2012). Additionally, the state government collaborated with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international agencies to implement programmes such as the Women Empowerment and Livelihood Programme (WELP), which aimed to enhance women's access to resources and decision-making processes. Despite these efforts, challenges such as cultural barriers, limited funding and inadequate implementation mechanisms hindered the full realization of these programmes' objectives (Jude, 2025).

From 2015 to 2023, women empowerment in Rivers State gained further momentum under Governor Nyesom Wike's administration. The government prioritized gender mainstreaming in its policies and established the Rivers State Ministry of Women Affairs to coordinate and monitor gender-related programmes (Rivers State Government, 2018). Notable initiatives during this period included the Women in Agriculture Programme (WAP), which aimed to increase women's participation in agribusiness, and provision of grants to female entrepreneurs through the Rivers State Microfinance Agency (RIMA). Furthermore, the state government enacted laws to protect women's rights, such as the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Law, which addresses issues like domestic violence and gender-based discrimination (Amadi, 2020). These efforts were complemented by increased advocacy from civil society organizations, which played a crucial role in raising awareness and holding the government accountable for its gender commitments. Despite these advancements, significant gaps remain in achieving gender equality in Rivers State. Women's representation in political leadership remains low, with

few women holding elective or appointive positions. Additionally, rural women continue to face barriers in accessing education, healthcare and economic opportunities (Amadi, 2020).

Comparative Assessment of Women Empowerment Programmes in Rivers State between 1999 and 2023

Women empowerment programmes in Rivers State have been a focal point of various administrations, each bringing unique approaches and outcomes. The tenures of Dr. Peter Odili, Rotimi Amaechi and Nyesom Wike each made significant efforts aimed at enhancing the status of women through various initiatives. Dr. Peter Odili, who served as the Governor of Rivers State from 1999 to 2007, laid the groundwork for women's empowerment through policies that aimed at improving women's access to education, healthcare and economic opportunities. His administration recognized the importance of gender equality and sought to integrate women into the mainstream of economic and political activities. One of the notable programmes under Odili's administration was the establishment of microcredit schemes aimed at providing financial support to women entrepreneurs. These schemes were designed to enable women to start or expand their businesses, thereby improving their economic status and contributing to the overall development of the state (Odili, 2005).

Rotimi Amaechi, who succeeded Odili and served as governor from 2007 to 2015, continued and expanded on these initiatives. Amaechi's administration placed a strong emphasis on education and healthcare, which are critical components of women empowerment. His government implemented policies that aimed at increasing the enrolment and retention of girls in schools, recognizing that education is a fundamental tool for empowering women. Additionally, Amaechi's administration launched various health programmes aimed at improving maternal and child health, which directly benefited women in the state. The administration also established vocational training centres, where women could acquire skills that would enable them to participate more effectively in the economy. These centres provided training in various trades, including tailoring, catering and information technology, thereby equipping women with the skills needed to become self-reliant (Amaechi, 2010).

Moreover, Nyesom Wike, who became the Governor of Rivers State in 2015, also made significant strides in women empowerment. Wike's administration focused on creating an enabling environment for women to thrive both economically and politically. One of the key initiatives under his leadership was the Rivers State Women Empowerment Programme, which provided grants and loans to women to start or expand their businesses. This programme was instrumental in reducing the financial barriers that often hinder women from achieving economic independence. Furthermore, his administration was proactive in appointing women to key positions in government,

thereby promoting gender equality in political representation. This, not only provided women with a platform to contribute to governance but also served as a source of inspiration for other women in the state (Wike, 2018).

Comparatively, these programmes were both similar and different in their approaches and outcomes. All three administrations recognized the importance of economic empowerment as a means of improving the status of women. However, the strategies employed varied significantly. Odili's microcredit schemes were primarily focused on providing financial support, while Amaechi's vocational training centres emphasized skill acquisition. Wike's approach combined financial support with political empowerment, thereby addressing both economic and social barriers to women's advancement (Amadi, 2025).

In terms of impact, Odili's microcredit schemes were successful in providing immediate financial relief to many women, but the long-term sustainability of these programmes was often questioned. Amaechi's focus on education and healthcare had a more profound and lasting impact, as it addressed the root causes of gender inequality. The vocational training centres, in particular, have been credited with equipping many women with the skills needed to achieve economic independence. Wike's administration, with its dual focus on economic and political empowerment, was effective in creating a more inclusive environment for women. The appointment of women to key positions in government promoted gender equality and served as a catalyst for broader social change. Despite these achievements, however, challenges remain. One of the key challenges is the need for more comprehensive data to assess the impact of these programmes. While anecdotal evidence suggests that these initiatives have had a positive impact, there is a need for more rigorous evaluation to determine their effectiveness. Additionally, there is a need for greater collaboration between the government and non-governmental organizations to ensure that these programmes reach the most vulnerable women in the state.

Impact of these Programmes on Women's Socio-economic and Political Participation in the State

Women empowerment programmes under successive administrations in Rivers State have been a subject of significant interest, particularly in understanding how these administrations have contributed to advancing gender equality and women's inclusion in various spheres of life. Each administration, while operating within the broader context of Nigeria's socio-political and economic challenges, implemented policies and programmes aimed at empowering women, albeit with varying degrees of success and focus. Dr. Peter Odili, who served as governor from 1999 to 2007, laid the foundation for women empowerment in Rivers State by initiating policies that sought to address gender disparities and promote women's participation in governance and economic activities. His

administration recognized the importance of women's contributions to development and sought to create opportunities for their advancement, which saw the appointments of Felicity Okpete Ovai as Commissioner for Work. Moreover, Odili's government established the Rivers State Ministry of Women Affairs, which was tasked with addressing issues affecting women, including access to education, healthcare and economic opportunities (Nwankwo, 2005). This ministry played a pivotal role in advocating women's rights and implementing programmes such as skill acquisition schemes and microcredit facilities aimed at enhancing women's economic independence. However, while these initiatives were commendable, critics argue that the impact was limited due to inadequate funding, poor implementation, and the persistence of cultural and structural barriers that hindered women's full participation in socio-economic and political activities (Amadiume, 2000).

Furthermore, Rotimi Amaechi's administration (2007-2015) built on the foundation laid by Odili. Amaechi's government prioritized education as a tool for socio-economic transformation and implemented policies such as the free education programme, which benefited many girls and women in the state. By removing financial barriers to education, the administration sought to increase female literacy rates and, by extension, enhance women's ability to participate in economic and political activities (Amaechi, 2013). Additionally, Amaechi's administration made deliberate efforts to increase women's representation in political offices. For example, during his tenure, women were appointed to key positions in the State Executive Council and local government councils (these included Ms. Patricia Simon-Hart, Ibim Simentari, Dame Alice Nemi and Bar. Emmanuela George Izunwa), reflecting a commitment to gender inclusivity in governance (Ikelegbe, 2010). Despite these efforts, challenges such as cultural resistance, limited access to resources, and the patriarchal nature of Nigerian politics constrained women's full participation in political processes. Furthermore, while the administration's focus on education was laudable, critics noted that more needed to be done to address systemic issues, such as gender-based violence and economic inequality, which disproportionately affect women (Okonjo-Iweala, 2012).

During Nyesom Wike's administration (2015-2023), the state was characterized by a more aggressive approach to women empowerment, with a focus on economic empowerment, political inclusion and addressing gender-based violence. Wike's government implemented many programmes aimed at enhancing women's economic independence, including provision of grants and loans to women entrepreneurs, as well as establishment of vocational training centres to equip women with marketable skills (Wike, 2020). These initiatives were instrumental in reducing poverty levels among women and increasing their participation in the informal and formal sectors of the economy. In terms of political participation, Wike's administration made significant

strides in appointing women to key positions in government, including the appointment of the first female Deputy Governor in the state's history (Eze, 2021). This move was widely celebrated as a milestone in the fight for gender equality in Rivers State. Additionally, Wike's government took a strong stance against gender-based violence, enacting laws and establishing support systems for victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse (Rivers State Government, 2019). These efforts contributed to creating a safer environment for women to participate in socio-economic and political activities. However, despite these achievements, challenges such as limited access to land and credit facilities, cultural stereotypes and underrepresentation of women in elective positions persisted, highlighting the need for sustained efforts to achieve gender equality (Nigerian Gender Policy, 2006).

The impact of women empowerment programmes under these administrations can be assessed through various indicators, including increased female literacy rates, higher levels of women's participation in the labour force and greater representation of women in political offices. For instance, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed that Rivers State has consistently recorded higher female literacy rates compared to the national average, a trend that can be attributed to the emphasis on education by successive administrations (NBS, 2020). Similarly, the state has seen a steady increase in the number of women participating in economic activities, particularly in the informal sector, where many women have established small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with the support of government programmes (World Bank, 2018). In terms of political participation, while progress has been made in appointing women to key positions, the number of women in elective positions remains low, reflecting the broader challenges of achieving gender parity in Nigerian politics (INEC, 2019). This underscores the need for more targeted interventions, such as affirmative action policies and capacity-building programmes, to address the structural barriers that hinder women's political participation.

Challenges and Limitations Affecting the Effectiveness of Women Empowerment Initiatives in Rivers State

There are numerous challenges bedevilling the effectiveness of women empowerment in Rivers State. The notable ones are examined below.

Cultural and Societal Norms

One of the most significant barriers to the success of women empowerment initiatives in Rivers State is the deeply entrenched cultural and societal norms that perpetuate gender inequality. Rivers State, like many other parts of Nigeria, is predominantly patriarchal, with traditional beliefs and practices that often marginalize women and limit their opportunities. These norms are deeply rooted in the customs and traditions of the various

ethnic groups in the state, including the Ikwerre, Ogoni, Etche, Ogba and Kalabari people. For instance, traditional gender roles in Rivers State often dictate that women's primary responsibilities are within the home, including childcare, cooking and other domestic duties. This limits their ability to participate in economic activities, pursue education or engage in political processes. Even when women are allowed to work, they are often confined to low-paying, informal sector jobs, which do not provide the financial independence needed for empowerment (Amadi, 2025).

Economic Constraints

Economic constraints have also significantly limited the effectiveness of women empowerment initiatives in Rivers State. Poverty is widespread in the state, particularly in rural areas, and women are disproportionately affected. Economic challenges manifest in many ways, including limited access to financial resources, lack of infrastructure and inadequate funding for empowerment programmes. Many women in Rivers State lack access to credit, savings and other financial services that are essential for starting and growing businesses. Financial institutions often require collateral, which many women do not have, and may also discriminate against women based on their gender. Microfinance programmes have been introduced to address this issue, but they are often insufficient to meet the demand, and the high-interest rates charged by some microfinance institutions can be prohibitive.

Furthermore, poor infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, exacerbates economic challenges for women. Lack of access to clean water, electricity, and transportation makes it difficult for women to engage in economic activities. For example, women who rely on agriculture for their livelihoods may struggle to transport their goods to markets due to poor road networks. Similarly, lack of access to electricity limits the types of businesses women can operate and reduces their productivity. These are mostly predominant in hinterland communities like Etche, Ogoni and Ogba.

Political Instability and Governance Issues

Political instability and governance issues have also hindered the effectiveness of women empowerment initiatives in Rivers State. The state has experienced significant political turmoil since 1999, including violent conflicts, electoral violence and disputes over resource control. These challenges have created an unstable environment that is not conducive to the successful implementation of empowerment programs. According to Jude (2025), Rivers State has been a hotspot of political violence, particularly during election periods. This violence often targets women, who may be intimidated, harassed or even physically assaulted for participating in political activities. The fear of violence discourages many women from engaging in politics or advocating their rights, which undermines efforts to increase women's political participation.

Corruption is another significant issue in Rivers State, and it affects the implementation of women empowerment initiatives. Funds allocated for gender-related programmes are often embezzled or misused, which reduces the impact of these initiatives. Additionally, corruption within government institutions lead to the exclusion of women from decision-making processes, as positions of power are often awarded based on patronage rather than merit (Jasper, 2025).

Inadequate Implementation Strategies

Furthermore, the effectiveness of women empowerment initiatives in Rivers State has been limited by inadequate implementation strategies. Many programmes are poorly designed, lack clear objectives, and fail to address the specific needs of women in the state. Additionally, there is often a lack of coordination between different stakeholders, which leads to duplication of efforts and inefficient use of resources. Many empowerment initiatives are implemented without a thorough needs assessment, which means they may not address the most pressing challenges faced by women in Rivers State. For example, a programme aimed at increasing women's access to education may fail to consider the barriers that prevent girls from attending school, such as early marriage or lack of transportation. As a result, these programmes may have limited impact or fail to reach the most vulnerable women.

Corruption and Lack of Interest

Finally, corruption and lack of interest among women pose significant challenges to effective women empowerment initiatives in Rivers State. Corruption, particularly in the disbursement and implementation of empowerment programmes, hinders the success of these initiatives. Funds meant for skill acquisition, entrepreneurship and financial aid are often mismanaged or diverted by officials, limiting their reach and impact. This breeds mistrust among women, discouraging them from participating in such programmes. Additionally, favouritism and nepotism in selecting beneficiaries further undermine inclusivity, preventing many deserving women from accessing opportunities. Beyond corruption, a lack of interest among women themselves presents another challenge. Some women, due to deep-seated gender stereotypes, remain sceptical about their potential for economic and political advancement. Others prioritize domestic responsibilities over participation in training or business ventures, believing that their primary role lies in household management. Moreover, inadequate sensitization and education on the benefits of empowerment programmes contribute to apathy, as many women remain unaware of available opportunities. In some cases, past negative experiences, such as failed initiatives or unfulfilled promises cause women to lose faith in government or non-governmental efforts (Amadi, 2025).

Recommendations

The following are some of the recommendations derived from the study:

- **Strengthen Policy Frameworks and Institutional Support:** One of the primary challenges facing women empowerment programmes in Rivers State is the lack of robust policy frameworks and institutional support. While there have been initiatives, such as the Rivers State Women Development Programme, and partnerships with NGOs, these efforts often lack a cohesive strategy and long-term vision. To address this, the government should enact gender-sensitive legislation, establish a dedicated gender ministry or agency and also integrate gender mainstreaming as a main policy thrust.
- **Increase Funding and Resource Allocation:** A recurring issue in women empowerment programmes is inadequate funding. Many initiatives in Rivers State have struggled to achieve their objectives due to limited financial resources, which affects their reach, quality and sustainability. To address this, government should commit a specific percentage of its annual budget to women empowerment programmes. This would ensure consistent funding and demonstrate a commitment to gender equality.
- **Enhance Access to Education and Skills Development:** Education and skills development are fundamental to women empowerment, as they provide the tools needed for economic independence and social mobility. However, many women in Rivers State still face barriers to accessing quality education and vocational training. As a way forward, the River State Government should implement targeted programmes to increase girls' enrolment and retention in schools. This could include providing scholarships, building more schools in rural areas and addressing cultural barriers, such as early marriage and gender stereotypes.
- **Promote Women's Political Participation and Leadership:** Political empowerment is a critical aspect of women's overall empowerment, as it enables them to influence decision-making processes and advocate their rights. Despite some progress, women in Rivers State remain underrepresented in political and leadership positions. To address this, the government should adopt affirmative action policies that reserve a certain percentage of political positions for women. This could include quotas for women in local government councils, the State Assembly and executive appointments. Moreover, women interested in politics should have access to leadership training programmes that equip them with the skills needed to campaign effectively, manage public office and advocate gender-sensitive policies.

Conclusion

Over the past two decades, various initiatives have been implemented to address gender inequality, improve women's access to education, healthcare and economic opportunities, and enhance women's participation in governance. Programmes such as skill acquisition schemes, microcredit facilities, and advocacy campaigns have contributed to empowering women, particularly in rural areas. These efforts have led to increased awareness of women's rights and improved livelihoods for many beneficiaries. However, the impact of these programmes has been uneven. While some women have benefited significantly, systemic barriers, such as cultural norms, limited funding and inadequate implementation have hindered broader success. For instance, women's representation in political leadership remains low and gender-based violence persists as a critical issue. Additionally, the sustainability of some initiatives has been questionable, with many programmes failing to achieve long-term impact due to poor monitoring and evaluation. Despite these challenges, the period under review laid a foundation for future progress. The increasing involvement of civil society organizations and international partners has strengthened advocacy and resource mobilization for women empowerment. There is a need for more inclusive policies, increased funding and stronger institutional frameworks to ensure sustainability and scalability of empowerment programmes.

References

• Primary Source

S/N	NAME	SEX	AGE	OCCUPATION	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
1	Mrs. Jude Chinyere	F	55	Civil Servant	Port Harcourt	15/01/2025
2	Dr. Amadi, Patricia	F	49	Lecturer	Virtual	08/01/2025
3	Mrs. Sandra Jasper	F	64	Trader	Port Harcourt	19/02/2025

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19**ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION: A STRATEGIC PATHWAY FOR POVERTY
REDUCTION IN NIGERIA**

By

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&

Kemkamma Bright Aborh²**Abstract**

This study investigated the impact of economic diversification on poverty reduction in Nigeria from 1991 to 2023, using secondary data from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the World Bank. Economic diversification was proxied by the Share of Agriculture (AGDP), Manufacturing (MGDP), and Services (SGDP) in GDP, while Political Stability (PLST) was included as a control variable. Descriptive statistics, unit root tests, co-integration, and an error correction mechanism (ECM) were employed for analysis. The findings revealed that AGDP and SGDP had a positive and significant effect on poverty reduction by increasing employment, whereas MGDP had a negative and significant effect, implying that growth in manufacturing reduces employment and increases poverty. Political stability (PLST) had a negative but insignificant effect on poverty reduction. The study concludes that growth in agriculture and services reduces poverty, while expansion in manufacturing and political stability increase poverty in Nigeria. The study recommended that the government should implement policies that support agricultural development through increased investment, improved infrastructure and access to credit for farmers to further boost employment and poverty reduction. Also, since manufacturing growth appears to increase poverty, policies should focus on enhancing labour-intensive industries, improving industrial infrastructure, and supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to create more employment opportunities.

1. Introduction

Economic diversification is a crucial tactic for boosting economic stability and growth, especially for nations or areas that mainly depend on one industry or sector. Economic diversification reduces the risks that come with being overly reliant on one industry. The World Bank claims that economies that rely too heavily on one industry, like agriculture or oil, are more susceptible to downturns and changes in the price of commodities globally (World Bank, 2020). For instance, because of their strong reliance on oil exports, nations like Nigeria and Venezuela have experienced severe economic instability (IMF, 2021). By distributing investments, diversification can promote long-term economic growth. Because diversified economies are less vulnerable to sector-specific shocks, they are better positioned to maintain growth and accomplish development goals, according

to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2022). New job opportunities in a variety of industries may arise as a result of economic diversification. For instance, compared to economies that are dependent on a single industry, those with diversified sectors typically have lower unemployment rates and better employment conditions (ILO, 2019). By promoting the growth of new sectors and technologies, economic diversification stimulates innovation. Because various industries contribute to technological advancements and knowledge spillovers, the OECD claims that diversified economies frequently see higher levels of innovation and productivity growth (OECD, 2021). Because diversification lessens sensitivity to outside shocks, it improves economic resilience. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), economies with a diverse industrial base are more flexible and better able to manage crises and changes in the world economy (ADB, 2023).

Nigeria has put in place a number of measures to encourage economic diversification and lessen its reliance on oil. In 2010, for example, the Nigerian government established the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB); in 2014, the National Industrial Revolution Plan (NIRP); in 2016, the Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP); in 2017, the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP); in 2018, the Nigerian Industrial Policy and Competitiveness Advisory Council; and in 2019, the SME Development Initiatives.

Based on the aforementioned, it is anticipated that the economy will perform better following the implementation of all of the policies and programmes implemented by the Nigerian government, both in theory and in reality. However, a quick glance at the Nigerian economy reveals that issues like persistent underdevelopment, poverty, unemployment, mounting debt, deliberate breakdown of infrastructure, high rate of corruption, etc., are still common.

According to Thomas (2008), Nwezeaku (2010) and Ogbonna (2012), high rates of persistent and perennial inflation, a fluctuating and deficit balance of payments position, low per capita income, unequal income distribution, and ongoing poverty are all signs that Nigeria's economy is beset by unfavourable economic indices. Nigeria's economic development has been plagued by political banditry, corrupt practices at all levels, insatiable greed and lust for excessive wealth, and mismanagement of abundant natural, human and material resources.

Empirically, little is known about how economic diversification affects a nation's ability to reduce poverty, particularly in Nigeria. The majority of the reviewed studies used data from Bangladesh, Nepal and Malaysia to compare vertical and horizontal diversification (Hasan & Toda, 2004). Olaleye et al. (2013) examined the relationship between export diversification and economic growth in Nigeria. Chris et al. (2015) highlighted the need for a paradigm shift in Nigerian policies and political will in order to

achieve economic diversification. Muttaka (2015) identified the key drivers of economic diversification, such as investment, governance and regional dimensions. Anyaehie and Areji (2015) investigated the sociopolitical obstacles preventing Nigeria from diversifying its economy. Export diversification has a positive effect on economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (Hodey Oduro and Senadza, 2015). Nwosa et al. (2019) investigated how export diversification affects economic growth using the ARDL technique. According to a 2019 study by Jauili and Khemission on economic diversification in Saudi Arabia, diversification helped to create more job opportunities. Economic diversification has a positive effect on growth (Afrogha and Afrogha, 2022). A UNCTAD (2024) study found a positive correlation between export diversification and income inequality. Ojima (2024), however, used the output of the manufacturing, service and agricultural sectors as proxies for economic diversification in his study of the long-term relationship between economic diversification and revenue generation in Nigeria.

Using the share of the agricultural sector to GDP (AGDP), the manufacturing sector to GDP (MGDP) and the service sector to GDP (SGDP) as proxies for economic diversification, the current study departs from these studies by examining the impact of economic diversification on poverty reduction in Nigeria. In the light of this, the purpose of this study is to examine how economic diversification affects the fight against poverty in Nigeria.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the effect of economic diversification on poverty reduction in Nigeria from 1991 to 2023. The objectives are to:

1. examine the effect of the share agricultural sector to GDP on poverty reduction in Nigeria;
2. investigate the influence of the manufacturing sector to GDP on poverty reduction in Nigeria; and
3. analyse the effect of the share of the service sector to GDP on poverty reduction in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

- i) The share agricultural sector to GDP has significant effect on poverty reduction in Nigeria.
- ii) The manufacturing sector to GDP has significant effect on poverty reduction in Nigeria.
- iii) The share of the service sector to GDP has significant effect on poverty reduction in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Clarifications

2.1.1 Economic Diversification

Economic diversification is the process of growing a nation's economy by increasing the number and diversity of industries and sectors that contribute to its GDP and overall economic development. By encouraging the growth of several industries and lowering susceptibility to outside shocks like changes in commodity prices or worldwide economic downturns, it seeks to build a more resilient economy (IMF, 2022).

The goal is to reduce dependence on a single or limited number of industries, products or exports, thereby making the economy more resilient to external shocks and fluctuations. That is, it refers to the process of expanding a country's economy by increasing the variety and number of industries and sectors.

One of the ways of measuring economic diversification is sectorial Value-Added Share. This metric examines the contribution of various sectors (e.g. agriculture, industry or manufacturing and services) to a country's GDP. A more even distribution across sectors indicates diversification.

Economies dominated by one sector, such as agriculture, are considered less diversified compared to economies with balanced contributions from services, manufacturing and industry (World Bank, 2020). In this, agriculture Value-Added Share, manufacturing Value-Added Share and services Value-Added Share are used to measure economic diversification.

2.1.2 Poverty Reduction

Poverty reduction refers to a range of strategies, policies and programmes aimed at improving the living standards of individuals and communities living in poverty. It seeks to address both the immediate needs of poor populations and the underlying structural causes of poverty, such as unemployment, inequality and lack of access to essential services. According to the World Bank (2020), poverty reduction involves creating opportunities for economic growth, enhancing access to education and healthcare, and providing social safety nets to protect the most vulnerable.

One of the key strategies for poverty reduction is promoting inclusive economic growth, which creates jobs and raises incomes, especially for marginalized groups (UNDP, 2019). Investments in education and skills development also play a crucial role, as they empower individuals to break the cycle of poverty by improving their employability (OECD, 2018). Moreover, effective governance and targeted social protection programmes, such as cash transfers and food subsidies, have been shown to reduce poverty and inequality significantly (World Bank, 2021). In this, the ratio of employment to total population was used to measure poverty reduction.

2.2 Theoretical Literature Review

2.2.1. Structural Change Theory

The Structural Change Theory suggests that, as economies develop, they shift from agriculture to manufacturing and then to services. Economic diversification facilitates this transition by creating more productive and higher-paying jobs, thereby reducing poverty. Lewis' Dual-Sector Model explains how labour moves from low-productivity agriculture to high-productivity industrial sectors, increasing income and economic growth.

2.2.2. Endogenous Growth Theory

Developed by Paul Romer and Robert Lucas, this theory emphasizes the role of innovation, human capital, and technology in driving long-term economic growth. Diversification leads to knowledge spillovers, skill development and innovation, which enhance productivity and reduce poverty by creating better job opportunities.

2.2.3. Resource Curse Theory (Dutch Disease Hypothesis)

The Resource Curse Theory highlights how economies overly dependent on natural resources (like oil) experience volatility, weak industrialization and slower poverty reduction. Economic diversification helps mitigate these risks by promoting more stable and broad-based economic growth.

2.2.4. Comparative Advantage and Export-led Growth Theory

Diversification allows countries to develop multiple industries, reducing dependence on a single sector. By expanding into competitive industries, economies can create more employment, raise incomes and reduce poverty.

2.2.5. Kuznets Hypothesis (Inverted U-Curve Theory)

Simon Kuznets proposed that economic growth initially increases inequality but later leads to poverty reduction as wealth spreads. Economic diversification helps accelerate the shift to inclusive growth by expanding job opportunities in different sectors.

2.2.6. Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory, developed by Gary Becker, suggests that investment in education and skills development leads to higher productivity and income. Economic diversification enhances human capital utilization by offering diverse employment opportunities, which help lift people out of poverty.

2.2.7. Inclusive Growth Theory

The Inclusive Growth Theory argues that growth must be broad-based across sectors and include the majority of the labour force. Economic diversification ensures that various sectors contribute to growth, reducing income disparities and poverty.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

Oyelami and Alege (2018) investigated how trade diversification impacts macroeconomic performance in Nigeria. The study used the ARDL bound test to assess whether there is a co-integration relationship between trade diversification and key macroeconomic variables. Additionally, it evaluated both the short-run and long-run effects of intensive and extensive trade diversification on economic growth and exchange rate fluctuations. The findings from the bound tests indicated a co-integration between trade diversification and economic growth, as well as between trade diversification and exchange rate movements. Furthermore, the estimations revealed that trade diversification can stimulate economic growth in Nigeria. It also showed that trade diversification, particularly extensive diversification, can help stabilize exchange rate fluctuations, preventing significant deviations that could disrupt this crucial variable from maintaining its long-term equilibrium. The study suggests that policymakers should actively promote both intensive and extensive trade diversification to enhance economic growth and ensure a stable exchange rate for the Nigerian currency.

Nwosa et al. (2019) explored the relationship between export diversification and economic growth in Nigeria from 1962 to 2016, employing the Auto-regressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) technique. The findings indicated that, though export diversification had a positive effect on economic growth, this influence was not statistically significant. This suggests that the oil sector continues to dominate Nigeria's economy, and the government's efforts to diversify have not made a substantial impact on other sectors. Consequently, the study advocates targeted economic policies aimed at enhancing the diversification of the non-oil sectors. In conclusion, export diversification appears to be an insignificant factor in determining economic growth in Nigeria.

Further, Jouili and Khemissi (2019) examined how economic diversification affects the employment rate of graduates in Saudi Arabia from 2005 to 2016. Their findings revealed that effective economic diversification plays a positive role in job creation. However, the case study of Saudi Arabia indicated that the level of economic diversification was relatively low, particularly in terms of generating new job opportunities for individuals with bachelor's degrees. Therefore, it is essential for the Saudi government to enhance its economic diversification efforts to improve job prospects for graduates.

Valentine et al. (2020) investigated the effects of economic diversification on growth in Nigeria. The study utilized secondary data on GDP growth rates as a measure of economic growth, non-oil GDP for GDP diversification, non-oil exports for export diversification, as well as investment and exchange rates, covering the period 1981 to 2016. An econometric analysis using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) was conducted on the data, revealing that non-oil GDP had a positive and significant impact on economic

growth, while the exchange rate showed a negative but significant relationship with economic growth.

Owan et al. (2020) examined the relationship between diversification and economic growth in Nigeria from 1981 to 2016 using an econometric approach based on Ordinary Least Squares (OLS). Their findings indicated that non-oil gross domestic product had a positive and significant effect on economic growth, while the exchange rate exhibited a negative but significant relationship with economic growth during the study period, alongside a growing population that contributed to increasing pollution levels.

Similarly, Akarara (2021) explored the impact of economic diversification on Nigeria's economy from 1981 to 2020, focusing on revenue from agriculture, manufacturing and tourism sectors. The real gross domestic product growth rate served as a proxy for economic growth. The analysis utilized the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model, revealing a long-term relationship between the diversification variables and economic growth. The results further indicated that revenue from the agricultural and manufacturing sectors positively and significantly influenced economic growth in Nigeria, whereas revenue from the tourism sector did not significantly impact economic growth. The study recommended that the Nigerian government should enhance the manufacturing and agricultural sectors by facilitating access to quick credit facilities, thereby reducing reliance on the oil sector in the long run.

Anyanwu and Ojima (2021) investigated the effect of non-oil exports on economic growth in Nigeria, focusing on the period 1986 to 2018. They employed time series data and utilized the Augmented Dickey-Fuller unit root test and Johansen co-integration test to analyze the relationships among the variables. Their findings showed a positive association between the exploratory variables and the dependent variable. They therefore recommended that government should take steps to improve the technological and scientific growth of the country to give room for diversification of the economy.

Moreover, Afrogha and Afrogha (2022) explored the effects of economic diversification in Nigeria from 1986 to 2016, aiming to determine whether diversifying the economy could influence Nigeria's economic growth. They employed an inferential statistical approach using secondary data and applied regression analysis to assess various independent variables, including agricultural output, manufacturing and mining, with GDP serving as a proxy for growth. The study found a positive relationship between the explanatory variables. Consequently, the researchers recommended that the government should enhance its involvement in other sectors to promote sustainable economic growth.

Olufolakemi and Faith (2022) examined the impact of economic diversification on Nigeria's economy during the same period, 1986 to 2016. They utilized an inferential statistical approach, gathering secondary data from the National Bureau of Statistics

(NBS) and the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2018), which they analyzed using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method. Their findings, supported by model verification through a priori expectations, statistical criteria and econometric techniques, confirmed the theoretical hypothesis and upheld OLS assumptions. The study revealed that diversification, indicated by agricultural and mining contributions to GDP, significantly affected GDP, while the manufacturing contribution showed a negative correlation with GDP and a minimal impact on Nigeria's economic growth during the reviewed period. The parameters (LOG (ACG), LOG (MICG)) indicated a positive relationship between the explanatory and explained variables, whereas the (LOG (MACG)) parameter suggested a negative association between the dependent and independent variables.

Ojima (2024) explored the impact of economic diversification on revenue generation in Nigeria from 1993 to 2023. The study's models identified several explanatory variables, and Ordinary Least Squares were applied. Additionally, the research included unit root tests, Granger causality tests, bound tests and ARDL estimation to analyze both short-term and long-term relationships between the dependent variable and those selected in the model. The findings indicated a long-term connection between government revenue generation and the study's variables. Consequently, the study recommended that the government should invest deliberately in the agricultural, manufacturing and service sectors, revise tax policies to attract investment, and increase sectoral allocations.

In the same vein, UNCTAD, (2024) investigated the link between export diversification and income inequality. The study sampled 182 countries over the period 1998 to 2018. A fixed effects model was employed to evaluate the relationship between inequality and diversification. The results showed a statistically significant positive correlation between income inequality and export diversification across various commodity dependence groups. This suggests that diversifying exports can lead to increased income for the population. The study thus recommended implementing inclusive policies to foster diversification.

Olanike et al. (2024) examined how livelihood diversification affects the poverty levels of rural farming households in Kwara State, Nigeria. They collected cross-sectional data from 152 farming households over the course of a year using a structured questionnaire and interviews. For analysis, they employed descriptive statistics, the Shannon diversity index, the Foster, Greer, and Thorbecke poverty index, as well as fractional logit and probit regression models. The results indicated that agriculture-related activities remained the primary livelihood strategy in the region. While farmers had access to a variety of livelihood options, the activities undertaken by rural households were quite similar, with crop farming, fish farming and palm-wine tapping ranking first,

second and third, respectively. The key factors influencing livelihood diversification were age, gender, household size and farming experience. In terms of household poverty, significant determinants were access to credit, gender, age and cooperative membership. The main challenges identified were a lack of sufficient funds for investment, high transportation costs, inadequate training for skill acquisition and limited access to credit facilities. In the light of these findings, it was recommended that the government should organize training programmes focused on asset accumulation for households through extension services.

Koiry et al. (2024) explored the relationship between poverty and income diversification in a tea estate in Bangladesh. They used the multistage sampling method to select one tea estate and 382 households. Primary data were gathered through interviews. The Simpson diversification index and the Alkire-Foster multidimensional poverty index were utilized to assess income diversification and multidimensional poverty, respectively. Additionally, the study employed the propensity score matching method to evaluate the causal impact of income diversification on multidimensional poverty. The findings showed that the research area had a 35% household level income diversification rate.

2.4 Evaluation of the Literature Reviewed

The literature reviewed revealed a significant gap regarding the impact of economic diversification on poverty reduction in countries, particularly Nigeria. Most of the studies examined either focused on vertical versus horizontal diversification using data from Bangladesh, Nepal and Malaysia (Hasan & Toda, 2004). Olaleye et al. (2013) investigated the link between export diversification and economic growth in Nigeria. Chris et al. (2015) emphasized that achieving economic diversification necessitates a shift in policies and political commitment in Nigeria. Muttaka (2015) identified key drivers of economic diversification, such as investment, governance, and regional factors. Anyaehie and Areji (2015) explored the socio-political challenges that impede Nigeria's economic diversification. Hodey Oduro and Senadza (2015) found that export diversification had a positive effect on economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Nwosa et al. (2019) employed the ARDL technique to analyze the impact of export diversification on economic growth, while Jauili and Khemission (2019) reported that economic diversification in Saudi Arabia led to increased job opportunities. Afrogha and Afrogha (2022) confirmed that economic diversification positively influenced growth, and UNCTAD (2024) established a positive correlation between export diversification and income inequality. The only exception is Ojima (2024), who examined the long-term relationship between economic diversification and revenue generation in Nigeria, using outputs from the agricultural, manufacturing and service sectors as proxies for economic diversification.

This study differs from previous research by focusing on the effect of economic diversification on poverty reduction in Nigeria, utilizing the Shares of the Agricultural Sector to GDP (AGDP), Manufacturing Sector to GDP (MGDP), and Service Sector to GDP (SGDP) as measures of economic diversification, which, to the these researchers' knowledge, have not been previously studied.

3. Methodology

This section addresses issues bordering on research design, methodological framework, description of variables, specification of the model, source of data collection and estimation techniques.

3.1 Research Design

Research design means the template for data collection. This study adopted a quasi-experimental research design. The quasi-experimental research design enables the researcher to determine the cause-and-effect relationship between dependent and independent variables and does not rely on random assignment of data.

3.2 Model Specification

This study utilized the Error Correction Mechanism (ECM) to examine both the long-run and short-run relationships involving economic diversification, which was represented by the share of the Agricultural sector to GDP (AGDP), the Share of the Manufacturing Sector to GDP (MGDP), and the Share of the Services Sector to GDP (SGDP). Political Stability (PLST) served as a check variable, while the employment-to-total population ratio was used to represent poverty reduction (PVRD), which acted as the dependent variable over a 43-year period (1991 to 2023). To ensure the stationarity of all variables, the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test for stationarity was conducted. The data for this study consisted of annual time series data sourced from the World Bank's World Development Indicators, covering the years 1991 to 2023.

The model specification of this study was based on the work of Afrogha and Afrogha (2022), with further modification. Afrogha and Afrogha (2022) studied the implications of economic diversification in Nigeria from 1986 to 2016 using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression modelled:

$$RGDP = f(ACG, MICG, MACG),$$

where:

RGDP = Real gross domestic product (proxy for economic growth)

ACG = Agricultural contribution to GDP

MICG = Mining contribution to GDP

MACG = Manufacturing contribution to GDP

However, the present study deviated from this study by examining the effect of economic diversification on revenue generation in Nigeria from 1991 to 2023 by using ratio of employment to total population to proxy poverty reduction (PVRD) as the dependent variable while Share of Agricultural sector to GDP (AGDP), Share of Manufacturing sector to GDP (MGDP) and Share of Services Sector to GDP (SGDP) were used to proxy economic diversification as the main explanatory variables, whereas:

Political Stability (PLST) was used as a check variable as a factor that affect economic diversification.

Thus, the functional relationship is stated as follows:

$$PVRD = f(AGDP, MGDP, SGDP, PLST) \quad (3.2)$$

The mathematical form of the model or equation (3.2) is stated as follows:

$$PVRD_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 AGDP_t + \beta_2 MGDP_t + \beta_3 SGDP_t + \beta_4 PLST_t \quad (3.3)$$

The linear econometric form of the model or equation (3.3) is stated as follows:

$$PVRD = \beta_0 + \beta_1 AGDP_t + \beta_2 MGDP_t + \beta_3 SGDP_t + \beta_4 PLST_t + \mu_1 \quad (3.4),$$

where:

PVRD = Poverty Reduction

AGDP = Share of Agricultural Sector to GDP

MGDP = Share of Manufacturing Sector to GDP

SGDP = Share of Services Sector to GDP

PLST = Political Stability

PVRD, AGDP, MGDP, SGDP and PLST are as earlier defined.

β_0 is the intercepts or the constant terms,

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$, and β_5 are the slopes of the explanatory variables

It is expected that increase in economic diversification will enhance revenue generation in Nigeria. Thus, a priori expectations are $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$, and $\beta_5 > 0$.

3.2 Estimation Techniques

4. Results and Discussion

The analysis was conducted in phases. It begins with the descriptive statistics analysis of the data, followed by the unit root test and thereafter the analysis was conducted using ECM modelling techniques.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.1 presents the summaries of the descriptive statistics for the variables used in this study. It shows the mean, medium, maximum, minimum and standard deviation values, etc.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics

	PVRD	AGDP	MGDP	SGDP	PLST
Mean	57.50909	24.31848	12.68545	46.22545	6.281515
Median	57.94000	23.89000	11.81000	44.68000	5.190000
Maximum	58.38000	36.97000	20.93000	59.79000	26.60000
Minimum	55.03000	19.99000	6.550000	35.36000	0.000000
Std. Dev.	0.888237	3.690172	4.386583	6.137331	6.018546
Skewness	-1.387924	1.617757	0.428290	0.282378	1.878045
Kurtosis	3.781311	6.227234	1.830162	2.475490	6.327323
Jarque-Bera	11.43420	28.71493	2.890596	0.816832	34.62153
Probability	0.003289	0.000001	0.235676	0.664702	0.000000
Sum	1897.800	802.5100	418.6200	1525.440	207.2900
Sum Sq. Dev.	25.24687	435.7558	615.7476	1205.339	1159.133
Observations	33	33	33	33	33

Source: Authors' Computation (2025)

Table 4.1 indicate that Poverty Reduction (PVRD) had a mean value of 57.50909 and a standard deviation of 0.888237. The skewness value for Poverty Reduction (PVRD) was negative (-1.387924), suggesting that it had a long-left tail. Additionally, the kurtosis value for Poverty Reduction (PVRD) was 3.781311 (greater than 3), indicating that it is leptokurtic. This means that the distribution is peaked, with values concentrated higher than the sample mean.

The Share of Agriculture to GDP (AGDP) had a mean value of 24.31848 and a standard deviation of 3.690172. Its skewness value was positive (1.617757), meaning that it also had a long-left tail. The kurtosis value for Share of Agriculture to GDP (AGDP) was 6.227234 (greater than 3), signifying that it is leptokurtic as well, with a peak distribution where values were higher than the sample mean.

The Share of Manufacturing to GDP (MGDP) had a mean value of 12.68545 and a standard deviation of 4.386583. The skewness value for Share of Manufacturing to GDP (MGDP) was positive (0.428290), indicating a long-left tail. However, the kurtosis value for Share of Manufacturing to GDP (MGDP) was 1.830162 (less than 3), meaning that it is platykurtic. This suggests a flatter distribution, with values lower than the sample mean.

The mean value of the Share of Services to GDP (SGDP) was 46.22545, with a standard deviation of 6.137331. The skewness of SGDP was positive at 0.282378, indicating a long-left tail, while the kurtosis was 2.475490, which was less than 3, suggesting a platykurtic distribution. This means the distribution was relatively flat, with values that tended to be lower than the sample mean.

For Political Stability (PLST), the mean was 6.281515, and the standard deviation was 6.018546. The skewness for PLST was positive at 1.878045, indicating a long right tail,

and the kurtosis was 6.327323, which was greater than 3, indicating a leptokurtic distribution. This suggests that the values were more concentrated around the mean, resulting in a peak distribution.

An important point to note from this table is the Jarque-Bera statistics for the variables. The values for PVRD, AGDP and PLST exceeded 5.99, indicating that these variables did not follow a normal distribution. In contrast, MGDG and SGDP had values below 5.99, suggesting they exhibited a normal distribution.

Given these findings, it is essential to test for the stationarity of the variables and their long-run relationships, as using the variables at their level could lead to spurious results. Therefore, a unit root test was performed to ensure that the variables were stationary, with the study employing the Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) unit root test procedure.

4.3.2 Unit Root Test

Tables 4.2 presents the results of stationarity test for each of the variables used employing Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) test.

Table 4.2: Unit Root Test Results

Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) Test				
Variables	Level	1 st Difference	Status	Remarks
PVRD	-2.353850	-4.336293	I(1)	Stationary
AGDP	-1.701504	-6.438258	I(1)	Stationary
MGDP	-1.481257	-4.972339	I(1)	Stationary
SGDP	-1.387257	-3.898259	I(1)	Stationary
PLST	-2.065069	-4.002131	I(1)	Stationary
Critical Values	Level	1 st Difference		
1%	-3.679322	-3.752946		
5%	-2.967767	-2.998064		
10%	-2.622989	-2.638752		

Source: Authors' Computation (2025)

As seen in Table 4.2 above, the result of the variables showed that all the variables were found stationary in their 1st difference. This can be seen by comparing the observed values (in absolute terms) of the ADF test statistics with the critical values (also in absolute terms) of the test statistics at the 5 percent level of significance. This implies existence of long-run (equilibrium) relationship between the variables used in this study. Since the variables were co-integrated of order one, we proceeded to conduct the co-integration test using the Johansen procedure.

4.3 The Co-Integration Test

The result of co-integration test for the model is presented in Table 4.3 below. This will enable us to determine if there exists long-run equilibrium relationship among the variables applied in this model.

Table 4.3 Co-integration Test Result

Unrestricted Cointegration Rank Test (Trace)

Hypothesize d		Trace	0.05	
No. of CE(s)	Eigenvalue	Statistic	Critical Value	Prob.**
None *	0.755336	85.24241	69.81889	0.0018
At most 1	0.437442	41.59839	47.85613	0.1703
At most 2	0.338703	23.76532	29.79707	0.2105
At most 3	0.214818	10.94522	15.49471	0.2149
At most 4	0.105269	3.448187	3.841466	0.0633

Trace test indicates 1 cointegrating eqn(s) at the 0.05 level

* denotes rejection of the hypothesis at the 0.05 level

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

Unrestricted Cointegration Rank Test (Maximum Eigenvalue)

Hypothesize d		Max-Eigen	0.05	
No. of CE(s)	Eigenvalue	Statistic	Critical Value	Prob.**
None *	0.755336	43.64402	33.87687	0.0025
At most 1	0.437442	17.83307	27.58434	0.5091
At most 2	0.338703	12.82010	21.13162	0.4689
At most 3	0.214818	7.497037	14.26460	0.4321
At most 4	0.105269	3.448187	3.841466	0.0633

Max-eigenvalue test indicates 1 co-integrating eqn(s) at the 0.05 level

* denotes rejection of the hypothesis at the 0.05 level

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

Source: Authors' Computation (2025)

The result of the co-integration in Table 4.3 was based on both the Trace Statistics and Maximum Eigenvalue. The result indicated a one co-integrating equation for both the Trace Statistics and Maximum Eigenvalue at 5 percent level. This suggests that there was a co-integration, that is a long-run relationship existed between the variables in the PVRD model.

4.4 Parsimonious ECM Test Result and Analysis

In order to confirm the existence of a co-integrating vector among the variables, the ECM was employed. This was based on the general-to-specific rule. The results are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Parsimonious ECM Result

Dependent Variable: D(PVRD)				
Method: Least Squares				
Date: 01/27/25 Time: 15:03				
Sample (adjusted): 1994 2023				
Included observations: 30 after adjustments				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	-0.031902	0.050971	-0.625890	0.5378
D(PVRD(-1))	0.388253	0.163269	2.377999	0.0265
D(AGDP(-1))	0.004462	0.001510	2.956087	0.0064
D(MGDP)	-0.085604	0.040496	-2.113900	0.0371
D(SGDP)	0.020373	0.020905	0.974557	0.3404
D(SGDP(-2))	0.015968	0.005835	2.736445	0.0103
D(PLST(-2))	-0.016927	0.014203	-1.191756	0.2461
ECM(-1)	-0.536753	0.158462	-3.387273	0.0022
R-squared	0.526770	Mean dependent var		-0.037667
Adjusted R-squared	0.444469	S.D. dependent var		0.327706
S.E. of regression	2.673707	Akaike info criterion		0.456707
Sum squared resid	164.4203	Schwarz criterion		0.830360
Log likelihood	-64.51338	Hannan-Quinn criter.		0.576242
F-statistic	6.400529	Durbin-Watson stat		1.832322
Prob(F-statistic)	0.001294			

Source: Authors' Computation (2025)

As presented in Table 4.4, the regressors in the model explained approximately 44 percent of the total variation in the PVRD. The remaining 56 percent was attributed to factors outside the model, which were captured by the error term. Additionally, the overall regression result of the dynamic model was significant at the 5 percent level, as evidenced by an F-calculated value of 6.400529 and a probability F-statistics value of 0.001294, both of which were below the 0.05 threshold, confirming the model's significance. The ECM included in this model had the appropriate sign (i.e. negative) and was statistically significant at the 5 percent level. The coefficient suggested an adjustment

speed of about 54 percent, indicating that approximately 54 percent of the errors were corrected within one year, given that the data was annual. Furthermore, the ECM indicated a long-run relationship between the regressors (AGDP, MGD, SGDP, and PLST) and the response variable (PVRD). The findings also confirmed the existence of a short-run relationship among the variables in the model. The D.W. value of 1.832322 suggested minimal serial autocorrelation in the model.

In terms of short-run estimation, Table 4.4 shows that the Share of agriculture to GDP (AGDP) had a positive relationship (0.004462) with Poverty reduction (PVRD). This implies that a unit increase in the Share of Agriculture to GDP (AGDP) leads to an increase in the employment-to-population ratio, thereby reducing Poverty (PVRD) by 0.004462 units in Nigeria. The positive impact of the Share of Agriculture to GDP (AGDP) on Poverty Reduction (PVRD) aligned with the economic theory and confirmed a priori expectations. This effect was statistically significant at the 5 percent level. Consequently, the study rejected the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between the Share of agriculture to GDP (AGDP) and Poverty Reduction (PVRD) while accepting the alternative hypothesis.

The Share of Manufacturing to GDP (MGDP) showed a negative relationship (-0.085604) with Poverty Reduction (PVRD), indicating that an increase in MGD led to a decrease in the employment-to-population ratio, which in turn raised Poverty Reduction (PVRD) by 0.085604 units in Nigeria. This negative impact of MGD on PVRD contradicted prior expectations and did not align with the established economic theory. Furthermore, the negative relationship was statistically significant at the 5 percent level. Consequently, the study rejected the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between MGD and PVRD, while accepting the alternative hypothesis.

In contrast, the Share of Services to GDP (SGDP) exhibited a positive relationship (0.015968) with Poverty Reduction (PVRD), suggesting that an increase in SGDP enhanced the employment-to-population ratio, thereby reducing poverty (PVRD) by 0.015968 units in Nigeria. This positive effect of SGDP on PVRD aligned with prior expectations and was consistent with the economic theory. Additionally, the positive relationship was statistically significant at the 5 percent level. Thus, the study rejected the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between SGDP and PVRD, while accepting the alternative hypothesis.

Lastly, Political Stability (PLST) presented a negative relationship (-0.016927) with Poverty Reduction (PVRD), indicating that an increase in PLST decreased the employment-to-population ratio, consequently raising poverty (PVRD) by 0.016927 units in Nigeria. Political Stability (PLST) had a negative (-0.016927) relationship with Poverty Reduction (PVRD), suggesting that a unit increase in Political Stability (PLST) reduced the ratio of employment to population, thereby increasing poverty (PVRD) by 0.016927 units in

Nigeria. The negative impact of Political Stability (PLST) on Poverty Reduction (PVRD) did not align with initial expectations and was inconsistent with the economic theory. Furthermore, the negative effect of Political Stability (PLST) on Poverty Reduction (PVRD) was not statistically significant at the 5 percent level. As a result, the study accepted the null hypothesis, indicating that there was no significant relationship between Political Stability (PLST) and Poverty Reduction (PVRD).

4.5 Post-estimation Test Results and Analysis

The study also conducted a diagnostic test to ascertain whether or not the series are free from autocorrelation (Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test), heteroscedasticity (Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey Test) and linearity test (Ramsey RESET Test Statistics). The result of the post-estimation test is presented in Table 4.5 below.

Table 5: Post-estimation Test Results

Test	Results	Prob. Value
Ramsey RESET Test (Linearity Test)	0.069814	0.7938
Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test	0.381712	0.6876
Heteroskedasticity Test: Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey	1.622905	0.1812

Source: Authors' Computation (2025)

The result of the Linearity Test using Ramsey RESET Test revealed that the F-statistic value was 0.069814 while the probability value was 0.7938. This value was about 79 percent which was higher than the 5 percent (0.05) level. The study, therefore, confirmed the model.

The study also showed the result of the serial or autocorrelation test using Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test. It indicated that the F-statistic was 0.381712, with a probability value of 0.6876. This indicated that the probability value of about 68 percent (0.6876) was greater than the 5 percent (0.05) critical value; hence, we confirmed no serial correlation in the model.

The result of the heteroscedasticity test using Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey test showed the F-statistic was 1.622905 while the probability value was 0.1812. This suggested that there was no evidence of heteroskedasticity in the model, since the Chi-square probability value of about 80 percent was more than 5 percent ($p > 0.05$). So, residuals had constant variance, which was desirable in regression, meaning that the residuals were Homoscedastic.

Also, the stability of the parameters of the model was examined using the plots of the cumulative sum of recursive residuals (CUSUM) and cumulative sum of squares of recursive residual (CUSUMSQ). Instability of the parameters arose due to structural changes and the institution of different policy regimes over the sample period. Whilst the

CUSUM test was particularly useful for detecting systematic changes in the regression coefficients, the CUSUMSQ test was significant in situations where the departure from the constancy of the regression coefficients was haphazard and sudden. If any of the straight lines in the graph is crossed, the null hypothesis that the regression equation is correctly specified is rejected at the 5 percent level of significance. As seen in Figure 1, both the CUSUM and CUSUMSQ stay within the 5 percent critical line, indicating parameter constancy throughout the sample period in this study.

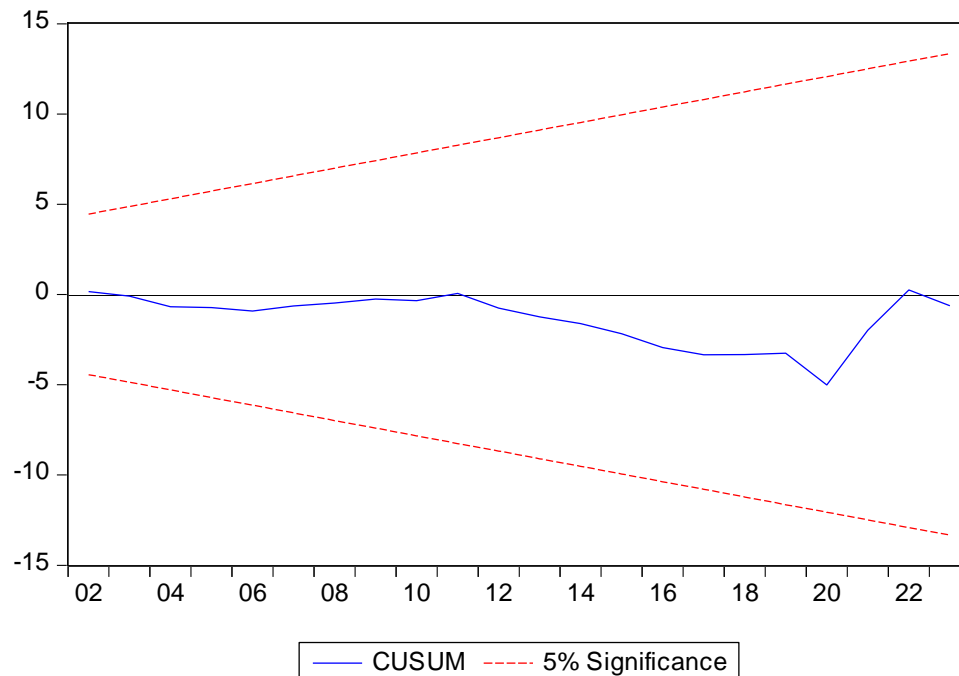


Figure 1: Stability Test Result based on CUSUM

5. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The study empirically investigates the impact of economic diversification on poverty reduction in Nigeria from 1991 to 2023. Time series data were collected from secondary sources, using the ratio of employment to total population as a proxy for poverty reduction (PVRD), which served as the dependent variable. The Share of Agriculture to GDP (AGDP), Share of Manufacturing to GDP (MGDP), and Share of Services to GDP (SGDP) were utilized to assess economic diversification. The dataset was analyzed through descriptive statistics, unit root tests, co-integration, and the error correction mechanism (ECM) technique to estimate the model.

The results indicated that the Share of Agriculture to GDP (AGDP) had a positive and significant effect on poverty reduction, implying that an increase in AGDP enhanced the employment ratio relative to the total population, thereby reducing poverty in Nigeria during the study period. Conversely, the Share of Manufacturing to GDP (MGDP) had a

negative and significant effect on poverty reduction, suggesting that an increase in MGDG decreased the employment ratio, which, in turn, raised poverty levels in Nigeria. Additionally, the Share of services to GDP (SGDP) positively and significantly affected poverty reduction, indicating that an increase in SGDP also boosted the employment ratio, thus alleviating poverty in Nigeria. However, Political Stability (PLST) showed a negative and insignificant effect on poverty reduction, suggesting that an increase in PLST led to a decrease in the employment ratio, consequently increasing poverty in Nigeria. The study concluded that the Share of Agriculture to GDP (AGDP) and the Share of Services to GDP (SGDP) contributed to poverty reduction, while the Share of Manufacturing to GDP (MGDP) and Political Stability (PLST) exacerbated poverty in Nigeria during the reviewed period.

The study therefore suggests that:

- The government should implement policies that support agricultural development through increased investment, improved infrastructure and access to credit for farmers to further boost employment and poverty reduction.
- Since manufacturing growth appears to increase poverty, policies should focus on enhancing labour-intensive industries, improving industrial infrastructure, and supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to create more employment opportunities.
- Given the positive impact of the services sector on poverty reduction, policies should encourage further expansion of the services sector, particularly in technology, finance and trade, to enhance job creation.
- Although political stability was found to have an insignificant impact on poverty reduction, ensuring good governance, policy continuity and a secure business environment can indirectly support economic growth and job creation.
- The government should implement a balanced economic diversification strategy that encourages synergy between agriculture, manufacturing and services to maximize job creation and poverty reduction.
- Expanding access to education, vocational training and skill development programmes will equip the workforce with the necessary skills to participate in diversified economic activities and reduce poverty.
- Improving transportation, electricity and digital infrastructure will support growth across all economic sectors and create an enabling environment for employment generation.

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20**RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN NIGERIA: AN
AUTOREGRESSIVE DISTRIBUTED LAG (ARDL) APPROACH****By****Nteegah Alwell**

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Email: Terver_leonard@uniport.edu.ng**Abstract**

This study examined the effect of renewable energy on economic growth in Nigeria. The study covered a period of thirty-three years (1990-2022). Renewable energy was proxied by hydro energy and solar energy, while economic growth was proxied by Real Gross Domestic Product. Time series data were used and these data were sourced from World Bank Development Indicator, *Central Bank of Nigeria statistical bulletins* and International Energy Agency. The techniques of data analysis adopted were descriptive statistical technique, ADF unit root test, bounds cointegration test and Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL). The findings of the study showed that hydro energy had a positive and significant effect on Real Gross Domestic Product in Nigeria in both the short run and the long run. Solar energy had a positive and significant effect on Real Gross Domestic Product in Nigeria in the short run and the long run. Based on the findings, the study concluded that renewable energy plays a significant positive role in driving economic growth in Nigeria. It was recommended that government and policy makers in the energy sector should make effective energy policies to diversify the sources of energy so as to accommodate more streams of renewable energy in order to enhance productivity and foster economic growth in Nigeria.

Keywords: Renewable energy, Economic growth, Hydro energy, Solar energy, Real Gross Domestic Product

1.0 Introduction

Energy is one of the elements that run the world. It is a vital source of economic growth because many production and consumption activities involve energy as a required input. Thus, one of the impelling forces that boost industrial production and economic growth has been energy. Energy is a fundamental resource in the economy. Every facet of

economic activities in this planet earth requires energy in one form or the other to function effectively. Energy is an integral element in human civilization. The importance of energy has increased geometrically during the last decade. It is undoubtedly a fulcrum for sustainable business, economic and financial growth, globally and especially for emerging economies, like Nigeria. Nations with a higher per capita energy consumption and distributions are considered economically robust and industrialized, unlike those with low levels of consumption and distribution (Umeh, Ochuba & Ugwo, 2019).

Due to its vital role in enhancing economic growth, it is important to diversify sources of energy as clean as possible for strategic, environmental and energy security reasons. Thus, modern energy services, including renewable energy, have been a prerequisite to sustained development in every advanced economy (Campos, Da Silva & Perreira, 2016). According to United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) (2015), renewable energy is as any energy generated from natural processes, including hydropower, geothermal, solar, tides, wind, biomass and biofuels, which made up 53.6% of the total gigawatt capacity of all energy technologies installed in 2015. This excludes large hydroelectric projects. According to International Energy Agency (IEA) (2015), renewable energy technologies are becoming much more prevalent in both developed and developing economies as they are cheaper, more reliable and readily available. Renewable energy technologies have more benefits to both developed and developing countries than merely being environmentally-friendly. They can also provide protection against future price increases in conventional fuels by diversifying the energy portfolio, aid the balancing of budget and trade deficits, and create new local economic opportunities which support poverty reduction and promote economic growth.

Given the importance of renewable energy in promoting economic growth, the empirical literature studying the relationship between renewable energy and economic growth has expanded considerably in the last decade. For instance, George, Anthony, Eberechukwu, Ezeh, Okenyeka and Mbadiwe (2023) found that renewable energy consumption has significant positive impact on economic growth. Also, Uzokwe and Onyije (2020) assert that there is a positive relationship between renewable energy consumption and economic growth both in the short run and the long run. In addition, Aliyu, Lawal and Beki (2018) claim that energy consumption has significant relationship with economic growth in Nigeria. On the contrary, Goshit and Shido-Ikwu (2022) note that long run and short run estimates established a significant negative relationship between renewable energy consumption and economic growth in Nigeria. Furthermore, the result of Ekone and Amaghionyeodiwe's (2020) study showed that, although renewable energy consumption and economic growth increased between 1990 and 2016 in Nigeria, renewable energy consumption had no significant positive impact on economic growth in

Nigeria. Lastly, Maji, Chindo, and Rahim (2019) aver that renewable energy consumption slows down economic growth in West African countries.

However, developing countries like Nigeria are faced with the challenges of sluggish economic growth and the mounting imperative to decarbonize their economies. Countries are looking for solutions to improve their economic performance while minimizing further greenhouse gas emissions. Given this context, renewable energy is emerging not only as a solution to meet growing energy demand while sharply reducing carbon emissions but also as a potential engine for economic growth and diversification (Akorede, Ibrahim, Amuda, Otuoze & Olufeagba, 2017).

The generation and utilization of renewable energy in Nigeria is still in the infant stage. According to Renewable Energy Master Plan (REMP) developed by the energy commission in 2005, Nigeria targets to expand energy access to 90 percent of its population by 2030 and 30 percent of their total generation to be from renewable sources (Gerretsen, 2018; Aliyu, Modu, & Tan, 2018). The Renewable Energy Master Plan (REMP) seeks to increase the supply of renewable electricity from 13% of total electricity generation in 2015 to 23% in 2025 and 36% by 2030. Renewable electricity would then account for 10% of Nigerian total energy consumption by 2025. However, these targets are far from actualization given the current level of generation of renewable electricity to the total energy consumption in the country.

Furthermore, the literature for transiting to renewable energy is not yet clear and proven particularly for countries like Nigeria that are huge exporters of conventional energy sources. In other words, a thorough review of the available literature in this study showed that the empirical evidence provides contradictory arguments regarding the nexus of economic growth and renewable energy development, which could lead to destructive policies. While some studies found a positive relationship between renewable energy and economic growth (Aliyu, Lawal & Beki, 2018 Uzokwe & Onyije, 2020; George, Anthony, Eberechukwu, Ezeh, Okenyeka & Mbadiwe, 2023;), other found a negative relationship between renewable energy and economic growth (Maji, Chindo, & Rahim, 2019 Ekone & Amaghionyeodiwe, 2020; Goshit & Shido-Ikwu, 2022;). Also, the literature is observed to cover limited time periods along with the traditional econometric approaches to explore the nexus of the said variables. Therefore, this study tried to fill this gap by utilizing advance and appropriate econometric approaches for achieving the evidence of the relationship between renewable energy and economic growth in Nigeria more comprehensively. Hence, the aim of this study was to empirically examine renewable energy development as a way of driving economic growth in Nigeria.

The study is structured into five sections, with the introduction as section one. Section two is on literature review of theoretical, conceptual and empirical literature related to the study. Section three deals with the methodology applied in the study.

Section four presents the results and discusses the findings of the study, while section five provides the conclusion and policy recommendations of the study.

2.0 Literature Review

Theoretical Literature

The theories adopted in this study are discussed in this section

1. Energy Transition Theory

The idea of linking energy to economic growth is anchored to the Energy Transition theory. The proponents of the theory, such as Hosier and Dowd (1987) and Leach (1992), linked the nature of energy consumed to income. Energy is argued to be one of the main drivers of modern economy, especially across countries that have witnessed rapid growth in recent years. The theory explains that the type of energy consumed by a nation strongly depends on the level of per capita income. Drawing from Consumer Theory, the theory posits that as income increases, energy consumers tend to transit from traditional or inferior energy to modern energy due to ease of use and comfort. The theory holds that there is a direct link between level of income and energy consumption; high income countries tend to consume more quality energy than poor countries.

Furthermore, the theory maintains that poor access to modern energy limits a nation's potential to reduce poverty and ensure sustainable growth. This is because access to energy is central to any poverty reduction drive (Pachauri & Spreng, 2004) as energy deprivation inhibits production and limits level of economic activities (Kaygusuz, 2011; Sovacool, 2012).

2. Energy-Growth Hypotheses

Investigation on the link between energy consumption and economic growth dates back to the 1970s, with the pioneer work of Kraft and Kraft (1978), where a unidirectional causality from Gross National Product (GNP) growth to energy consumption was observed in the United States for the period 1947-1974. Since then, numerous scholars have carried out further tests to determine the relationship between energy consumption and economic growth (Yildirim & Aslan, 2012).

Studies without qualitative distinction have propounded and provided four testable hypotheses to explain the direction of the relationship between energy consumption and economic growth. In other words, the energy-growth literature identifies four hypotheses about the causal relationship between energy consumption and economic growth, namely: The Growth Hypothesis, the Conservation Hypothesis, the Feedback Hypothesis, and the Neutrality Hypothesis. Each of these hypotheses has important policy implications (Ozturk, 2010; Yildirim and Aslan, 2012; Ekeocha, Penzin & Ogbuabor, 2020).

Growth Hypothesis: The Growth Hypothesis assumes unidirectional causality from energy to economic growth, emphasizing the crucial roles energy access and consumption play in output growth. This relationship denotes an energy-dependent economy where no access or limited access to modern energy supplies potentially limits entrepreneurship and economic activities, resulting in poor economic performance (Emeka, Nenubari & Godsgrace, 2019).

Conservation Hypothesis: According to Emeka, Nenubari and Godsgrace (2019), the Conservative Hypothesis posits that economic growth pulls energy consumption. The hypothesis argues for unidirectional causality from economic growth to energy consumption. Here energy conservation policies on energy consumption would not have a negative effect on the economy.

Feedback Hypothesis: The Feedback Hypothesis posits bidirectional causality between energy consumption and economic growth, meaning that a mutual relation exists between energy consumption and economic growth. In this situation, energy conservation policy that seeks to reduce energy consumption may negatively affect economic growth and these changes are likewise reflected back to energy consumption (Emeka, Nenubari & Godsgrace, 2019).

Neutrality Hypothesis: Ouedraogo (2013) notes that the Neutrality Hypothesis states that energy consumption has no effect on economic growth. It posits that there is no causality between energy consumption and economic growth. This hypothesis is supported when there is absence of causality between energy consumption and economic growth. In this case, energy conservation policies for the reduction of energy consumption will have no impact on economic growth.

Conceptual Literature

Renewable Energy Resources

Renewable energy is energy that comes from a source that will not run out. They are natural and self-replenishing, and usually have a low- or zero-carbon footprint. Renewable energy comes from sources or processes that are constantly replenished. These sources of energy include solar energy, wind energy, geothermal energy and hydroelectric power.

i. **Solar Energy:** Solar energy is the energy that comes from the sun. Solar energy is broadly characterized as either passive solar or active solar, depending on the way they capture, convert and distribute solar energy. Active solar techniques include the use of photovoltaic panels and solar thermal collectors to harness the energy.

ii. **Biomass Energy:** Biomass is based on carbon, hydrogen and oxygen. Biomass energy is derived from five distinct energy sources: garbage, wood, waste, landfill gases

and alcohol fuels. Biomass can be converted to other usable forms of energy, like methane gas or transportation fuels, like ethanol and biodiesel. Biomass energy is the conversion of solid fuel made from plant materials into electricity. Biomass energy uses organic materials from plants and animals, including crops, trees and waste wood.

iii. Hydro Energy (Hydropower): Hydroelectric power works in a manner similar to wind power in that it is used to spin a generator's turbine blades to create electricity. Hydro power uses fast moving water in rivers or from waterfalls to spin the turbine blades and is widely used in some countries.

iv. Wind Energy: Wind energy works much like old-fashioned windmills did, by using the power of the wind to turn a blade. Where the motion of these blades would once cause millstones to grind together to make flour, today's turbines power a generator, which produces electricity. When wind turbines are sited on land they need to be placed in areas with high winds, such as hilltops or open fields and plains.

v. Geothermal Energy: By harnessing the natural heat below the earth's surface, geothermal energy can be used to heat homes directly or to generate electricity. Although it harnesses a power directly below our feet, geothermal energy is of negligible importance in some European countries compared to countries where geothermal heat is much more freely available.

vi. Tidal Energy: Tidal energy uses twice-daily tidal currents to drive turbine generators. Although tidal flow, unlike some other hydro energy sources, is not constant, it is highly predictable and can therefore compensate for the periods when the tide current is low.

Empirical Literature

George, Anthony, Eberechukwu, Ezech, Okenyeka and Mbadiwe (2023) examined the impact of renewable energy consumption on economic growth in Nigeria in order to establish the relationship between renewable energy consumption and economic growth in Nigeria. The study used secondary data from the World Bank data bank from 1990 to 2020 for its analysis. The study also used Toda-Yamamoto augmented granger causality to test for the nature of the relationship between the two variables and Auto Regressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) bounds to examine the impact of renewable energy consumption on economic growth. The study found a bi-directional relationship between the variables. The regression results also showed a significant positive impact of renewable energy consumption on economic growth. The work concluded that renewable energy consumption enhances economic growth in Nigeria.

Goshit and Shido-Ikwu (2022) investigated the impact of renewable energy consumption on economic growth in Nigeria for the period 1990-2019. The study adopted Autoregressive Distributive lag (ARDL) and Toda-Yamamoto (T-Y) causality as the methods of analysis. The result of the ARDL bound test showed that there were two cointegrating

vectors in the model, confirming the existence of a long-run equilibrating relationship amongst the variables. The result further showed that both the long-run and short-run estimates established a negative and significant relationship between renewable energy consumption and economic growth in Nigeria. The Toda-Yamamoto result revealed that there was a strong one-way causal relationship between renewable energy consumption and economic growth, with direction (flowing) from renewable energy consumption to economic growth in Nigeria.

Moreover, Somoye, Ozdeser and Seraj (2022) examined the impact of renewable energy consumption (RNEW) on economic growth (RGDP) in Nigeria within the period of 1990Q1-2019Q4 using a non-linear autoregressive distributed lag (NARDL) model. In addition, the NARDL approach examined the positive and negative shocks of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The bound test result confirmed cointegration among the variables. Further results showed that a positive shock of RNEW decreased RGDP, while a negative shock increased RGDP in the long run. This result differs from the existing literature, in which a majority of the studies found a positive relationship between RNEW and RGDP. In the short run, a positive shock of RNEW increased RGDP, while a negative shock decreased RGDP, although not significant. A positive shock in RNEW hurt RGDP because of the nature and source of renewable energy used in Nigeria, mainly wood biomass.

Udo, Idamoyibo, Victor, Akpan and Victor (2021) investigated the causal link between energy consumption and economic growth in agriculture, manufacturing, and service sectors in Nigeria, through the multivariate framework and quarterly data from 2000Q1-2018Q4. The study made use of ARDL bounds test and Error Correction Model while Clemente-Montanes-Reyes unit root was used for structural breaks in the series. The findings of the study revealed estimated billing system and energy demand-supply gap as factors negatively influencing energy distribution and consumption in various sectors of the economy. The results also revealed a cointegrating relationship between economic growth and sectorial value creation. There was a bidirectional causality between liquefied natural gas and energy consumption and a unidirectional causality between economic growth and petroleum oil consumption. However, there was a non-causal relationship between the service and agricultural sectors.

Similarly, Ekone and Amaghionyeodiwe (2020) examined the effect of renewable energy consumption on economic growth in Nigeria for the period 1990 to 2016. It investigated the direction of causality between renewable energy consumption and economic growth in Nigeria. This was with a view to providing information on the relationship between renewable energy consumption and economic growth in Nigeria within the period of the study. The data collected were analysed using descriptive analysis and econometric techniques, which included unit root, correlation, cointegration,

regression and Granger causality tests. The result showed that, although renewable energy consumption and economic growth increased between 1990 and 2016 in Nigeria, renewable energy consumption had no significant positive impact on economic growth in Nigeria. Furthermore, there was no causality between renewable energy consumption and economic growth in Nigeria during the period. The study concluded that renewable energy consumption exerted an insignificant negative impact on economic growth in Nigeria.

Uzokwe and Onyije (2020) examined the relationship between renewable and non-renewable energy consumption and economic growth in Nigeria from 1984 to 2015, deploying the Autoregressive Distributive Lag Model (ARDL) approach and the Vector Autoregressive (VAR) as well as Granger Causality Test. The overall findings suggested the absence of causality, which supports the neutrality hypothesis and the presence of a positive relationship between non-renewable energy consumption, renewable energy consumption and economic growth in the short run and the long run.

Further, Ekeocha, Penzin and Ogbuabor (2020) evaluated the relationship between energy consumption and economic growth in Nigeria over the period 1999Q1-2016Q4 using alternative model specifications. Specifically, the study used a nonlinear (or asymmetric) ARDL model and an ARDL-ECM specification, which presumes a linear relationship rather than a nonlinear one. Overall, the study found that the role of energy consumption as a driver of growth remained negligible throughout, suggesting that a lot still needs to be done to ensure that the expected role of energy begins to manifest in the Nigerian economy. Also, the Granger causality tests revealed a unidirectional causality running from energy consumption to economic growth, indicating that Nigeria can attain high levels of sustainable growth with improved and stable energy supply.

Maji, Chindo, and Rahim (2019) estimated the impact of renewable energy on economic growth in West African countries using panel dynamic ordinary least squares (DOLS) and employing a sample of 15 West African countries covering the 1995 to 2014 period. The results of the study indicated that renewable energy consumption slowed down economic growth in these countries. The study attributed this to the nature and source of renewable energy used in West Africa, which is mainly wood biomass. The wood biomasses used in West Africa are usually unclean and highly polluting when burnt. The use of clean energy sources like solar, wind and hydropower, which do not have a side effect on human health and the environment, is less in West Africa. As such, renewable energy use can slow down economic growth by lowering productivity when unclean and inefficient sources are used.

Mallesh and Asharani (2019) investigated the role of renewable energy consumptions on CO₂ emissions and economic growth during 1965-2016 within a multivariate framework. The Autoregressive Distributed Lag Bounds Testing approach to

cointegration and Vector Error Correction Model (VECM) were employed to explore the long-run and causal relationship between natural gas consumption, renewable energy consumption, coal and petroleum consumption, CO₂ emissions, and economic growth. The empirical results showed existence of long-run equilibrium association among the variables. The Granger causality results indicated short-run bidirectional causality between renewable energy consumption and economic growth in India, while no causality was found between these two variables in China. However, natural gas consumption caused economic growth in China, whereas no causality was confirmed in India in the short run.

Haseed, Abidin, Hye, and Hartami (2019) examined the role of renewable energy in influencing economic well-being in Malaysia from 1980 to 2016. They adopted the ARDL method of estimation. The results of the ARDL bound testing approach confirmed a valid long-term connection between renewable energy and economic well-being in Malaysia. Furthermore, the results indicated that renewable energy had significant and positive impact on economic well-being in the short and the long run.

3.0 Methodology

Research Design

The design adopted for this research was the ex-post facto research design. This because the data used were time series data, which captured already computed and reported microeconomic and macroeconomic variables, while the dataset, reported figures as well as proxies for the variables of interest cannot be susceptible to the manipulations or doctoring of the researchers because they are information in public domain and are easily verifiable.

Data Collection and Sources

This study utilised time series data covering a period of thirty-three (33) years (1990 to 2022). The data were sourced/extracted from the World Bank Development Indicator, *Central Bank of Nigeria statistical bulletins* and International Energy Agency.

Model Specification

The multiple linear regression model was adopted in this study. Specifically, the model for the study was adapted from the work of Ekone and Amaghionyeodiwe (2020), which investigated the effect of renewable energy consumption on economic growth in Nigeria. However, the model was modified to suit the purpose of this present study.

The functional form of the model is stated as follows:

$$RGDP_t = f(HYE, SLE) \quad (1)$$

The functional relationship in the model above is stated in explicit form as follows:

$$RGDP_t = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HYE_t + \alpha_2 SLE_t + u_t \quad (2)$$

The model above is stated in its log linear form as follows:

$$\ln RGDP_t = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \ln HYE_t + \alpha_2 \ln SLE_t + u_t \quad (3)$$

A priori Expectation: $\alpha_1 > 0, \alpha_2 > 0$,

where: $RGDP$ = Real Gross Domestic Product, HYE = Hydro energy, SLE = Solar energy, α_0 = Regression Intercept, α_1 = Parameter of hydro energy, α_2 = Parameter of solar energy, t = Timeframe (1990-2022), \ln = natural log, u_t = Error term

The Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model specifications of the above model is given as:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \ln(RGDP_t) = & \delta_0 + \alpha_{1i} \Delta \ln(RGDP_{t-1}) + \alpha_{2i} \Delta \ln(HYE_{t-1}) + \alpha_{3i} \Delta \ln(SLE_{t-1}) \\ & + \sum_{t=1}^p \beta_{1i} \Delta \ln(RGDP_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \beta_{2i} \Delta \ln(HYE_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \beta_{3i} \Delta \ln(SLE_{t-1}) \\ & + \varepsilon_{1i} \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

where: Δ = the difference operator and indicates the optimum lag; t = time lag; δ_0 = constant variables; $\alpha_1 - \alpha_3$ = long-run dynamic coefficients of the model; $\beta_1 - \beta_3$ = short-run dynamic coefficients of the model; ε_{1i} = Serially uncorrelated stochastic term with zero mean and constant variance.

The short-run dynamic parameters are arrived at by the estimation of an error correction model linked with the long-run estimates. The model is stated below:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \ln(RGDP_t) = & \beta_0 + \sum_{t=1}^p \beta_{1i} \Delta \ln(RGDP_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \beta_{2i} \Delta \ln(HYE_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \beta_{3i} \Delta \ln(SLE_{t-1}) \\ & + \delta ECT_{t-1} \\ & + \varepsilon_{1i} \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

where: $\beta_1 - \beta_3$ = Short-run dynamic coefficients of the model's convergence to equilibrium; δ = The speed of adjustment which is expected to be less than zero; ECT = The lagged error correction term obtained from the estimated cointegration model.

Data Analysis Technique

For the purpose of this study, the long-run and short-run estimations were conducted using the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) technique. The Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) technique is a popular econometric approach used to model the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables both in the short and the long run. The ARDL approach was particularly useful in this study since all the variables in the model are integrated at different orders, meaning some variables were stationary at level $I(0)$ and others were stationary at first difference $I(1)$.

4.0 Data Analyses and Discussion of Findings

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The section presents the results of the descriptive analysis

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis Result

	RGDP	HYE	SLE
Mean	43807.93	6230.000	89.40625
Median	39951.85	5920.000	86.00000
Maximum	73382.77	8234.000	147.0000
Minimum	21680.20	4387.000	76.00000
Std. Dev.	19819.44	998.7686	12.51286
Skewness	0.248069	0.547695	3.264401
Kurtosis	1.423893	2.637372	15.26740
Jarque-Bera	3.640353	1.775170	257.4859
Probability	0.161997	0.411649	0.000000
Sum	1401854.	199360.0	2861.000
Sum Sq. Dev.	1.22E+10	30923698	4853.719
Observations	33	33	33

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2024

The descriptive statistics of Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP), hydro energy (HYE) and solar energy (SLE) are shown in Table 1 above. As revealed by the table, Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) had a mean of 43807.93, while the minimum of Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) in the observations was 21680.20 and the maximum of Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) was 73382.77. The standard deviation of 19819.44 showed the level at which the Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) deviated from the mean. Also, hydro energy (HYE) had a mean of 6230, while the minimum of hydro energy (HYE) in the observations was 4387 and the maximum of hydro energy (HYE) was 8234. The standard deviation of 998.77 showed the level at which the hydro energy (HYE) deviated from the mean. Lastly, solar energy (SLE) had a mean of 89.41. The minimum of solar energy (SLE) in the observations was 76 and the maximum of solar energy (SLE) was 147. The standard deviation of 12.51 showed the level at which the solar energy (SLE) deviated from the mean.

Unit Root Test

The results of the Augmented Dickey-Fuller test are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Results of Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test

Variables	@ Levels		@ First Difference		Decision	Order of Integrati on
	ADF Statistic	5% Critical Value	ADF Statistic	5% Critical Value		
$\ln RGDP_t$	-2.130136	-	-	-	Stationary	I(1)
		2.96041	4.385676	2.963972		
		1				
	-3.356755	-	-	-	Stationary	I(0)
		2.96041				
		1				
$\ln HYE_t$	-2.686100	-	-	-	Stationary	I(1)
		2.98622	3.605150	2.991878		
$\ln SLE_t$		5				

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2024

The ADF unit root test results showed that, hydro energy (HYE) attained stability at level. This was because the test statistic value of hydro energy (HYE) was greater than the Mackinnon critical value at 5% level of significance at level. This further indicated that hydro energy (HYE) was stationary at order zero [i.e., I(0)]. On the contrary, Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) and solar energy (SLE) attained stability after first differencing. This was because their test statistic values were greater than the Mackinnon critical value at 5% level of significance at first difference. This further indicated that Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) and solar energy (SLE) were integrated at order one [i.e., I(1)]. Attainment of mixed stationarity therefore necessitated the use of ARDL in the estimation of the long-run and short-run relationship among the variables using the ARDL approach.

ARDL Bound Cointegration Test

Table 3: ARDL Bound Cointegration Test Result

Test Statistic	Value	K
F-statistic	8.184	4
Significance	Lower Bound [I(0)]	Upper Bound [I(1)]
10%	2.2	3.09
5%	2.56	3.49
2.5%	2.88	3.87
1%	3.29	4.37

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2024

The ARDL bound cointegration test result, as presented in Table 3, showed that there was cointegration among the variables in the model. In other words, there existed a long-run relationship between Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP), hydro energy (HYE) and solar energy (SLE).

Short-run Autoregressive Distributive Lag (ARDL) Estimation

The short-run dynamic effect of renewable energy on economic growth in Nigeria was estimated using ARDL technique. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Short-run Autoregressive Distributive Lag (ARDL) Estimation Result

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
$Dln(HYE_t)$	3.137134	0.360842	8.693927	0.0000
$Dln(SLE_t)$	0.383082	0.143687	2.666087	0.0163
CointEq(-1)*	-0.494347	0.090060	-5.489090	0.0000
R-squared = 0.843461; Adjusted R-squared = 0.793592				
Durbin-Watson stat = 2.159300				

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2024

The ARDL short-run result in Table 4 showed that Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) was positively and significantly affected by hydro energy (HYE). This means that Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) will increase by 3.137134 given a unit increase in hydro energy (HYE), while Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) will decrease by 3.137134 given a unit decrease in hydro energy (HYE). Also, Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) was positively and significantly driven by solar energy (SLE). This means that Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) will rise by 0.383082 given a unit rise in solar energy (SLE), while Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) will fall by 0.383082 given a unit fall in solar energy (SLE). Also, the adjusted R-squared obtained was 0.793592. This showed that about seventy-nine percent (79%) of the changes in Real Gross Domestic Product were attributable to changes in hydro energy and solar energy, while the remaining twenty-

one percent (21%) of the variation in the model was captured by the error term (factors outside the model). Furthermore, the ARDL error correction result indicated the expected negative sign, and the CointEq(-1) was highly significant. This confirms the existence of the long-run relationship between the variables with their various significant lags. The coefficient of CointEq(-1), which was -0.494347, indicated that deviation from Real Gross Domestic Product was corrected by 49% by the following year. Lastly, the Durbin Watson statistic of 2.159300 indicated that there was no problem of serial correlation in the model.

Long-run Autoregressive Distributive Lag (ARDL) Estimation

The long-run dynamic effect of renewable energy on economic growth in Nigeria was estimated using ARDL technique. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Long Run Autoregressive Distributive Lag (ARDL) Result

Dependent Variable: $\ln RGDP_t$				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
$\ln HYE_t$	1.876314	0.451615	4.154676	0.0006
$\ln SLE_t$	0.664782	0.189916	3.500042	0.0013
C	-9.157551	2.955736	-3.098230	0.0181

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2024.

Table 5 shows that Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) was positively and significantly influenced by hydro energy (HYE). This means that Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) will increase by 1.876314 given a unit increase in hydro energy (HYE), while Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) will decrease by 1.876314 given a unit decrease in hydro energy (HYE) in the long run.

Also, there was a positive and significant relationship between solar energy (SLE) and Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP). This means that Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) will increase by 0.664782 given a unit increase in solar energy (SLE), while Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) will decrease by 0.664782 given a unit decrease in solar energy (SLE).

Post-estimation Tests

Table 6: Post-estimation Test Results

Test	F-Statistic	Probability	Null Hypothesis	Decision
Normality Test	0.29356	0.861299	H₀: Normal distribution	Retain H_0
Serial Correlation LM Test	1.87189	0.1862	H₀: No serial correlation	Retain H_0
Heteroskedasticity Test	0.58321	0.8284	H₀: Homoscedasticity	Retain H_0
Ramsey RESET test	1.44183	0.2571	H₀: Correctly specified	Retain H_0

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2024

The diagnostic test results of the Real Gross Domestic Product model are presented in Table 6. Specifically, the result of normality test showed that the error term was normally distributed. Further, the result of serial correlation LM test showed that there was no evidence of autocorrelation given that Breush Godfrey LM test probability value was greater than 0.05. In addition, the result of heteroscedasticity test showed that it was absent in the model, confirming the assumption of homoscedasticity. Finally, the result of Ramsey RESET test traveled that the model was correctly specified and no variable was missing in the model.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the effect of renewable energy on economic growth in Nigeria between 1990 and 2022. The techniques of data analysis adopted involved descriptive statistical techniques, ADF unit root test, bounds cointegration test and Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL). The data used were obtained from World Bank Development Indicator, *Central Bank of Nigeria statistical bulletins* and International Energy Agency. The data analysis was facilitated by Econometric Views (EViews) statistical software 12. The findings obtained in the study are discussed in this section.

The findings obtained in the study showed that hydro energy had a positive and significant effect on Real Gross Domestic Product in Nigeria in both the short run and the long run. This finding is consistent with [Somoye, Ozdeser and Seraj \(2022\)](#), who found that a significant relationship existed between renewable energy consumption, as proxied by hydro energy and economic growth (RGDP). Solar energy had a positive and significant effect on Real Gross Domestic Product in Nigeria in both the short run and the long run.

This result is in agreement with Ekone and Amaghionyeodiwe (2020), who found that solar energy consumption as an indicator of renewable energy consumption positively contributed to economic growth in Nigeria.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study analyzed the effect of renewable energy on economic growth in Nigeria. The study covered a period of thirty-three years (1990 to 2022). Renewable energy was proxied by hydro energy and solar energy, while economic growth was proxied by Real Gross Domestic Product. Specifically, the study examined the effect of hydro energy and solar energy on Real Gross Domestic Product in Nigeria. The findings showed that hydro energy and solar energy had positive and significant effect on Real Gross Domestic Product in Nigeria in both the short run and the long run. Based on the findings, the study concluded that renewable energy plays a significant positive role in driving economic growth in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and the conclusion drawn, the following are recommended:

- Since hydro energy has a positive and significant effect on Real Gross Domestic Product in Nigeria, government must pursue policies that will positively develop hydro energy in Nigeria.
- Since solar energy has a positive and significant effect on Real Gross Domestic Product in Nigeria, there is the need for government to formulate and implement energy policies that will be favourable to solar energy production in Nigeria.
- Government and policy makers in the energy sector should make effective energy policies to diversify the sources of energy so as to accommodate more streams of renewable energy in order to enhance productivity and foster economic growth in Nigeria.
- Government should encourage investments in the renewable energy sector by providing a favourable business environment and create awareness on the importance of the use of renewable energy in the country.

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21**THE ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURS IN MODERN ECONOMIES**

By
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“The most valuable 100 people to bring into a deteriorating society would not be economists, or politicians, or engineers, but rather 100 entrepreneurs.”
- Abraham Maslow, *Readings in the Economics of Education* (UNESCO, 1968)
The above statement was true in the 1960’s and even most relevant today”.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship may be defined as the pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently controlled (Stevenson, 1983). The entrepreneurship theory proposed by Joseph Schumpeter (1934) sees the entrepreneur as the voice of development and growth in economies, as they develop means to allocate productive resources to ensure value. The theory sees the entrepreneur as the change agent responsible for development strides (Śledzik, 2013).

Entrepreneurship is the willingness to design, launch, run, and manage a new business venture along with any of its risks in order to make a profit. The new venture typically begins as a small business, such as a start-up company, offering a product, process or service for sale or hire. The people who do so are called entrepreneurs (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entrepreneurship>).

Joseph Schumpeter (1934) defines entrepreneurs as innovators who use a process of shattering the status quo of the existing products and services, to set up new products or new services. Drucker (1964) views an entrepreneur as one who searches for change, responds to it and exploits opportunities. In the view of May (2013), an entrepreneur is someone who commercializes his or her innovation. Entrepreneurs play major roles in modern economies, as they establish and operate micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which, when managed well scale to become large enterprises.

Micro, small and medium enterprises are an important part of the economies of many countries because of their tremendous contributions to entrepreneurship, job creation, and expansion of the economy (Durst & Runar-Edvardsson, 2012; Amadasun & Mutezo, 2022). Also, more than 90 percent of businesses worldwide are MSMEs, which are estimated to account for 33% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and 40% of employment across poor countries (IFC, 2020).

There are diverse definitions of MSMEs globally, but we will adopt the definition offered by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria in the National Policy on MSMEs (2021- 2025). According to the policy, a microenterprise is a business with less than 10 employees and total assets less than ₦10,000,000, excluding land and buildings. A small enterprise is one with more than 10 employees but fewer than 50 employees with total assets between ₦10,000,000 and less than ₦100,000,000, while a medium-sized enterprise is one with a minimum of 50 but fewer than 200 employees with assets worth ₦100,000,000 to ₦1,000,000,000, excluding land and buildings.

Addressing the Misconceptions about Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

In accordance with the submission of Ugbala *et al.* (2020), MSMEs are generally seen as critical to the economic recovery in every country, whether emerging or more technologically sophisticated country. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are a major driver of economic growth (Obi *et al.*, 2018). They are vital to most global economic systems, particularly those in developing nations (Ndiaye *et al.*, 2018). Hurdawaty and Tukiran (2024), assert that MSMEs have an important part to play in boosting a country's economic performance, creating employment opportunities and enhancing the overall well-being of communities.

It is important to note that entrepreneurs/MSMEs are not limited to cleaning agents, producers or artisans at the micro level. Entrepreneurs, including MSMEs, are innovators across diverse sectors and areas of innovation, including the manufacturing industry, aviation and the engineering space. The First Industrial Revolution was a product of entrepreneurial efforts. It was a transformative period in human history that marked the shift from manual labour to machine-based manufacturing. Key innovators and entrepreneurs of the First Industrial Revolution are listed below:

1. Steam Engine (James Watt, 1769)
2. Spinning Jenny (James Hargreaves, 1764)
3. Power Loom (Edmund Cartwright, 1787)
4. Iron Production (Abraham Darby, 1709)
5. Cotton Gin (Eli Whitney, 1793)
6. Railways (George Stephenson, 1825)

Entrepreneurs continue to be the catalysts of industrial revolution from the first, through the second and third industrial revolutions and now the fourth. Entrepreneurs of these industrial revolution include the following:

- Mr Jack Ma – Alibaba.com
- Mr Ma Huateng – Tencent (QQ, WeChat)
- Mr Mark Zuckerberg – Facebook, Meta

- Garrett Camp and Travis Kalanick – Uber
- Mr Liu and Qiangdong – JD.com

In Nigeria, entrepreneurs of the Fourth Industrial Revolution include the following:

1. Mitchell Elegbe – Interswitch Group
2. Jeremy Johnson and Iyin Aboyemi – Andela
3. Tayo Oviosu – Paga
4. Shola Akinlade – Paystack
5. Gbenga Agboola – Flutterwave
6. Juliet Ehimuan – Beyond Limits
7. Bosun Tijani and Femi Longe – Co-creation Hub (CcHub)

The fourth Industrial Revolution has been from 2011 and opens opportunities for innovation and continuous entrepreneurial development in Nigeria.

Promoting Entrepreneurial Development

In her 2024 State of Entrepreneurship Report, the Fate Institute, asserted that, in early 2023, Nigerian entrepreneurs weathered the challenge of naira scarcity from the Naira Redesign Policy by adopting trade-by-barter, digital payment platforms and flexible work arrangements. This time, however, the pressures –both internal (poor power supply, high transport and food costs, and high rent) and external (high tariffs, rising input costs from exchange rate depreciation) – are far more difficult to navigate. While some businesses have turned to alternative energy sources, like solar, or adopted technology to reduce costs and expand their reach, these options are not feasible for smaller enterprises with limited financial resources. These businesses are forced to pass on the costs to consumers, leading to weakened demand and lower margins. If this situation persists, many nano, micro, and small businesses (NMSMEs) are at high risk of closure. Already, some large firms, like GlaxoSmithKline, announced plans to exit the Nigerian market due to the harsh business climate, while countless NMSMEs are quietly folding. In the 2024 State of Entrepreneurship (SoE) survey, a higher percentage of entrepreneurs, compared to 2023, reported that they did not plan to expand their operations in the coming year. The impact of this on the economy will be huge, as unemployment will worsen and income will be eroded. (Adeyemi *et al.*, 2024).

Globally, there are lots of efforts to stimulate the MSMEs sector (including efforts from the United Nations) because it is indeed the engine of any economy, be it developed, developing or underdeveloped. June 27 is significant for MSMEs globally, especially for MSMEs in the 193 member states of the United Nations, including Nigeria. On April 6, 2017, 54 member states, representing over 5 billion people, co-sponsored the resolution

adopted by the United Nations General Assembly setting aside June 27 as “Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day.” The United Nations General Assembly recognized the vital role MSMEs would play in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially in the area of Promoting Innovation, Creativity and Decent Work for All and, therefore, is committed to its implementation.

According to the data provided by the International Council for Small Business (ICSB), formal and informal MSMEs make up over 90% of all firms and account on average for 60-70% of total employment and 50% of GDP.

In the United States, MSMEs are regarded as the pillar of the economy, totalling 33,185,550 in 2023 (Office of Advocacy, 2023) and representing 99.9% of all businesses in the U.S. as of 2024 (Main, 2024). It is said that the sector employs over 61.7 million Americans, which makes nearly 47% of the entire private-sector employees, and has been responsible for 64.7% of the net jobs created in 1995-2021 (Office of Advocacy, 2023; U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2023).

In China, there are 120 million MSMEs operating in the economy as of 2020, and the role of MSMEs is synonymous to what obtains in larger economies like the U.S., as MSMEs account for 98.5% of enterprises in China, with an economic contribution of 60% in GDP, 68% of the nation's exports, and nearly 79% of the employment rate in China (OECD, 2022).

Similarly, in Japan, there are 3.58 million MSMEs, aggregating 99.7% of the entire businesses in the economy (SMEs Support Japan, 2024). In addition to this, the business is responsible for nearly 70% of the total number of employed workers and approximately 41% of the country's GDP (Hironaka, 2017; Clavecilla, 2023).

In developing nations, for instance Brazil, these businesses account for 98.5% of the total registered businesses in the country, which is 11.5 million, accounts for 27% of the nation's GDP, and are responsible for over 41% of the country's employed population (OECD, 2022a). In Mexico, there are 4.47 million MSMEs, and the contribution is 50% in employment and 14.6% in GDP (OECD, 2022b). In Nigeria, the statistics are not so different; these enterprises total 39.65 million, aggregating 97.7% of entire businesses, and are responsible for over 43.31% of the country's GDP and 87.9% of the entire workforce (Yakubu, 2022; Oduwole, 2023).

It is highly recommended that the growth of the MSME sector in Nigeria should be supported. This will help them to be sustainable and scale to become competitive MSMEs and also evolve to large enterprises.

Lessons from China

1. A national strategy: Everyone is encouraged to undertake innovation and entrepreneurship.
Idea: A nation is hopeless without innovation.
2. At the university level, there is a student organisation for innovation and entrepreneurship. The students conduct projects on innovation and entrepreneurship and participate in competition at the university or school level.
3. Innovation and entrepreneurship have formed an excellent environment at the university level. (Sun, 2018)
From the foregoing, it is clear that modern economies can thrive only when the private sector contributes to development through entrepreneurial initiatives. Entrepreneurship should be encouraged from infancy.

Notable Quotes

“Small businesses are the growth engines of the world’s economies –Lars Thunell
IFC Executive Vice President and CEO
“God doesn’t create stupid people, our education system does.” Robert Kiyosaki

Recommendations

- The Nigerian entrepreneurship curriculum in higher institutions should be expanded beyond artisanal crafts to core value-adding activities that address societal needs, including business development skills.
- Entrepreneurship must be encouraged especially amongst the youth and all stakeholders, including the public sector, must be seen implementing initiatives in this regard.
- There has to be a deliberate mindset shift from that of employees to that of employers of labour.
- Development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) is a great means by which unemployment can be reduced, and the enabling environment has to be created for these SMEs to thrive.
- Deliberate actions must be taken by the private and public sectors to support the growth and development of MSMEs to enable them scale and become competitive MSMEs growing into large enterprises.
- Establishment of business incubators should be encouraged. This should be run side by side a mentorship programme to allow start-ups go through their teething problems and ensure a soft landing for them.
- The government needs to create the enabling environment, including friendly regulatory policies to support entrepreneurial growth in Nigeria

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22**THE BLUE ECONOMY AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN NIGERIA****By****Nteegah Alwell, Briggs David Theophilus****&****Isaac Olubiyi Oladosu.**Department of Economics, University of
Port Harcourt, Nigeria**Abstract**

This study empirically examined the effect of the blue economy on poverty alleviation in Nigeria from 1990 to 2023. The study adopted fisheries production, aquaculture production, maritime transportation, maritime tourism and hydropower energy as the proxies of the blue economy, while poverty rate was used to proxy poverty alleviation. The study utilised annual time series data as sourced from Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) statistical bulletins, World Bank Development Indicators, International Energy Agency (IEA) reports and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) report. The major techniques of data analysis adopted were correlation matrix technique, Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) approach of unit root, bounds cointegration approach and Autoregressive Distributive Lag (ARDL) approach. The findings revealed that fisheries production, aquaculture production, maritime transportation and hydropower energy had significant negative effect on poverty rate in both short run and long run, indicating that these key blue economy variables have been able to significantly reduce poverty rate in Nigeria. On the contrary, maritime tourism had a positive and non-significant effect on poverty rate in both short run and long run. Premised on the findings, the study concluded that the blue economy plays a significant role in alleviating poverty in Nigeria. The study recommended that there should be implementation of government-led initiatives to promote sustainable fishing practices and expand aquaculture production through subsidies, training and access to credit facilities for small-scale fish farmers.

Keywords: Blue economy, Poverty alleviation, Fisheries production, Aquaculture production, Maritime transportation, Maritime tourism, Hydropower energy

1.0 Introduction

Over the past ten years, the phrase “the blue economy” has gained popularity, as more people, governments and economists have come to understand the enormous possibilities that the ocean and its resources present. The concept, the blue economy, can be traced to Gunter Pauli’s (2010) publication and its popularity at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Various definitions of the blue economy are in use. Sustainable use of ocean resources for

economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs while preserving the health of the ocean ecosystem is the World Bank's (2022) definition of the blue economy. Similarly, United Nation (2022) defines the blue economy as a range of economic activities related to oceans, seas and coastal areas and the issue of whether these activities are sustainable and socially equitable. Fishing, coastal leisure and tourism, shipbuilding, seawater desalination, and offshore oil and gas shipping are some of the economic activities in the traditional sector. But more recently, new industries have emerged in deep sea mining, biotechnology, aquaculture, seabed extraction, offshore renewable energy and blue carbon sequestration (Braithwaite, 2023).

The blue economy has tremendous economic promise and capability and it has emerged as a transformative pathway for poverty alleviation. Its subsectors, such as fisheries, aquaculture, maritime transportation, maritime tourism, renewable energy and coastal conservation, have demonstrated potential in addressing socioeconomic challenges, especially in countries like Nigeria with significant marine and coastal resources. Amarh (2017) states that the number of people who earn a living on the blue economy cannot be underestimated as it cuts across so many subsectors like fisheries, oil and gas, shipping and so on. The blue economy creates and generates employment which in turn leads to poverty reduction. According to Food and Agriculture Organization (2022), fisheries and aquaculture are foundational subsectors of the blue economy with direct impacts on poverty reduction. This is because fisheries employ over 60 million people globally, most of whom are in developing nations. In Nigeria, artisanal fishing provides livelihoods for millions in coastal communities, contributing to income generation, food security and poverty alleviation. Also, efficient maritime transportation as an indicator of the blue economy is a key driver of trade, economic growth and poverty reduction. It facilitates the movement of goods and people, creating employment and enabling coastal economies to access regional and global markets. This has enhanced trade volumes and indirectly reduced poverty through increased economic activities (African Development Bank, 2021). More importantly, marine renewable energy, such as offshore wind, wave and tidal energy, offers a sustainable solution for energy access and poverty alleviation. In Nigeria, where energy poverty affects a significant portion of the population, harnessing of offshore renewable energy provides affordable and reliable electricity to underserved regions (Adesanya, Adewale & Olusola, 2021).

However, despite the strategic importance of the blue economy, Nigeria's blue economy has suffered from severe infrastructural deficits. Specifically, maritime transportation, a critical aspect of the blue economy, is hindered by poorly maintained ports and inadequate shipping facilities. According to the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA, 2020), port congestion and delays cost the economy \$55 million annually in lost revenues. Similarly, the lack of investment in modern fisheries and aquaculture techniques reduces

fisheries and aquaculture productivity, which further exacerbates poverty level, especially in rural areas in Nigeria. Additionally, the hydropower sector, which could provide renewable energy to millions, remains underutilized. Nigeria generates less than 20% of its total electricity from hydropower, despite having vast water resources (World Bank, 2022). This energy gap hampers industrial activities and economic opportunities in impoverished regions, perpetuating cycles of poverty. Lastly, maritime insecurity poses a significant threat to Nigeria's blue economy. The Gulf of Guinea, where Nigeria is located, is one of the world's most dangerous maritime regions. According to International Maritime Bureau (2021), 26% of piracy incidents in Nigeria occur in this region. These activities disrupt trade routes, increase shipping costs and discourage investment in maritime tourism and transportation. For coastal communities, insecurity hampers fishing and other livelihood activities, exacerbating poverty.

Drawing from the identified problem therefore, this study examined the effects of the blue economy on poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to: determine the effect of fisheries production on poverty rate in Nigeria, investigate the effect of aquaculture production on poverty rate in Nigeria, analyze the effect of maritime transportation on poverty rate in Nigeria, ascertain the effect of maritime tourism on poverty rate in Nigeria, and evaluate the effect of hydropower energy on poverty rate in Nigeria.

2.0 Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Natural Resource Economics Theory as its theoretical foundation. This theory is reviewed in this section.

a. Natural Resource Economics Theory

Natural Resource Economics Theory emerged and evolved over time with contributions from various economists and scholars who explored the economic principles and dynamics governing natural resource utilization, market dynamics, externalities, property rights and sustainability. One of the foundational works in Natural Resource Economics is "The Economics of Natural Resources" by Harold Hotelling, published in 1931. Hotelling's seminal paper introduced the concept of "optimal depletion" or "Hotelling's rule," which explores the optimal rate of extraction of non-renewable resources over time, considering the interaction of resource availability, market prices and extraction costs. Another influential figure in Natural Resource Economics is Elinor Ostrom, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 2009 for her groundbreaking work on the governance of common-pool resources. Ostrom's research challenged conventional economic theories and highlighted the importance of collective action, community-based

management and institutional arrangements in sustainable natural resource management.

Over the years, Natural Resource Economics has evolved and expanded with contributions from economists, researchers and practitioners worldwide, exploring diverse topics, methodologies, and approaches related to sustainable resource utilization, environmental conservation, market mechanisms, policy interventions and governance structures. Natural Resource Economics Theory examines the allocation, use and sustainability of natural resources to maximize societal well-being. It focuses on managing resources to ensure their efficient use and long-term availability, addressing issues like resource scarcity, market failure and environmental degradation.

The theory is particularly relevant in the context of the blue economy which leverages oceanic and marine resources for economic development while ensuring sustainability. The blue economy can contribute significantly to poverty alleviation, especially in coastal and island regions dependent on marine ecosystems for their livelihoods. It promotes sustainable practices to avoid overfishing and depletion of stocks, a key focus of the theory. Sustainable fisheries ensure a steady income for millions of small-scale fishers, reducing poverty while preserving marine ecosystems for long-term use. Moreover, efficiently utilizing marine biodiversity for pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and industrial applications aligns with the theory's principle of optimal resource use. Creating high-value products from marine resources generates jobs and income, especially for research and development in coastal regions.

Review of Empirical Literature

Odey (2023) focuses on the blue economy and its impact on the economic growth of the Niger Delta region and the Nigerian state. The findings revealed that the blue economy contributes to employment, job creation and poverty eradication, and addresses challenges such as ending hunger, securing food, promoting physiological condition and sustainable fisheries, sustainable energy and natural resources, and innovative industries, and fostering the development of people, culture, communities and societies.

Hammoud, Munqith and Omar (2022) examined the impact of the blue economy variables, represented in total fish production (tons) and the total goods transported through the ports (tons), expressed as gross domestic product in selected European countries. The research was based on panel data for the period 2010-2019 for eleven countries that provided the data needed for the study (Belgium, Netherlands, Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Slovenia, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, and United Kingdom). The research found that the total production of capital (tons) and the total goods transported through the ports (tons) had a positive impact on economic growth in the short term. In the long run, the total fish production will have a negative effect on economic growth,

while the total goods transported through the ports will have a positive impact on economic growth.

Similarly, Sule (2021) explored the importance of effective management of Nigerian blue economy. The study was carried out among 110 stakeholders selected using the snowballing sampling technique from different areas of expertise but who had an understanding of the topic under investigation, such as maritime experts, journalists and researchers. A self-made close-ended questionnaire was adopted for data collection and data analysis was carried out descriptively using frequencies and percentages. The result of the study indicated that Nigeria has great potential in actualizing the blue economy if it utilizes good maritime data management system, adequate investment, enlightenment and sensitization. Also, developing an integrated policy framework and effective maritime security will provide a healthy ground for the actualization of the blue economy.

Gollnisch and Weller (2021) investigated the economic benefits of the blue economy initiatives in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which are highly dependent on marine and coastal resources for their economies. The study assessed how these initiatives contribute to economic growth, sustainability and resilience. It used case studies from several SIDS to analyze the impact of blue economy initiatives. It employed both qualitative and quantitative methods, including statistical analysis of economic data and thematic analysis of interviews with policymakers and local business owners. The study revealed that blue economy initiatives significantly enhanced economic resilience and sustainability in SIDS. It highlighted improvements in tourism, fisheries and renewable energy sectors. The SIDS that adopted blue economy strategies experienced increased economic stability and environmental health.

Dey and Kabir (2020) examined the role of the blue economy in promoting sustainable development in Bangladesh, focusing on the economic, social and environmental dimensions. The study utilized a combination of econometric modelling and GIS mapping. Econometric analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between blue economy activities and various economic indicators, while GIS mapping was used to visualize the distribution and impact of these activities on coastal and marine ecosystems. The findings indicated that blue economy activities positively influenced sustainable development in Bangladesh, contributing to economic growth and environmental conservation.

The focus of Santos and Almeida (2019) is how the blue economy contributes to economic growth in Portugal, a country with extensive maritime interests. The study analyzed various sectors within the blue economy, including fisheries, tourism and marine renewable energy. The researchers used a combination of input-output analysis and econometric modelling to quantify the economic contributions of blue economy sectors.

Data were sourced from national economic reports, sectoral statistics and interviews with industry experts. The study found that the blue economy played a crucial role in Portugal's economic growth. Sectors such as marine tourism and renewable energy showed significant contributions to GDP and employment. The research also highlighted the potential for further growth through innovation and sustainable practices.

Okemwa (2019) carried out a study to establish how Kenya could harness the potential of the blue economy for sustainable development. Copies of a questionnaire was administered to 35 respondents randomly selected from the state's agencies and departments in charge of the blue economy, but only 32 responses were retrieved. The results revealed that for blue economy resources to be fully utilized and sustainably exploited to spur economic growth and development in Kenya, and to foster understanding within the various state agencies and departments responsible for the blue economy agenda, an integrated national maritime policy should be implemented.

Moreover, Chasomeris (2018) examined the role of maritime transport in South Africa's economic growth. The study focused on the historical evolution of these ports and their roles in the country's trade dynamics. A detailed analysis of trade data revealed the significant contribution of maritime transport to South Africa's Gross Domestic Product, highlighting the volume and value of goods handled by South African ports over the past decades. Maritime transport had a substantial multiplier effect on the economy, stimulating growth in related sectors, such as manufacturing, logistics and services.

Amarh (2017) emphasizes the contributions of the blue economy to national development, arguing that the blue economy has a great impact on a nation's development. This is why recent governments of various countries have given significant attention to their marine boundaries expecting to use them as a mechanism of safeguarding their territorial waters. This is with the hope of discovering natural minerals, like oil, which will help in enhancing the national resources used in developing the lives of their citizens in terms of standard of living and the general development.

In the same vein, Miller and Yates (2017) explored the impact of blue economy strategies on economic development in Caribbean countries, which rely heavily on marine resources for their economies. It examined the effects on tourism, fisheries and marine biotechnology. Data were collected from national economic reports and industry surveys, and econometric models were applied to evaluate the economic impact of blue economy initiatives. The research found that blue economy strategies significantly boosted economic development in the Caribbean. Key areas of impact included enhanced tourism revenues, improved fisheries management and growth in marine biotechnology sectors.

Literature Gap

With respect to the empirical studies reviewed, it was discovered that some studies focused on the impact of the blue economy on economic growth. However, no single empirical study linked the blue economy to poverty alleviation in Nigeria. Also, none of the related studies used combination of fisheries production, aquaculture production, maritime transportation, maritime tourism and hydropower energy as proxies of the blue economy. All these indicate the presence of a research gap and the need to further undertake a study in this area in order to fill this gap. Therefore, this study investigated the effect of the blue economy on poverty alleviation in Nigeria using fisheries production, aquaculture production, maritime transportation, maritime tourism and hydropower energy as proxies of the blue economy as well as poverty rate as a proxy of poverty alleviation.

3.0 Methodology

Annual time series data that ranged from 1990 to 2023 were used. The data were mainly sourced from Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) statistical bulletins, World Bank Development Indicators, International Energy Agency (IEA) reports and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reports.

Model Specification

The theoretical framework of this study was based on Natural Resource Economics Theory, which emphasizes how the blue economy leverages oceanic and marine resources for economic development while ensuring sustainability. In addition, the model of this study was built on Hammoud, Munqith and Omar (2022), which was technically modified to suit the aim and objectives of this study. The functional form of the model is specified as follows:

$$POR = f(FSP^{\beta_1}, AQP^{\beta_2}, MAT^{\beta_3}, MRT^{\beta_4}, HPE^{\beta_5}) \quad (1)$$

Model 1 is explicitly stated as:

$$POR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 FSP + \beta_2 AQP + \beta_3 MAT + \beta_4 MRT + \beta_5 HPE + U_i \quad (2)$$

Transforming equation (2) into log linear model gives:

$$\ln POR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \ln FSP + \beta_2 \ln AQP + \beta_3 \ln MAT + \beta_4 \ln MRT + \beta_5 \ln HPE + U_i \quad (3)$$

POR = Poverty rate, FSP = Fisheries production, AQP = Aquaculture production, MAT = Maritime transportation, MRT = Maritime tourism, HPE = Hydropower energy, β_0 = Constant variables in the model, $\beta_1 - \beta_5$ = Parameters or coefficients of independent variables (proxies of the blue economy), U_i = Error term

A Priori Expectation (Economic Theory): Based on the a priori expectation, the expected nature of relationships among all the variables involved in this study are mathematically represented as follows: $\beta_1 < 0$; $\beta_2 < 0$; $\beta_3 < 0$; $\beta_4 < 0$; $\beta_5 < 0$.

The Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model specification of the above models are given as:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \Delta \ln(POR_t) &= \beta_0 + \beta_{1i} \Delta \ln(POR_{t-1}) + \beta_{2i} \Delta \ln(FSP_{t-1}) + \beta_{3i} \Delta \ln(AQP_{t-1}) + \beta_{4i} \Delta \ln(MAT_{t-1}) \\
 &+ \beta_{5i} \Delta \ln(MRT_{t-1}) + \beta_{6i} \Delta \ln(HPE_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^p \alpha_{1i} \Delta \ln(POR_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{2i} \Delta \ln(FSP_{t-1}) \\
 &+ \sum_{t=1}^p \alpha_{3i} \Delta \ln(AQP_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{4i} \Delta \ln(MAT_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{5i} \Delta \ln(MRT_{t-1}) \\
 &+ \sum_{t=1}^p \alpha_{6i} \Delta \ln(HPE_{t-1}) \\
 &+ \varepsilon_{1i}
 \end{aligned} \tag{4}$$

The short run dynamic parameters are arrived at by the estimation of an error correction model linked with the long-run estimates as expressed below:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \Delta \ln(POR_t) &= \alpha_0 + \sum_{t=1}^p \alpha_{1i} \Delta \ln(POR_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{2i} \Delta \ln(FSP_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{3i} \Delta \ln(AQP_{t-1}) \\
 &+ \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{4i} \Delta \ln(MAT_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{5i} \Delta \ln(MRT_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{6i} \Delta \ln(HPE_{t-1}) + \delta ECMT_{t-1} \\
 &+ \varepsilon_{2i}
 \end{aligned} \tag{5}$$

\ln = Natural log; Δ = Difference operator and indicates the optimum lag; t = Time lag; β_0 , α_0 = Constant variables; $\beta_1 - \beta_6$ = Long-run dynamic coefficients of the model; $\alpha_1 - \alpha_6$ = Short-run dynamic coefficients of the model; $\varepsilon_{1i} - \varepsilon_{2i}$ = Serially uncorrelated stochastic term with zero mean and constant variance.

Variable Description

The variables used in this study are dependent and independent variables.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study was poverty alleviation and it was proxied by poverty rate.

- **Poverty Rate (POR):** This is the percentage of the Nigerian population living below the poverty line, which is the minimum level of income deemed necessary to meet basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter and healthcare. It serves as a key indicator of economic inequality and societal well-being. Poverty rates are often calculated using international thresholds (e.g. \$2.15 per day by the World Bank) or national poverty standards.

Independent Variable

The independent variable in this study was the blue economy and its proxies include fisheries production, aquaculture production, maritime transportation, maritime tourism and hydropower energy:

- **Fisheries Production (FSP):** This refers to the harvesting of aquatic organisms, including fish, crustaceans, molluscs and aquatic plants, from natural water bodies, like oceans, rivers and lakes. It also includes both capture fisheries (wild harvest from natural habitats) and aquaculture fisheries (farmed production). Fisheries production is a major source of food, livelihoods and economic activity globally.
- **Aquaculture Production (AQP):** This involves the cultivation of aquatic organisms, such as fish, shellfish and plants, in controlled or semi-controlled environments, like ponds, tanks or marine enclosures. This method aims to supplement or replace wild fisheries by farming species sustainably and efficiently. Aquaculture contributes significantly to global seafood supply and economic development, especially in coastal communities.
- **Maritime Transportation (MAT):** This refers to the movement of goods and people across water bodies, including seas, oceans, rivers and canals. It is a critical component of global trade and logistics, involving shipping industries, ports and waterways. Maritime transportation includes various modes, such as cargo ships, oil tankers, passenger ferries and container vessels.
- **Maritime Tourism (MRT):** This encompasses recreational activities and travel that take place on or around coastal and marine environments. It includes activities such as cruising, yachting, scuba diving, beach tourism and ecotourism. Maritime tourism plays a vital role in coastal economies, generating revenue, creating jobs and promoting cultural and environmental awareness.
- **Hydropower Energy (HPE):** This is renewable energy generated by capturing the kinetic energy and potential energy of moving water, such as rivers, streams or artificially stored water in dams. It is one of the oldest and most widely used forms of renewable energy. Hydropower is commonly used for electricity generation but also supports irrigation and water management.

4.0 Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Descriptive Analysis

The results of the descriptive analysis are presented in this section.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	POR	FSP	AQP	MAT	MRT	HPE
Mean	63.01441	447.6659	146337.0	127.6229	232.9800	6338.824
Median	62.70500	156.8150	84832.50	92.65000	158.2300	5995.000
Maximum	78.60000	2335.490	358919.0	418.5500	777.8400	8349.000
Minimum	42.50000	3.210000	7347.000	4.840000	10.67000	4387.000
Std. Dev.	8.184405	684.5399	132715.6	112.9717	226.5305	1066.157
Skewness	-0.666231	1.899503	0.334791	1.182141	0.872218	0.452437
Kurtosis	3.541925	5.333629	1.353991	3.455785	2.688599	2.290589
Jarque-Bera	2.931280	28.16088	4.473388	8.213218	4.448371	1.872922
Probability	0.230930	0.000001	0.106811	0.016464	0.108155	0.392013
Sum	2142.490	15220.64	4975458.	4339.180	7921.320	215520.0
Sum Sq. Dev.	2210.488	15463633	5.81E+11	421165.9	1693431.	37510773
Observations	34	34	34	34	34	34

Source: Authors' Computation, 2024

Table 1 above presents the descriptive statistics of poverty rate (POR), fisheries production (FSP), aquaculture production (AQP), maritime transportation (MAT), maritime tourism (MRT) and hydropower energy (HPE) in Nigeria over a period of thirty-four years (1990 to 2023). Poverty rate (POR) recorded a mean of 63.01%, with a maximum value of 78.6% and minimum value of 42.5% per annum, while its standard deviation of 8.18% indicated high dispersion from the mean. Fisheries production (FSP) had a mean value of ₦447.67 billion, while its maximum and minimum values were ₦2335.49 billion and ₦3.21 billion, respectively. However, its standard deviation of ₦684.54 billion indicated low dispersion from the mean. In addition, aquaculture production (AQP) had a mean value ₦146337.0 billion, while its maximum and minimum values were ₦358919.0 billion and ₦7347.0 billion, respectively. However, its standard deviation of ₦132715.6 billion indicated low dispersion from the mean. Also, maritime transportation had a mean value of ₦127.62 billion, with maximum and minimum values of ₦418.55 billion and ₦4.84 billion, respectively, while its standard deviation of ₦112.97 billion indicated low dispersion from the mean. Maritime tourism had a mean value of ₦232.98 billion, with maximum and minimum values of ₦777.84 billion and ₦10.67 billion, respectively, while its standard deviation of ₦226.53 billion indicated low dispersion from the mean. Lastly, hydropower energy had a mean value of ₦6338.82 billion, with maximum and minimum values of ₦8349.0 billion and ₦4387.0 billion,

respectively, while its standard deviation of ₦1066.16 billion indicated high dispersion from the mean.

Trend Analysis

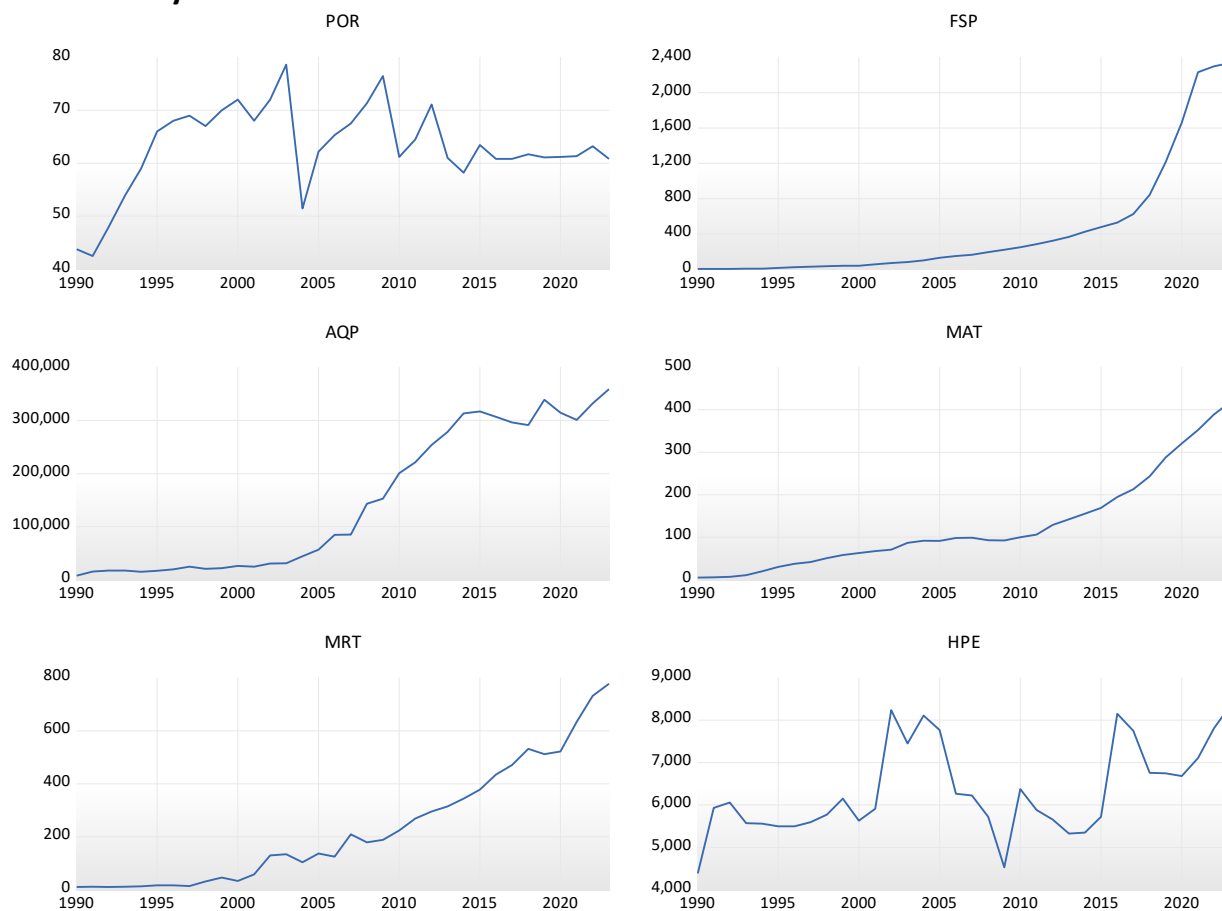


Figure 1: Line Graph Showing the Trends in the Research Variables

Figure 1 shows that, unlike fisheries production (FSP) and maritime transportation (MAT) that followed a fairly consistent upward movements, poverty rate (POR), aquaculture production (AQP), maritime tourism (MRT) and hydropower energy (HPE) in Nigeria showed some levels of inconsistencies in their movements (upward and downward) throughout the research period (1990 to 2023).

Pre-estimation Tests

Multicollinearity Test

In econometrics, multicollinearity occurs when two or more independent variables in a regression model are highly correlated. This high correlation can make it difficult to determine the individual effect of each variable on the dependent variable. One common

method for detecting multicollinearity is using a correlation matrix, which shows the pairwise correlations between all independent variables in the model. The results of the correlation matrix in this study are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

	POR_t	FSP_t	AQP_t	MAT_t	MRT_t	HPE_t
POR_t	1					
FSP_t	-0.05411	1				
AQP_t	-0.00298	0.253955	1			
MAT_t	-0.044179	0.35933	0.163765	1		
MRT_t	0.011261	0.413821	0.529232	0.47705	1	
HPE_t	0.018993	0.477149	0.311146	0.546848	0.515169	1

Source: Authors' Computation, 2024

Table 2 indicates that all the correlation coefficients of all the independent variables (fisheries production, aquaculture production, maritime transportation, maritime tourism and hydropower energy in the matrix were below a threshold (e.g. 0.6). In other words, all the independent variables had weak relationships with poverty rate (POR) over the research period. The implication of this is that there is absence of multicollinearity problem among the variables and there is sufficient statistical evidence to proceed with our data analysis.

Unit Root Test

The data representing variables in this study were subjected to test of stationarity by testing for the presence or absence of unit root using Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) to overcome this undesirable outcome. The results are summarized in Table 3:

Table 3: Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) Test Results

Variable s	At Levels		At First Difference		Remark	Order of Integrati on
	ADF	Mackinnon Critical Value @ 5%	ADF	Mackinnon Critical Value @ 5%		
$InPOR_t$	- 1.394438	-2.954021	- 5.437139	-2.960411	Stationary at 1st Difference	I(1)
$InFSP_t$	- 1.987925	-2.957110	- 3.034010	-2.957110	Stationary at 1st Difference	I(1)
$InAQP_t$	- 0.459882	-2.960411	- 3.408152	-2.960411	Stationary at 1st Difference	I(1)
$InMAT_t$	- 3.771096	-2.954021	-	-	Stationary at Level	I(0)
$InMRT_t$	- 1.451376	-2.960411	- 6.697430	-2.960411	Stationary at 1st Difference	I(1)
$InHPE_t$	- 2.969383	-2.954021	-	-	Stationary at Level	I(0)

Source: Authors' Computation, 2024

As shown in Table 3, at 5% level of significance, the Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) test statistics for maritime transportation (MAT) and hydropower energy (HPE) were greater in absolute value than the individual critical values. This indicates that maritime transportation (MAT) and hydropower energy (HPE) were stationary at levels and were therefore integrated at order zero [that is, $I(0)$]. On the contrary, poverty rate (POR), fisheries production (FSP), aquaculture production (AQP) and maritime tourism (MRT) were stationary at first difference and were therefore integrated at order one [that is, $I(1)$]. However, given that all the variables were stationary at levels and first difference, that is, mixed of integrated at orders zero [$I(0)$] and one [$I(1)$], we therefore proceeded to establish or ascertain the existence or nonexistence of long-run cointegrating relationship among the variables in the equation using bounds cointegration test.

Bounds Cointegration Test

The results of the bounds cointegration test are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Bounds Cointegration Test

Null Hypothesis: No Long-Run Relationships Exist				
Critical Value Bounds				
T-statistic	Value	Significance	I(0)	I(1)
F-statistic	8.240973	10%	2.08	3
K		5%	2.39	3.38
		2.5%	2.7	3.73
		1%	3.06	4.15

Source: Authors' Computation, 2024.

Since the computed F-statistic (8.240973) was greater than upper bound critical value (3.38) at 5% significant level, there was sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that there exists a long run relationship or cointegration among poverty rate (POR), fisheries production (FSP), aquaculture production (AQP), maritime transportation (MAT), maritime tourism (MRT) and hydropower energy (HPE). However, the existence of long-run relationship together with mixed order of stationarity is a precondition for fitting the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model. Hence, we therefore proceeded to estimate the long-run coefficients by estimating an ARDL of the order 2, 3, 3, 2, 3, 0.

Estimation of Autoregressive Distributive Lag (ARDL) Model

The results of the short-run and long-run dynamic Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) approach are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Results of Short-Run and Long-Run ARDL Estimations

Variable	Dependent Variable = $\ln POR_t$			
	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.*
$D\ln(POR_{t-1})$	0.346761	0.103904	3.337310	0.0059
$D\ln(FSP_t)$	-0.423217	0.100194	-4.223977	0.0012
$D\ln(FSP_{t-1})$	-0.147006	0.094667	-1.552878	0.1464
$D\ln(FSP_{t-2})$	0.275328	0.082833	3.323876	0.0061
$D\ln(AQP_t)$	-0.289929	0.096677	-2.998935	0.0111
$D\ln(AQP_{t-1})$	0.339137	0.060693	5.587733	0.0001
$D\ln(MAT_t)$	-0.362532	0.134811	-2.689191	0.0197
$D\ln(MAT_{t-1})$	-0.275328	0.178799	-1.539878	0.1495
$D\ln(MRT_t)$	0.049685	0.075738	0.656012	0.5242
$D\ln(HPE_t)$	-0.241332	0.054136	-4.457904	0.0008
$D\ln(HPE_{t-1})$	-1.329422	0.142915	-9.302162	0.0000
$D\ln(HPE_{t-2})$	0.422333	0.239983	1.759844	0.1039
CointEqM(-1)*	-0.320992	0.040510	-7.923710	0.0000

Adjusted R-squared = 0.766483; Durbin-Watson stat = 2.723607

Variable	Dependent Variable = $\ln POR_t$			
	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.*
$\ln FSP_t$	-0.346761	0.150868	-2.298444	0.0403
$\ln AQP_t$	-0.388822	0.128457	-3.026860	0.0105
$\ln MAT_t$	-0.560240	0.174559	-3.209468	0.0075
$\ln MRT_t$	0.069867	0.084071	0.831049	0.4222
$\ln HPE_t$	-0.241332	0.103864	2.323546	0.0385
C	4.507825	1.231214	3.661285	0.0033

Source: Authors' Computation, 2024

The results of long-run ARDL in Table 5 revealed that fisheries production had a negative and significant relationship with the poverty rate in Nigeria in the short run and long run. This was because its coefficient value was negatively signed, its p-value was less than 0.05 and its t-statistical value was greater than 1.96. This implies that an increase in fisheries production will lead to reduction in poverty rate in the short run and the long run. Also, aquaculture production had negative and significant impact on poverty rate in Nigeria in both short-run and long-run. This was because its coefficient value was negatively signed, its p-value was less than 0.05 and its t-statistical value was greater than 1.96. This implies that increase in aquaculture production will lead to decrease in poverty rate in the short run and the long run. Moreover, maritime transportation had negative and significant effect on poverty rate in Nigeria in both short run and long run. This was because its coefficient value was negatively signed, its p-value was less than 0.05 and its t-statistical value was greater than 1.96. This implies that an increase in maritime transportation by will lead to decrease in poverty rate in the short run and the long run. Maritime tourism had positive and non-significant effect on poverty rate in Nigeria in both short run and long run. This was because its coefficient value was positively signed, its p-value was greater than 0.05 and its t-statistical value was less than 1.96. This implies that an increase in the maritime tourism will lead to increase in poverty rate in the short run and the long run. Additionally, hydropower energy had negative and significant impact on poverty rate in Nigeria in both short run and long run. This was because its coefficient value was negatively signed, its p-value was less than 0.05 and its t-statistical value was greater than 1.96. This implies that a rise in hydropower energy will lead to a reduction in poverty rate in the short run and the long run.

The Adjusted R-squared (Adj. R^2) value of 0.766483 indicated that 77 percent of the systematic variation in poverty rate was explained by fisheries production, aquaculture production, maritime transportation, maritime tourism and hydropower energy in the short-run while the remaining 23 percent of the variation in the model was captured by the error term (unknown factors/variables outside the model). Lastly, the coefficient of the CointEq(-1)* at -0.320992 indicated that the speed of adjustment to long-run equilibrium was 32% when any past deviation would be corrected in the present period. This means that poverty rate adjusts rather slowly to changes in fisheries production, aquaculture production, maritime transportation, maritime tourism and hydropower energy.

Post-estimation Tests

The post-estimation tests are conducted to test the proficiency of the model which must be consistent with the standard assumptions of Ordinary Least Square (OLS), such as normality, serial correlation, heteroscedasticity and functional form. The results of the diagnostic tests are presented and discussed below.

Table 6: ARDL Model Diagnostic Tests

Test	Statistics	P-Value	Null Hypothesis	Decision
A. Normality	0.238395	0.8876	H_0 : Normally Distributed	Do not reject H_0
B. Serial Correlation	2.630848	0.1208	H_0 : No serial correlation	Do not reject H_0
C. Heteroskedasticity	2.202799	0.0831	H_0 : Homoscedasticity	Do not reject H_0
D. Functional Form	0.776884	0.3969	H_0 : Correctly specified	Do not reject H_0

Source: Authors' Computation, 2024

NB: A is based on a test of Jarque Bera; B is Lagrange multiplier test of residual serial correlation; C is based on the regression of squared residuals on squared fitted values; D is Ramsey's RESET test using the square of the fitted values

As presented in Table 6, the results of the Lagrange multiplier test of Jarque Bera normality test, residual serial correlation, Heteroscedasticity test and Ramsey's RESET test indicated the model passed all the tests. This implies that it is normally distributed, it has a correct functional form, it is homoscedastic, while its residuals are serially uncorrelated.

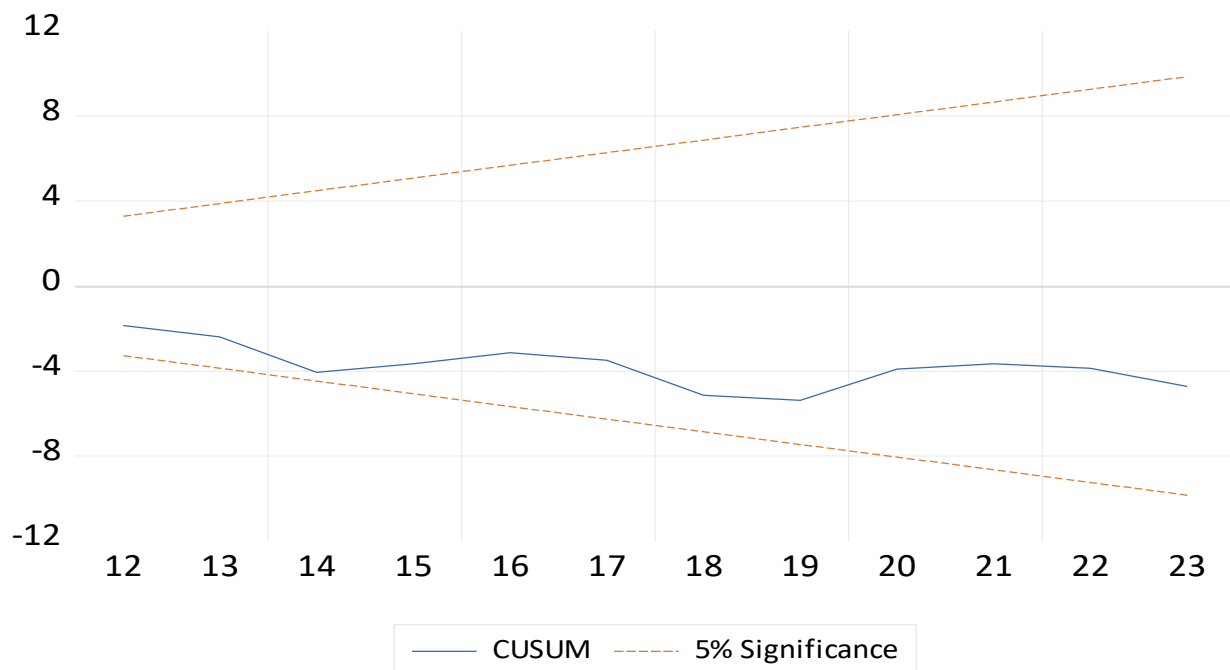


Figure 2: Stability Cusum Test

The cumulative sum (CUSUM) was used to test the stability of the long-run coefficients with the short-run dynamics. The result of stability test presented in Figure 2 indicated that the CUSUM line stayed within the 5 percent critical bound and the plot did not cross the 5 percent critical lines. The implication of this is that there is stability of the long-run coefficients of the regressors that have an effect on poverty alleviation in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study indicated fisheries production had a negative and significant effect on poverty rate in Nigeria. This aligns with the result of Hammoud, Munqith and Omar (2022), who established that, in the long run, the total fish production will have a significant effect on economic growth. Also, aquaculture production had a negative and significant effect on poverty rate in Nigeria. This finding relates to that of Odey (2023), who notes that the blue economy indicators, such as aquaculture production contributes to employment, job creation and poverty eradication. Moreover, this study showed that maritime transportation had a negative and significant effect on poverty rate in Nigeria. This is in line with the finding of Chasomeris (2018), which revealed a significant contribution of maritime transport to South Africa's Gross Domestic Product, highlighting the volume and value of goods handled by South African ports over the past decades. Moreover, maritime tourism had a positive and non-significant effect on poverty rate in Nigeria. This finding is in tandem with Santos and Almeida (2019), who claim that the blue economy plays a crucial role in Portugal's economic growth. Miller and Yates (2017) also found that the blue economy strategies, such as enhanced tourism revenues positively boosted economic development in the Caribbean. Lastly, hydropower energy had a positive and significant effect on poverty rate in Nigeria. This finding aligns with Santos and Almeida (2019), who argue that the blue economy plays an important role in the economic growth of Portugal. Specifically, as the renewable energy sector has shown significant contributions to Gross Domestic Product and employment.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study has empirically examined the effect of the blue economy on poverty alleviation in Nigeria using the time series data sourced from 1990 to 2023. The study found that four key blue economy indicators (fisheries production, aquaculture production, maritime transportation and hydropower energy) have been able to significantly reduce poverty rate in Nigeria. Therefore, the study concluded that the blue economy plays a significant role in alleviating poverty in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn from this study, the study recommends the following:

- i. There should be implementation of government-led initiatives to promote sustainable fishing practices and expand aquaculture production through subsidies, training and access to credit facilities for small-scale fish farmers.
- ii. Government should develop and modernize maritime transportation systems, including ports, shipping lanes and inland waterways, to improve connectivity and reduce transportation costs for goods and services.
- iii. Government should expand the development of small and medium-sized hydropower projects to provide affordable and sustainable energy access to off-grid rural areas.
- iv. Government should establish robust institutional and regulatory frameworks to support sustainable exploitation of marine resources, equitable benefit-sharing and environmental protection.

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23**THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS:
A FOCUS ON NIGERIA-CHINA BILATERAL RELATIONS, 1971-2024****By****Kingdom E. Orji**

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Introduction

In recent times, the global community has recorded rapidly evolving landscape in international relations. Economic cooperation has been the catalyst and an energetic constituent of diplomatic relations between nation-states. The increasing interconnectedness of the global economy has created new prospects for countries to engage in mutually advantageous economic co-operations, which have the potential to reinforce diplomatic relations. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the growing economic ties between Nigeria and China. These nations have witnessed significant expansion in their bilateral relations over the past two decades. Nigeria is Africa's largest economy, while China is perceived as the world's second largest economy. Their diplomatic relations that have over time metamorphosed into economic cooperation has a long history that could be traced back to 1971. However, in recent years, the economic cooperation of the two countries has gained significant momentum, following the emergence of China as one of Nigeria's largest trading partners. Nigeria is one of China's largest markets in Africa. The two countries have also collaborated in numerous infrastructural development projects, including transportation networks, energy systems and telecommunications.

Despite the growing economic ties between Nigeria and China, there is a need for a comprehensive examination of the impact of economic cooperation on their diplomatic relations. It is on this premise that this study investigates the impact of economic cooperation on diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China. Specifically, the study examines the evolution of Sino-Nigeria relations, the current state of economic cooperation between the two countries, and the impact of economic cooperation on diplomatic relations. The study will contribute to the existing literature on international relations, economic diplomacy and bilateral relations between Nigeria and China. It will also provide valuable insights for policymakers, business leaders and scholars seeking to understand the complex dynamics of economic cooperation and diplomatic relations.

Explication of Concepts

This section will be focus on definitions of some key concepts.

Economic Cooperation: Barston (2014) considers economic cooperation as a constituent of international collaboration whose objectives are to create a conducive environment for simplifying the operation of trade and industry, and research and innovation. Caraiani and Georgescu (2013) describe economic cooperation as an international collaboration whose target or purpose is to obtain reciprocated benefits through the shared use of financial, material and technological resources of all partners. While in the view of O'Farrill, Moraga, Perez and Vallejos (1999), economic cooperation commonly refers to trade, fiscal, profitable, innovative and manufacture cooperation amongst nations. World Bank (2020) describes economic cooperation as the collaboration between two or more countries to achieve common economic goals, such as promoting trade, investment and economic development.

Infrastructural Development: World Bank (2009) opines that infrastructure is a canopy that houses economic activities, and that satisfactory achievement of infrastructure sets the platform for investment in less-developed areas, and provides possibilities for economic diversity through the mechanisms of unrestricted movement of people, goods, services and information. Vinceta (2014) contends that development is the attainment of a balance amid ecological security and social economic growth that sustain the present and future needs. Sheffrin (2013) opines that infrastructural development is an interconnected operational constituent that offers background assistance to the entire arrangement of development. It could also be considered as a means through which an objective or set of objectives for development is achieved. It provides the enabling environment for countries, regions or states to be adjudged developed or heading toward achieving a developmental status. African Development Bank (2020) considers infrastructural development as the construction, maintenance and upgrading of physical

infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, ports and energy systems, to support economic growth and development.

Diplomatic Relations: According to Onuoha (2008), diplomatic relations are the official and formal interactions between two or more countries, including the exchange of ambassadors, diplomatic missions and other forms of official communication.

Nigeria and China Relations: Nigeria and China relations refer to the bilateral relations between Nigeria and China, encompassing economic, political, cultural and social interactions between the two countries (Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020).

Bilateral Trade: Bilateral trade refers to the exchange of goods and services between two countries, with the aim of promoting economic cooperation and development (World Trade Organization, 2020). In the context of Nigeria-China relations, bilateral trade refers to the mutual trade relations that is aimed at stimulating trade collaboration between China and Nigeria for economic growth.

Investment: According to International Monetary Fund (2020), investment means the act of obligating capital or resources to a project or venture, with the anticipation of producing revenues or proceeds.

Evolution of Nigeria and China Economic Cooperation

The 1960s and 1970s, marked the beginning of Nigeria's mutual relations with China. After Nigeria's independence from the British, the duo expanded their bilateral ties through trade and strategic cooperation. They enjoyed a very good and responsive relationship since the last six decades. However, in the early days, the Nigeria-China bilateral relations witnessed the emergence of Cold War which affected the world. Despite the fact that the conflict was between the Eastern bloc and Western bloc, this made the developing countries, like Nigeria, join the non-aligned policy of neutrality, which brought Nigeria closer to China and strengthened their diplomatic relations.

On Nigeria-China relations, levy (2013) opines that, on February 10, 1971, Nigeria and China established diplomatic relations. Prior to this, Nigeria had maintained relations with the Republic of China (Taiwan), since 1960. However, following the recognition of the People's Republic of China by the United Nations in 1971, Nigeria switched its recognition to the PRC. During the 1970s, Nigeria-China relations was largely limited to diplomatic exchanges and cultural cooperation. China provided Nigeria with some economic assistance, including a \$10 million interest-free loan in 1972.

There was expansion of the relations in the 1980s and the 1990s). There was rapid population increase of the Nigerian state, which eventually gained her the recognition as the most populous country in Africa and the country with the highest concentration of blacks in the world, with the population of about 232 million (World Population Statistics,

2024). China has the highest population in the continent of Asia, with population of over 1.4 billion, which also makes it the most populous country in the world. These developments prompted the two countries, in the 1980s, to begin diplomatic expansion, with increased trade and economic cooperation. China became one of Nigeria's largest trading partners, with bilateral trade growing from \$100 million in 1980 to \$1.4 billion in 1999. During this period, China also provided Nigeria with significant economic assistance, including a \$500 million loan in 1985 and a \$200 million grant in 1995. In the 2000s, Nigeria-China relations entered a new phase, with the establishment of a strategic partnership. This partnership was formalized in 2005, when Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo visited China and signed several agreements on trade, investment and cooperation. Since then, Nigeria-China relations have continued to deepen, with increased trade, investment and cooperation in areas such as infrastructure development, energy and agriculture. China has become Nigeria's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade exceeding \$10 billion in 2020.

Nigerian's Contributions to Chinese Economy

Some areas in which Nigeria has made valid contributions to the economy of China are discussed below:

Strategic Location: Nigeria's strategic location in West Africa makes it an important partner for China in the region. The Chinese government leverages her economic cooperation with Nigeria to expand her business and investment across African, especially polities in the West African sub-region. The phenomenal rise of Nigeria is due to her control of an expansive mineral resource (oil deposits), and this oil mineral is of crucial importance to Chinese industries. This strategic location and the natural potential of the Nigerian state have further strengthened the Chinese economy and her overseas investment. Hence, this has proven the Nigeria contribution in the economic cooperation between Nigeria and China.

Market Access: Nigeria offers China access to a large and growing market in West Africa, with a population of over 200 million people. Scholars of international relations and diplomacy consider population as a critical constituent of state diplomacy. According to Clapham (1977), qualitatively, the size of the population of a nation must be taken into consideration in any calculation of economic cooperation of two states. The capacity of a state population determines her intake rate of market economy. The strategic importance of Nigeria to China's economic cooperation rests on her sheer size as the most populous black nation of the world. China recognizes this population potential of Nigeria by setting up large market in Nigeria for economic gains. However, Nigeria's acceptance to offer China a comfortable economic environment to strive corroborates contributions to Nigeria-China relations.

Natural Resources: Natural resource is a strong factor in international relations that exercises significant influence on diplomatic relations of states. According to Orugbani (2004), the term natural resource in international relation is considered in two broad ways, namely food and raw materials. The main element in natural resource diplomacy is food. A country that is either self-sufficient or nearly approaching autonomy in natural resource takes a greater advantage over the states that rely on her for raw materials to feed their industries. Nigeria became a valuable asset in her economic cooperation with China following the high level of her natural resources, such as crude oil. Natural resources have brought Nigeria so close to China in recent times, and this factor has created a change in the economic significance of Nigeria to China. The Chinese industries survive through the natural resources of the Nigerian state to grow China's domestic economy. This proves Nigeria's contributions to Nigeria-China relations.

Nigeria's Provision of Scholarships to Chinese Students: Despite the highly rated industrialization of China, Nigeria has provided scholarships to Chinese students to study in Nigerian universities. This is a way of sustaining their diplomatic ties via the existing economic cooperation between them as well as promoting educational exchange and cooperation between the two countries (Mmaduka, 2016).

Nigeria's Hosting of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum: Nigeria hosted the 2015 China-Africa Cooperation Forum, which brought together leaders from China and African countries to discuss economic cooperation and development. This contribution of Nigeria became necessary, since the industrial growth of China is undeniably increasing on daily basis, and as such, her industrial capacity has become her basis for the bargaining power in her economic cooperation with Nigeria. Concern for the Third-World countries prompted Nigeria's role in hosting the China-Africa cooperation to further sustain her economic cooperation with China.

Chinese Contributions to Nigeria and China Economic Cooperation

The technological advancement of China, which eventually culminated in the technological engineering of modern warfare and communication, is an indispensable element of modern diplomacy and international relations. China has made giant strides in modern warfare following the quality of her technological advancement in ships, tanks, airplanes and diverse types of quality equipment. Her technological weight influences her interaction with Nigeria. It provides Nigeria state with technological opportunities in infrastructure development, construction of roads, bridges and railways (Chege, 2018).

Security Cooperation: Nigeria has provided diplomatic support to China in international arenas, including the United Nations and the African Union. Similarly, Nigeria has cooperated with China on security issues, including counter-terrorism and maritime security.

The Impact of Economic Cooperation on Nigeria and China Diplomatic Relations

The evolution of Nigeria-China economic relations has significantly influenced Nigeria's diplomatic ties with China. This has implications for diplomatic ties in the following area:

Deepening Diplomatic Relations: The growth in economic cooperation between Nigeria and China has led to the deepening of diplomatic ties between the two countries. Nigeria and China have established a strong foundation for cooperation, with regular high-level visits and exchanges. For example, in 2006, China's President Hu Jintao visited Nigeria, marking the first visit by a Chinese Head of State to Nigeria. In 2013, Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan visited China, marking the first visit by a Nigerian President to China in over a decade, and in 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari on the sidelines of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing (Akpoy, 2018).

Strategic Partnership: In 2005, Nigeria and China established a strategic partnership, which has facilitated their diplomatic ties in areas such as trade, investment, infrastructure development, and energy. Nigeria and China enjoy long-standing diplomatic relations that has metamorphosed over the years into a strategic partnership. The term partnership has been characterized by significant economic, political and cultural cooperation between the two nations. Nigeria-China relations that started in the 1970s, gathered momentum in the 2000s, with China's increasing economic interests in Africa. In 2006, Nigeria and China signed a strategic partnership agreement, which marked the beginning of a new era in their diplomatic relations. However, the key areas of the strategic partnership agreement that has influenced their diplomatic relations are economic cooperation, which significantly saw China's emergence as one of Nigeria's largest trading partners, infrastructure development, which gave China the platform to invest heavily in Nigeria's public utilities, such as construction of roads, bridges, and railways. The most notable project is the Lagos-Calabar Railway, which is being constructed by the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC).

Energy Cooperation: Nigeria and China have cooperated in the energy sector, with China investing in Nigeria's oil and gas industry. The two countries have also cooperated in the development of renewable energy sources, such as solar and hydroelectric power. The Nigeria-China economic cooperation has significantly influenced their diplomatic ties and built bridges for future prospects, in areas such as technology transfer, aimed at bringing Nigeria to a point of benefiting from China's technological advancements, particularly in areas such as renewable energy, infrastructure development and manufacturing (Aluko, 2017).

Increased Bilateral Trade: The growth in economic cooperation between Nigeria and China has led to a significant increase in bilateral trade between the duo. The bilateral trade volume between China and Nigeria has been steadily increasing over the years, reaching \$13.4 billion in 2020, accounting for over 20% of Nigeria's total trade. Nigeria's exports to China primarily consist of oil and gas, while China's exports to Nigeria include machinery, electronics and textiles. This economic cooperation has provided a strong influence on the diplomatic ties of the two countries. For example, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has led to increased investment in Nigeria's infrastructure development, including roads, railways and ports. Nigeria's effort to diversify its economy, particularly in the areas of agriculture and manufacturing, has China as a potential partner in achieving as well as creating new opportunities for trade with China. The economic cooperation has influenced the diplomatic relations such that Chinese companies have increased their investment in Nigeria, particularly in the areas of energy, infrastructure and manufacturing following Nigeria's growing population and increasing demand for consumer goods from China (Adebayo, 2019).

Chinese Investment in Nigeria: China has become a significant investor in Nigeria, with investments in areas such as infrastructure development, energy and manufacturing. The economic cooperation between Nigeria and China has a strong influence on the diplomatic interactions of the duo following the China's investment in Nigeria that has risen in recent years, making China the largest trading partner of Nigeria. China has invested heavily in Nigeria's infrastructure development, including the construction of roads, bridges, airports, and seaports, Nigeria's energy sector, including the construction of power plants, oil refineries and pipelines; in Nigeria's manufacturing sector, including the establishment of textile mills, cement factories, and other industries; and in Nigeria's agricultural sector, including the establishment of farms, agricultural processing plants and other related industries. According to the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (2020), China's total investment in Nigeria is estimated to be over \$10 billion, annual investment in Nigeria is estimated to be over \$1 billion, with over 100 investment projects in Nigeria, covering various sectors. The impacts of this investment include job creation; China's investment in Nigeria has created thousands of jobs for Nigerians. However, there are indications of violation of labour laws by the Chinese companies in Nigeria

Nigeria's Membership of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): Nigeria's membership of the BRI has further strengthened her diplomatic ties with China. The BRI has provided Nigeria with access to Chinese funding and expertise for infrastructure development projects. It has also provided comfortable environments to the Chinese investor to invest in Nigeria (Sheriff, & Farouk, 2020).

Regular High-level Visits: The growth in economic cooperation between Nigeria and China has led to regular high-level visits between the two countries. These visits have helped to strengthen diplomatic ties and facilitate cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

Establishment of the Nigeria and China Binational Commission: The establishment of the Nigeria and China Binational Commission has provided a framework for cooperation between the two countries. It has facilitated cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, infrastructure development and energy. It is a bilateral commission established in 2005 to promote economic, cultural and scientific cooperation between Nigeria and China. It aims to strengthen the relationship between the two countries and to identify areas of mutual interest and cooperation (Ogunkola & Adewiyi, 2008).

Security Cooperation: The growth in economic relations has also led to increased security cooperation between the two countries. Nigeria and China have established a security cooperation framework, which has facilitated cooperation in areas such as counter-terrorism and maritime security.

The Prospects of Nigeria and China Economic Cooperation vis-à-vis Diplomatic Relations

Upgrading of Relations: The recent upgrade of Nigeria-China relations to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership is a significant development, reflecting the deepening economic cooperation between the two states. This advancement is expected to boost bilateral trade, investment and cooperation in areas such as infrastructure development, energy and agriculture.

Increased Trade and Investment: China has become Nigeria's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade exceeding \$10 billion in 2020. The two countries have also agreed to facilitate synergies between the Belt and Road Initiative and Nigeria's Renewed Hope Agenda under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, which is expected to attract more Chinese investment in Nigeria, in order to create avenues for job creation for Nigeria citizens.

Cooperation in Key Sectors: Nigeria and China have identified key areas for cooperation, including infrastructure development, energy, agriculture and digital economy. The two countries have also agreed to strengthen their economic cooperation beyond economic environment into areas such as security, where both parties join efforts to tackle their internal security issues, education and culture.

Challenges in China and Nigeria Economic Cooperation

Nigeria and China relations are stronger than ever, with cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, infrastructural development, energy and agriculture. China is Nigeria's largest trading partner, and Nigeria is one of China's largest markets in Africa. However,

the relationship is not without its challenges. There are concerns about the imbalance in trade between the two countries, with Nigeria's imports from China far exceeding its exports. The trade imbalance between China and Nigeria is a significant aspect of their economic cooperation, reflecting broader trends in international trade dynamics. As one of Africa's largest economies, Nigeria has increasingly engaged with China, which is now its largest trading partner. However, this relationship is characterized by a substantial trade imbalance that favours China.

Trade Imbalance: Adigbuo (2021) posits that Nigeria's imports from China far exceed its exports, leading to a significant trade deficit. This imbalance has created tension in the relations and makes it difficult for Nigeria to negotiate favourable balance of trade in the following areas:

Nature of Trade: The trade relationship between China and Nigeria has been marked by a heavy reliance on imports from China. In 2022, for instance, Nigeria imported goods worth approximately \$4 billion from China while exporting goods only worth about \$1 billion to China. This stark contrast highlights the dependency of Nigeria on Chinese manufactured goods, including electronics, machinery, textiles and consumer products.

Composition of Exports and Imports: Nigerian exports to China are predominantly raw materials, such as oil and agricultural products. While crude oil remains a critical export commodity, the volume has fluctuated due to various factors, including global oil prices and production challenges within Nigeria. Conversely, China's exports to Nigeria consist largely of finished goods which are often cheaper than locally produced alternatives. This dynamic not only exacerbate the trade imbalance but also raises concerns about local manufacturing capabilities in Nigeria.

Economic Implications: The persistent trade deficit poses challenges for Nigeria's economy. It contributes to a negative balance of payments and can lead to currency depreciation pressures as more naira flows out of the country to pay for imports than comes in through exports. Additionally, this imbalance can hinder local industries' growth, as they struggle to compete with cheaper Chinese imports.

Investment Flows: While the trade figures indicate an imbalance, it is important to note that Chinese investment in Nigeria has been significant over the years, particularly in infrastructure development (such as roads, railways, and power plants). These investments are aimed at improving the business environment in Nigeria but often come with conditions that may favour Chinese companies over local firms.

Strategic Partnerships: Both countries have recognized the need for a more balanced economic relationship. Initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) have been instrumental in fostering closer ties between China and African nations, including Nigeria.

However, there remains scepticism regarding whether these initiatives will effectively address the underlying issues of trade imbalances or merely reinforce existing patterns (Kimairis, 2016).

Employment: The challenges faced by Nigerian employees working under Chinese companies are multifaceted and deeply rooted in issues related to labour rights, working conditions, and systemic discrimination. The challenges include the following:

Poor Working Conditions: Many Nigerian workers employed by Chinese firms report hazardous working environments characterized by inadequate safety measures. Workers often lack access to essential personal protective equipment (PPE), such as helmets, gloves and masks, which exposes them to health risks associated with dust inhalation and other occupational hazards. For instance, workers in the Ogun Guangdong Free Trade Zone have reported severe respiratory issues attributed to dust exposure due to the absence of proper PPE.

Health Issues: The lack of safety protocols has led to significant health problems among workers. Cases of asthma, tuberculosis and other respiratory diseases have been documented among employees who have worked in poorly ventilated and dusty environments without adequate protection. Employees like Adefemi Adeolu have shared their experiences of developing chronic health conditions after prolonged exposure to harmful work conditions.

Discrimination in Employment Practices: There are allegations of discriminatory practices within these companies regarding pay disparities between local Nigerian workers and the expatriate staff. Reports indicated that local employees often receive significantly lower wages compared to their foreign counterparts for similar roles, fostering resentment and feelings of exploitation among the workforce.

Job Insecurity and Exploitation: Many workers are employed on a casual basis with little job security or benefits. Employment can be terminated at any time for minor infractions or complaints about working conditions, leading to a culture of fear where employees feel compelled to accept poor treatment without protest. This precarious employment situation leaves many workers vulnerable and without means of expressing grievances.

Lack of Support from Authorities: Despite the numerous complaints regarding labour practices in Chinese companies, there appears to be insufficient oversight or intervention from Nigerian regulatory bodies. Reports suggested that the government often overlooks violations committed by these foreign firms, allowing exploitative practices to persist unchecked.

Cultural Barriers and Communication Issues: The cultural differences between Nigerian workers and Chinese management can lead to misunderstandings and further exacerbate tensions in the workplace. Language barriers may also hinder effective communication regarding safety protocols or employee grievances.

Conclusion

The evolution of Nigeria and China economic relations has had a significant impact on diplomatic ties between the two countries. The growth in economic relations has led to deepening of diplomatic ties, increased bilateral trade, increased Chinese investment in Nigeria, and fostered cooperation in areas such as infrastructural development, energy, security and agriculture. China is Nigeria's largest trading partner, and Nigeria is one of China's largest markets in Africa. However, the relationship is not without its challenges. There are concerns about the imbalance in trade between the two countries, with Nigeria's imports from China far exceeding its exports. There are also concerns about the environmental and social impact of Chinese investments in Nigeria. Despite these challenges, Nigeria-China relations will continue to deepen in the coming years, driven by the growing economic ties between the two countries. The impact of economic cooperation on diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China has been significant, but not without challenges that could be addressed.

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SECTION C

PEACE AND CONFLICT PERSPECTIVES

24

THE PATHOLOGY OF INSECURITY, CRIME MANAGEMENT AND CONFLICT CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria faced profound challenges related to insecurity, crime, and conflict, which positioned the country at the forefront of global insecurity indices for several decades. These issues—spanning poverty, civil unrest, insurgency, terrorism and banditry—plagued not only Nigeria but also several other African nations. However, the extent and geographical spread of these problems within Nigeria were particularly alarming, as they significantly disrupted economic development and exacerbated poverty levels. This study critically examined these issues through the frameworks of Travis Hirschi's Social Control Theory (1969) and Field's Social Capital Theory (2003), both of which suggest that the breakdown or weakening of social bonds contribute to delinquency and criminal behaviour. The research relied exclusively on secondary data sources, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the ongoing security crisis in Nigeria. The findings revealed that the challenges of insecurity and crime evolved along various dimensions, including political instability, ethnic tensions, and organized violence, leading to widespread human suffering, displacement and social unrest. Given the complexity and persistence of these security challenges, it is evident that comprehensive and sustained interventions are required. The study recommended, among other measures, a deliberate focus on promoting quality education, consistently supported by a motivational reward system and effective governance. This approach is crucial for addressing the anger and restiveness of the country's disillusioned population, who have become fearful of an uncertain future.

Keywords: Insecurity, crime, conflict, governance, social bonds

Introduction

Decades after achieving political independence, many African nations are yet to develop ideal, sustainable and functional mechanisms to combat insecurity, crime and conflict. In numerous African countries, conflicts emerge in various forms, and crime rates remain alarmingly high, with most existing mechanisms proving ineffective in addressing these challenges. This persistent issue calls for a comprehensive and organic investigation into the processes underlying these occurrences and their potential consequences on the

economic, social and political lives of the population. A report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2013) highlights Africa as one of the regions with the highest global crime prevalence. The continent records a homicide rate of 12.5 per 100,000 people, significantly higher than the global average of 6.2. Moreover, while crime rates appear to be stabilizing or declining in Europe, they continue to rise in Africa (Institute for Security Studies & Africa Check, 2014). In Nigeria, the prevalence of crime has reached an alarming level, manifesting in various aspects of national life. Daily, lives are lost, the population is diminished, businesses remain in a state of stagnation, investments are dwindling, multinational corporations are shutting down and leaving the country, unemployment is soaring, and citizens live in constant fear. This situation poses significant threats to the people, governance and economic growth of the nation. Since the return to democracy in 1999, successive Nigerian governments have implemented various strategies to mitigate the devastating effects of crime and insecurity. However, these efforts have largely failed to yield sustainable results due to the collapse of the nation's security architecture. Consequently, crime and insecurity remain critical challenges that demand urgent and innovative solutions.

The most fundamental justification for the existence of government lies in its role as a protector, safeguarding citizens from violence and maintaining law and order. In *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes paints a vivid picture of the chaos and insecurity that would prevail in a society without government, where individuals would be left vulnerable to internal and external threats. The devastating consequences of inadequate governance are evident in many of the world's fragile states and ungoverned regions, where lawlessness prevails. Historically, when faced with extreme disorder and violence, citizens have often opted for authoritarian regimes, such as the Taliban or ISIS, as a lesser evil compared to the anarchy of warring factions. This reality highlights the critical role of global and regional organizations in maintaining peace and security. For instance, the United Nations, with its core mandate of promoting international peace and security, remains one of the most significant organizations globally. Similarly, regional organizations, such as African Union (AU) and its Regional Economic Communities (RECs), prioritize peace and security as central to their mission (Albert, 2017).

The concept of government as a protector necessitates resources, which are raised through taxation. These funds are used to establish and maintain security agencies, such as the military and police forces, judicial systems, correctional facilities and governance structures, to enact and enforce laws. In terms of foreign threats, a government's protective role also involves diplomacy and, when necessary, military engagement. The minimalist view of government as a protector was evident in the early days of the American Republic, which operated with a limited structure, comprising the president,

Congress, Supreme Court, and departments for treasury, war, state, and justice (Agwanwo & Bello, 2019; Seriki, 2021).

Insecurity was once considered a secondary concern in Nigeria, overshadowed by issues such as corruption and power shortages. However, it has now become one of the country's most pressing problems, assuming complex and alarming dimensions. Since the end of the Cold War, Africa has experienced a surge in ethnic, religious and sectarian conflicts, often marked by widespread violence against civilians. Between 1990 and 2020, hundreds of conflicts erupted across the continent, leaving millions dead, devastating entire regions, and displacing tens of millions as refugees (Boutwell & Klare, 2000; Babalola, 2021; Iremeka, 2022).

The root causes of armed conflicts in Africa vary, but one significant factor is the illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons. These weapons exacerbate violence and criminality, undermine social security, and contribute to the erosion of state institutions. From Mali to Ghana, Libya to Somalia, and South Africa to Nigeria, the continent is awash with millions of illicit arms. These weapons have caused immense human suffering, destroyed livelihoods, and claimed an estimated three million lives since 1990 (Enuka, 2017).

In addition to escalating conflicts, other factors such as corruption, underdevelopment, political instability, and economic crimes further destabilize the region. These issues have created a toxic social environment characterized by lawlessness, weakened democracy and the militarization of daily life. Across Africa, non-state actors, including criminal gangs, rebels, mercenaries, vigilantes and local militias, possess and utilize small arms, further compounding the region's security challenges. This cycle of insecurity, underpinned by the proliferation of arms and systemic governance failures, underscores the urgent need for comprehensive solutions to restore peace and stability in Africa.

Nigeria as an independent nation seems to have taken to crime. This worrisome situation may be connected with the sudden rise or increase in the level of unemployment in the country, which pose a great challenge to a stable society where the protection of human lives and property should take the front burner. The nature of insecurity in Nigeria has become segmented, wherein the herders and farmers' clashes/crises occur mostly in the North Central geo-political zone, where Benue and Plateau States belong; insurgency (Boko Haram) in the North East; gunmen attacks, Fulani herdsman in the North West; separatist agitations in the South East; ritual killings in the South West; and Niger Delta militancy in the South-South. This is in addition to security breaches, such as politically- and non-politically-motivated killings, kidnapping, proliferation of small and light weapons as well as other crimes noticeable across the whole country (Onifade et al., 2013; Babalola, 2021).

In Nigeria the level of insecurity and terrorism in both northern and southern parts of the country have become a major issue for the government. Since 1990, when the activities of the Niger Delta militants started and until recently, when Boko Haram insurgents arose in the northern part of the country, Nigeria has witnessed unprecedented security challenges. These challenges range from kidnapping, suicide attacks, bombings, ritual killings, assassinations, banditry, Boko Haram to armed robbery, and have led to the destruction of lives and property, hindered business activities, discouraged local and foreign investors, and increased, on a regular basis, the government expenditure on security. All of these stifle and retard Nigeria's socio-economic development (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014).

In the immediate past regime of Muhammadu Buhari, hardly did a day pass without a report of one security challenge or the other. Unfortunately, ordinary citizens as well as the nation's economic resources were at the receiving end of this wanton destruction. The series of bombings and killings in the North, kidnapping and armed robbery attack in the South, political and economic related assassinations as well as the politically influenced communal wars have become a hydra-headed monsters which security agents in Nigeria appear incapable of handling (Adiele, 2023). Angry with the development, the former President Muhammadu Buhari, in Jos, the capital of Plateau State, directed security chiefs in the country to remain vigilant and ensure the protection of lives and property in the country. Speaking at an interactive session with stakeholders, the President urged traditional and community leaders to complement government's efforts and persuade their people to tolerate one another for peace and unity to reign in the country. "What happened here in Jos is very bad," he said. The President condoled with the victims' families, the government and people of the state, and wished those injured a speedy recovery.

The former President also used the occasion of the interactive session to appeal to Nigerians to avoid inflammatory utterances that endanger peace or promote conflicts. "Whatever is being given to the media, we have to be very responsible about it," he said. The President further noted thus:

Take, for instance, the situation in Benue. The Benue subsistence farmer knows that the Nigerian cattle herder that he knows doesn't carry nothing more than a stick, occasionally sometimes something to cut grass to feed his cattle. But the present herder, I am told, carries AK47 and people are even blaming me for not talking to them because maybe (they say) I look like them. There is some injustice in these aspersions. It is noteworthy that some Nigerians still acknowledge that despite the security challenges, this administration has made notable successes in the security sector (Seriki, 2021).

The Buhari administration made notable successes in the country, but such were blighted by the endemic twin evil of crime and violence. Senators of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, mainly from the opposition political parties, staged a walkout during plenary, demanded the impeachment of President Mohammadu Buhari over the high level of insecurity in the country (Iroanus, 2022).

The general failure of the government in fulfilling its constitutional mandate to the people has resulted in dire consequences, usually with the lower-class citizens and the bourgeoisie being the most at the receiving end. Such is the daily reported incidences of banditry, mindless killings, and kidnappings being perpetrated in Nigeria. According to the 2018-2019 report of the Strategic Monitor, security refers both to physical security as well as identity security and when a government can successfully provide both prosperity and security to a citizen, the social contract is fulfilled (Sweijjs, 2021). Indeed, insecurity has survived in Nigeria and has trickled down to areas where it had not been experienced. No nation can develop when there is high level of insecurity. The far-reaching effects of insecurity are evident in most communities in Nigeria.

In view of the foregoing, the present study is premised upon the central assumption that there is gap in various government-centric policy responses and approaches advanced so far to address the intricate and confusing security scenario in Nigeria. This missing link in the security architecture propelled the desire of some major stakeholders to question the pathology of security management and conflict challenges in Nigeria. This serves as the basis of this investigation.

Conceptualizing Insecurity and Crime

Insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection. Insecurity could also be seen as the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Insecurity is also the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. These definitions of insecurity underscore a major point, that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur.

Insecurity is increasingly becoming a permanent feature or characteristic of the Nigerian social formation. Insecurity is seen as the absence of freedom from threat and wants (UNDP, 1994, cited in Nwagba, 2012). Insecurity is also seen as the change within the social system elicited by perceived failures of government policies, which manifest in various forms, such as violence and revolt. It can equally be seen as the antithesis of security. Further, Effiom and Edinyang (2013) view insecurity as the state of being subject to threat or injury. It is a feeling of unease or anxiety that may be triggered or propelled by perceiving of oneself to be vulnerable.

Furthermore, it should be known that insecurity is a feeling of general discomfort that may be activated by perceiving oneself to be vulnerable or inferior in some way or sense of vulnerability or instability which threatens one's self-image or ego. Insecurity, to a large extent, is a feeling of uncertainty, a lack of confidence on the country's leadership or anxiety about oneself or environment. Orisa (2010) affirms that, day and night, lives and property of innocent citizens are endangered, with the police helpless in most cases to deal with situation. This shows how humans are insecure in the environment in which they found themselves. The degree of armed robbery in the country has attained an unprecedented height. Paradoxically, too, Nigerians do not feel safe anywhere, at home, at work, at school, on the high way, at the church or mosque, at the airports and in any environment they find themselves.

Insecurity is a risk factor which business owners and managers dread and avoid by relocating their businesses elsewhere. When people's security is guaranteed, they have the freedom, physically and mentally, to get on with the business of building their lives without fear of molestation or violent death. Thus, to experience a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, security is essential (Meddings, 2001). Without security, there can be no stable society; rather, there will be prevalent fear and danger from violent deaths (Hobbes 1651).

It is known and accepted that a peaceful world is far better than the violent world because development, which is positive change and which enhances, promotes and advances citizens well-being, is a direct function of peace. On the contrary, backwardness, which distorts, disfigures, diminishes and impoverishes citizen's well-being, is a direct product of insecurity.

Human rights remain highly critical in the life of every modern state in the international system. This makes the safety of all citizens an obligation for policy makers and law enforcement agencies (Nwobueze and Adiele, 2021). Militancy, kidnapping insurgency and other criminal activities, individually and collectively, create insecurity and breach of the peace that are likely to or indeed affect legitimate social and economic activities in the country, thereby hindering sustainable development. These problems also have the very damaging consequence of giving the signal to the rest of the world that Nigeria is not a safe and secure (scaring investors away) place and as such not suitable for economic investment and activities. This is particularly important in view of the efforts being made to create the desired atmosphere to attract foreign investment into Nigeria. Insecurity is a risk factor which investors all over the world dread. Security uncertainly is not only considered a bad omen for business but it also sends warning signals to investors to take their investable funds to another country where there is adequate or a semblance of security (Adesina, 2013).

On the impact of insecurity on the economy, the productive aspect of most manufacturing business depends largely on the availability and regular supply of raw materials for production. Insecurity cuts off the supply of such raw materials, hence, jeopardizing production activities. Besides this, insecurity affects marketing of finished product, as there is a continuous exodus from areas of insecurity. There is also an increase in security spending, as most business organizations operating in Nigeria spend a lot in maintaining private security outfits.

In the case of Nigeria, there is also evidence of some businessmen and manufacturing companies having to relocate, particularly from the North in recent times, to other peaceful parts of the country (Nwagboso, 2012). Many of the Igbo and Yoruba from southern Nigeria who are engaged in various businesses in northern Nigeria have had to return to their home states to avoid the violence orchestrated by Boko Haram (Suleiman, 2012). Thus, the Boko Haram insurgency, which began in Maiduguri, Borno State, in 2009, has badly affected the economy of the North, as major companies which produce consumer goods have withdrawn from the region. Examples are the telecommunication companies which have been forced to close down as their telecommunication apparatuses were repeatedly destroyed; media houses were equally attacked as well as having some of their staff killed; banks too were not spared from the destruction, as some branches of the banks were attacked and robbed. Thus, the resources which could have been used in strengthening the infrastructural amenities are increasingly being diverted to fund the security system, therefore constituting a drain on the nation resources (Nwagboso, 2012).

However, as regards the consequences of insecurity on development in Nigeria, Eme and Anthony (2011, p. 66) summarize the impact of insecurity in the following words:

Social dislocation and population displacement, social tensions and new pattern of settlements which encourages Muslims/Christians or member of an ethnic group moving to Muslim/Christian dominated enclaves, dislocation and disruption of family and communal life, general atmosphere of mistrust, fear and anxiety, dehumanization of women, children, and men especially in areas where rape, child abuse and neglect are used as instruments of war, increasing hunger and poverty in the polity, atmosphere of political insecurity and instability including declining confidence in the political leadership and apprehension about the system, governance deficit as a result of security agencies inefficiency and corruption, loss of man hours due to shortened working hours by banks and commercial institutions and the closure of businesses by those who work at night due to curfew consequent on the declaration of state of emergency in various states.

Anik et al. (2013) examined the impact of insecurity on households' food security. To quantify insecurity, they interviewed 210 Bangladeshi rice farmers about the prices they paid for services and compared these with the actual prices to the level before the security breaches. The differences between actual and paid prices were taken as proxies for insecurity. Their results indicated that the cost of insecurity adversely affected households' food consumption. They also found that low-expenditure rice farming households were relatively more affected than high-expenditure ones. This was explained by the fact that high-expenditure households had more flexibility in terms of adjusting their expenditures and, hence, were able to adjust without affecting their food consumption.

Fafchamps and Minten (2004) found, for Madagascar, that crime and insecurity result in a significant reduction in income and in access to public infrastructure, such as health care centres and schools. Skaperdas et al. (2009) state that violence results in high costs on global development, and it directly reduces economic growth. Fafchamps and Moser (2003) mention indirect costs, which occur if, for example, business and trade are diverted, investment and savings are reduced or resources are wasted, in the presence of insecurity and crime. Indirect costs also occur as psychic cost and loss in work time if people affected by burglary or theft feel suspicious and unsafe at home (Barclay et al. 2001; Ceccato 2016).

Furthermore, in case of property crime, farming households are deprived of their livelihood income, if livestock, field crops, or equipment and tools are stolen from their homesteads or fields. Environmental and wildlife crime may not only harm the environment but also threaten the sustainability of rural people's livelihoods if the environment and natural resources, including water and land surrounding the villages, are degraded based on criminal acts. In fact, a large part of rural people's income depends on the environment, which will be impaired from environmental destruction and wildlife loss (Nguyen et al. 2015).

Violent crime can be accompanied by property crime or can result from social conflicts over land or other resources. But crime also covers corruption and bribery, often related to the infringement of rules and laws. Thus, illegal logging or fishing is often done based on bribing of officials in charge of controlling the access to these resources. Deforestation and overfishing are often the outcomes. In certain cases, crimes can also undermine the cohesiveness of rural communities, creating some social cost. Although the number of crimes is generally lower in rural than in urban areas, Ceccato (2016) points out that, in developed countries, one selected case of crime may have a much greater impact on the perception of safety in a village as compared to several incidences of crime in an urban setting.

Crime

The word crime is said to be as old as society itself. However, crime changes with the passage of time and regimes and attitudinal dimensions of society. Some crimes, in the course of time, become obsolete and some assume new and broader dimensions. However, crime is like other concepts in social sciences, which have no generally accepted definition. Crime is an act of doing wrong voluntarily and intentionally. It is very dangerous to the individual and society. Generally, it involves the violation of social law, moral law and country's law, with the objective to cause harm or injury to others.

Crime is a threat to the economic, political and social security of a nation and a major factor associated with underdevelopment. It discourages both local and foreign investments, reduces the quality of life, destroys human and social capital, and damages relationship between citizens and the states, thus undermining democracy, the rule of law and the ability of the country to promote development. The development in societies with particular reference to Westernization has not helped matters; instead, it has been destructive to the social and cultural values of society. Reasons for the increase in crime in Nigeria include urbanization, which is spreading more widely and rapidly than improvement in the socio-economic condition. Crime is a huge threat to public safety. It causes great personal suffering and vast material damage, and places enormous burden on the urban social network. Globally, every five years, 60% of city inhabitants have been victims of one type of crime or another while over half of these crimes have involved personal crime (arson, fraudulence, cheating, 419 syndromes, forgery, etc.).

It has been noted that Nigerian cities are conducive areas for criminal activities because they provide the anonymity needed for criminal activities (Okafor, 2011). According to Paul Tappan (2009), "Crime is an intentional act or omission in violation of criminal law committed without defence or justification." *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that "it is an action which constitutes a serious offence against an individual or the State and is punishable by law" (Lisham, 2011). According to Abu (2017), a crime is an unlawful act punishable by a state or other authority. The term "crime" does not have any simple and universally accepted definition in modern criminal law, though statutory definitions have been provided for certain purposes. The most popular view is that crime is a category created by law. In other words, something is a crime if declared as such by the relevant and applicable law. One definition views a crime or an offence as an act harmful not only to some individual but also to a community, society or state; such acts are forbidden and punishable by law. The state has the power to severely restrict one's liberty for committing a crime.

In modern societies, there are procedures to which investigations and trials must adhere. If found guilty, an offender may be sentenced to a form of reparation, such as a community sentence or, depending on the nature of their offence, to imprisonment, life

imprisonment or, in some jurisdictions, execution. While every crime violates the law, not every violation of the law counts as a crime. Breaches of private law (torts and breaches of contract) act not automatically punished by the state, but can be enforced through civil procedure. Similarly, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (2003) defines crime as an "act or the commission of an act that is forbidden or the omission of a duty that is commanded by a public law and that makes the offender liable to punishment by that law; especially a gross violation of law."

Crime has been consistently linked to social structures. Numerous investigations show that crime rates in communities are strongly correlated to the extent to which the communities are socially disorganized or organized (Sampson & Groves, 1989; Saegert & Winkel, 2004; Weijters et al., 2009). These investigations are evidently built on the work of Shaw and McKay (Shaw & McKay, 1942; Sampson & Groves, 1989), who pioneered the linking of crime to social settings. Shaw and McKay developed Social Disorganization Theory, which hypothesizes that disorganized communities experience high crime rates whilst organized communities experience low crime rates. Crime rates are high in disorganized communities because social disorganization erodes social bonds and increases social disruption in the communities, neighbourhoods, families and even in the local organizations, including churches (Brewer et al., 1998). As a result of disorganization, the communities lack common values and social cohesion, which are driving forces for the community residents to control crime and maintain security collectively (Kawachi et al., 1999; Steyn, de Beer & Fouché, 2009). In this context, social disorganization is defined as the inability of community residents to realize their common values and maintain effective social controls (Sampson and Groves, 1989).

According to *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* (2009):

a crime is held to be an offence which goes beyond the personal and into the public sphere, breaking prohibitory rules or laws, to which legitimate punishments or sanctions are attached, and which requires the intervention of a public authority... for crime to be known as such, it must come to the notice of, and be processed through, an administrative system or enforcement agency. It must be reported and recorded by the police (or other investigators); it may then become part of criminal statistics; may or may not be investigated; and may or may not result in a court case.

There exists some evidence from the literature about different types of crimes that are occurring in many areas. These can be differentiated into environmental and wildlife crimes, violent crimes, corruption and other crimes.

Environmental and wildlife crimes: Environmental and wildlife crimes include garbage dumping, excessive soil, water or air pollution, deforestation, slash and burn cultivation,

illegal clearing of native land, destruction of rivers illegal hunting, poaching, or other illegal acts that harm species or the environment. Environmental and wildlife crimes also involve trade in endangered species – animals and plants – alive or dead (Ceccato 2016).

Specific numbers on environmental and wildlife crimes in general exist only for selected developed countries. For example, in Sweden 5,000 environmental and wildlife crimes are being reported per year to the police. These include mainly the dumping of oil or other chemicals on land or in water bodies, illegal hunting and fishing, air pollution, deforestation, and some petty crimes, such as noise from sawmills and littering (Ceccato 2016). For developing countries, such detailed information on environmental and wildlife crimes in rural areas is not available. However, there are statistics and literature from developing countries on drivers and effects of the above-mentioned crimes, particularly deforestation, slash and burn cultivation, or illegal clearing of native land. Kaimowitz and Angelsen (1998) reviewed 150 economic models on deforestation which have been used to identify why, where, when and how much forest is being converted. These models draw on household data but also on macro data.

At the macro level, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC website 2016) explicitly deals with “wildlife and forest crime” which is defined as “taking, trading (supplying, selling or trafficking), importing, exporting, processing, possessing, obtaining and consumption of wild fauna and flora, including timber and other forest products, in contravention of national or international law.” According to UNODC (2016), wildlife and forest crime is often linked to trans-border organized crime. High profit margins make the illegal wildlife trade one of the most profitable industries in the world (Pires et al., 2015). Also, the United Nations Environmental Programme reported that global syndicates are responsible for the poaching of animals, the illegal shipping of toxic waste and deforestation. In total, the damage of these crimes has been estimated to annually amount to tens of billions of dollars for communities around the world (News24, 2013).

There are also many studies on single threatened animal and plant species linked to developing countries which are rich in wildlife, biodiversity and endangered species. Pires et al. (2015) conducted a study on parrots, one of the most threatened bird species, in Peru and Bolivia to better understand the determinants of the illicit sales market for parrots. Pires et al. (2015) also conducted interviews with parrot poachers, middlemen, other sellers and experts in Bolivia and Peru. They revealed that the trade in this case was not governed by formal organized groups but rather by single freelance operators.

Violent crimes: Violent crimes include assaults, threats, robbery, and sexual incidents, or even homicide. With respect to sexual incidents, victimization rates are generally seldom reported, but in comparison with police statistics, the ICVS provides some good insights showing that they are highest in Africa and lowest in Asia. However, this data refers to urban areas and there are large differences within the continents. Thus, while the

victimization rates are lowest in Asia, India belongs to the five countries with the highest rates. There, rape is one of the most common crimes against women (Ramaswamy, 2013), and it has one of the highest mortality rates of girls up to the age of 5 worldwide (Solotaroff & Pande, 2014). In Africa, there are six countries (Nigeria, Swaziland, Lesotho, Zambia, Botswana and Namibia) among the 15 countries with the highest rates (van Dijk, 2008). About half of all sexual assaults happen at home or close to home (Alvazzi Del Frate, 1998).

Violence against people might also happen in the context of farm crimes or environmental and wildlife crimes. Kumwenda (2012) points out that, in South Africa, racially motivated violent crimes happen on farms. Clinard and Abbott (1973) observe that, in developing countries, few people deposit their savings in banks. Instead, in some cultures, people wear them openly in the form of jewellery. This then often leads to violence, if these people become victim of theft or robbery. Violent crimes in rural areas may also happen if there are disputes in or between villages; this may happen in connection with alcohol and drug consumption and/or over the possession of a piece of land or other scarce natural resources (Clinard and Abbott, 1973).

Corruption: In developing countries, corruption is widespread, as evidenced by different indices, such as the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index and the World Bank Governance Indicators. Corruption occurs especially in the service sector, including health, education, electricity, banking, police and law enforcement, land administration, local governments and NGOs. This is explained by the simple fact that civil servants, doctors and nurses, teachers or police officers are poorly paid; so they are inclined to accept money, often in exchange for special treatment, such as good exam marks (Clinard & Abbott 1973; Gerasimova 2008). This is also true for rural areas, although the service sector is often limited to schools, health care centres, or selected local offices.

There are additionally high-value natural resources, such as timber, fish and wildlife, which are prone to corruption. Many studies about corruption relate to the macro level where data are more readily available from organizations such as Transparency International, World Economic Forum and World Bank. Evidence from the micro level is scarce. This is even more so for rural areas in developing countries. An exception is the study by Anik, Manjunatha and Bauer (2013), which analyzed the impact of farm-level corruption on households' food security.

Bribery: The attempt to influence a public officer in the discharge of his/her official duties by the offer of a reward or other consideration

Extortion: Taking of something from a person through the fear of a future harm

Robbery: Taking of something from a person through the use of force or fear of force

Burglary: Breaking and entering with the intent to commit a felony therein

Arson: This is wilful and deliberate burning of a dwelling or outbuildings of another person. This also covers the burning of any building to defraud an insurer.

Kidnapping: Unlawful taking of a person against his or her will

Embezzlement: Conversion of personal property by a person to whom the property was entrusted

Larceny: Taking and carrying away of personal property of another with the intention of depriving the owner permanently of the property

Larceny by False Pretence (aka 419): Obtaining personal property of another person with the intent of depriving them permanently by use of false pretence in misrepresenting a past or present fact

Computer Crime: Computer crime is defined as any illegal act that involves a computer system as the object of a crime, an instrument used to commit a crime, or a repository of evidence related to a crime. The terms "computer misuse" and "computer abuse" are also frequently used, but they have significantly different implications. Criminal law typically looks at the intent of the person who has committed the violation. The terms misuse and abuse are associated with annoying behaviour rather than criminal behaviour (Sam, 2016).

Computer Fraud: This is a situation where information technology (IT) equipment has been used to manipulate computer programs or data dishonestly (for example by altering or substituting records, destroying or suppressing records, duplicating or creating spurious records), or where the existence of an IT system was a material factor in the perpetration of fraud (i.e. where the fraud was unlikely to have occurred if there had been no IT system). Theft or fraudulent use of computer facilities, computer programs and the Internet is included in this definition. The suspicion that any of these acts have taken place should be regarded as potentially fraudulent (Sam, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

The Social Control Theory and Social Capital Theory were adopted for this paper. The Social Control Theory is primarily associated with the work of Travis Hirschi (1969), an American social scientist who proposed that people generally conform to social norms due to strong social bonds. Social Capital Theory was propounded by Field (2003). Both theories posit that individuals engage in delinquent acts when the bonds of strong social consciousness are broken or weak. For instance, in the case of Social Control Theory, the key components of social bonds are presented below:

Attachment: How strong or weak is an individual's relationship with others? Do these others expect certain kinds of behaviour (such as obeying the law) from this individual? The stronger the attachment and the stronger the expectations, the more likely it is that the individual will conform.

Commitment: The more an individual commit himself/herself to a particular lifestyle (for example, being married, being a parent and having a job), the more he/she has to lose if he/she becomes involved in crime (and so deviate from the lifestyle).

Involvement: This component relates to time – the more time the individual spends engaging in law-abiding behaviour, the less time he/she has to engage in law breaking behaviour.

Belief: This relates to upbringing. If an individual has been brought up to be law-abiding, they are less likely to become involved in crime.

The Social Capital Theory maintains that crime results from weak informal social controls and low capacity mobilize such formal external resources as law enforcement agencies (Field, 2003). In attempting to explain why some places have weak informal social controls and therefore prone to crime than others, researchers have applied this theory.

The theory has also been deployed to investigate and explain why collective action is more successful in some places than others. The theory has been viewed as consisting "features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitates action and cooperation for mutual benefit and results in high levels of interpersonal trust and interaction, and norms of aid and reciprocity, and high rates of civic participation" (Howdon, 2009). Two forms of social capital are identified. These are bridging and bonding forms of capital. Bridging capital accounts for civic interaction and engagement, whereas bonding form of capital explains relationship between those we have shared experiences and expectations with, a component of hope for future interactions, such as family members and relatives.

The ideas adumbrated here have explicit relevance to this study's discussion. Based on these two theories, societies that depict greater cohesion and shared expectations will tend to have lower rates of crime and disorder. Such strong networks of societies have the potential for deterring crime. This is attributed to the fact that where such cohesion exists members of such societies share a responsibility to intervene before behaviour gets out of hand, because such environments provide its young members "with a sense of status and self-esteem, which supports their integration in the society." Thus, societies that have strong social controls are thought to have lower levels of crime and insecurity; weak social capital is associated with high levels of social disorder. It is suggested that public institutions, such as the police, will encounter more support in

places where social capital is high, which provides the rationale for policy support for programmes that increase levels of bridging capital.

Methodology

This paper adopted an analytical approach, relying entirely on secondary sources to address the issues under investigation. It analyzed and discussed matters related to insecurity, crime management and conflict challenges in Nigeria. To achieve this, the study utilized secondary data sourced from journals, newspapers, magazines and textbooks. These sources were critically examined and systematically analyzed under relevant subheadings to provide a comprehensive perspective on the subject matter.

Dimensions of Insecurity in Nigeria

1. The Insecurity of Uneven Development, Marginalization and Inequalities

The present government of Nigeria has been accused of ethnic bias and marginalization of some sections of the country in the distribution of basic infrastructure and these have greatly compounded the security of Nigeria (Nwadiakor, 2011). Key political appointments in the democratic dispensation have always been tailored towards one ethnic extraction while others are left out in the cold. This perhaps explains the agitation for the Republic of Biafra and many security breaches that have accompanied the agitation. There must be conscious efforts to make way for the unborn innocent children. For instance, Nigeria changed her national anthem to the old anthem. In a similar spirit, it should also reverse the attitude of impunity in governance. Besides, it is quite glaring that there is great disparity in life chances in Nigeria. A vast majority of the public have a feeling of inequality, unfairness and marginalization, and this has led to frustration and loss of hope, especially amongst the youth. The youth now express their disillusionment about the state of affairs by any means possible, legal or illegal. The result is growing insecurity (Onuoha, 2011).

- **Insecurity of Economy –Poverty and Unemployment**

A poor economy with high poverty and unemployment rate appears to have been the bane of the Nigerian society (The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, cited in Ogah, Fanimu, Shadare, Ebosele, Okere, Adepotun, & Lawrence (2011). Every year, institutions of higher learning produce many graduates who are thrown into the labour market with no hope in sight for jobs. In an effort to keep body and soul together, and out of frustration, some of them go into violent and criminal acts, such as the “lucrative” kidnapping, militancy and armed robbery. Others have become prey to terrorists and are easily radicalized.

The case of Boko Haram, IPOB (indigenous People of Biafra) and Niger Delta militancy easily come to mind. Nwagbosa (2012) argues that past governments have failed to put in place measures that will reduce unemployment and poverty, which have

been the major causes of insecurity in Nigeria. To a large extent, the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, under the late President Umaru Yar'Adua and former President Goodluck Jonathan, enjoyed the introduction of amnesty in which unemployed and poverty-stricken youths who laid down their arms were sent to training centres for vocational and educational purposes. This brought amazing peace and tranquillity to that area.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines poverty as that income level below which a minimum nutritionally adequate diet together with essential non-food requirements is not affordable. Poverty is grouped by UNDP in three broad categories, as contained in the universally accepted definition: absolute, relative and material types. Absolute poverty means the inability to provide such physiological subsistence (i.e. foods, shelter, clothing, potable water, safety, health care service, basic education, transportation and gainful employment) to the extent of being unable to protect human dignity. People under this category receive meagre income and their capacity to make savings is zero. Relative poverty means inadequate income to enhance active participation in societal activities to the extent that it limits the actualization of one's potential. In this type of poverty, the minimum requirements of an individual are determined by caloric intake of square metres of shelter per person. Poverty here means inability of one to satisfy one's basic social needs. Material poverty is the deprivation of physical assets, such as cash crop trees, land, and animal husbandry (UNDP, 1994; Uzuegbunam, 2001).

Poverty is relatively of the mind. Therefore, a family considered very poor at Lekki Island in Lagos State may be considered to be a very wealthy family in New Haven, Enugu State of the same country. A man who cannot fend for his family due to lack of income-producing employment is suffering from derivative poverty caused by imbalance in the distribution of social benefits. Although unemployment and poverty are universal phenomena, it is not necessarily a peculiar characteristic of any particular segment of the society nor is it a property of developing countries. As Eitzen (1980) succinctly observes, the United States is envied by most people of the world because it is a blessed country, with great natural resources. It possesses the most advanced technology known. A very wealthy nation and a magnanimous donor to many developing countries, it has a very high standard of living; it is a world power of the first order. In spite of all these wonderful credentials, a significant portion of American citizens live in a condition of poverty. Millions of Americans are ill-fed, ill-clothed and ill-housed. These same millions are discriminated against in schools, in worship places, in courts, in the job market, and in the marketplace, which has the effect of trapping many of them in less than desirable conditions.

It is thus being contended that poverty is a product of the corporate society. Some people are poor because of societal failure to provide equality in education, prevalence

of institutional discrimination against minorities, failure of the private sector to provide sufficient job opportunities and technology rendering some jobs obsolete. Therefore, the victims of poverty are not to blame for their condition; rather, the inequities prevalent in society are responsible. The causes of poverty are inequality in money and in opportunities. Some opposing views emerged from radical scholars who contend that the poor are to blame for their plight because they are thought to be lazy. Poverty is perceived by these scholars as the result of people being lazy, stupid, wasteful, and immoral. While others are of the view that poverty is a generational curse that is being passed on from one generation to another.

- **Ethno-religious Conflicts' Perspectives of Insecurity**

Suspicion and mutual distrust among the various ethnic groups as well as the major religions in Nigeria have tended to be a source of security challenge. Two dominant religions exist in Nigeria –Islam and Christianity –and there have been frequent and persistent religious clashes between these dominant religions and the end seems not to be in sight. In all parts of the country, ethno-religious conflicts have assumed alarming rates, making a mockery of the security order.

The current and general state of insecurity in most parts of northern Nigeria today is tied to Boko Haram (Ezeoha, 2011). In fact, before the advent of this dreaded religious sect, there were many instances of security crisis due to the activities of religious fanatics in the North. The Maitatsine riot in Kano, Kaitungo crisis (2000), Kala-Kato violence in Bauchi State (Madala), burning of churches in Niger State in 2011 and series of arson and burning of churches in the North remains evergreen in the memories of Nigerians.

- **Insecurity of Porous Borders**

It has been observed that the porous borders in Nigeria, which facilitate unrestricted and untracked movements of people, have greatly contributed to insecurity in Nigeria. Apart from unrestricted movement of individuals into Nigeria, arms and ammunition, whether they be light, small or heavy weapons, have found their way into Nigeria, most times undetected, and have been used by religious fanatics, insurgents and militia to wreak havoc on Nigeria's social order, with little or no response from law enforcement agents. Edeko (2011) has reported that Nigeria hosts over 70% of about 8 million illegal weapons which have been used to create security crisis. Adeola and Olayemi (2012) assert that the porosity of the country's border has led to uncontrollable influx of migrants, mainly youths from neighbouring countries, particularly Niger, Chad and Republic of Benin, who have been mainly responsible for some of the criminal acts in Nigeria.

- **Fragile Security**

The statutory role of maintaining law and order in any society rests squarely on law enforcement agents. Unfortunately, it would appear, as Iyegbe (2012) has pointed out,

that the law enforcement agents seem unaware of security challenges and often act after the occurrence of security breaches. At other times, even when they hear of violence, criminal activities or a likely breach of security, they ignore such or are slow to act for the fear of death or harm befalling them. In the view of Temple (2013), the law enforcement agents are not well provided for, in terms of life insurance and accommodation; their monthly salary is poor, with no welfare packages. He advises the government to stop putting the lives of security personnel in danger by sending them to quell insurgency without the required equipment.

Achumba, Ighomereho and Robaro (2013) in their study revealed that, even when security personnel have the basic training and equipment, some of them get influenced by ethnic or religious sentiments and are thus easily swallowed by their personal interest to serve their people instead of the nation. Olonisakin (2008) asserts that the police-population ratio in Nigeria is 1:450, which falls below the United Nations' standard. This implies that Nigeria is grossly under-policed and this perhaps explains the inability of the police to effectively tackle crimes and security challenges. Consequently, rather than be national peace keepers saddled with the responsibility of protecting Nigerian citizens, they take sides and fuel crime/insecurity through either leaking vital security information or aiding and abetting criminals to acquire weapons or to escape the long arm of the law. This perhaps explains why some individuals have called for the posting of security personnel to their states of origin.

Oputa (1991) and Alemika and Chukwuma (2000) have argued that, the Nigeria Police has a very serious image problem in the eyes of the public it is established to serve. The Nigeria Police is viewed with suspicion, a pariah of some sort, perceived to be "unfriendly." "brutal." "trigger-happy." "extortionist." "crime collaborators." "gross violators of fundamental human rights" and so on. The rising crime rate, especially violent crimes involving kidnapping, armed robbery, ritual murders, political assassinations, ethnic and religious violence, election violence, has dampened the hope of the public on the capacity of the police to ensure the safety of people's lives and property. The general feeling is that the police can neither solve the crimes already committed, through arrests and successful prosecutions, nor prevent or, at least, reduce the incidence of crimes.

- **Fragile Judicial System**

Closely associated with weak security is the weak judicial system in Nigeria. According to the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, the judiciary is charged with the interpretation of the law and adjudication in civil and criminal cases. In doing this, it ensures that rules are not broken and social order is maintained. Fukuyama (2004) notes that:

The increasing impunity and dare devilry of sundry looting and embezzlement especially of public funds are enhanced by the weakness of the Nigeria legal system. Justice and the rule of law do

not just depend on the law but on the impartiality, astuteness and nobility of the judicial officers.

As noted by Tella (2015) and Obarisiagbon (2017), the Nigerian judicial system is weak and encourages criminality, as many of the offenders easily find their way home even after being arrested and prosecuted. Nigeria is in trouble if the judiciary personnel cannot prevent crimes due to the flaws inherent in the system that hinder the dispensation of justice.

2. The Pathology of Crime and Security Challenges in Nigeria

Nigeria is facing a huge crisis of criminality and security challenges because of her uncivilized, misplaced and misguided security methodologies. All societies of the world exist to give security to all human beings living therein. Nigeria does not operate in isolation of these common security practices. It is faced with numerous security challenges, such as food insecurity as well as finance, transport, health care, personal and national security issues. Apart from the above-listed social problems, Nigeria also witnessed series of political and tribal/ethnic crises, political assassinations and politically-induced kidnapping/abduction in different states of the federation, including diverse cases of armed robbery, human trafficking, environmental degradation and separatist agitations (which was initially the talk of the Niger Delta region), desertification challenge in some parts of northern Nigeria, erosion problems in south-eastern Nigeria.

The unending Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict which came into existence as a result of encroachment of farmlands by the Fulani herders; it has produced multiple occurrences in almost all the states of Nigeria. The clash has displaced many people from their farmlands, leading to loss of their major source of livelihood. Hence, the Fulani herdsmen crisis is becoming unbearable; they always have their way, leaving their victims (farmers) devastated. The thought-provoking question is; do we really have government? And if do, does the government interact to feel the pulse of its citizens? Or does it exist but does not know what the problems are and how to tackle them? It is not hidden that herdsmen have attributed the roots of this crisis to religious differences. The farmers see the herdsmen as a threat to their crops and agricultural produce since the herdsmen allow their cows to feed on the farmer's crops, resulting in the killing of their cows.

The deadliest security crisis in Nigeria is the one between herdsmen and crop farmers and has become one of the major insecurity problems Nigeria is facing without solution. It is second to Boko Haram (Okoro, 2018, cited in Adebayo et al., 2024). The herdsmen have sacked whole communities, abducted elderstatesmen, burnt churches, and killed church priests and other worshipers; police officers were killed, women raped, property looted and heinous crimes were perpetrated while the government has done

less to arrest the situation. This has constituted a serious threat to Nigeria's national security and national development.

Etannibi and Alemika (2015) note that farmer's displacement from the affected communities has drastically reduced agricultural production in Nigeria and increased food insecurity. This has been amply demonstrated by relative shortage of farm produce in the rural and urban markets of Nigeria. Dauda (2019) avers that the gains in the agricultural sector of the economy, especially in the area of food production, suffered a serious setback as a result of the negative effect of the activities on farmers in areas where Fulani herdsman crisis is prominent. For instance, in Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara States, estimates suggest that 50-75 percent of the land area is becoming desert (Adebayo et al., 2024). These environmental changes have wrecked agriculture and human livelihoods, forcing millions of pastoralist and others to migrate to the South, in search of productive land. Migration initially was seasonal, with herders spending December to May in the central zone before returning to the North. The unprecedented and sudden migration has further intensified security breaches, crime prevalence, anger and frustration.

Akinsowon (2021), quoted in Adebayo et al. (2024), identifies the following as factors that may constitute a comprehensive notion of security:

- Political security: Freedom from domination and other arbitrary government
- Economic and social security: Freedom from poverty and wants
- Cultural security: Freedom from ethnic and religious domination
- Environmental Security: Freedom from environmental destruction and resources security
- Food Security: Access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active healthy life

It seems these challenges have grown higher than what they were some years back. It also seems Nigeria cannot boast that she has provided her citizens with all the above forms of security. With the endangering challenges and the inability of the security apparatus of the government to guarantee safety and security in the country, everyone is left with different permutations.

Conclusion/Recommendations

A wide range of issues has been presented and discussed in the literature, highlighting the complex dimensions of security and crime challenges in Nigeria. These challenges have manifested in diverse forms, triggering conflicts that have inflicted immense pain, anguish and suffering on the populace. The consequences of these challenges have been catastrophic, leading to widespread plundering and carnage. This situation has plunged

the nation into a humanitarian crisis, characterized by erosion of human dignity and proliferation of governance marked by impunity, even at the local level.

Resolving the insecurity, crime and conflicts ravaging different parts of Nigeria requires far more than the deployment of security operatives, whose efforts have yielded limited meaningful results. Instead, a comprehensive and strategic approach is necessary. The following measures are critical to achieving this goal:

- There should be a deliberate inducement of good and quality education built constantly on motivating reward system, good governance to cover the population who are awfully tough, with anger and restive posture because of fear a bleak future.
- There is also the need for forceful inland and off-land (water ways) and frontier policing. This type of policing engagement must deal with and incorporate peculiar circumstances of diverse borderlines, forest lands and hinterlands. This requires a tactical synergy between the community police network (local vigilantes) and that of the state.
- There is the need for non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs) and other stakeholders to create public consciousness as well as call for a reasonable change process of reforming national moral soundness or rectitude.
- States and local government areas should take over the security of their domains to protect lives and property. This position supports the agitation for state policing at the National Assembly.

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**IMPLICATIONS OF BOKO-HARAM INSURGENCY ON NIGERIA'S NATIONAL
SECURITY 2011-2023**

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Introduction

Boko Haram is a militant Islamist group based in northeastern Nigeria, known for its violent insurgency against the Nigerian government and attacks on civilians. The group was founded in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf and gained international notoriety for its abduction of over 200 schoolgirls in Chibok in 2014. Boko Haram's ultimate goal is to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria governed by Sharia law. The group has been responsible for numerous bombings, assassinations and kidnappings, resulting in thousands of deaths and displacements. The challenges posed by Boko Haram to national security are multidimensional and multifarious. The group's activities have destabilized the region, leading to widespread fear, displacement of populations and economic hardship. Boko Haram's tactics include suicide bombings, raids on villages and attacks on military installations, posing a significant threat to the security and stability of Nigeria and neighbouring countries. The Nigerian government has been struggling to contain the insurgency, facing criticism for its handling of the crisis and allegations of human rights abuses in its counterinsurgency operations.

Boko Haram: Boko Haram is a militant Islamist group based in northeastern Nigeria. The name “Boko Haram” translates to “Western education is forbidden” in the Hausa language. The group was founded in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf and gained international notoriety for its violent attacks, including bombings, assassinations and kidnappings. (Aghedo & Osumah, 2015).

National Security: In the view of Offor (2021), national security refers captures national defence, political security, economic security, food security, social security, gender security, environmental security, educational security, health security, cyber security, labour security, transportation security, drug law security and youth security. While Akinyemi, et al. (2018) refers to national security as the protection of a nation’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and citizens from external threats. However, in agreement with Offor’s view, the authors agree that national security encompasses various aspects, such as military defence, intelligence gathering, cyber security, border control and emergency preparedness. National security is a critical concern for governments worldwide, as it ensures the safety and well-being of a country’s population and institutions.

Brief History of Boko Haram

Boko Haram is a militant Islamist group based in northeastern Nigeria. The group was founded in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf, and its original name was Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad, which translates to “People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad.” Boko Haram seeks to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria and opposes Western education, which it believes is sinful. Boko Haram’s insurgency escalated in 2009 when the Nigerian government launched a crackdown on the group, leading to a violent confrontation that resulted in the death of Mohammed Yusuf. Following Yusuf’s death, Abubakar Shekau emerged as the leader of Boko Haram and intensified the group’s attacks on security forces, government officials and civilians. Boko Haram’s tactics have included suicide bombings, raids on villages and abduction of women and children (Ibrahim & Uzodike 2016).

The group gained global notoriety in 2014 when it abducted more than 200 schoolgirls from Chibok in northeastern Nigeria. The incident sparked international outrage and led to the Bring Back Our Girls campaign. Despite military efforts to combat Boko Haram, the group has continued to carry out attacks in Nigeria and neighbouring countries, like Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

Boko Haram has also pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) terrorist organization, further complicating efforts to eradicate the group. The Nigerian government has faced challenges in addressing the root causes of Boko Haram’s insurgency, including poverty, corruption and marginalization of certain communities. In

recent years, there have been reports of factionalism within Boko Haram, with splinter groups like Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) emerging. These factions have continued to pose a security threat in the region, leading to instability and humanitarian crises. Boko Haram's activities have had devastating consequences for Nigeria and its neighbouring countries, causing widespread displacement, loss of life and economic disruption. Efforts to counter the group's influence remain a significant challenge for regional governments and international partners (Obi & Obi 2018).

Causes of Boko Haram Insurgency

Ibrahim and Uzodike (2016) note that Boko Haram has evolved into a violent extremist organization that has caused widespread devastation and instability in Nigeria and neighbouring countries. They identify the following factors as contributing to the rise of Boko Haram:

Lack of Education: The name "Boko Haram" roughly translates to "Western education is forbidden" in the Hausa language. The group's opposition to secular education reflects broader issues related to access to quality education in Nigeria. Lack of educational opportunities can leave young people vulnerable to radicalization.

Socio-economic Marginalization: One of the key drivers of the Boko Haram insurgency is the socio-economic marginalization of certain regions in northern Nigeria. Poverty, lack of access to education, high unemployment rates, and economic disparities has created fertile ground for recruitment by extremist groups like Boko Haram.

Political Corruption and Governance Issues: Widespread corruption, weak governance structures, and a history of political instability in Nigeria have fuelled grievances among marginalized communities. The failure of the government to address these issues effectively has eroded trust in state institutions and provided an opening for extremist groups to exploit. Rampant corruption within the Nigerian government has eroded trust in state institutions. The failure of the government to provide basic services and address social inequalities has further alienated large segments of the population.

Religious Extremism: Boko Haram's ideology is rooted in a radical interpretation of Islam that rejects Western education and values. The group seeks to establish an Islamic state governed by Sharia law and views Western influence as a threat to its vision. This extremist ideology has resonated with some disaffected individuals who feel alienated from the mainstream society.

Ethnic and Religious Tensions: Nigeria is a diverse country with over 250 ethnic groups and a significant Christian population alongside Muslims. Inter-communal tensions, exacerbated by historical grievances and competition for resources, have been exploited

by Boko Haram to sow discord and recruit followers. Boko Haram's ideology, which promotes a strict interpretation of Islam and seeks to establish an Islamic state, has exacerbated existing tensions between different religious communities.

External Influences: Boko Haram has established links with other terrorist organizations, such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Islamic State (IS). These connections have provided the group with funding, training and ideological support, enabling it to expand its operations beyond Nigeria's borders.

Historical Grievances: Boko Haram's origins can be traced back to historical grievances related to colonialism, imposition of Western values and perceived injustices against Muslim communities in northern Nigeria. These grievances have been exploited by extremist groups to mobilize support for their cause.

Sources of Boko Haram

Ibrahim and Uzodike (2016) opine that the sources of Boko Haram are traceable to a combination of historical, political, social and economic factors that have fuelled its rise and sustained its activities. However, one of the primary sources of Boko Haram's emergence is rooted in the historical context of Nigeria. The country has a complex history of colonialism, ethnic diversity, religious tensions and political instability, which have created fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take hold. Additionally, the marginalization of certain ethnic and religious groups, particularly in the northern regions of Nigeria where Boko Haram is based, has contributed to feelings of disenfranchisement and alienation among segments of the population.

Politicians: Corruption and governance failures in Nigerian politics have also played a significant role in the rise of Boko Haram. Widespread corruption within the government has eroded public trust in state institutions and the politician seize that as an opportunity to support and champion extremist groups to exploit grievances and recruit disaffected individuals. The politicians who patronize this group for their political gain capitalized on perceptions of government neglect and injustice to garner support and sympathy from marginalized communities, hence the outbreak of insurgent groups called Boko Haram.

Social Factors: Politicians exploit existing fault lines within the Nigerian society, including tensions between Muslims and Christians, as well as between different ethnic groups to galvanize and recruit this group called Boko Haram and sustain them. These politicians often speak in a manner that frames the insurgency as a struggle against Western influence and promoting a radical interpretation of Islam. Politician have sought to polarize Boko Haram amongst communities and incite violence along religious lines. They assist the group to carry out their propaganda through their connections and social media

platforms to enable them to spread its message widely and attract followers both within Nigeria and beyond.

Economic factors: Obi and Obi (2018) assert that poverty, unemployment, and lack of opportunities in northeastern Nigeria are a source for Boko Haram's appeal among vulnerable populations. The group has been helped by powerful politicians or government officials, through financial incentives, to recruit members, including promises of economic empowerment and social mobility through participation in its activities. This has offered an alternative source of income and social support. Boko Haram has been able to recruit fighters and supporters from impoverished communities.

Nature of Boko Haram Attacks

Agbiboa and Hansen (2017) discuss the nature of the Boko Haram violent attacks, including bombings, kidnappings and massacres. The group's activities have targeted government institutions, security forces, schools, churches, mosques and civilian populations. Boko Haram was responsible for the abduction of hundreds of schoolgirls in Chibok in 2014, drawing global condemnation.

Bombing: Boko Haram's tactics include suicide bombings, kidnappings, and attacks on schools, churches, mosques and other public places. The group has targeted both security forces and civilians, resulting in thousands of deaths and injuries.

Kidnapping: Boko Haram has been responsible for the abduction of hundreds of schoolgirls, most notably the 2014 kidnapping of over 200 girls from a school in Chibok.

Attacks on Villages: The group's activities, including attacks on villages, bombings and kidnappings, have disrupted agricultural activities and food production in the affected areas. This disruption has led to food shortages, increased food prices, and limited access to nutritious food for many people in the region. Under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau, who assumed control in 2010, Boko Haram intensified its operations and demonstrated increased capabilities in carrying out attacks using improvised explosive devices (IEDs), vehicle-borne IEDs (VBIEDs) and suicide bombings. The group expanded its targets to include a wide range of entities, including Western interests, security forces, civilians and religious groups perceived as collaborators. Boko Haram's violence escalated over the years, leading to international condemnation and prompting a regional counterterrorism offensive against the group.

Massacre: Boko Haram, officially known as "Jama'atu Ahl as-Sunnah li-Da'awati wal-Jihad" (JASDJ), is a terrorist group based in Nigeria. The group aims to overthrow the Nigerian government and establish an Islamic regime governed by Sharia law. Referred to as the "Nigerian Taliban," Boko Haram gained notoriety for its opposition to Western education, with its name translating to "Western education is forbidden." The group has

been active since the late 1990s and experienced a significant leadership change in 2009 following clashes with Nigerian government forces that resulted in the death of its former leader, Muhammad Yusuf.

Effects of Boko Haram Crisis on the People

Ajala (2016) claims that Boko Haram has had a significant impact on the economy of the region. The group's activities have created a climate of fear and instability that has had far-reaching economic consequences.

Social Effects of Boko Haram

Humanitarian Crisis: The activities of Boko Haram have had a significant negative impacts on the people, leading to widespread displacement of civilians, which could be better described as humanitarian crisis in the region. The group's attacks have resulted in the displacement of millions of people, leading to overcrowded refugee camps and a strain on resources, loss of lives, and disruption of economic activities.

Breakdown in Social Services: One of the major forms of violence perpetrated by the Boko Haram against humanitarian aid organizations is the breakdown in social services, such as healthcare and education, further exacerbating the suffering of the local population as well as worsening of their health condition, as many health workers, like nurses and doctors, refuse their posting to this trouble zone for safety reasons.

Closure of Many Educational Institutions: The education sector has also suffered as a result of Boko Haram's insurgency. Schools have been targeted by the group, leading to the closure of many educational institutions and the displacement of students and teachers. This disruption not only deprives young people of their right to education but also hampers the development of human capital, which is essential for economic growth.

Inter-communal Tensions: Boko Haram's actions have fuelled inter-communal tensions in Nigeria, particularly between Muslims and Christians. The group's targeting of religious institutions and communities has deepened existing divisions and created a climate of fear and mistrust among different religious groups in the country.

Economic Effect of Boko Haram Insurgency

Boko Haram's activities have had a negative impact on the economy of Nigeria. The insecurity caused by the group has deterred investment and hindered economic development in the region. Businesses have been forced to close down or relocate due to the constant threat of violence, leading to job losses and economic hardship for the local population (Ibrahim & Abdulazeez 2019).

Disruption of Agricultural Activities: One of the direct effects of Boko Haram on the economy is the disruption of agricultural activities in the region. Farmers have been forced to abandon their fields due to insecurity, leading to food shortages and higher prices of basic commodities. This has had a ripple effect on other sectors of the economy, as businesses struggle to cope with increased costs and reduced consumer purchasing power.

Dislocation of Tourism Industry: The tourism industry in northeastern Nigeria has also been severely impacted by Boko Haram's activities. The region, which was once known for its natural beauty and cultural heritage sites, has become a no-go area for tourists due to the risk of violence and kidnapping. This has led to job losses and decreased revenue for hotels, restaurants and other businesses that depend on tourism.

Displacement of Farmers: One of the major impacts of the Boko Haram crisis on national food security is the displacement of farmers from their land. Many farmers in the northeastern region of Nigeria have been forced to flee their homes due to Boko Haram attacks, leaving their farms unattended. This has resulted in decreased agricultural production and reduced food availability in the region. Additionally, the insecurity caused by Boko Haram has made it difficult for farmers to access their land and engage in agricultural activities, further exacerbating food insecurity.

Disrupted Food Distribution: The Boko Haram crisis has also disrupted food distribution networks in Nigeria. The conflict has made it challenging for food producers to transport their goods to markets, leading to limited food availability and higher prices for consumers. In addition, humanitarian organizations providing food assistance to those affected by the crisis have faced challenges delivering aid due to security concerns and logistical difficulties.

Malnutrition: The Boko Haram crisis has had a negative impact on nutrition outcomes in Nigeria. Limited access to nutritious foods due to disrupted agricultural activities and food distribution networks has contributed to high levels of malnutrition among children and adults in the affected areas. Malnutrition can have long-term consequences on health and development, further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict.

Hardship Economic: The ongoing conflict with Boko Haram has had a negative impact on Nigeria's economy, particularly in the northeastern region, where the group is most active. The insecurity has disrupted agricultural activities, trade routes and investment, leading to economic hardship for many people in the region.

Boko Haram Crisis and National Security

The activities of Boko Haram pose significant challenges to national security in Nigeria and neighbouring countries. The group's relentless attacks on civilians, security personnel,

government institutions, schools and religious sites have destabilized the region and created a humanitarian crisis. Boko Haram's ability to carry out coordinated assaults, including large-scale kidnappings, like the infamous abduction of schoolgirls in 2014, has underscored the threat it poses to both local populations and international interests (Obioma 2017).

Threat to Civilian Population: Boko Haram's attacks have resulted in the deaths of thousands of civilians, as well as the displacement of millions of people from their homes. This has created a humanitarian crisis and has strained resources for both the government and humanitarian organizations.

Destabilization of Region: The activities of Boko Haram have not been limited to Nigeria but have also spread to neighbouring countries, such as Cameroon, Chad and Niger. This has led to cross-border insecurity and has strained relations between these countries.

Undermining Government Authority: The inability of the Nigerian government to effectively combat Boko Haram has undermined its authority and legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens. This has eroded trust in the government's ability to provide security and basic services.

Global Security Concerns: The rise of Boko Haram has raised concerns about global security, particularly due to the group's links with other terrorist organizations, such as ISIS. There are fears that Boko Haram could become a breeding ground for extremism that could spread beyond Africa.

Breakdown of Social Cohesion and Trust: The Boko Haram insurgency has posed a serious threat to national security in Nigeria. The violence perpetrated by the group has created a climate of fear and insecurity among the population, leading to a breakdown of social cohesion and trust. The attacks have targeted schools, churches, mosques, markets and government institutions, disrupting normal life and economic activities. The displacement of populations has strained resources and services, exacerbating poverty and vulnerability among affected communities.

Military Operations: The Nigerian government has been engaged in efforts to combat the Boko Haram insurgency and restore national security. Military operations have been conducted to weaken the group's capabilities and push it out of its strongholds. However, the conflict has persisted over the years, with periodic escalations in violence and reprisal attacks by both sides.

Challenges of Security Agencies Regarding Boko Haram Activities

The activities of Boko Haram pose significant challenges to national security in Nigeria and the broader region. The group's tactics, which include suicide bombings, kidnappings and

raids on villages, have created a climate of fear and insecurity. Boko Haram's ability to recruit fighters and carry out coordinated attacks has strained the capacity of Nigerian security forces and undermined public trust in the government's ability to protect its citizens (Ajala, 2016).

Transnationalism: The transnational nature of Boko Haram's operations further complicates efforts to combat the group effectively. Its ability to conduct cross-border attacks into Cameroon, Chad, Niger and other neighbouring countries has strained regional security cooperation and necessitated coordinated responses to address the threat comprehensively.

Affiliation with Global Terrorist Networks: Boko Haram's affiliation with global terrorist networks, such as al-Qaeda and ISIS, has raised concerns about the possibility of further radicalization and international terrorism emanating from the region. This has made difficult the operational activities of the military and other strategic measure by the security operatives to achieve their counter-terrorism mechanism on them.

Cross-border Activities: Boko Haram represents a formidable challenge to national security in Nigeria and beyond due to its extremist ideology, operational capabilities and cross-border activities. This systematic capacity of the group has been a serious threat, engendering sustained efforts of the military operatives at multiple levels, local, regional and international, to counter violence and extremism, enhance border security, promote community resilience and address underlying socio-economic grievances that fuel recruitment into terrorist organizations.

Fostered Radicalization and Extremism: The Boko Haram insurgency has had far-reaching implications for national security in Nigeria and neighbouring countries. The conflict has strained resources, displaced populations, disrupted economic activities and heightened tensions among different ethnic and religious groups. In addition to the direct impact on human lives and infrastructure, the insurgency has also fostered radicalization and extremism in the region.

Government and International Responses to the Boko Haram Insurgence

As noted by Aghedo and Osumah (2015), in response to Boko Haram's violence, the Nigerian government and international community have taken various actions to counteract its influence and restore stability to Borno State and other affected regions.

Military Operations: The Nigerian military, alongside regional forces, such as the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), has conducted numerous operations against Boko Haram strongholds within Borno State and neighbouring countries, like Cameroon, Chad and Niger. In August 2016, Nigeria declared that it had "technically defeated" Boko

Haram; however, sporadic attacks continue to occur even today. These key initiatives undertaken by the Nigerian government to conduct counterinsurgency operations aimed at neutralizing Boko Haram fighters and dismantling their networks have resulted in the capturing of key Boko Haram leaders and the liberation of territories previously held by the group. While progress has been made in degrading Boko Haram's capabilities and reducing its influence, challenges remain in achieving lasting peace and stability in affected regions.

Diplomatic Efforts: In addition to military action, the Nigerian government has also pursued diplomatic efforts to address the Boko Haram crisis. The government has engaged with neighbouring countries and international partners to coordinate regional responses to the threat posed by Boko Haram. This involves sharing intelligence, conducting joint military operations and implementing measures to prevent the cross-border movement of militants.

Prioritized Socioeconomic Development: Furthermore, the Nigerian government has prioritized socioeconomic development as a means of addressing the root causes of extremism and insecurity in the country. Initiatives aimed at promoting education, job creation and poverty alleviation have been implemented in regions affected by Boko Haram violence. By addressing underlying grievances and improving livelihoods, these programmes seek to reduce support for extremist ideologies and enhance community resilience against radicalization.

Humanitarian Assistance: Various organizations, like the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNICEF, World Food Programme (WFP) and other non-governmental organizations, have provided support to internally displaced persons and host communities by delivering food assistance, water sanitation facilities, shelter materials, healthcare services and educational resources. However, accessing hard-to-reach areas remains a challenge due to ongoing security concerns and limited resources available for these operations.

Reconstruction Efforts: To address the damage caused by Boko Haram's violence on infrastructure and livelihoods in Borno State, various organizations have launched reconstruction efforts aimed at rebuilding communities affected by conflict while creating opportunities for sustainable development that fosters social cohesion among different ethnic groups present in this region of Nigeria. For example, The European Union has provided €45 million (\$53 million) through its Nigerian Urban Rural Development Fund project aimed at reconstructing schools, hospitals, markets, water infrastructure, roads, etc. Also, the World Bank is implementing a \$500 million five-year stabilization programme called "Restoring Peace, Stability, and Economic Growth through

Accountability, Transparency, and Effective Governance” targeting areas most affected by conflict, such as Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Yobe and Borno States.

Conclusion

Addressing the Boko Haram insurgency requires a manifold approach that combines military action with efforts to address underlying grievances, promote social cohesion, strengthen governance structures and enhance regional cooperation. International support and collaboration are crucial in addressing the complex security challenges posed by Boko Haram and preventing further destabilization in West Africa. The Boko Haram crisis has had a significant impact on national security in Nigeria and the surrounding region. The group's violent activities, including bombings, kidnappings and attacks on civilians and security forces, have caused widespread instability and insecurity in the region. The impact of the Boko Haram crisis on national security can be seen in several key areas.

Overall, the Boko Haram crisis has had far-reaching implications for national security in Nigeria and the broader region, affecting civilian populations, destabilizing governments, undermining economic development and posing a threat to global security. Boko Haram's activities have had a devastating impact on the economy of northeastern Nigeria, affecting agriculture, tourism, education and investment. Addressing the root causes of the insurgency and restoring peace and stability to the region are essential steps towards rebuilding the economy and improving the livelihoods of its inhabitants.

In conclusion, the Boko Haram crisis has had a detrimental impact on national food security in Nigeria. The displacement of farmers, disruption of food distribution networks and negative effects on nutrition outcomes have all contributed to increased food insecurity in the country. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts from government agencies, humanitarian organizations and other stakeholders to ensure that all Nigerians have access to an adequate and nutritious diet despite the ongoing conflict.

Recommendations

In addressing the Boko Haram menace, the Nigerian government must make efforts to address socioeconomic and development issues, radicalization initiatives of the Boko Haram through community engagement and dialogue. The government should also enhance governance, promote inclusive development, address all regional grievances, and improve educational system and employment opportunities for youths. It should also strengthen community resilience.

The Boko Haram crisis underscores the difficult challenges facing Nigeria in ensuring national security. Addressing the manifold dimensions of insecurity requires a comprehensive approach that combines security measures with long-term strategies for

peace-building, reconciliation, development and social cohesion. This is achievable if the government and its critical stakeholders as well as the military trace the insurgency from its historical dimension. This will address the root causes of extremism, such as poverty, marginalization and lack of educational opportunities. International cooperation is also crucial in combating the transnational threat posed by the group and preventing its spread to other regions.

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LETHAL VIOLENCE IN RIVERS STATE: SOURCES, TRENDS AND STRATEGIC INSIGHTS FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION

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Abstract

Rivers State, situated in Nigeria's Niger Delta region, is a critical economic area due to its vast oil resources. However, this wealth has been overshadowed by persistent and evolving patterns of lethal violence that threaten the region's stability and development. The conflict in Rivers State is deeply rooted in historical grievances, environmental degradation and socio-economic inequalities, which have been exacerbated by the discovery and exploitation of oil. Over the years, these issues have given rise to various forms of violence, including militant insurgencies, cult clashes and politically-motivated killings. This study analyses the sources and patterns of lethal violence in Rivers State. The methodology in this paper is qualitative, with secondary sources relevant to the discourse, including data from case studies/scenarios, Niger Delta Conflict Trackers and Nigeria Watch database. The paper examines these questions: **What are the primary socio-political and economic factors contributing to the occurrence of lethal violence in Rivers State? What are the patterns or trends of lethal violence in Rivers State? How do different forms of lethal violence (e.g. militancy, cult clashes and political violence) intersect, and what are the commonalities and differences in their underlying causes? What strategies have been implemented to prevent and mitigate lethal violence in Rivers State, and what are the lessons that can be learned from their success or failure?** The paper argues that addressing the root causes of conflicts will reduce the escalation of violence. Therefore, there is the need for collaborative efforts of government and families to address the threat to peaceful coexistence in the state through reorientation of people and promotion of the culture of non-violence. When families encourage their members to adopt conflict-sensitive communication, issues that lead to conflict will be addressed easily. The youth, who are the leaders of tomorrow, have a lot to benefit from peacefully presenting their concerns and grievances rather than engaging on violence, which would affect their growth and development.

Keywords: Lethal violence, Youth restiveness, Rivers State, Fair play, Government, Family institution

Introduction

Lethal violence is one of the threats to sustainable livelihoods across the world. It causes tensions and makes it difficult for people to exercise their human rights in affected locations. Across the world, governments and families are social control institutions, having the capacity to regulate the activities of citizens. Rivers State, located in the oil-rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria, has long been a focal point of economic activities and violent conflict. The discovery of oil in the region in 1956 transformed Rivers State into a critical economic hub for Nigeria, contributing significantly to the nation's revenue. However, this economic boom has been accompanied by profound socio-political challenges, leading to a persistent cycle of violence and instability.

It is the responsibility of governments and the people of a state to solve problems associated with the human society for the welfare of all. The roots of violence in Rivers State can be traced to a combination of historical grievances, environmental degradation and socio-economic inequalities (Nwobueze, 2015; Nwobueze & Okolie-Osemene, 2018). Because these root causes were not attended to at the right time by stakeholders, the problem escalated, with little effort to prevent the activities of troublemakers.

Rivers State has recorded different trends of violence in the past two decades, making it one of the states in Nigeria that witnessed disturbances occasioned by social, political and economic conflicts involving many groups that have conflict of interest. Many of the conflicts that escalated to violence originated from the latent phase, with remarkable sources and patterns that can be attributed to the failure of stakeholders to respond at the right time. The sources of lethal violence have centred on urban and rural youth violence, such as cult-related clashes, youth restiveness and piracy, confrontation with security agencies, communal crisis, struggle over resources, political violence, and confrontation between youths and oil companies. Also, the patterns of the violence are characterized by day and night attacks with the aid of firearms, vehicles and motorcycles. The exploitation of oil resources has led to severe environmental pollution, which has devastated local livelihoods, particularly those dependent on agriculture and fishing. This environmental degradation, coupled with the perceived inequitable distribution of oil wealth, has fuelled resentment among local communities. These grievances have manifested in various forms of resistance, ranging from peaceful protests to insurgencies.

The rise of militant groups in the early 2000s, such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), marked a significant escalation in the level of violence in Rivers State. These groups initially framed their activities as a struggle for resource control and environmental justice. However, over time, the conflict dynamics became increasingly complex, with proliferation of armed factions, involvement of criminal networks, and entrenchment of a culture of violence in the region.

Despite numerous government interventions, including military operations and amnesty programmes, in Rivers State, lethal violence has persisted, albeit in different forms. Recent years have seen a shift from large-scale militant activities to more fragmented and localized forms of violence, including cult clashes, political thuggery and kidnapping for ransom. These evolving patterns of violence have had devastating impacts on the social fabric, economic development and governance structures in Rivers State.

Given this backdrop, there is a critical need to map the dynamics of lethal violence in Rivers State to better understand its origins, trends and underlying drivers. Such an analysis is essential for developing effective strategies for conflict prevention and promoting long-term stability in the region. This paper fills this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the sources and patterns of lethal violence in Rivers State. By identifying key trends and offering strategic insights, the study contributes to the broader goal of conflict prevention and sustainable development in the Niger Delta.

In view of the patterns of violence and the detrimental impact of violence on the region's development, this study is both timely and crucial. It aligns with national and international efforts to address the root causes of conflict and to foster stability in resource-rich but conflict-prone regions. The outcomes of this research are expected to engender design of more effective intervention strategies that are sensitive to the local context and capable of delivering long-term peace and security in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Rivers State has experienced significant levels of lethal violence in the past three decades. The persistent occurrence of violent conflicts in the state, driven by a complex interplay of political, economic and social factors, poses a serious threat to the stability and development of the region. Despite numerous interventions aimed at curbing violence, the patterns of conflict continue to evolve, leading to devastating impacts on communities, local economies and governance structures. This study addresses the critical gap in understanding the origins and dynamics of lethal violence in Rivers State. By mapping the sources and trends of violence, the research aims to uncover the underlying drivers and patterns that sustain conflict in the region. Furthermore, the study will provide strategic insights into and recommendations for conflict prevention, thus contributing to the broader goal of achieving lasting peace and stability in Rivers State.

The lack of comprehensive and data-driven analysis on this issue has limited the effectiveness of past interventions. Therefore, this research is essential for guiding policy decisions and designing targeted strategies to mitigate violence and promote sustainable development in the region.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

- (a) What are the primary socio-political and economic factors contributing to the occurrence of lethal violence in Rivers State?
- (b) What are the patterns or trends of lethal violence in Rivers State?
- (c) How do different forms of lethal violence (e.g. militancy, cult clashes and political violence) intersect, and what are the commonalities and differences in their underlying causes?
- (d) What strategies have been adopted to prevent and mitigate lethal violence in Rivers State, and what are the lessons that can be learned from their success or failure?

Methodology

Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis: In-depth case studies of specific violent incidents or conflicts were utilised. The contexts, key actors, triggers and outcomes of the events were analysed to provide detailed insights into the dynamics of lethal violence in the state.

Secondary Data Analysis: The study analyzed existing data from reliable sources, including local non-governmental organisations. Thematic and content analyses were applied to the secondary data, such as media reports and government documents, to identify recurring narratives and factors contributing to violence.

Potential Beneficiaries of the Study

1. Policymakers and Government Agencies

- **Federal and State Governments:** Insights from the study can guide the development of policies and programmes aimed at reducing violence and promoting sustainable development in Rivers State.
- **Security Agencies:** The study's findings on the patterns and trends of violence can assist the police, the military and other security agencies in formulating more effective strategies for crime prevention and conflict management.

2. Civil Society Organizations

1. **Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs):** Non-governmental Organizations working on conflict resolution, human rights and community development can use insights from the study to design more targeted interventions and advocacy programmes.
2. **Community-based Organizations (CBOs):** Local organizations can benefit from understanding the drivers of violence in their communities. This will enable them to engage more effectively in peacebuilding and conflict-prevention efforts.

3. **International Development Partners**

- **Donor Agencies:** International organizations and donors involved in peacebuilding, development and humanitarian assistance in the Niger Delta can use the study's findings to align their funding priorities and programme interventions with the realities on the ground.
- **United Nations and Other Multilateral Bodies:** Entities focused on conflict prevention, human rights and sustainable development can leverage the research to plan their initiatives and partnerships in the region.

4. **Academic and Research Institutions**

- **Universities and Research Institutes:** Scholars and students studying conflict, development and governance can use the research as a basis for further academic exploration and analysis.
- **Think Tanks:** Research and policy institutes focused on security and development in Nigeria can utilize the study's findings to influence public debate and policy discussions.

5. **The Private Sector**

- **Oil and Gas Companies:** Corporations operating in Rivers State can use the study to better understand the security environment, mitigate risks and engage more effectively with local communities.
- **Businesses and Investors:** Understanding the dynamics of violence can help businesses assess the risks associated with operating in the region and contribute to corporate social responsibility efforts aimed at promoting peace and stability.

6. **Local Communities**

- **Residents of Rivers State:** The ultimate beneficiaries of the research are the people living in Rivers State, who would gain from reduced violence, improved security and more inclusive development initiatives driven by the study's findings.

7. **Media Organizations**

- **Journalists and Media Outlets:** The study can provide valuable information for media professionals reporting on conflict and development in Rivers State, helping them to guide the public and shape the narrative around violence in the region.

Literature Review

Violence is one of the main threats to sustainable livelihoods across the world (Nwobueze, 2015; Okoli-osemene, 2015). Political crisis is a major cause of violence, and the failure of leaders to address critical issues peacefully leads to their escalation to crisis situations (Orji & Okolie-Osemene, 2024). The major features of violence are harm, injury and

destruction of lives and property in affected neighbourhoods. For instance, wherever violence occurs, peace will elude all the people and the environment cannot be stable until normalcy is restored.

Lethal violence in the Niger Delta region, particularly in Rivers State, has been a focal point of scholarly research owing to its devastating impact on socio-economic development and regional stability. The literature on this subject spans various dimensions, including the historical roots of violence, the socio-political and economic factors that perpetuate conflict and the effectiveness of interventions aimed at reducing violence. This review synthesizes key contributions to understanding the dynamics of lethal violence in Rivers State, with a focus on sources, trends and implications of lethal violence for conflict prevention.

The origins of violence in Rivers State are deeply embedded in the region's history of resource exploitation, colonial legacies and post-colonial political struggles. Watts (2008) argues that the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta in the 1950s intensified the existing grievances among the local communities, which perceived themselves as marginalized in the distribution of oil wealth. This marginalization, coupled with environmental degradation, laid the groundwork for militant resistance and escalation of violence.

The existence of foot soldiers causing the conflicts that lead to violence in the region is well documented. Rivers State is the centre of what is seen as existence of "conflict foot soldiers" (PIND, 2023) or entrepreneurs of violence. This contributed to incidences of violence that affected peaceful living across the state during and after elections. Anarchy in some communities, especially those that share common boundaries with other states, creates opportunity for the activities of non-state actors that compete for spaces and struggle for territory (Idler, 2019).

Socio-political and Economic Drivers of Conflict

The literature highlights the role of socio-political and economic factors in sustaining violence in Rivers State. Ikelegbe (2005) discusses how the competition for political power and control of resources has led to the proliferation of armed groups and the militarization of local politics. Furthermore, Okonta and Douglas (2003) emphasize the link between economic disenfranchisement and the rise of youth militancy, noting that widespread unemployment and poverty have fuelled the recruitment of young people into violent groups.

Patterns and Trends of Violence

Recent studies focused on identifying patterns and trends of lethal violence to better understand its dynamics and predict future conflicts (Okolie-Osemene, 2015; Nwobueze & Okolie-Osemene, 2018). A discussion of the patterns of violence in the state cannot

ignore the activities of oil companies and the youth who often clashed with the oil companies, relying on the support and intervention of security agencies in matters that require negotiation and constructive resolution. Such action isolated the people they were supposed to cooperate with and made it difficult for them to agree.

Asuni (2009) provides a comprehensive analysis of the patterns of violence in the Niger Delta, noting a shift from organized militant activities to more fragmented and localized forms of violence. With the fragmentation and localization of violence in rural and urban communities, no week passed without any incidence of violence in Niger Delta communities. Similarly, Obi (2010) explores the evolving nature of conflict, highlighting the increasing involvement of criminal networks in violence, which complicates the efforts meant to achieve lasting peace. The actions that continue to frustrate peace efforts include the double standard of the elite, conspiracy of silence, youth involvement criminal victimization and their refusal to totally renounce violence, especially the use of arms.

Conflict Prevention and Strategic Insights

Preventing conflict is highly demanding and requires timely intervention. This is because it is better and easier to prevent conflict. Different stakeholders have made significant efforts to contain violence across Rivers State. These are members of communities, leaders, youth, women and government at all levels. Efforts to prevent and mitigate violence in Rivers State have been met with mixed success. The amnesty programme initiated by the Nigerian government, which aimed to disarm militants and integrate them into society, is also noteworthy (Aghedo & Osumah 2012; Okolie-Osemene, 2018). While the programme achieved short-term success, its long-term impact remains questionable owing to inadequate follow-up measures and the persistence of underlying socio-economic issues. Consequently, scholars advocate a more holistic approach to conflict prevention, which includes dealing with the root causes, such as inequality, corruption and poor governance. These root causes are the main factors responsible for the difficulty in achieving the goals of peacebuilding (Omotola, 2010).

Impact of Violence on Different Groups in the State

Many families have lost their loved ones because of lethal violence, which does not respect anyone. Because of the insecurity associated with violence, it is difficult for people to guarantee their safety. For instance, Rivers State was a flashpoint of violence during general elections in Nigeria in 2015-2023 because of confrontation and struggle for domination by political parties and their supporters.

Consequently, law enforcement agencies found it challenging to manage security threats and maintain law and order. The government was also disturbed by the spate of insecurity. Communities were also affected by the activities of outlaws and confrontation

with security agencies. The development created fear and discouraged freedom of movement in volatile areas, especially in the creeks, where militancy attracted the presence of heavily armed soldiers to restore order. Travellers and tourists have also been affected by the insecurity occasioned by violence.

Primary Socio-political and Economic Factors Contributing to the Occurrence of Lethal Violence in Rivers State

The occurrence of lethal violence in Rivers State is influenced by a complex interplay of socio-political and economic factors. The primary contributors include the following:

1. Resource Control and Oil Wealth

- **Oil Revenue and Wealth Distribution:** Rivers State is rich in oil, which has been both a blessing and a curse. The struggle over control of oil resources, revenue allocation, and the benefits of oil wealth has fuelled tensions between communities, the political elite and militant groups. Disputes over who benefits from the oil wealth often lead to violent conflicts.
- **Environmental Degradation:** The environmental impact of oil extraction, including oil spills and gas flaring, has devastated local communities, leading to loss of livelihoods, particularly in fishing and farming. This has exacerbated poverty and resentment, and contributed to violent protests and clashes.

2. Political Rivalries and Election Violence

- **Electoral Violence:** Rivers State has a history of intense political rivalries, often leading to violent clashes, particularly during elections. Politicians and their supporters sometimes resort to violence to intimidate opponents, manipulate election outcomes, or maintain power. The use of armed thugs and militias in these conflicts is common.
- **Cultism and Militant Groups:** Various cult groups and militias are often recruited by politicians for political purposes. These groups frequently engage in violence to assert control over territories, intimidate rivals, or enforce political agendas.

3. Socio-economic Inequality and Poverty

- **High Unemployment Rates:** Despite the state's oil wealth, many residents of Rivers State live in poverty, with high unemployment rates, particularly among the youth. The lack of economic opportunities drives many young people to join militant groups and cults, or engage in criminal activities as a means of survival.
- **Inequitable Development:** Development in Rivers State is often uneven, with some communities benefiting from government and oil company investments, while others are neglected. This inequity breeds resentment and contributes to conflicts over resources and access to development.

4. **Ethnic Tensions and Identity Politics**

- **Ethnic Rivalries:** Rivers State is ethnically diverse, with various groups, such as the Ijaw, Ikwerre and Ogoni. Competition for political power, control of resources, and cultural dominance among these groups often results in violent clashes. Ethnic identity is frequently politicized, which exacerbates tensions.
- **Land Disputes:** Conflicts over land ownership and use are common in Rivers State, particularly in areas where land is seen as valuable due to its proximity to oil fields or urban centres. These disputes can take on ethnic dimensions, leading to lethal violence.

5. **Weak Governance and Corruption**

- **Corruption:** Corruption at various levels of government has undermined effective management of resources and provision of public services. The mismanagement of oil revenues and the failure to address the needs of the population have fuelled anger and frustration, often leading to violence.
- **Inadequate Law Enforcement:** The state's security apparatus is often seen as ineffective or compromised by corruption. The inability of law enforcement to prevent or respond to violence, coupled with a lack of accountability for perpetrators, allows lethal violence to persist with impunity.

6. **Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons**

- **Arms Availability:** The widespread availability of small arms and light weapons has escalated the lethality of conflicts in Rivers State. Militants, cultists and criminal gangs have easy access to firearms, which they use in violent confrontations, leading to high casualty rates.

7. **Social Discontent and Marginalization**

- **Perceived Marginalization:** Many communities in Rivers State feel marginalized by the federal and state governments. This perception of exclusion from the benefits of the state's resources, coupled with a lack of political representation, has led to social discontent, protests and, at times, violent uprisings.

8. **Criminal Activities and Illegal Bunkering**

- **Illegal Oil Bunkering:** The theft and illegal refining of crude oil, known as illegal bunkering, is a significant criminal activity in Rivers State. The competition among various groups involved in this illicit trade often leads to violent confrontations.
- **Kidnapping and Armed Robbery:** Criminal activities, such as kidnapping for ransom and armed robbery, are rampant in Rivers State. They contribute to the overall environment of insecurity and violence.

These socio-political and economic factors interact in ways that create a volatile environment where lethal violence is frequent. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that includes governance reforms, economic development, conflict resolution and community engagement.

Patterns and Trends of Lethal Violence

The patterns and trends of lethal violence in Rivers State reflect a complex and evolving landscape influenced by socio-political, economic and cultural factors. The key patterns and trends observed in the region are discussed below.

1. Geographic Concentration of Violence

- **Hotspots of Violence:** Lethal violence in Rivers State is often concentrated in specific areas, particularly in urban centres, like Port Harcourt, and rural regions with significant oil activities. Certain local government areas, particularly Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni, Emohua, and Andoni, are frequently reported as violence hotspots owing to high levels of criminality, cultism and militant activities.
- **Rural vs. Urban Divide:** While urban areas experience more politically-motivated violence, rural areas, particularly those near oil installations, are prone to violence related to land dispute, environmental degradation and competition over resources.

2. Politically-motivated Violence

- **Election-related Violence:** A significant pattern of lethal violence occurs around election periods, driven by intense political rivalries. Elections in Rivers State are often marked by violence, with political actors using armed groups, such as cultists and militants, to intimidate voters, disrupt polling or challenge election results.
- **Post-election Clashes:** Violence also persists after elections, particularly in cases where election outcomes are contested, leading to clashes between rival political supporters or between communities aligned with different political factions.

3. Cultism and Gang-related Violence

- **Cult Groups and Rivalries:** Rivers State has a long history of cultism, with numerous cult groups operating in the state. These groups are often involved in violent rivalries over territory, control of resources or political patronage. Such conflicts frequently result in high casualties and a cycle of revenge killings.
- **Gang-related Violence:** Besides cultism, other criminal gangs contribute to the pattern of lethal violence, engaging in activities such as armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom and illegal bunkering. These gangs often clash with one another or with security forces, leading to deadly confrontations.

4. **Economic Motivations for Violence**

- **Resource-based Conflicts:** The competition over oil resources and the benefits they generate is a key driver of lethal violence in Rivers State. There are conflicts over oil bunkering routes, control of illegal refineries and disputes over compensation from oil companies. The lucrative nature of the oil industry creates incentives for violent competition.
- **Land Disputes:** Disputes over land ownership, especially in areas near oil installations or urban expansion zones, often escalate into lethal violence. Such conflicts are exacerbated by lack of clear land rights, environmental degradation and the presence of valuable natural resources.

5. **Ethnic and Communal Violence**

- **Inter-community Clashes:** Ethnic and communal violence is another trend in Rivers State, often sparked by disputes over land, political representation or resource control. These clashes can be protracted, with cycles of retaliatory violence between neighbouring communities.
- **Ethnic Identity and Political Allegiances:** In Rivers State, violence is sometimes influenced by ethnic identity, where political power and resource control are tied to ethnic group dominance. This can lead to conflicts between different ethnic communities vying for influence and access to state resources.

6. **Increase in Kidnapping and Ransom-related Violence**

- **Kidnapping for Ransom:** The trend of kidnapping for ransom has escalated in Rivers State, contributing to the pattern of lethal violence. Kidnappers often target high-profile individuals, oil workers or even ordinary citizens. There are violent encounters during abductions or rescue operations.
- **Violence against Hostages:** In some cases, hostages who cannot pay the ransom demanded are killed. Violent clashes often occur during attempts by security forces to rescue hostages, adding to the lethality of this trend.

7. **Militarization and Security Responses**

- **Heavy-handed Security Operations:** The state's response to violence, particularly through military and police operations, has sometimes contributed to lethal violence. Security forces are frequently accused of use of excessive force, which results in civilian casualties and aggravates tensions.
- **Militant Attacks on Security Forces:** Militants and armed groups in Rivers State often target security forces in retaliation for crackdowns or as part of broader anti-government activities. This leads to deadly confrontations.

8. Temporal Trends

- **Seasonal Fluctuations:** Lethal violence in Rivers State sometimes shows seasonal patterns, with increases during election periods or times of economic hardship, such as periods of low oil prices or high unemployment.
- **Escalation and De-escalation Cycles:** Violence in the state often occurs in cycles, where periods of intense conflict are followed by temporary lulls, usually as a result of government interventions, peace agreements or political dynamics.

9. Environmental Degradation and Livelihood Conflicts

- **Environmental Grievances:** The environmental degradation caused by oil extraction, such as pollution of farmlands and water bodies, has led to conflicts over dwindling natural resources. Farmers and fishermen, who suffer the most, often resort to violence as a means of protesting or defending their livelihoods.
- **Conflicts over Compensation:** Disputes over compensation for environmental damage or land use by oil companies frequently result in violent clashes, especially when communities feel they have been inadequately compensated or excluded from the benefits of oil wealth.

These patterns and trends highlight the multifaceted nature of lethal violence in Rivers State. A comprehensive approach that considers the socio-political and economic contexts driving violence, along with effective governance, community engagement and conflict resolution strategies, is need to address these issues.

Intersection, Commonalities and Divergence in the Underlying Causes of Lethal Violence

Lethal violence in Rivers State manifests in various forms, often intersecting in complex ways. These forms of violence, while distinct in certain aspects, share underlying causes that create a volatile environment. Understanding these intersections, commonalities and differences is crucial for developing effective conflict-prevention and conflict-resolution strategies.

1. Intersection of Different Forms of Lethal Violence

9. **Political Violence and Cultism:** Political violence in Rivers State frequently intersects with cultism, as politicians often recruit cult groups to serve as enforcers during elections. Cult groups, in turn, use this opportunity to assert their dominance, leading to violent clashes with rival cults and security forces. This intersection blurs the lines between politically-motivated violence and criminal activities.
10. **Resource-based Violence and Ethnic Conflicts:** Conflicts over oil resources and land often intersect with ethnic violence. Disputes over who controls land or benefits from oil wealth can take on ethnic dimensions, leading to inter-communal clashes. For example, when oil revenues or compensation from oil companies are

perceived to favour one ethnic group over another, ethnic tensions can be ignited, resulting in lethal violence.

11. **Criminal Activities and Militant Violence:** Criminal activities, such as kidnapping and illegal oil bunkering, frequently intersect with militant violence. Militants may engage in these criminal activities to fund their operations or to challenge state authorities. This creates a cycle where criminal violence fuels militant activities, and vice versa, leading to a complex web of violence that is difficult to disentangle.
12. **Environmental Degradation and Livelihood Conflicts:** Environmental degradation caused by oil extraction intersects with livelihood conflicts, as communities that suffer from pollution and loss of arable land often resort to violence. This violence can take the form of attacks on oil infrastructure, clashes with oil company security forces or inter-community violence over shrinking resources.

2. **Commonalities in the Underlying Causes**

- **Economic Marginalization:** A common thread across different forms of lethal violence is economic marginalization. Whether it is in the form of the lack of jobs driving youth to join cults or the unequal distribution of oil wealth fuelling ethnic conflicts, economic deprivation plays a central role in perpetuating violence.
- **Weak Governance and Corruption:** Weak governance and widespread corruption are also common underlying causes. The failure of the government to provide basic services, enforce law and order, or equitably distribute resources creates a power vacuum that various groups exploit, leading to violence. Corruption undermines trust in the government and strengthens grievances, which manifest in different forms of violence.
- **Proliferation of Small Arms:** The easy availability of small arms and light weapons is another common factor that intensifies all forms of lethal violence. Whether in the hands of militants, cultists or criminal gangs, these weapons make conflicts more deadly and difficult to control.
- **Identity Politics:** Identity politics, whether based on ethnicity, religion or regional affiliation, often underpins various forms of violence in Rivers State. The manipulation of identity for political or economic gains can turn disputes over resources, political power or social status into violent confrontations.

3. **Differences in the Underlying Causes**

- **Political Violence vs. Resource-based Conflicts:** While both forms of violence may share common causes, like economic marginalization and weak governance, political violence is often driven by the quest for power and control over the state apparatus. In contrast, resource-based conflicts are more directly tied to the control and distribution of natural resources, particularly oil. The actors involved

also differ, with political violence often involving politicians and their supporters, while resource-based conflicts involve communities, militants and oil companies.

- **Cultism vs. Ethnic Violence:** Cultism is primarily driven by social factors, such as the need for identity, protection and belonging among disenfranchised youth, and is often linked to criminal activities, like drug trafficking and robbery. Ethnic violence, on the contrary, is rooted in historical grievances, competition for political representation and access to land and resources. While cultism is more associated with urban violence, ethnic violence often plays out in rural areas.
- **Environmental Violence vs. Criminal Violence:** Environmental violence is primarily a response to the degradation of the natural environment, particularly in communities affected by oil spills, deforestation and loss of livelihoods. This type of violence is often reactive, involving protests, sabotage or clashes with security forces. Conversely, criminal violence is more opportunistic and profit-driven, involving activities like kidnapping, armed robbery and illegal bunkering (Aghaino & Okolie-Osemene, 2014; Okolie-Osemene, 2015; Nwobueze & Okolie-Osemene, 2018).

4. **Implications of the Intersections**

- **Escalation of Violence:** The intersection of different forms of violence can lead to escalation, where what begins as a localized dispute or a politically-motivated clash spirals into broader, more sustained conflicts. For example, a political conflict may draw in cult groups, which then engage in wider criminal activities, further destabilizing the region.
- **Complexity of Conflict Resolution:** The intersection of various forms of violence complicates conflict resolution efforts. Dealing with one form of violence, such as political violence, without considering its links to cultism, resource conflicts or ethnic tensions, is unlikely to yield lasting peace. A holistic approach is required to tackle the root causes and interconnected nature of violence in Rivers State.
- **Human Security Implications:** The convergence of multiple forms of lethal violence in Rivers State has severe implications for human security. Communities are not only at risk of a single source of violence but also from multiple, overlapping threats, making it difficult for residents to find safety and stability. This multifaceted violence also strains the capacity of security forces and humanitarian agencies to respond effectively.

The different forms of lethal violence in Rivers State intersect in ways that amplify the overall level of insecurity and instability. While there are common underlying causes, such as economic marginalization, weak governance and proliferation of small arms, the

specific drivers and actors involved in each form of violence differ, necessitating tailored yet comprehensive approaches to conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Preventive and Mitigating Strategies for Lethal Violence in Rivers State

In view of the state's history of complex conflicts involving political violence, cultism, resource-based conflicts and criminal activities, numerous strategies have been implemented to prevent and mitigate lethal violence in Rivers State. The effectiveness of these strategies varies, offering valuable lessons for future interventions.

1. Security Operations and Military Intervention

- **Description:** The Nigerian government has frequently deployed the armed forces and special security operations to address violence in Rivers State. Operations like "Operation Crocodile Smile" and the Joint Task Force (JTF) have been aimed at curbing militancy, cultism and criminal activities, particularly in areas with high levels of violence.
- **Successes:**
 - **Short-term Reduction in Violence:** These operations have occasionally succeeded in temporarily reducing violence, particularly by disrupting militant groups and criminal gangs.
 - **Reasserting State Control:** Military presence in volatile areas has sometimes reasserted state control, allowing for a degree of stability and order in regions plagued by lawlessness.
- **Failures:**
 - **Heavy-handed Tactics:** The use of force has often been criticized for being heavy-handed, leading to human rights abuses, civilian casualties and further alienation of local communities.
 - **Temporary Solutions:** Military interventions have been criticized for offering only short-term solutions, with violence often resuming after the end of the operations. This suggests that these strategies address the symptoms rather than the root causes of violence.
- **Lessons Learned:**
 - **Need for a Comprehensive Approach:** Military operations need to be part of a broader strategy that includes community engagement, economic development and addressing the underlying grievances that fuel violence.
 - **Importance of Human Rights:** Security operations should prioritize the protection of human rights to avoid worsening conflicts and undermining the legitimacy of the state.

2. **Peacebuilding Initiatives and Dialogue**

- **Description:** Various peacebuilding efforts have been undertaken, including community dialogues, peace accords between warring factions and interventions by civil society organizations and religious leaders. These initiatives aim to foster reconciliation, reduce tensions and promote non-violent conflict resolution.
- **Successes:**
 - a. **Reduction in Inter-Community Violence:** Some peacebuilding efforts have successfully reduced inter-community violence by fostering dialogue and understanding between conflicting groups.
 - b. **Strengthening Community Cohesion:** Initiatives that involve local leaders and community members have helped to strengthen social cohesion and build trust within communities.
- **Failures:**
 - c. **Lack of Sustained Engagement:** Many peacebuilding initiatives have suffered from a lack of sustained engagement, with dialogues and accords not followed up with consistent efforts to address underlying issues.
 - d. **Limited Scope and Reach:** Some initiatives have been too localized or limited in scope to have a significant impact on broader patterns of violence in the state.
- **Lessons Learned:**
 - e. **Sustained and Inclusive Dialogue:** Peacebuilding efforts need to be sustained over a long time and must be inclusive, involving all relevant stakeholders, including marginalized groups, to ensure lasting impact.
 - f. **Linking Peacebuilding with Development:** Peacebuilding should be linked with development programmes that address the socio-economic conditions that fuel violence, such as poverty, unemployment and lack of access to education.

3. **Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Programmes**

- **Description:** Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes have been implemented to disarm and rehabilitate former militants, cult members and other armed groups. These programmes typically involve the surrender of weapons in exchange for amnesty, skills training and economic support.
- **Successes:**
 - **Reduction in Militancy:** Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes have had some success in reducing militancy by offering

economic alternatives to former fighters and integrating them back into society.

- **Collection of Weapons:** These programmes have contributed to the collection and destruction of a significant number of small arms, reducing the immediate capacity for violence.
- **Failures:**
 - **Reintegration Challenges:** Many former combatants have struggled with reintegration, facing stigma, unemployment and a lack of adequate support, making some of them to return to violence.
 - **Perception of Inequality:** The focus of DDR programmes on militants and cultists has sometimes created perceptions of inequality, with law-abiding citizens feeling neglected and resentful of the benefits given to former fighters.
- **Lessons Learned:**
 - **Comprehensive Reintegration Support: Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration** programmes need to provide comprehensive reintegration support, including psychological counselling, long-term economic opportunities and community reconciliation initiatives.
 - **Community-based Approaches: Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration** efforts should be more community-based, ensuring that the attendant benefits are distributed equitably and that the broader community is involved in the reintegration process.

4. **Developmental Interventions and Economic Empowerment**

- **Description:** Developmental interventions aimed at reducing violence in Rivers State have focused on economic empowerment, job creation and improving infrastructure in affected areas. These include government initiatives, corporate social responsibility programmes by oil companies and international donor projects.
- **Successes:**
 - **Economic Opportunities:** Programmes that create jobs and provide vocational training have had some success in reducing youth involvement in violence by offering alternatives to criminal activities and cultism.
 - **Infrastructure Development:** Investments in infrastructure, such as roads, schools and healthcare facilities, have improved living conditions in some communities, contributing to reduced tensions.

- **Failures:**
 - **Corruption and Mismanagement:** Many developmental programmes have been undermined by corruption, mismanagement and a lack of transparency, leading to minimal impact or even fuelling grievances.
 - **Targeting and Inclusivity Issues:** Some programmes have been criticized for poor targeting, either missing the most vulnerable populations or being captured by the local elite, which worsens the existing inequalities.
- **Lessons Learned:**
 - **Transparency and Accountability:** Developmental interventions must prioritize transparency and accountability to ensure that resources reach the intended beneficiaries and have a meaningful impact.
 - **Holistic Approaches:** Economic empowerment programmes should be part of a holistic approach that includes education, health and community development to address the root causes of violence comprehensively.

5. Legal and Institutional Reforms

- **Description:** Efforts have been made to strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks in Rivers State, including reforming the justice system, improving police effectiveness, and enhancing the capacity of local governments to manage conflicts.
- **Successes:**
 - **Improved Policing:** In some cases, targeted police reforms and community policing initiatives have led to better law enforcement and reduced violence in specific areas.
 - **Justice System Reforms:** Legal reforms aimed at improving access to justice and addressing impunity have contributed to greater accountability and deterrence of violence.
- **Failures:**
 - **Implementation Gaps:** Many legal and institutional reforms have faced significant implementation challenges, including resistance from vested interests, lack of resources and inadequate training of personnel.
 - **Trust Deficit:** There remains a significant trust deficit between the community and law enforcement agencies, with many citizens perceiving the police and judiciary as corrupt or biased.
- **Lessons Learned:**
 - **Building Trust and Accountability:** Legal and institutional reforms must focus on building trust between the community and the state, ensuring accountability, and delivering justice fairly and transparently.

- **Capacity Building:** Constant capacity building for law enforcement and judicial institutions is essential to ensure that reforms are effectively implemented and sustainable.

The various strategies implemented in Rivers State to prevent and mitigate lethal violence offer a mix of successes and failures. The key lessons learned emphasize the need for a holistic, inclusive and transparent approach to conflict prevention. Combining security measures with long-term peacebuilding, economic empowerment, legal reforms and community engagement is crucial for sustainable peace and development in the region. Addressing the root causes of violence, such as economic marginalization, weak governance and identity politics, is essential for breaking the cycle of violence in Rivers State.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the issue of lethal violence in Rivers State. The state experienced lethal violence in social, economic and political spheres, and this has affected the victims and their families, thereby creating the atmosphere of security threats. Incidences of lethal violence in Rivers State underscore the complexity of the issues that generate conflict, with multiple interrelated factors contributing to the persistence of conflict. Lethal violence is distributed at locations where struggle for resources and other factors generate conflict.

While significant progress has been made in understanding the sources and trends of violence, there is a need for more targeted research that provides strategic insights for effective conflict prevention. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on effective policy interventions. It stresses that discouraging lethal violence will prevent the recruitment of non-state actors and attract investors into the state and increase its internally generated revenues. Peace education that is supported with vocational training efforts should be sustained across all the local governments to reduce youth idleness, restiveness and criminality.

Tackling the root causes of conflicts will reduce the escalation of violence. This requires collaborative efforts of government and families, with particular focus on the threat to peaceful coexistence in the state. This can be done through reorientation of people and promotion of culture of non-violence. When families encourage members to adopt conflict-sensitive communication, issues that lead to conflicts will be addressed easily. The youth, who are the leaders of tomorrow, have a lot to benefit from peacefully presenting their concerns and grievances rather than engaging on violence, which would affect their growth and development. Resource-based and political conflicts cannot be left for parties, without timely government response, so as to prevent them from escalating and creating disturbances.

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OUTCOME OF BREAKDOWN OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

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Abstract

When and if a union is recognized as representative of an organization's employees, a day is set for management and labour at the bargaining table to negotiate a labour agreement. This agreement will contain specific provisions covering wages, hours of work and working conditions. Thus, both management and labour are required by law to negotiate wages, hours of work, and terms and conditions of employment in good faith. This study examined the outcome of failed collective bargaining. The work observed that when the union is unable to get management to agree to a demand it feels is critical, it may resort to a strike. The study suggests that conflict resolution interventions, such as mediation, arbitration and injunction, should be employed to avoid work stoppage.

Keywords: Collective Bargaining, Organization, Union, Management, Employees, Strike, Negotiation, Agreement

Introduction

The core of union-management relations is "collective bargaining." Its first phase involves negotiating the work conditions that become the collective agreements, that is contract which describes employee-employer relationships on the job. The second phase of this activity involves interpreting and enforcing the collective agreement, that is contract administration, and resolving any conflict arising out of it (Chamberlain and Kuhn, 1986). However, bargaining in good faith is the cornerstone of effective labour management relations. It means that both parties communicate and negotiate, that proposals are matched with counter-proposals, and that both parties make every reasonable effort to arrive at an agreement (Michael, 1992). To bargain collectively is the performance of the mutual obligation of the employer and the representative of the employees to meet at reasonable times and confer in good faith with respect to wages, hours of work, and terms and conditions of employment. It could also be viewed as the negotiation of an agreement, on any question arising from it, and the execution of a written contract

incorporating any agreement reached if requested by either party, but such obligation does not compel either party to agree to a proposal or require the making of a concession (Mark, 1998). Thus, as rightly observed by Hugh and David (1994) “employees have the right to form organizations for the purpose of seeking to influence their working conditions, wages, hours of work, and benefits.” These employee-created organizations, called unions, seek to manage their working environment primarily through a process called collective bargaining. When unions are not present, employers usually set employment terms and conditions unilaterally, that is without consulting employees, within constraints imposed by market conditions and the Fair Labour Standards Act. Collective bargaining allows employees to participate in setting terms and conditions of employment through their unions. Although this process puts additional constraints on employers, it also creates a more participatory system of employee involvement.

Collective Bargaining Stages

William (1976) and Richardson (1977) note that the actual bargaining typically goes through many stages of development. First, each side presents its demands. At this stage, both parties are usually quite far apart on some issues. Second, there is a reduction of demands. At this stage, each side trades off some of its demands to gain others. Third, there is the subcommittee studies; the parties form joint subcommittees to try to work out reasonable alternatives. Fourth, an informal settlement is reached and each group goes back to its sponsor. Union representatives check informally with their superiors and the union members, while management representatives check with top management. Finally, once everything is in order, a formal agreement is fine-tuned and signed.

Collective Bargaining Process

Collective bargaining is a complex process in which union and management negotiators manoeuvre to win the most advantageous contract. How the variety of issues involved are settled depends upon the following:

1. Quality of the union-management relationship,
 2. Processes of bargaining used by labour and management,
 3. Management’s strategies in the collective bargaining process,
 4. Union’s strategies in the collective bargaining process and
 5. Joint union-management strategies.
-
1. **Union-Management Relationships:** Union-management relationships are better viewed from the perspective of a labour relations system. The labour relations system is composed of three subunits, namely employees, management and the union, with the government influencing the interaction among the three. However, the relationship may be in these forms:

- **Adversarial Relationship:** Brett (1980) avers that “in an adversarial systems of union-management relations, the union’s role is to gain concessions from management during collective bargaining and to preserve those concessions through the grievance procedure. The union is an outsider and critic.”

2. **Cooperative Relationship:** In a cooperative system, the union’s role is that of a partner, not a critic, and the union is jointly responsible with management for reaching a cooperative solution. Brett (1980), Hammer and Smith (1984) and Business Week (1985) demonstrate that “a cooperative system requires that union and management engage in problem solving, information sharing, and integration of outcomes.” Most changes and job redesign projects undertaken by management need the acceptance of the union to be successful. In the words of Patlison and Novotny (1985), “active involvement of the union is one of the best ways to gain this acceptance.” However, regardless of whether union and management share an adversarial or a cooperative relationship, they still must engage in bargaining to arrive at a union-management contract.
- **Processes Bargaining:** Labour-management relations are commonly perceived as being highly adversarial in character. Press coverage of unions focuses attention on strikes, which, although rare, do represent an obvious manifestation of conflict. In practice, the negotiating parties can take a position anywhere along a broad spectrum of conflict to cooperation. The most widely used description of bargaining identifies four types of processes in contract negotiations.
3. **Distributive Bargaining:** Thomas and Harry (1988), describe distributive bargaining as “the complex system of activities instrumental to the attainment of one party’s goals when they are in basic conflict with those of another party.” This is zero-sum negotiation, in which one party’s gain is the other party’s loss. Thus, it takes place when the parties are in conflict over an issue, and the outcome represents a gain for one party and a loss for the other. Thus, each party tries to negotiate for the best possible outcome.
4. **Integrative Bargaining:** It refers to activities instrumental to the attainment of objectives which are not in fundamental conflict with those of the other party. Such objectives are said to define an area of common concern, a problem (Thomas and Harry, 1988). In essence, it occurs when management and the union work to solve a problem to their mutual benefit. For instance, issues of work crew, size or union concerns for job security may be addressed. Most quality of work-life changes involves integrative bargaining. The new work setting will benefit employees as well as the employer.

3. Attitudinal Structuring: The relationship between labour and management results in attitudinal structuring or shaping of attitudes toward one another. Four dimensions of this relationship have been identified:

- (a) Motivational orientation or tendencies that indicate whether the interaction will be competitive and adversarial, or cooperative;
- (b) Belief about the legitimacy of the other or how much a party believes the other has a right to be bargaining;
- (c) Level of trust in conducting affairs or belief in the integrity and honesty of the other party; and
- (d) Degree of friendliness, or whether the interactions are friendly or hostile.

Management Strategies: Prior to the bargaining session, management negotiators develop the strategies and proposals they will use. Four major areas of preparation have been identified:

1. Preparation of specific proposals for changes in contract language;
2. Determination of the general size of the economic package the company anticipates offering;
3. Preparation of statistical displays and supportive data the company will use; and
4. Preparation of a bargaining book for company negotiators, compilation of information on issues that will be discussed, giving an analysis of the effect of each clause, its use in other companies, and other facts (Business Week, 1984).

Union Strategies: Unions need to prepare for negotiations by collecting information. More and other information gives the union the ability to be more convincing in negotiations. Since collective bargaining is the major means by which a union can demonstrate to its members that it is effective and valuable, this is a critical activity. Therefore, unions should collect information in at least three areas:

1. The financial situation of the company and its ability to pay,
2. The attitude of management toward various issues, as reflected in the past negotiations or inferred from negotiations in similar organizations, and
3. The attitudes and desires of the employees.

The first two areas give the union an idea of which demands management is likely to accept. The third area is important but sometimes overlooked. The union should be aware of the preferences of the membership.

Joint Union Management Strategies: Consistent with cooperative union-management relationships and integrative bargaining are joint union-management strategies, which can be divided into three major types:

- **Productivity Bargaining:** Productivity bargaining is a special form of integrative bargaining. In productivity bargaining, labour agrees to scrap old work habits for

new and more effective ones desired by management; in exchange, management returns some of the gains of modernization and increased efficiency to labour in the form of new and better work incentives.

- **Concessionary Bargaining:** Concessionary bargaining occurs when employers face severe economic and near-bankruptcy conditions. Seeking to survive and prosper, employers seek givebacks or concessions from the unions, giving in return promises of job security. During the past few years, this type of bargaining has been particularly prevalent in the smokestack industries such as auto steel, rubber, and to some extent, transportation. Concessions sought by management from the unions in these industries include wage freezes, wage reductions, work-rule changes or elimination, fringe benefits reductions, delay or elimination of colas, and more hours of work for the same day.
- **Continuous Bargaining:** As affirmative action, safety and health requirements and other government regulations continue to complicate the situation for both unions and employers, and as change continues to accelerate, some labour and management negotiators are turning to continuous bargaining. In this process, a joint committee meets on a regular basis to explore issues and solve problems of common interest. Fossum (1980) has identified the following characteristics of continuous bargaining:
 1. Frequent meetings during the life of the contract,
 2. Focus on external events and problem areas rather than internal problems,
 3. Use of outside experts in decision-making, and
 4. Use of a problem-solving (integrative) approach.

The intention is to develop a union-management structure capable of adapting to sudden environmental changes in a positive and productive manner. This continuous bargaining approach is different from, but an extension of, the emergency negotiations that unions have insisted on when inflation or other factors substantially changed the acceptability of the existing agreement. Continuous bargaining is a permanent arrangement intended to help avoid the crisis that often occur under traditional collective bargaining systems.

Issues for Negotiation

The issues that can be discussed in collective bargaining sessions are specified by the Labour Management Relations Act. This Act has established three categories (Fossum, 1988):

1. **Mandatory Issues:** Employers and employee representatives (unions) are obligated to meet and discuss "wage, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment." These are the mandatory issues. Also any issue that changes the nature of the job itself or compensation for work must be discussed in collective

bargaining. Hence, mandatory issues include sub-contracting work, safety, changes of operations and other actions management might take that will have an impact on employees' jobs, wages, and economic supplements (Cook, 1981).

2. **Permissive Issues:** Permissive issues are those that are neither mandatory nor illegal. They are issues not specifically related to the nature of the job but still of concern to both parties. For example, issues of price, product design and decisions about new jobs may be subject to bargaining if the parties agree to such. Thus, permissive issues usually develop when both parties see that mutual discussion and agreement will be beneficial, as may be more likely when a cooperative relationships exist between union and management. Fossum (1980) argue that "management and union negotiators cannot refuse to agree on a contract if they fail to settle a permissive issue." Permissive subjects are matters over which the parties may negotiate if they both agree to, but neither is required to do so. Neither party may engage in a strike or lockout over a permissive issue or pursue a permissive issue to the point of impasse.
3. **Prohibited Issues:** Prohibited issues are those concerning illegal or outlawed activities, such as the demand that an employer should use only union-produced goods or, where it is illegal, that it should employ only union members (Chambarlain and Kuhn, 1986). Such issues may not be discussed in collective bargaining sessions. Neither party can legitimately bring illegal subjects to the bargaining table.

Table 1: Subjects of Bargaining and Examples

Mandatory Subjects	Permissive Subjects	Illegal Subjects
Wages	Retiree benefits	Featherbedding
Benefits	(changes in)	Discrimination in hiring
Incentive pay	Product pricing and	Closed shop agreements
Overtime	labeling	
Layoff and recall	Contract ratification	
	procedure	
Union security clause	Performance bonds	
Management rights	Corporate investment	
Clause	policy	
Grievance procedures		
Seniority rights		
Safety		

Source: Adapted from R. Allen and T. Keaveny, *Contemporary Labour Relations* © 1988 by Addison Wesley Publishing Company Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

Table 1 provides some examples to illustrate the distinctions among mandatory, permissive, and illegal subjects of bargaining. However, mandatory bargaining issues are the critical factors in the bargaining process. They are the issues that may affect management's ability to run the organization efficiently or clash with the union's desire to protect jobs and workers' standing in their jobs.

In the opinion of Briggs (1988) most of the issues for negotiation are mandatory, such as the following:

Wage: Probably no issue under collective bargaining give rise to more difficult problems than wages and wage-related subjects. Wage conflicts are the leading cause of strikes. The difficulties here are understandable. A wage increase is a direct cost to the employer as is a wage decrease to the employee (Mitchell, 1981). Unions seek to raise the average wage level within the establishment in order to improve the standard of living among bargaining unit members. Unions also attempt to influence how pay is structured. Unions tend to prefer more egalitarian pay structures and equal pay for equal work. Unions typically raise pay by 10 to 15 percent over comparable non-union jobs. As a result, Richard and James (1984) observe that unionized firms tend toward flatter pay structures from top to bottom, and smaller differentials between jobs.

Traditionally, two major concerns have exerted a profound influence on wage and benefit bargaining between labour and management, namely inflation and productivity. Thus, the wages that an employee is paid are primarily determined by the basic pay rate for a certain job. This pay may then be increased by several other factors, all of which are subject to collective bargaining. Although management would prefer that basic pay be related only to productivity, this is seldom the case. However, three additional standards are frequently used: (1) comparative norm, where rate of pay is influenced by the rates provided for similar jobs in other companies within an industry or even by comparative rates between industries; (2) ability to pay, where the pay rate is influenced by the financial capability of the company and especially the amount of its profit; and (3) standard of living, where changes in the cost of living influence the rate of pay. Kochen (1980) avers that "due to the productivity crisis and increased, international competition, firms are having profitability problems. In turn, they are asking unions to hold the line on wage increases, and in some cases, to take a wage reduction."

Economic Issues: Simpson et al. (1985) assert that an increasingly important part of the pay package is the section covering economic issues, fringe benefits, such as vacations, holidays, pensions and insurance. These benefits run as high as 38 percent of the cost of wages and are now a major factor in collective bargaining. Additionally, Ferguson and Goals (1984) and Schuster (1985) demonstrate that common economic supplements

include pensions, paid vacations, paid holidays, sick leave, health and life insurance, dismissal or severance pay, and supplemental unemployment benefits.

Institutional Issues: Some issues are not directly related to jobs but are nevertheless important to both employees and management. Institutional issues that affect the security and success of both parties include union security, checkoff, strikes and management prerogatives.

Administrative Issues: The last category of issues is concerned with the treatment of employees at work. Administrative issues include breaks and clean-up time, job security, seniority, discharge and discipline, safety and health, production standards, grievance procedures, training and duration of the agreement.

Sloan and Witney (1985) assert that “partly, because there are so many issues over which to bargain, agreement and contract settlement are not always attained without conflict. When this occurs, forms of conflict resolution are utilized.

Collective Bargaining Breaks Down: Impasse, Strike, Lockout, Mediation, Arbitration

Impasse: In collective bargaining, an impasse occurs when the parties are not able to move further toward settlement. An impasse usually occurs because one party is demanding more than the other will offer. Sometimes, an impasse can be resolved through a third party, that is, a disinterested person, such as a mediator. Linda and Craig (1992) are of the view that “if the impasse is not resolved in this way, a work stoppage, or strike, may be called by the union to bring pressure to bear on management.”

Strike: A strike is a withdrawal of labour. When the union is unable to get management to agree to demand it feels is critical, it may resort to a strike. A strike can be defined as the refusal by employees to work at a company.

Employers can make several responses when they become the object of a strike. The first is to shut down the affected area and halt their operations until the strike is over. The second alternative is to contract out work during the duration of the strike in order to blunt the effects of the strike on the employer. The third alternative is for the employer to continue operations, perhaps using supervisors and other non-striking workers to fill in for the striking workers. The fourth is hiring of replacements for the strikers. When a strike is imminent, plans must be made to deal with it. Stephen and Gerald (1981) and Brenda (1995) opine that, when a strike is imminent or already under way, following these guidelines can minimize confusion:

1. Pay all striking employees what they are owed on the first day of the strike.
2. Secure the facility. Supervisors should be on the alert for strangers on the property, and access should be controlled. The company should consider hiring guards to

protect replacements coming to and from work, and to watch and control the picketers, if necessary.

3. Notify all customers. A company may decide not to notify customers but to respond to inquiries only. A standard official response to all customers should be prepared and should be merely informative.
4. Contact all suppliers and other persons with whom the company do business who will have to cross the picket line. Establish alternative methods of obtaining supplies.
5. Make arrangements for overnight stays in the facility and for delivered meals in case the occasion warrants such action.
6. Notify the local unemployment office of the company's need for replacement workers.
7. Photograph the facility before, during and after picketing. If necessary, install videotape equipment and a long-distance microphone to monitor picket line misconduct.
8. Record any and all facts concerning strikes' demeanour and activities and such incidents as violence, threats, mass pickets, property damage or problems. Record police response to any request for assistance.
9. Gather the following evidence: number of pickets and their names; time, date, and location of picketing; wording on every sign carried by pickets; and descriptions of picket cars and license numbers.

According to Herbert (1994), management and labour have other weapons they can use to try to break an impasse and achieve their aims. The union, for example, may resort to a "corporate campaign." A corporate campaign is an organized effort by the union that exerts pressure on the corporation by pressuring the company's other unions, shareholders, directors, customers, creditors, and government agencies, often directly. Thus, individual members of the board of directors might be shocked by picketing of their homes, political figures might be pressured to agree to union demands, and the company's banks might become targets of a union member boycott (Herbert, 1994). Stephen and Gerald (1981) argue that employers can try to break an impasse with lockouts. A lockout is a refusal by the employer to provide opportunities to work. The employees are locked out and prohibited from doing their jobs and from getting pay.

Type of Strikes and Rights of Strikers

There are many different types of strikes, and the rights of strikers and employers depend on the type. Four types discussed here are economic strike, unfair labour practice strike, wildcat strike and sympathy strike.

Economic Strike: If the parties have negotiated in good faith but fail to reach an agreement, any strike that follows is called an economic strike (Richard and James, 1994).

This is the most common type of strike, and it is fully protected by law. In theory, economic strikers cannot be fired for engaging in protested concerted activity, and discrimination against employees for supporting a strike would be illegal. But economic strikers, as observed by Edward and Cynthia (1987), can still lose their jobs if they are permanently replaced. Employees retain a right to return to their jobs after the strike only so long as the jobs still exist and the employer has not hired permanent replacements (Cynthia, 1985).

Unfair Labour Practice Strikes: Employers and unions have a duty to negotiate in good faith. Good faith may be breached by such actions as refusing to respond to a party's request to bargain, refusing to send bargaining representatives with sufficient authority to the negotiations, continually shifting bargaining positions in a clearly obstructionist manner, delaying and hampering negotiations, and refusing to make any counterproposals at all. If a strike is provoked or prolonged by an employer's unfair labour practice, such as the failure to bargain in good faith, the law forbids the permanent replacement of strikers. Sidney and Beatrice (1997) highlight that "employers are found guilty of causing an unfair labour practice strike, have a legal obligation to reinstate the strikers, even if they have hired permanent replacements in the interim." Thus, unfair labour practice strikes are aimed at protecting illegal conduct by the employer.

Wildcat Strike: A wildcat strike is an unauthorized strike occurring during the time of a contract. Benjamin and Fred (1987) are of the view that despite binding commitments to the contrary, some strikes occur in direct violation of a collective bargaining agreement, usually without the official approval of union leaders. Contract almost always contain no-strike clauses, through which the union pledges not to strike during the life of the contract but instead to use the grievance procedure to resolve any disagreements about the way the contract is applied. Employees who strike in defiance of such a clause are said to be on wildcat strike. Generally, wildcat strike loses the protection of law injunctions that can be issued against the union, with damages or fines levied directly against union funds. In addition, striking employees may be discharged and have no right to return to their jobs. In practice, however, few employers find it feasible to terminate and replace their entire workforce because of a wildcat strike.

Sympathy Strike: According to Fossum (1988), a sympathy strike occurs when one union strikes in support of the strike of another union. Picketing is one of the first activities occurring during a strike. The purpose of picketing is to inform the public about the existence of the labour dispute and often to encourage others to refrain from doing business with the struck employer.

Employers can make several responses when they become the object of strike (Mark, 1998):

1. to shut down the affected area and thus halt their operations until the strike is over,
2. to contract out work during the duration of the strike in order to blunt the effect of the strike on the employer,
3. to continue operations, perhaps using supervisors and other non-striking workers to fill in for the striking workers,
4. to consider replacements permanent and would not have to be let go to make room for strikers who decide to return to work.

Lockout: Management may refuse to allow employees to work, which is called a lockout, but this is an uncommon occurrence (Kennan, 1980; Blevins, 1984).

Ways of Preventing Strikes: While strikes and lockouts have little impact on the economy as a whole, they can have a dramatic impact on the parties involved. Workers go without pay, and this affect them, their families, and the merchants and banks with whom they trade. Companies experience diminished revenues, which may adversely affect shareholders, other workers and the company's trading partners. Therefore, while strikes and lockouts may sometimes be necessary, considerable resources have been invested in developing alternative dispute resolution procedures to reduce the likelihood of strike. These are examined below.

1. **Mediation:** Mediation is a widely used dispute resolution mechanism. It occurs when a neutral third party who has no binding authority assists union and management in reaching agreement. Mediators help by scheduling meetings, keeping the parties engaged in negotiations, carrying messages between the parties and making suggestions (Briggs, 1988). Having no power to impose a solution, the mediator attempts to facilitate the negotiations between union and management. The mediator may make suggestions and recommendations and perhaps add objectivity to the often emotional negotiations. To have any success at all, the mediator must have the trust and respect of both parties and have sufficient expertise and neutrality to convince the union and employer that he or she will be fair and equitable.
2. **Arbitration:** In the words of Compton-Forbes (1984), arbitration is a procedure in which a neutral third party studies the bargaining situation, listening to both parties and gathering information, and then makes recommendations that are binding on the parties. The arbitrator, in effect, determines the conditions of the agreement.

Five types of arbitration have been developed.

1. **Extension of Bargaining:** The arbitrator attempts to reach a rational and equitable decision acceptable to both parties.

2. **Final-Offer Arbitration:** It involves the arbitrator choosing between the final offer of the union and the final offer of the employer. The arbitrator cannot alter these offers but must choose one as it stands. Since the arbitrator chooses the offer that appears most fair, and since losing the arbitration decision means settling for the other's offer, there is pressure to make as good an offer as possible. The intention of final-offer arbitration is to encourage the parties to make their best offer and to reach an agreement before arbitration becomes necessary. This is also true with respect to the use of closed-offer arbitration.
3. **Closed-Offer Arbitration:** Here, the arbitrator receives information only on the parties' original positions without any information on the bargaining progress up to the time the arbitrator is selected.
4. **Grievance Arbitration:** Once the impasse is removed, union and management have a contract agreement. Abiding by it is the essence of contract administration; however, there are times when arbitration is again necessary, namely when a grievance is filed. This type of arbitration is referred to as rights or grievance arbitration. In contrast, the arbitration process that deals with the contract terms and conditions is called interest arbitration.
5. **Interest Arbitration:** Interest arbitration is an alternative dispute resolution procedure that can guarantee resolution of disputes and can therefore eliminate strike altogether. Interest arbitrators are third-party neutrals authorized to make binding decisions to resolve interest disputes. Interest arbitration is rarely used in the private sector, but it is widely used in the public sector, where it is designed to compensate for the fact that public employees have no right to strike.

Figure 1: Interest Arbitration (Fish p. 730)

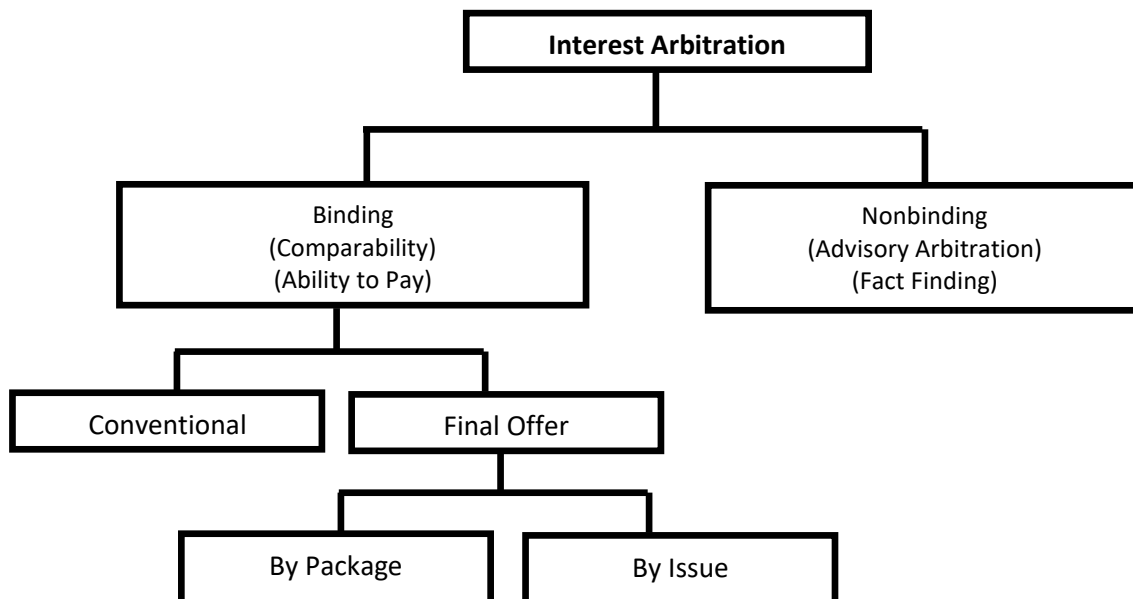


Figure 1 traces the development of interest arbitration techniques. Although interest arbitration is relatively infrequent in the private sector, it is more common in the public sector, where it becomes a necessary quid pro quo for forgoing the strike option (Johnson, 1983).

Conclusion

In many organizations, union-management relations are at a critical crossroads today. Once a union has been certified as representing a group of employees, it can begin negotiations with management in an attempt to secure a contract. Bargaining can be conducted in different structural arrangements. Mandatory bargaining issues include wages, hours of work and conditions of employment. Permissive items may be discussed, but neither party may insist on them to the point of impasse, and illegal items may not be bargained on. If an impasse is reached, private-sector employees may choose to strike. Economic strikers have right to return to their jobs after a strike, whereas unfair labour practice strikers, have no right to return to their jobs.

As an alternative to strikes, mediation or various forms of arbitration may be used. To settle disagreements over contract administration during the life of a contract, the grievance system is used. Thus, effectiveness of collective bargaining and contract administration is usually assessed by measures of how well the process is working. Bargaining can be evaluated using measures such as negotiations, the frequency of strikes, use of thirty-party intervention and the need for government intervention.

Recommendations

The following are recommended to tackle impasse in organizations:

1. Economic supplements, such as pensions, paid vacations, paid holidays, sick leave, health and life insurance, dismissal or severance pay, and supplemental unemployment benefits should be improved.
2. Administrative issues such as breaks and clean-up time, job security, seniority, discharge and discipline, safety and health, production standards, grievance procedures, training and duration of agreement should be taken into consideration in management of human resources.
3. To prevent strikes and lockouts, mediation and different types of arbitration should be employed.
4. Institutional issues that affect employees and management, such as union security, checkoff, strikes, and managerial prerogative, should be looked into.
5. Basic pay should be related to productivity. However, additional standards, such as comparative norm, ability to pay and standard of living should be included.

Wage conflicts are to be recognized as the leading cause of strikes; therefore, they should be adequately administered in organizations.

6. Employers and unions should select their own representatives for the negotiating committee.
7. Contracts of employment should be negotiated by a single union and a single employer.
8. The widely used bargaining types in the process of contract negotiations, such as distributive bargaining, integrative bargaining, attitudinal structuring, and intra-organizational should be taken into cognizance.
9. Employees should be allowed to have the right to form unions for the purpose of seeking to influence their working conditions, wages, hours and benefits.
10. Union-management relations should be highly regulated, with state and federal governments playing a very active part.

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SECTION D

SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES

28

**EFFECTIVENESS OF SAFETY AND HEALTH EDUCATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH CHALLENGES IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of safety and health education on environmental health challenges in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study employed the mixed methods approach, in public health and policy analysis to discern the interplay of the factors contributing to Rivers State health and environmental challenges. There was extensive data collection, involving field surveys, interviews and comprehensive literature review. Three research questions guided the study. The population of the study comprised all the residents of the Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State. The multistage sampling technique was used to select the sample size of 400 respondents. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data; the Cronbach Alpha method was used to compute for reliability test of the instrument, which was 0.79 and considered satisfactory. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse research questions. Furthermore, the research assessed existing policies and interventions, to elucidate their effectiveness in mitigating these hazards while promoting sustainable health outcomes. The study found that the current public health education strategies were insufficient in addressing these challenges. Many residents lacked awareness of the health risks associated with environmental pollution and the preventive measures they could take. The findings of this study are anticipated to provide valuable insights for policymakers, researchers and practitioners, enabling the formulation of evidence-based strategies to enhance environmental sustainability and public health resilience in Rivers State.

Keywords: Safety and health education, Environmental health challenges, Environmental sustainability, Public health resilience

Introduction

Pollution is one of the biggest threats to global health. Environmental pollution can destroy the soil and contaminate the air and water. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 8.9 million people die every year from diseases caused by pollution, and 8.4 million (94%) of these people are from poor countries (World Health Organisation,

2014). Environmental health challenges encompass a variety of issues that significantly impact both the environment and public health. These challenges arise from a complex interplay of factors, including pollution, climate change and socio-economic disparities, each contributing to adverse health outcomes. For instance, exposure to environmental hazards, such as toxic chemicals and poor air quality, has been shown to exacerbate respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, particularly among vulnerable populations, like low-income communities and immigrants (Stein et al., 2018). Furthermore, as highlighted in the literature, comprehensive strategies for improving environmental conditions are necessary to promote overall well-being and safety (Killoran et al., 2010). Addressing these challenges demands integrative public health approaches that combine policy reform, community engagement and education. Emphasizing safety and health education is crucial in fostering awareness and encouraging proactive measures that mitigate environmental risks, ultimately leading to healthier environments and improved public health outcomes.

Environmental health is a public health science which is concerned with protection and improvement of health of humans by limiting their exposure to biological, chemical and physical hazards in their environment. This involves interdisciplinary knowledge from both the basic and applied chemical and biological sciences to develop assessment and management strategies. Environmental health can, therefore, be defined as the control of all those factors in man's physical environment which exercise deleterious effect on his physical, mental and social well-being. Environmental pollution poses significant threats to public health, contributing to various diseases and health complications. Pollutants, including heavy metals, particulate matter and chemical waste, can lead to respiratory illnesses, cardiovascular diseases and neurological disorders among exposed populations.

The importance of addressing these interconnected issues is underscored in recent consultancy efforts, which revealed substantial research gaps in the field of environmental health, particularly in regions like Malawi, where pollution exacerbates public health challenges (Lungu et al., 2010). Furthermore, educational initiatives that utilize a one-health approach highlight the critical relationship between environmental factors and food safety, emphasizing the need for interdisciplinary strategies to mitigate these risks (Angelos et al., 2017). By fostering a deeper understanding of the consequences of pollution on health, safety and health education can empower communities to advocate cleaner environments, ultimately improving public health outcomes while promoting ecological sustainability. The intricate relationship between the well-being of individuals and the state of the natural surroundings forms the foundation of sustainable health—a concept that embodies the collective pursuit of long-term, holistic health outcomes while safeguarding the integrity of the environment. As humans navigate a world grappling with escalating environmental hazards, from

escalating air pollution to the intensifying impacts of climate change, understanding and implementing strategies for sustainable health has never been more imperative (Hubby, 2009; Hyellai, et al. 2021; Emma et al., 2022).

The Niger Delta region, including Rivers State, has been subjected to extensive oil exploration for decades. This has resulted in environmental pollution, including oil spills, gas flaring and industrial waste discharge, leading to air, water and soil contamination. These environmental hazards have been linked to various health issues among the local population. Rivers State is a critical economic hub in Nigeria, largely due to its rich oil and gas reserves. However, the environmental degradation resulting from these industrial activities has led to severe health challenges for its residents. Understanding these challenges and the role of public health education is essential for developing effective interventions.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing prevalence of environmental hazards poses a significant threat to public health, necessitating urgent attention and intervention. These hazards, ranging from air and water pollution to climate-related risks, have been linked to a spectrum of adverse health outcomes (WHO, 2016; Lawson, 2019). The environmental health challenges in Rivers State have led to increased incidences of respiratory diseases, water-borne illnesses and other health conditions. Despite efforts by governmental and non-governmental organizations, these issues persist, indicating a gap in effective public health education and safety measures. Therefore, the study investigates the effectiveness of safety and health education on environmental health challenges in Rivers state

Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to assess the environmental health challenges in Rivers State and evaluate the effectiveness of public health education in addressing these issues. The objectives are to:

- identify the major environmental health challenges in Rivers State;
- assess the impact of these challenges on the health of residents; and
- evaluate the current public health education strategies in place.

Research Questions

1. What are the predominant environmental health challenges in Rivers State?
2. How do these challenges affect the health of the local population?
3. What public health education strategies are currently implemented?

Significance of the Study

This study will provide insights into the environmental health challenges in Rivers State and the role of public health education in mitigating these issues. The findings can help policymakers, health educators and community leaders in developing targeted interventions to improve public health outcomes.

Methodology

The mixed-methods approach was employed, including quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with residents, health professionals and policymakers in Rivers State. Secondary data from health records and environmental reports were also analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the situation. Three research questions guided the study. The population of the study comprised all the residents of the Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State. The multistage sampling technique was used to select the sample size of 400 respondents. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data; the Cronbach Alpha method was used to compute for reliability test of the instrument, which was 0.79 and considered satisfactory. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the research questions.

Presentation of the Results

Research Question 1: What are the predominant environmental health challenges in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Predominant Environmental Health Challenges in Rivers State

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev.	Remark
1.	Air pollution is a significant environmental health issue in my community.	259	119	22	-	3.89	0.31	Agree
2.	Water pollution adversely affects the health of residents in my area.	148	127	93	32	2.62	0.96	Agree
3.	Improper waste disposal contributes to environmental health problems in the state.	121	254	11	14	3.08	0.42	Agree
4.	Oil spills have led to serious health challenges in our	199	178	23	-	3.55	0.51	Agree

	locality.							
5.	Flooding is a recurrent environmental health concern in this region.	22	217	159	2	2.65	0.50	Agree
6.	Noise pollution is a major environmental health issue in my community	190	183	27	-	3.48	0.55	Agree
	Grand mean					3.19	0.50	Agree

The results in Table 1 revealed that the majority of the respondents agreed to items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6: air pollution is a significant environmental health issue in their community, water pollution adversely affects the health of residents in their area, improper waste disposal contributes to environmental health problems here, oil spills have led to serious health challenges in their locality, flooding is a recurrent environmental health concern in this region, and that noise pollution is a major environmental health issue in my community, respectively. The mean values were 3.89, 2.62, 3.08, 3.55, 2.65 and 3.48, respectively, which were higher the criterion means of 2.5. The grand mean of 3.19 implied that the identified items were the major environmental health challenges in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: How do these challenges affect the health of the local population?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on How These Challenges Affect the Health of the Local Population

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev.	Remark
1.	Air pollution has led to increased respiratory issues among residents.	107	263	11	19	2.95	0.47	Agree
2.	Contaminated water sources have resulted in water-borne diseases in the community.	115	263	22	-	3.08	0.28	Agree
3.	Improper waste disposal has caused a rise in infectious diseases locally.	199	176	25	-	3.54	0.53	Agree
4.	Oil spills have negatively impacted the health and	256	122	11	11	3.88	0.33	Agree

	livelihoods of residents.							
5.	Flooding has led to an increase in health-related problems in this area.	115	260	17	8	3.07	0.31	Agree
6.	Noise pollution has caused stress and hearing problems among residents.	248	130	18	4	3.83	0.38	Agree
	Grand mean					3.58		Agree

Table 2 shows mean and standard deviation scores of the respondents on how these challenges affect the health of the local population. The table indicates that the respondents agreed to all the list items 1, 2,3,4, 5 and 6: air pollution has led to increased respiratory issues among residents, contaminated water sources have resulted in water-borne diseases in the community, improper waste disposal has caused a rise in infectious diseases locally, oil spills have negatively impacted the health and livelihoods of residents, flooding has led to an increase in health-related problems in the area, and noise pollution has caused stress and hearing problems among residents, respectively. The mean scores were above the criterion mean of 2.5; hence the grand mean score was 3.58. This implied that environmental health challenges affected the health of the local population in Rivers State.

Research Question 3: What public health education strategies are currently implemented in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean and Standard on the Public Health Education Strategies Currently Implemented in Rivers State

S/ N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	Std	Decision
1	Public health education programmes effectively raise awareness about environmental health issues.	183	175	36	6	3.35	0.68	Agree
2	Health education campaigns adequately address the dangers of air and water pollution.	103	216	69	12	2.69	0.50	Agree

3	Community workshops on waste management are regularly conducted.	114	261	25	-	3.06	0.30	Agree
4	Information on preventing health issues related to oil spills is readily available.	25	56	74	245	1.32	0.74	Disagree
5	Flood preparedness and response education is provided to residents.	12	138	66	184	2.02	0.99	Disagree
Grand Mean						2.50	0.64	Agree

Table 3 captures the mean and standard deviation scores of the respondents on public health education strategies currently implemented in Rivers State. It indicates that the respondents agreed with items 1, 2, and 3: public health education programmes effectively raise awareness about environmental health issues, health education campaigns adequately address the dangers of air and water pollution, that community workshops on waste management are regularly conducted, respectively. The mean scores were above the criterion mean of 2.50. However, the respondents disagreed with items 4 and 5: information on preventing health issues related to oil spills is readily available and food preparedness and response education is provided to residents, with mean score less than 2.50; an average mean score of 2.61 was obtained. This implies that some of the public health education strategies were currently implemented in Rivers State. Based on the result, it was deduced that more still has to be done on public health education strategies in Rivers State.

Summary of Findings and Future Directions for Research

This empirical investigation revealed significant correlations between environmental health challenges and the effectiveness of safety and health education initiatives. The respondents indicated heightened awareness of environmental risks and the need for proactive education addressing these issues comprehensively. The data suggested that integrating environmental health topics into safety curricula will enhance residents' knowledge and fosters a culture of prevention and responsibility among future generations. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of such educational frameworks, particularly how they influence behavioural changes in communities disproportionately affected by environmental hazards. Additionally, studies should benchmark various educational approaches to determine their efficacy in different demographic settings, particularly marginalized or underserved populations. Ultimately,

a multifaceted approach involving collaboration among educators, health professionals and policymakers will be essential in mitigating the adverse effects of environmental challenges and promoting holistic health education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, addressing the myriad of environmental health challenges faced today necessitates a comprehensive approach that intricately weaves together safety and health education. Environmental health challenges in Rivers State pose significant risks to the well-being of its residents. The current public health education strategies are inadequate in mitigating these risks. There is a pressing need for comprehensive and effective public health education programmes tailored to the specific environmental challenges of the region. As demonstrated through various empirical studies, effective health education empowers communities to better understand and mitigate risks associated with environmental hazards, fostering resilience and proactive engagement. Furthermore, the integration of sustainable practices within educational frameworks is essential, as highlighted by recent research. Prioritizing environmental health education not only cultivates informed citizenry but also promotes equitable access to health resources, which is critical for marginalized communities. These efforts are vital in advancing public health outcomes and ensuring safety in environments increasingly threatened by environmental degradation and climate change.

Recommendations

- Government should develop targeted education programmes that raise awareness about environmental health risks and promote preventive measures.
- Strengthen policy implementation by ensuring strict enforcement of environmental regulations to reduce pollution from industrial activities.
- Involve local communities in decision-making processes related to environmental health to ensure interventions are culturally appropriate and effective.
- Establish systems for regular monitoring of environmental health indicators and the effectiveness of public health education initiatives.
- Collaboration with stakeholders to foster collaboration between government agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to address environmental health challenges comprehensively.

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29

**VALUE AND VESTED INTEREST: IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE IN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This paper discusses the implications of value and vested interest for community development practice in Nigeria by X-raying the various ways value and vested interest can hinder or promote community development initiatives either through self-help or government sponsor. The focus is on how value and vested interest can be harnessed to be a veritable tool for sustainability of the rural and urban community, devoid of much of its negative influence on project identification and execution and human development that are supposed to lead to more equitable and sustainable community development. This is seen in the way Prof. Okey Onuchuku who has value and vested interest in solving problems for mankind. The paper further discusses value and vested interest, community development workability, challenges of practice, ways value and vested interest promote community development practice, key stakeholders involved in streamlining community development outcomes, relationship between value and vested interest with respect to community development practice in the new era.

Keywords: Value, vested interest, and community development

Introduction

Discussing “value and vested interest” as it concerns community development practice in any subject matter, flora, platform and audience is important. This is because the concept has wide coverage in suggesting possible ways and strategies that will continue to contribute to the achievement of developing personality values, skills and expected visions to uphold society. It also assists in achieving community development objectives relevant to rural communities.

God Almighty created “man” with kin value and vested interest by handing over of the Ten Commandments to humanity, which will serve as a reminder and spiritual awakening to mankind forever. The value and vested interest in the Ten Commandments are positive in nature. But man has deviated from God’s plan, based on the quest and

demand for good things of life. However, there are some “men” who have distinguished themselves and decided to keep to the will and promises of God in this evolving society. One of such is Prof Okey Onuchuku, DSSRS, an Ikwerre (Iwhuruohna man) from the Emohua kingdom extraction. He is the Vice Chancellor of the fast-growing university in Rivers State, Nigeria. He is a great thinker, independent and capable of performing a range of social, economic, political, cultural, psychological, physiological and mental roles, especially participating in community affairs and responsibilities. He has chosen value and vested interest in providing good leadership, empowerment, capacity, mentorship, maintaining collective bargaining principles, green counselling strategies and peace building (a vehicle of unity and development at all levels of human existence. He is devoted to making others learn, happy and joyous at all times. His actions and life desires are also committed to seeing fellow humans fulfil their dreams.

The discourse on value and vested interest in the new era is a welcome development, especially now that emphasis is on the actualization of a sustainable community development practice that will assist reduce hunger, poverty, diseases, ignorance, etc. Value and vested interest are age-old concepts that deal with choice and human behaviours in every facet of society, including community development practice. They concern community projects or programmes initiatives, particularly their identification, execution and sustainability.

In Nigeria, community development actions are crucial for addressing various social, economic and political challenges. In view of these facts, value and vested interest can significantly hamper progress in community development activities through corruption, communal crises, violence, mismanagement of resources and unequal distribution of human and non-human resources. Thus, they may not effectively address the needs of the community people, which will also fail to bring sustainable social changes.

However, there are other intersecting factors, such as political influence, dynamics and cultural norms. The subject matter is a complex one. Therefore, it is imperative to examine the positive and negative effects of value and vested interest in community development practice of the 21st century in relation to sustainable development efforts of the wider society.

Value: It connotes importance, something that is qualitatively cherished and provides administration, satisfaction or sense of accomplishment. Value determines a man's choice in life, and human behaviour is influenced by choices. Okoh (2003) adds that, in valuing actions, one must distinguish between the preferred and preferable, and desired and desirable. There are religious, moral, aesthetic, social, cultural, intellectual and economic values. Social and economic values are the bane of vested interest in every human society. They have to do with acquisition of power, glory, sovereignty, mutualism, patriotism, loyalty, wealth profit, money making, economic power, fame, etc.

From the philosophical point of view, axiology, which is the theory of value, emphasizes positive societal values, i.e. values to be known as good in structure and nature. The nature of values is explained based on “interest theory.” which says that values actually depends on the individual’s interests. Barikor (2015) avers that axiology is the study of nature types and criteria of values and of value judgment. It also tries to find out whether values are variables, relative or constant, order of preference or hierarchy of values. This is based on the fact that the attitudes which people adopt towards life concern how to handle the application of vested interest, especially where it involves idealism, realism and pragmatism on perception of values, either good or bad. But what makes something good or bad?

There are differences in the approaches to value. For instance, the idealists believe that spiritual values are higher than material values, while the pragmatists hold empirical and material values higher than spiritual values. These are the issues within the nexus of community development practice, especially in Nigeria.

Vested interest: In some rural and urban communities in Nigeria, vested interest plays significant roles in terms of possessions, ownership, content and acquisition of natural resources. Negative thoughts in these area can lead to crisis in social change, acrimony, use of rival cult groups to fight for the interest of persons, especially when a community is faced with bad leadership, devoid of citizens’ participation and involvement in decision-making.

Autocratic decision-makers downplay the emotional intelligence of other members of the community. When a leader refuses to recognize the feelings of others in handling relationships such leader will hardly understand his or her strengths and weaknesses. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2008) identify basic components of emotional intelligence, namely self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Most of the communal disturbances and denial of birthrights arise as a result of vested interest.

Vested interest is a silent killer and an agent of darkness. But the goal of this discussion is to showcase how education leads to promoting development of individual learners’ skills and acquisition of knowledge, good citizenship and participation in community life for better economic and social well-being. But at times, these indicators of community development objectives cannot be achieved because of how vested interest are used or manipulated, resulting in marginalization and inequality amongst the people in the same area.

In other words, vested interest is a term used in economics to describe the level of financial or personal stake an individual or group has in a particular outcome or decision. It can also refer to the ownership or investments that have the potential to produce future financial gains (Smith, 2019). Vested interest can also refer to the entitlement or right an individual or group has as a result of past actions or investments. This can include legal

rights, such as the right to receive a portion of profits from a business, or personal rights, like the right to make decisions about a shared asset (Johnson, 2018).

In psychology, vested interest is often used to describe the level of emotional investment an individual has in a particular belief or outcome. This can influence their behaviour and decision-making, as they are more likely to defend or promote their vested interest (Williams, 2017). Vested Interest can also refer to the level of influence or power an individual or group has in a certain situation. This can be seen in political or social systems, where certain groups or individuals hold a vested interest in maintaining their current level of authority (Chen, 2016).

From a legal standpoint, vested interest can refer to a contractual right or interest in a particular property or asset. This can include rights of use, possession or control over the asset, which are typically granted through a legally binding agreement (Anderson, 2015). Vested interest is also commonly used in the context of education and career development. It can refer to the level of commitment and dedication an individual has towards their education or career goals. This can impact their motivation, persistence and success in achieving their desired outcomes (Lee, 2014).

Community Development

Community development means the process of improving the social, economic, and environmental conditions of a community through collective action and participation. This can involve a range of activities, including community organizing, capacity building and policy development. Community development has focused on its role in promoting resilience and sustainability, as well as addressing issues of social exclusion and inequality.

Okirika (2022) defines community development as the process of promoting social, economic and cultural growth within a particular community, with the goal of improving the overall well-being of its residents. Similarly, Andersson and Duit (2008) view community development as “a dynamic, participatory process aimed at improving social, economic, and environmental outcomes in a community.” The authors highlight the importance of building strong partnerships and promoting citizen engagement in sustainable development efforts. According to World Bank (2007), community development can be defined as “a process through which individuals, community groups, and organizations come together to build social capital, create economic opportunities, and enhance the quality of life in their communities.”

Ledwith (2011) views community development as “a social and political process that involves participation and empowerment of individuals, groups and communities.” Ledwith argues that it should be based on principles of social justice and equality, and should challenge oppressive structures and systems. Brown and Reed (2012) add that community development is “a multifaceted approach to improving community well-being that seeks to address issues of poverty, inequality and social exclusion.” They also discuss the challenges and opportunities facing community development practitioners and

practice in today's complex social and economic context. According to United Nations Development Programme (2013), community development is "a process that enables individuals, groups, and communities to take collective action to address their own needs and concerns." It highlights the importance of community ownership and participation in achieving sustainable development goals. Oji and Ajoku (2021) views community development as a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participatory democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunities, equalization and social justice through organization, education and empowerment of the people within their communities.

This definition signifies that the role of practitioners in relation to these choices is to enable communities to develop their understanding of these context and their implications and to deliberate together to reach their own decisions about their aims and how they seek to achieve them. It is obvious that to achieve this, vested interest has a role to play. In the presence of vested interest, it will be difficult to achieve the tangible and non-tangible aspects of community goals, which have to do with change and provision of physical infrastructure in a given community.

Community Development has the Following Tools for Workability:

- Concept of participation or voluntary participation (taking part in decision-making to identify needs, mobilization of resources, implementation, execution, monitoring and evaluation)
- Social infrastructure
- Poverty reduction
- Income generation
- Sustainability and sustainable development
- Capacity building
- Integration
- Empowerment
- Self-help mobilization.

Value and Vested Interest in Relation to Community Development Practice in Nigeria is Faced with the Following:

- No substantive ministry to cater for community development felt needs and activities, giving room for different ministries to run and have interest in community development affairs without requisite knowledge of the profession or specialty. They rely on persuasion instead of power to achieve the goals of community development practice.
- No room for research and data collection on the assessment of community needs
- Communal conflicts and crisis (bad leadership)
- Professionals, practitioners and facilitators are not incorporated into the

mainstream of administration of community development practice; rather advice is sought from non-professionals.

- Chieftaincy tussle, land ownership, recruitment of followers: Everyone wants to be seen as a lord, kingmaker, emperor, community chief, chairman and member of community development committee, youth leader, etc. There is also the desire to be in charge even at the level of households, especially where wives retain their stronghold not to allow another woman take over their husbands.
- Governments at all levels presently are more interested in politics than improvement of life in rural communities. This has brought negative consequences on the nation's community development practices. Actually, it is the duty of government at all levels to make policies on community development practice and review them when the need arises, especially situational events. This is expected to be devoid of any political colourations and be guided by the principles of equity, justice, fairness and total growth of the rural citizenry. Ajoku (2023) notes that, in this context, there is abuse of power by the government with respect to the provision of functional education to the citizenry.
- Painful experience of political influence on community development practice in the area of allocation of resources. Budgetary allocation to community development practice is more of politics than necessity. The major determinant of the direction of allocation is political consideration and maturation. Community development practice is built on collective bargaining and population participation. But budgetary allocations to the sector are erroneously influenced by vested interest of politicians' ideology and injection of manifesto of the ruling political party rather than any other considerations. Appointment of heads or directors to the units that have to do with community development practice is mostly influenced by political alignment, rather than procedural laws governing such sectors.
- Unqualified professionals, who are not practitioners, are given such appointments, which also makes it difficult for the government to conduct thematic investigations on the felt needs of the rural communities. Rather, development projects are awarded by government based on the interest and gain for political patronage. Budgetary allocation to community development practice has continued to depreciate. Government policies and programmes hardly attract the financial attention that will guarantee the implementation of such policies and programmes to enhance sustainable living of rural dwellers, especially in Nigeria.

Influence of the Political Elite and Politicization: According to Adama and Afolayan, (2019), political crisis or struggle is based on value and vested interest. The political elite have a significant influence on development projects in Nigeria, often leading to vested interests that hinder the progress of community development practice initiatives,

particularly project siting. For example, in many cases, the elite prioritize their own personal gains over the well-being of the community, resulting in the misallocation of resources and inadequate project implementation. One example of this can be seen in the oil-rich Niger Delta region, where community development projects have been continually hindered by the corrupt political elite. The elite often collude with multinational oil companies to exploit the region's resources for their own benefits, rather than investing in projects that would truly benefit the local communities (Ojo & Adejumo, 2018).

Furthermore, the political elite in Nigeria have also been known to use development projects as a means of gaining political support and influence. They often channel resources towards projects in areas where they have a strong voter base, neglecting the needs of other communities. This hinders the progress of community development practice initiatives, perpetuates inequality and further marginalizes already disadvantaged communities (Orji & Igwe, 2017). These vested interests must be addressed in order for sustainable and equitable development to take place in Nigeria. A case study is Rivers State, where political gladiators are fighting for the commonwealth of the people. This has given rise to communal conflicts and sympathy amongst political cohorts, internally and externally.

Donor Agencies and Organizations: Another issue is the impact of donor funding and aid on community development projects. In many cases, donor agencies and organizations may have their own agendas and interests that may not align with the needs and priorities of the local community. This can result in unequal power dynamics and decision-making processes, ultimately leading to ineffective or even harmful development projects. According to Okafor and Amadi (2016), the impact of donor funding and aid on development projects is an important aspect to consider in community development practice initiatives, particularly in Nigeria. The involvement of donors in funding and providing aid can have both positive and negative effects on the success and sustainability of development projects. One example of vested interest in community development practice initiatives in Nigeria is the development of schools and educational facilities. These projects often receive significant funding from donors and aid organizations. While this can greatly benefit the community, it can also lead to dependence on external aid and hinder the long-term sustainability of the project. Another example is the development of healthcare facilities in Nigeria. Donor funding and aid can greatly improve access to healthcare services for the community. However, it can also lead to a lack of investment and ownership from the local government, resulting in a lack of long-term sustainability.

In contrast, development projects that involve the community and prioritize local ownership and involvement tend to have a greater impact and sustainability. One example of this is the implementation of microfinance programmes, which empower individuals and communities to take control of their own economic development.

Role of Government: Inadequate support from government officials has been a significant barrier to community development projects in Nigeria. This is evident in the numerous instances of vested interest shown by these officials in the implementation of community development initiatives. For example, Okonkwo and Anyanwu (2015) note that in the case of the water sanitation project in Lagos, government officials were found to have allocated a large portion of the project's budget to their own personal expenses, resulting in the project's failure and hindering the development of the community. In the education project in Kano State, government officials used their influence to award the project contracts to their cronies, leading to poor quality of work and ultimately impeding the progress of the community. These examples demonstrate the detrimental impact of vested interests from government officials on community development projects in Nigeria. Ojo and Adejumo (2018) note that government officials prioritize their own personal gain over the needs of the community they serve. This can lead to mismanagement of funds allocated for community development projects, resulting in minimal impact on the intended beneficiaries. Similarly, Adegbite and Mohammed (2014) assert that the impact of vested interest on community development practice goes beyond economic factors. In many cases, it also affects the social and political aspects of a community. Government officials with vested interests may manipulate community development programmes for their own benefit, leading to a lack of transparency and accountability.

Tribalism and Ethnicity: Tribalism and ethnicity can also hinder community development practice initiatives in Nigeria. In some cases, resources are only allocated to communities belonging to a particular tribe or ethnicity, while neglecting others. This can result in unequal distribution of resources, leading to hindered community development.

Exploitation/Diversion of Resources: Exploitation and diversion of resources by oil companies in the context of community development practice initiatives in Nigeria is a significant issue that needs to be addressed. This has led to vested interests and conflicts between the companies and the local communities. For example, John (2019) argues that the exploration and extraction of oil in the Niger Delta has resulted in negative social, economic, and environmental impacts on the local communities. One notable example is the Ogoni community, which has been heavily affected by the activities of oil companies. The Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) has been operating in Ogoniland since the 1950s and has been accused of extensive environmental degradation, health hazards and human rights abuses. The company has also been accused of exploiting and diverting resources from the community without providing adequate compensation or development initiatives. Another example is the conflict between the Itsekiri community and Chevron Nigeria Limited. The company has been accused of exploiting and diverting resources, particularly natural gas, from the community without proper compensation or

addressing the negative impacts on the community's livelihood (Sarah & David, 2018). These examples demonstrate the widespread issue of exploitation by oil companies in Nigeria, and how it has become a vested interest in community development practice initiatives. It is imperative to address these issues and promote sustainable development practices that benefit both the companies and the local communities.

Resistance to Change/Social change: Some vested interests may also resist community development initiatives that threaten their current positions or way of life. For example, a community leader who benefit from the current state of affairs may resist development projects that aim to improve the lives of the community, as it may threaten their power and influence (Brown and Lee, 2018). Ololube, Dudafa, Uriah and Agbor (2013), cited in Oji and Kpakol (2023), contend that social change is either positive or negative in nature. Positive social change involves desirable development and improvement in the entire or some parts of societal institutions, which include culture, economy, education, family, international affairs, law, population, politics and religion, which invariably enhance human and social conditions of the people, especially in rural communities. Social change is a concept many people take for granted or do not even really understand. But, no society has ever remained the same; change is always happening. To some communities, the change is very rapid and remarkable, especially in educated or civilized societies.

Dominant Groups: Dominant groups are a key factor in community development practice initiatives in Nigeria. According to Torres and Kok (2008), these groups often hold a great deal of power and influence, which can significantly impact the success or failure of development efforts. For instance, in many cases, dominant groups may have vested interests in maintaining the status quo, which can hinder progress and hold back marginalized communities. One instance of this can be seen in the oil industry in Nigeria, where dominant groups hold significant political and economic power. These groups often prioritize their own interests over the needs of local communities, leading to issues like environmental degradation and displacement of indigenous populations (Patel & Singh, 2020). Another example can be seen in the education system, where dominant groups may resist efforts to create more inclusive and diverse curriculums. This can lead to unequal access to education and perpetuate systems of oppression. Walker and Smith, (2015) note that women and minority groups may face discrimination and unequal access to resources and opportunities due to the influence of vested interests of dominant groups in development projects.

Vested interest has a detrimental effect on community development practice in Nigeria. It hinders progress and development, creates social and political unrest, and ultimately hinders the well-being of the community. It perpetuates existing inequalities. It is important for development practitioners to critically assess and address vested interests in their work to ensure that development projects truly benefit the community and promote inclusive and equitable development. In order to combat the negative

impact of vested interest on community development practice in Nigeria, transparency and accountability are crucial. These can be achieved through strong governance structures, such as independent oversight committees, that ensure funds and resources are allocated and utilized properly for the benefit of the community. Additionally, involving community members in decision-making processes and project implementation can also help mitigate the negative effects of vested interest. By recognizing and addressing this issue, people can work towards creating thriving communities that are truly developed and cater for the needs of their members.

The Ways in which Value and Vested Interest Can Promote Community Development Practice Initiative Include the Following:

- 1. Establishing Partnerships:** Vested interests can promote community development practice initiatives in Nigeria through establishing partnerships with organizations and individuals working towards similar goals. For example, a vested interest group can partner a non-governmental organization (NGO) to conduct community development projects in specific areas (Smith, 2020).
- 2. Providing Financial Support:** By providing financial support, vested interests can help community development initiatives in Nigeria. This can include funding for infrastructure development, education programmes or health projects. For instance, a business with interests in a particular community can donate funds to build a school or a medical facility.
- 3. Advocating Policy Changes:** People with vested interests can use their influence to advocate policy changes that will benefit the community. This can include lobbying for better infrastructure, improved access to education or healthcare reforms. For example, a group of investors can lobby the government to allocate more funds for education in a specific region.
- 4. Implementing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives:** Companies with value and vested interests in Nigeria can contribute to community development by implementing CSR initiatives. This can include building schools, providing job training or sponsoring community events. For instance, a multinational corporation can invest in building schools in underprivileged areas as part of its CSR programme.
- 5. Supporting Local Businesses:** Vested interests can promote community development by supporting local businesses in Nigeria. This can include investing in small businesses, providing training and resources or promoting their products and services. For example, a group of investors can invest in a local farming cooperative to help improve the livelihoods of farmers in a particular community (Brown, 2021).

6. Encouraging Employee Involvement: individuals with vested interests can involve their employees in community development initiatives by organizing volunteer events or providing paid time-off for employees to participate in community projects. This not only benefits the community but also boosts employee morale and engagement. According to Garcia (2019), a company can organize a team-building event, where employees help build a community centre in a disadvantaged neighbourhood.

7. Conducting Research and Sharing Knowledge: Groups with vested interests can promote community development in Nigeria by conducting research on the needs and challenges faced by the community and sharing this knowledge with relevant stakeholders. This can help inform policies and programmes that are more targeted and effective in addressing community needs. For example, a group of academics can conduct research on the impact of poverty on education in a particular region and share its findings with NGOs and government agencies to inform their programmes.

In sum, vested interests can play a crucial role in promoting community development initiatives in Nigeria by utilizing their resources, influence, and expertise. Through partnerships, financial support, policy advocacy, and other initiatives, vested interests can contribute to the overall development and well-being of communities in Nigeria.

Key Stakeholders Involved in Supporting Community Development Practice Outcomes

The key actors involved in shaping community development practice outcomes initiatives in Nigeria are government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community leaders and communities. These actors play critical roles in driving and implementing community development projects, which aim to improve the overall well-being and living conditions of a particular community.

1. The government: Governments, particularly at the local and state levels, are responsible for creating policies and allocating resources for community development initiatives. They work closely with NGOs, which often have expertise and resources in addressing specific community needs. These NGOs also act as intermediaries between the government and the community, helping to bridge any gaps in communication and coordination (Adams, 2015).

2. Community Leaders: As noted by Evans (2019), community leaders, such as traditional rulers, religious leaders and local council members, have significant influence and play a vital role in shaping community development outcomes. Their involvement is crucial in garnering support and mobilizing community members to participate in development projects.

3. Community Members: Community members are key factors in community development outcomes. Their active involvement and participation are essential for the success and sustainability of any community development project. They often contribute

their time, resources and knowledge to the project, making it their own and ultimately driving positive outcomes (Brown, 2018).

4. Collaborative Efforts: According to Cunningham (2017), a particular community development project in Nigeria involved the collaboration of the government, NGOs and community leaders to provide access to clean water for a rural community. The government provided funding and policy support, the NGOs assisted with technical expertise and resources, and the community leaders helped to mobilize community members to participate in constructing the water system. As a result, the project was successful, and the community now has access to clean water, improving their overall health and well-being. Davis (2016) cites an instance that a community-based organization in Nigeria partnered the local government to provide vocational training for youth in a low-income community. With the support of community leaders, the project was able to engage youth who were at risk of delinquency, providing them with marketable skills and empowering them to become productive members of society.

These examples demonstrate the crucial roles of stakeholders in supporting successful community development outcomes initiatives in Nigeria. They highlight the importance of collaboration and active participation from all stakeholders to achieve meaningful and sustainable change in a community.

Relationship between Value and Vested Interest and Community Development Practice in Nigeria

The relationship between value and vested interest and community development practice in Nigeria is a complex and often contentious issue. Vested interest refers to the personal or financial stake that individuals or groups have in a particular project or development. In the context of community development, this can manifest in various forms, such as government officials pushing for certain initiatives to benefit their own interests, or corporations undertaking development projects that prioritize their bottom line over the needs of the community (Brown & Lee, 2018). An example of this can be seen in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, where the activities of the oil industry have led to the exploitation of natural resources and the displacement of local communities (John, 2019). Despite this, little has been done to address the social and environmental impacts of these developments on unity.

Another example is the development of large-scale infrastructure projects, such as highways and dams, which often prioritize the interests of the government and contractors over the needs of the community. This can result in forced evictions, loss of livelihoods and environmental degradation, further exacerbating the already existing social and economic inequalities in the country. However, community-led development projects have proven to have a positive impact on the overall development of communities. By involving community members in the decision-making process and

prioritizing their needs and interests, these projects have been able to bring about sustainable and inclusive development.

In a nutshell, the relationship between vested interest and community development in Nigeria is a complex one, often characterized by conflicting interests and power dynamics. It is crucial for stakeholders to prioritize the needs and interests of the community in order for development initiatives to truly benefit the people and promote inclusive growth.

Recommendations and Strategies for Addressing Value and Vested Interest in Promoting Equitable and Sustainable Community Development Practice in Nigeria

The following are recommendations for addressing value and vested interest and promoting more equitable and sustainable community development practices:

- 1. Creating a ministry of community development in the presidency:** This will checkmate and supervise strictly projects and programmes of the sector.
- 2. Prioritizing Participatory Decision-making Processes in Policy Development:** This can involve actively engaging marginalized communities in the decision-making process and taking their perspectives and needs into account.
- 3. Promoting Transparency and Accountability in Decision-making:** This can help mitigate the influence of vested interest and ensure fair and sustainable development practices.
- 4. Encouraging the Adoption of Sustainable Community Development Practices:** Another strategy could be to incentivize and encourage the adoption of sustainable development practices through policies such as tax breaks, subsidies and certifications. This can help create a level playing field for smaller businesses and reduce the effects of vested interests.
- 5. Investing in Education and Awareness Campaigns:** This can also play a role in promoting more equitable and sustainable community development practices. By educating the public on the importance of sustainable development and the negative effects of vested interest, individuals may be more likely to support and participate in sustainable initiatives.
- 6. Implementing Stricter Regulations and Enforcement Mechanisms:** This can also help address vested interest. It can involve measures such as mandatory environmental impact assessments and strict penalties for non-compliance. Such actions can provide a level playing field and hold those with vested interest accountable for their actions.

Conclusion

This paper centred on the implications of value and vested interest for community development practice in Nigeria. It showed that value and vested interest play significant roles, either positive or negative, in all facets of rural and urban communities. Community development practice prioritise participation, poverty reduction, integration, empowerment, capacity building self-help, mobilization, as well as monitoring, execution and evaluation of projects and programmes of the people. Sustainable community development practice in Nigeria can only be achieved through positive respect for value and vested interest as ascribed to man by the Creator of the universe.

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30**REVITALIZING THE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT****By****Stanley N. N. Mandah**

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Abstract

The study focused on the public library system in Nigeria. Public library is important because of its functions in library education. Over the years, it has been observed that some of the functions are not easily achieved based on problems affecting the library. Thus, this paper considered the negative factors affecting the realization of the laudable objectives of public library and reconsidered the need to generate factors that can enhance or revitalize its existence. There exists a direct relationship between public library and national development. Hence, there is the need for its revitalization. The paper made salient recommendations to this effect and concluded that all efforts must be to bring back public library to its full functioning as a type of library that will enhance national development.

Keywords: Revitalization, public library, system, national development

Introduction

The effective use of the library enhances growth and development of the individual, society and the nation. The user acquires information and knowledge, and the library renews itself by acquiring new information materials for the ever-expanding information needs of the users. Society becomes developed continuously as a result of the information acquired. Thus, the public library needs to be revitalized for national development. An obvious gap exists between the existence of public library and national development.

Library science has been defined by different authors. Gates, cited in Obi (2013), defines library science as the body of organized knowledge in whatever form which is concerned with the purpose, objectives and functions of libraries and the principles, theories, methods, organization and techniques employed in performing library services. Library services can be viewed as a collection of manuscripts, publications and other materials for reading, viewing, listening, studying, referencing, etc. Library is the

storehouse of knowledge for later use. Edoka (2000) sees library as a collection of books and possibly other materials and media that are accessible for use by its members and allied institution.

The main objective of library services is to maximize the social utility of recorded information for the benefit of society. Thus, modern discoveries and innovations, particularly those showing the advancement of science and technology, depend on rational use of recorded information. Library has been described as a layman's university. It can equally mean the heart of society. The commonality of the various definitions confirms that library is an organized knowledge; it has purposes, objectives and functions. Library has its principles, theories, methods, organization and techniques. In the real sense of application of library science, librarianship is implied. It is on this note that library science can be defined as the collection, organisation, presentation, dissemination and the use of books and non-book materials for varying needs (information, knowledge, aesthetic, recreation, etc.)

Types of Library

Libraries exist to provide information services to users. The following are the major types of library.

National Library: it is known as the nation's apex library. Every nation has its own national library, e.g. National Library of Nigeria. Edoka (2000) conceives of it as library of libraries and legal depository for books.

- **Academic Library:** It is a library attached to institutions of higher learning. It enhances and provides information, research and directory.
- **School Library:** This is for primary and secondary schools. It is not academic library because it is not into research. It is a resource centre. It provides information, and improves reading skills and learning habits.
- **Special Library:** This belongs to a particular organization that sets it up, e.g. government ministries, parastatals, banks, professional bodies and research institutions. It is maintained by the founder or parent body. Other examples are law library, medical library, sports library, and church library.
- **Private Library:** This is a personal library or family library. It is mostly owned by bibliophiles. Collection is according to individual owners, e.g. Herbert Macaulay library.
- **Electronic Library:** This is the collection of library resources in electronic formats, which can be accessed electronically with ease from different locations. Electronic library can access negotiation, resource capture storage and access resources discovery, delivery, utilization, etc.
- **Public Library:** this exists to meet information, educational and other needs of the general community, which may be recreational, aesthetic, etc. The existence of

public library is to make available all kinds of knowledge and information resources for its users (internally and externally). There is no limitation regarding age and physical challenge.

Public library maintains the following functions, according to the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto of 1994:

- Supports both individual and formal education at all levels.
- Provides access to cultural expression of all opportunities for personal creative development.
- Strengthens reading habits of all users.
- Supports oral traditions and provides information services to all interest groups in all areas of human activities.
- Facilitates development of literacy skills.
- Ought to house adequate current books and non-book materials for public use.
- Is owned and maintained by state government for public use.

Interrelationship between Library and Educational Technology

Libraries emerged as a result of the need to preserve and utilize records of civilization. This preservation is being documented. The documentation appeared in pictorials, carvings, paintings on stone, walls, velum, clay tabloids, parchment, Papyrus and scrolls. With time, writing emerged and formed part of the documentation process. The ancient documentation process gave meaning to the existence of modern library. Obi (2009) defines library as the selected collection of books and non-book materials organized and preserved for the dissemination of information by a well-qualified librarian. This implies that not all books and non-book materials are selected. Those that enhance teaching and learning as well as documentary processes are selected. The book materials are conceived as textbooks, manuals, newspapers, fiction, journals, encyclopedia, etc., while the non-books are projector, television, transparencies, slides, films, charts, graphics, audio cassettes, computers, etc.

The books and non-book materials can be accessed as hardware and software. Library resources are also made available to users to explore and to exploit. The non-book materials are information-bearing materials and they are introduced into the library through the advances of information technology, which is a critical aspect of educational technology.

The book and non-book materials that complement teaching and learning are divided into three segments: audio-materials, visual materials and audio-visual materials. The audio materials appeal to the auditory perception; the visual materials appeal to the sense of sight; while the audio-visual materials appeal to the sense of both sight and

hearing at the same time. The non-print resources are used not only by technologists but also in libraries by teachers and learners (users). The non-print materials are good for slow learners. The library itself is an educational agency and the modern technology which comes in the form of gadgets greatly aids the provision of information service delivery in the library. This is represented in the diagram below:

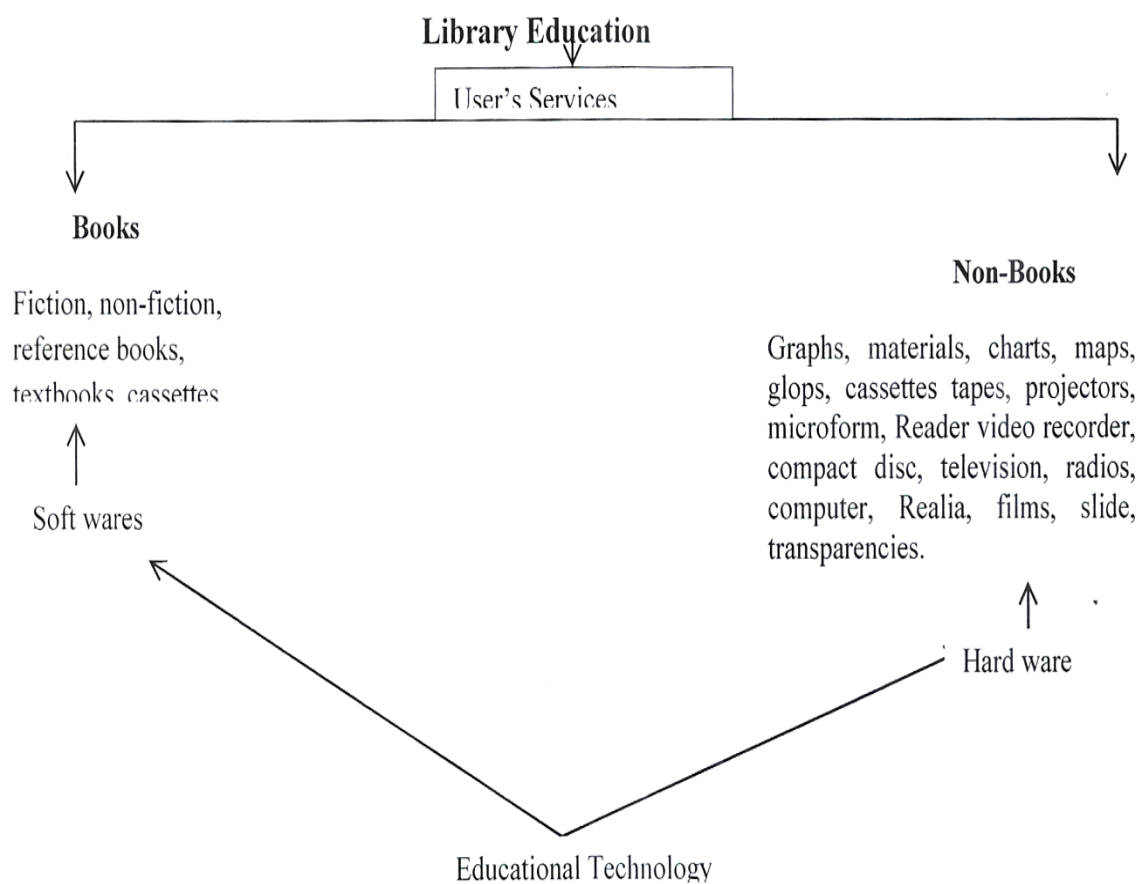


Fig. 1: Inter-relativity representation of Educational Technology and Library Education

Fig. 1: Interrelationship between Library and Educational Technology

Fig. 1 indicates that the books and non-book materials in library education are conceived as hardware and software. The other functions of library education, such as circulation, classification, cataloguing, and reference services are enhanced by the third domain of educational technology, which is systems approach.

Public Library System

A system is the sum total of interrelated parts working independently and in conjunction with one another to achieve some objectives. A system must possess parts, subsets, or

units functioning independently and collectively to enable the objective of the system to be achieved. In a public library, there exist functional sections, such as the following:

- Users services section
- Technical section
- Research/Bibliographic section
- Information communication technology(ICT) section
- Administrative section.

This is graphically illustrated below:

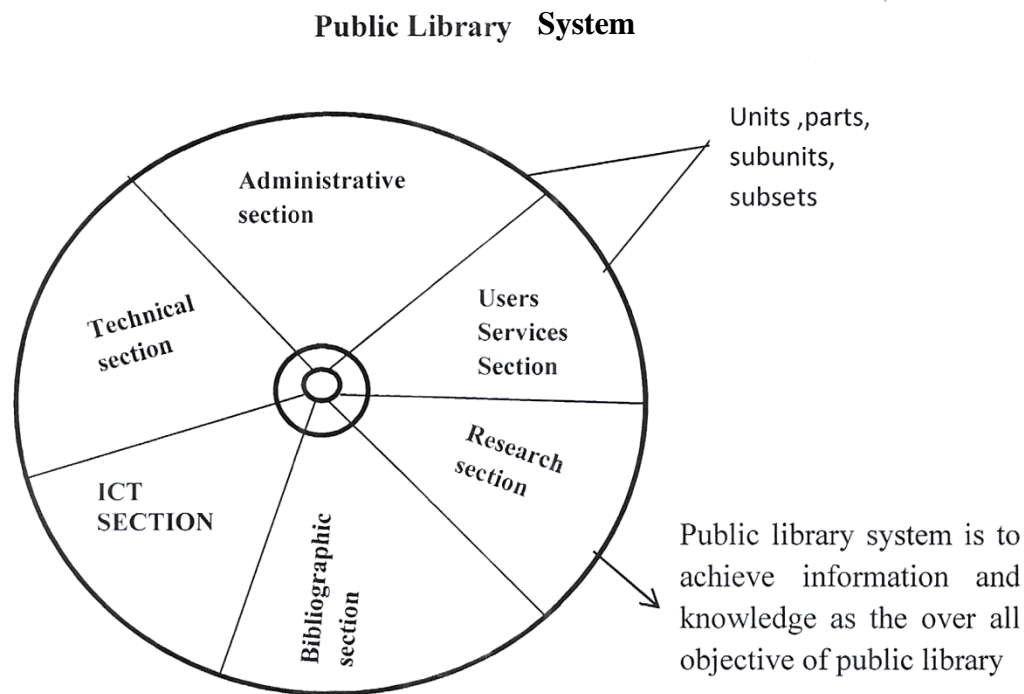


Fig. 2: Graphical Representation of Public Library System

Public Library and National Development

Public library dates back to the 19th century. It was first used in England (Aslam & Sonkar, 2018), funded with public funds and managed by professional librarians and para-professionals. Public library relates to national development, which can be defined as improvement in a country's social and economic conditions through the management of national and human resources in order to create wealth and improve lives. National development can also be described as the capacity of any country to raise the standard of living of its residents through providing individuals with basic livelihood requirements and supplying them with employment, among others, to alleviate poverty.

Smarter (2023) posits that national development can be measured by the following indicators:

- i. Gross domestic product (GDP), which is an economic measure of money a country makes through its products or services;
- ii. Birth/Death rates, that is the number of births and deaths in a country;
- iii. Life expectancy, which is the general age people can live in a nation;
- iv. Literacy rate, involving the number of people in percentage over the age of fifteen (15) years who can read and write; and
- v. Human development index. This aims at the quality or level of human development in a country, which includes health of a population (life expectancy), educational level, and standard of living through Gross National Income (GNI).

From the foregoing public library and national development can be represented graphically thus:

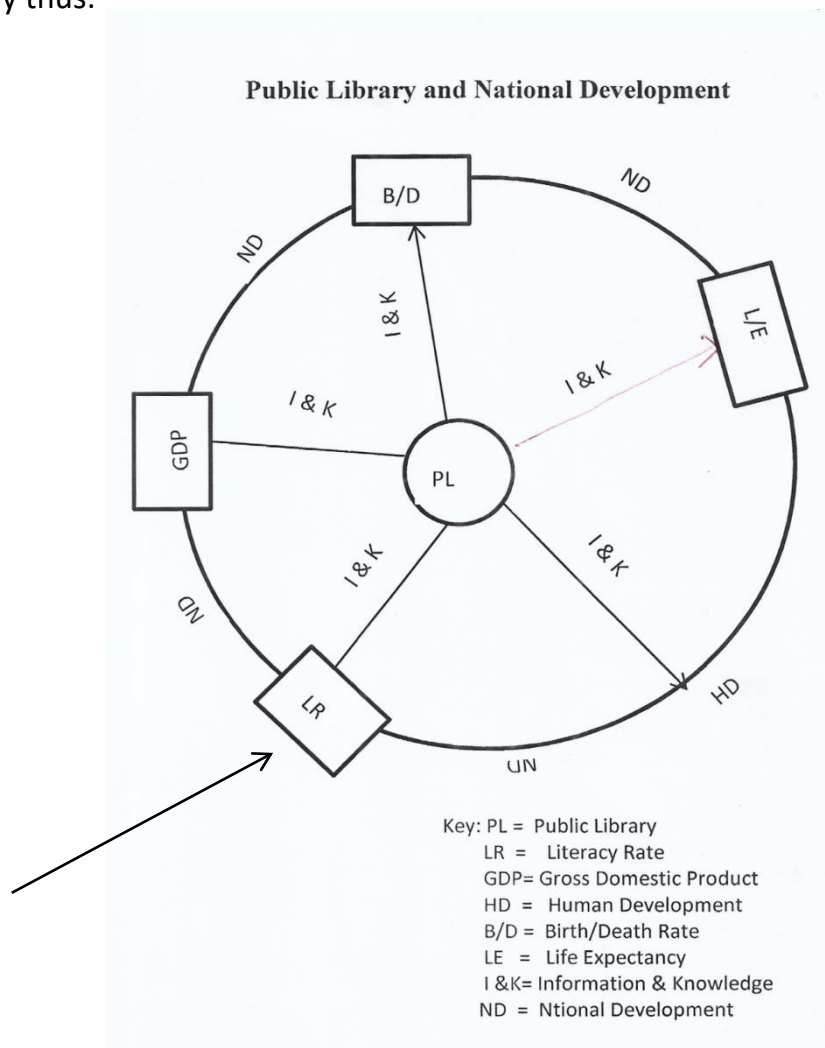


Fig. 3: Public Library and National Development

Information and Knowledge

The term information has been subjected to various definitions due to its enormous growth and use. The *Webster's Dictionary* defines information as the communication or reception of knowledge or intelligence communicated by others or obtained from investigation or instruction. Information also consists of facts and data organised to describe a particular situation. Knowledge is used to define what a specific situation means and it is applied to interpret information about the situation and to decide how to handle it. According to Lester and Koehler (2007), information tells about physical things in the library, such as registration card, holder's name, password, etc., while knowledge describes the knowhow and how to get about a procedure. Knowledge is the application of information. While there is fluidity in knowledge (diverse, forever changing), information is helpless without knowledge. Information is not knowledge until it is applied effectively. Thus, information and knowledge are inseparable.

Revitalizing Public Library to Enhance National Development

The following steps should be considered in any attempt to revitalize public library.

1. Rescue Public Library from Threats**a. Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

This is the intelligence of machines or software as opposed to human or animal intelligence. It is a study of computer science that develops and studies intelligent machines. There are various types of AI software: IBM Watson –question and answering, Tensor Flow –Machine learning, H2O AI-Cortana- Virtual Assistant, Google Assistants, Sales Force Einstein, etc.

AI software is a computer program which mimics human behaviour by learning various data patterns and insights. AI is also a field of study which combines computer science and robust-data sets to aid problem-solving. Similarly, AI is the theory and development of computer systems capable of performing task that historically required human intelligence, such as recognizing speech, making decisions and identifying patterns.

Benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- i. It drives down the time taken to perform a task.
- ii. It enables execution of complex tasks without cost.
- iii. It operates without interruption or breaks.
- iv. It augments capabilities of individuals.

2. Google: This is a popular Internet search engine. It scans the Web to find web pages that are relevant to the words you have typed in a search box. Google search is

the popular web search engine which is designed to search information on the **World Wide Web**.

3. Information Needs: This is the desire to locate and obtain knowledge and information to satisfy a conscious or unconscious need; it was coined by Robert S. Taylor.

4. Information-seeking Behaviour: It means the ways and means different profiles get information to meet their needs and fulfil their social or intrinsic obligation. The approaches of information-seeking behaviour include question and answer, trips to a library for book and non-book materials, Internet search engines, dialogue, and conversation. Koehler (2007) opines that information-seeking behaviour may be unsophisticated; it can be serendipitous, as one can be searching for one item of information but end up in another not envisaged. Etim (2007) identifies the following as an important information-seeking strategy:

Locate and Access, which is a situation where an information seeker will be able to locate and access designed information from the numerous resources from either the library or Internet sources.

Fisher (2005) advocates an information motor ground, whose emphasis is on space for exchange of information. There is a need for social atmosphere that fosters the spontaneous and serendipitous sharing of information. Information-seeking behaviour also involves seekers utilizing what they have found by reading, viewing or listening in order to determine its relevance and to extract and put it to use.

5. Inadequate Fund: Finance is one of the major factors that are required to revitalize public library. This will greatly assist to build more public libraries in each local government area, equip a public library with facilities, procure books and non-book materials, organize seminars and workshops, etc.

6. Drive towards Information Society: Information society, as defined by Gurnsay, cited in Obi (2013), involves the majority of the people engaged in creating, gathering, storing, processing or distributing information. As of 2006, five nations were described as information societies by International Telecommunication Union. They were Korea, Japan, Denmark, Iceland and Hong Kong. Most of the Western nations, like Canada, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France and Germany, have developed themselves into information societies.

Attributes of Information Societies

- Storing information technology base that has influenced the way people work, as most of their business activities and transactions are technically done and these have boosted their economy.

- The standard of living, patterns of work and leisure, the education system and marketplaces are influenced by advances in information and knowledge.
- Information communication technology is the order of the day. The implication is that everyone will aspire to be technology literate and the nation will build its own information industry which will enhance national development.

7. Research of Information Resource: This involves individuals, organizations, libraries, information centres, educational institutions, government agencies, electronic information systems. It concerns maintenance of libraries and building infrastructure – libraries, post-offices, cybercafés, etc. Sarrocco (2005) enumerates the following steps for enhancing revival of public libraries and encouraging information society:

- Ensure Internet connectivity.
- Establish international cooperation.
- Create an enabling environment by making policies and regulations to govern information activities.
- Liberalize use of information gadgets.
- Invite international bodies for technology transfer to provide technical and financial assistance.
- Encourage citizens through training to have the basic skills needed to fully participate in the information society.
- Handle political influence in the system, as it affects public library.
- The national library should be a co-coordinating agency.
- Library board should be headed by a professional; if moribund, it should be revived, funded and sustained.
- Readership campaign should be efficient and effective.

Conclusion

The revival of the public library is pertinent to national development. There exist direct relationships between the two variables. Therefore, individuals, agencies, governments, international bodies and other stakeholders should ensure that the public library is sustained to meet its overall objectives, which will enhance the national development of the country.

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31**CHARACTER EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE
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Abstract

This study explores the role of character education in promoting sustainable development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The Niger Delta, known for its rich natural resources, has long been affected by socio-economic challenges, environmental degradation and conflict. Given these challenges, fostering a culture of peace, ethical responsibility and environmental stewardship is crucial for sustainable development in the region. Through a mixed-methods approach, this study examines how character education can contribute to addressing these issues by instilling values such as respect for human rights, social justice and environmental responsibility. Data were collected from educational institutions, community leaders and local organizations to assess the current state of character education and its potential to foster sustainable practices and peaceful coexistence. Findings suggest that integrating character education into curricula and community programmes can enhance civic engagement, improve environmental awareness and reduce conflicts, thus contributing to the long-term development of the Niger Delta. The study advocates the inclusion of character education in educational policies and community initiatives as a means to build resilient communities and promote sustainable peace and development in the region.

Introduction

“Great learning and superior abilities will be of little value...unless virtue, truth and integrity are added to them.” —Abigail Adams (in Pala, 2011)

Character education is significant in every society in view of the need for people to become better, grow well and engage in development of their society. Character education is a major need in the Nigerian society because the youth constitute the storehouse of energy and ideas of the society, being in the position to be a catalyst in the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria (Odion, 2010). When this significant responsibility is recognized, policy makers would not struggle to initiate policies that empower all classes of people.

According to Odion (2010), well-developed youth are more likely to imbue in their children the virtues of development. Having a good character is significant because it determines the outcome of everything, especially human relations in areas of behaviour and daily activities. In fact, good character is critical for peace and stability. When character education is prioritized, people can easily appreciate the relevance of peace and why they should avoid violence, especially in the Niger Delta, where youth violence affected stability for decades.

Concept of Character Education

Character focuses on the behaviour of individuals. The purpose of education is to inform and empower people with the aim of making their lives better. Therefore, character education refers to the teaching and development of values, ethics and behaviors that help individuals become responsible, respectful and caring members of society. It is a deliberate and intentional effort to cultivate good character traits, such as honesty, integrity, respect, empathy and responsibility, in students, citizens or individuals of any age group. Character education aims not only to instil moral values but also to promote personal growth, community engagement and the betterment of society as a whole. Character education has been explained thus:

Character education is a national movement creating schools that foster ethical, responsible and caring young people by modelling and teaching good character through emphasis on universal values that we all share. It is the intentional, proactive effort by schools, districts and states to instil in their students' important core ethical values such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility and respect for self and others (Pala, 2011, p.25).

According to Character Education Foundation (2010), character education creates long-term solutions that address moral, ethical and academic issues of growing concern to society (Pala, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

Emotional Intelligence Theory: Emotional intelligence offers an alternative approach to human capital management. According to Moeller (2006), emotional intelligence aims to improve personal and organisational effectiveness and performance. Character education and peacebuilding can be deeply informed by Emotional Intelligence (EI) Theory, as EI focuses on recognizing, understanding and managing emotions in oneself and others, as well as using emotions to facilitate thinking and behaviour. Motivation, in the EI framework, involves harnessing emotions to pursue goals with energy and persistence. For character education, motivation helps individuals stay committed to their

personal development and moral growth. For peacebuilding, motivation drives people to work toward creating harmony, even when the path is difficult. In character education, self-regulation is concerned with teaching individuals to manage their actions in line with their values, even when faced with stress or adversity. Learning self-regulation helps build virtues like patience, discipline and resilience.

Human Capital Theory: This theory states that people's learning capacities are comparable to other natural resources involved in the production process, when the resource is effectively exploited (Nwobueze, 2015).

The framework of this paper is a combination of emotional intelligence and human capital theories which focus on ways of improving people's performance and enhancing productivity. This means that a combination of emotional intelligence and human capital is significant for effective character education, which is critical for sustainable development.

Key Aspects of Character Education

Moral and Ethical Development: It has been found that character education emphasizes the importance of developing ethical values and the ability to distinguish right from wrong. This requires high emotional intelligence, considering the need for ethical effectiveness. These values form the foundation for making good decisions and treating others with fairness and respect.

Core Values and Virtues: The teaching of core values (e.g. honesty, responsibility, perseverance and empathy) is a central component of character education. These values can help individuals navigate challenges, build positive relationships and contribute meaningfully to society.

Positive Behaviour and Social Responsibility: Character education encourages behaviours that promote the common good, such as kindness, cooperation and respect for others. It also stresses the importance of personal responsibility in contributing to a harmonious and just society.

Personal Development: Character education focuses on fostering personal growth and self-discipline. It involves helping individuals become aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and encouraging them to act in ways that reflect high moral standards.

Community and Civic Engagement: Teaching character education also involves cultivating a sense of belonging to a community and an awareness of social responsibilities. This includes understanding the importance of contributing to the welfare of others and being active in social and civic activities.

Educational and Family Support: Schools, educators, families and communities all play crucial roles in character education. Collaboration between these entities can help reinforce positive values and behaviours in students and individuals.

Table 1: Values in Traditional Africa

Values	Remarks
The priority for honesty	Daily life needs
Stealing is prohibited.	In the past, people were punished for stealing
Communal life is the order of the day,	Where people prioritize the welfare of others
Hard work and hospitality remain key to daily life	Social cohesion cannot be missing.

Source: *Odion (2010)*

As shown in Table 1, a society that tolerates social vices will struggle to prevent crime and violence.

Practical Approaches to Character Education

Curriculum-based Programmes: Many schools have implemented formal character education curricula that teach core values, decision-making skills and moral reasoning. Examples include programmes like **Character Counts! The Responsive Classroom**, and **The Virtues Project**. These programmes focus on specific traits and provide structured lessons and activities to foster character development.

Teaching through Literature and Storytelling: Using literature, parables and stories from various cultures is an effective way to teach character. Stories often present moral dilemmas and exemplify positive character traits in action. This can encourage reflection on ethical questions and deepen students' understanding of values.

Service Learning: Engaging in community service is a hands-on approach to character education. Service learning encourages students to apply their values in real-world situations, fostering a sense of social responsibility, empathy and teamwork. It can also help students develop leadership skills and contribute positively to society.

Modelling and Mentorship: Teachers, parents and community leaders can serve as role models for students, demonstrating the importance of character in everyday life. Mentorship programmes can provide personalized guidance and support for individuals, helping them grow into responsible and caring citizens.

Peer Education and Group Activities: Peer-led programmes and group activities allow students to collaborate and learn from one another. Group discussions, debates and collaborative projects can help reinforce character-building concepts in a social context.

Benefits of Character Education

- **Improved Behaviour:** Students and individuals who receive character education tend to display more positive behaviours, such as improved decision-making, reduced bullying, and enhanced empathy and respect for others.
- **Stronger Academic Performance:** Research has shown that students who participate in character education programmes often show improved academic performance due to the increased focus on self-discipline, motivation and emotional regulation.
- **Better Social Skills:** Character education enhances interpersonal skills, helping individuals work well in teams, resolve conflicts and communicate effectively.
- **Long-term Societal Impact:** Character education contributes to the development of a responsible and ethical citizenry, reducing the likelihood of antisocial behaviour and enhancing social cohesion.
- Character education helps women to develop a positive role within the community and personal self-efficacy
- Sufficient evidence suggests their character education has the highest possibility to fit the realities thrown up by the constraints to character and knowledge developing in Nigeria.

Nwobueze (2020, p.6) points out that:

a key threat to the success of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria is inadequate funding of higher education resulting in infrastructural deficits and poor quality of teaching and non-teaching staff, strike/disruption in academic calendar, challenges of quality assurance, knowledge transfer and social responsibility, persistence in pandemic and deplorable state of health.

There are also the lackadaisical and unsatisfactory students' attitude and behaviour towards learning, resulting in high cases of examination malpractice, sex-for-grade, money-for-grade, grade sorting and students' ignorance and illusion. Some of the consequences are violation of rights and dignity, gay tendencies, boy-girl relationships, male lecturer-female student relationship, female lecturer-male student relationship, lesbianism, bisexuality, rape, indecent dressing, sexual harassment, betting, character assassination, complacency, certificate racketeering, frustration and aggression, vices and viruses of ethnocentrism, religious bigotry and corruption.

Scope of Character Education

Character education encompasses a broad range of practices, philosophies and goals aimed at developing ethical values, personal integrity and social responsibility in individuals. The scope of character education is expansive, including the integration of moral development, emotional intelligence, social behaviours and academic success. This scope extends to various domains—home, school, community, and even the broader society—where different stakeholders collaborate to promote and reinforce positive character traits.

1. Moral and Ethical Development

One of the core aspects of character education is the focus on moral and ethical development. This includes helping individuals understand the importance of distinguishing right from wrong, making ethical decisions and taking responsibility for their actions. Moral education often involves teaching principles such as honesty, fairness and respect for others. Character education programmes aim to develop these qualities in children and adults alike, emphasizing the internalization of values rather than external compliance. The key objective is to produce individuals who demonstrate moral reasoning and are capable of making decisions based on ethical principles.

2. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a key component of character education that emphasizes the development of emotional intelligence, self-regulation, empathy, and effective interpersonal skills. It involves helping individuals manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, and establish and maintain positive relationships. It has a direct impact on improving social behaviours, including cooperation, conflict resolution and empathy toward others.

The main objective is to equip individuals with the social and emotional skills needed for success in both personal and professional life. **For instance,**

Example: Programmes like **the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)** promotes SEL as an integral part of character education, aiming to improve students' social awareness, self-management, and decision-making skills (CASEL, 2021).

3. Academic Success and Personal Development

Character education is also intertwined with academic success, as it helps cultivate traits like discipline, perseverance and a growth mindset. When individuals practise responsibility and self-control, they are more likely to succeed in educational settings. Additionally, the development of positive personal traits, such as resilience and grit, enables students to overcome challenges and setbacks in their academic journey.

Key Objective: To promote academic excellence by cultivating self-discipline, perseverance and other traits associated with successful learning

Example: Studies showed that character education programmes that focus on social and emotional learning can improve academic outcomes by helping students manage their emotions and behaviour (Zins et al., 2007).

4. Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility

Character education also focuses on developing a sense of civic responsibility, where individuals understand the importance of contributing to the welfare of society. This includes promoting behaviours such as volunteering, voting, environmental stewardship and adhering to social norms that contribute to the common good. By teaching young people to care for their community and the world, character education helps cultivate a generation of engaged and responsible citizens.

Key Objective: To encourage individuals to actively participate in their communities and contribute positively to society.

Example: Service learning programmes, which combine community service with academic coursework, are an example of how character education can promote civic engagement. These programmes not only teach core values but also offer real-life opportunities for individuals to practise those values in meaningful ways (Billig, 2000).

5. Integration across Different Environments

Character education is not confined to schools; it extends to the home, community organizations and even workplaces. Collaboration among parents, educators and community leaders is essential for reinforcing character values consistently. Schools may integrate character education into the curriculum, but the reinforcement of these values in home settings and social environments is crucial for lasting impact.

Key Objective: To ensure that the values learned in one environment (e.g. school) are consistently reinforced across various aspects of an individual's life

Examples: Character education programmes that encourage family involvement, such as family workshops and parent education initiatives, can significantly enhance the impact of character education by creating a cohesive learning environment between school and home (Lickona, 1991).

6. Character Education in Leadership Development

Character education plays a pivotal role in developing future leaders who are ethical, responsible and capable of making decisions for the greater good. Leadership training programmes that incorporate character education focus on instilling qualities such as integrity, empathy and accountability. These programmes aim at preparing young people

to become leaders who value collaboration and make decisions based on sound moral judgment.

Key Objective: To cultivate leaders who prioritize the welfare of others, act with integrity, and possess a strong sense of ethics and responsibility

Examples: Programmes like the **Leader in Me**, which is based on Stephen Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, integrate leadership development with character education to empower students to become proactive, responsible leaders in their schools and communities (Covey, 2008).

Benefits of Character Education

Character education plays a critical role in shaping individuals who exhibit positive behaviours, contribute to their communities and develop values that support moral and social well-being. By teaching and fostering virtues such as respect, responsibility, empathy and perseverance, character education programmes offer numerous benefits across personal, academic and social domains. The following outlines the key benefits of character education, supported by research and evidence.

1. Improved Social and Emotional Skills

Character education programmes often incorporate social and emotional learning (SEL), which helps individuals develop skills in managing emotions, building relationships and making responsible decisions. Social and emotional learning has been linked to enhanced emotional regulation, greater empathy and improved interpersonal skills. As a result, students and individuals become better equipped to handle conflicts, cooperate with others and empathize with diverse perspectives.

Key Benefit: Enhanced emotional intelligence and social competence, which fosters positive relationships and reduces antisocial behaviours, like bullying

Evidence: The research by Zins et al. (2007) indicated that SEL, an integral part of character education, contributes to improved emotional and social outcomes, including better behaviour and academic performance.

2. Reduction in Behavioral Problems

One of the primary benefits of character education is its impact on reducing negative behaviours, such as bullying, aggression and cheating. Character education teaches students to value positive traits like respect and responsibility, which can lead to a reduction in behaviour problems both in the classroom and in society. This can create a more positive school environment and promote a culture of respect and understanding

Key Benefit: A decrease in behavioural problems, such as aggression, bullying and substance abuse, leading to a more positive and productive environment

Evidence: Lickona (1991) notes that character education programmes can significantly reduce disciplinary issues, creating more harmonious learning environments. Additionally, the Character Counts programme showed positive results in reducing bullying and misconduct in schools (Josephson Institute of Ethics, n. d.).

3. Academic Improvement

While the primary focus of character education is moral and personal development, it also has a positive impact on academic performance. Students who exhibit traits such as self-discipline, responsibility and perseverance are more likely to succeed academically. These traits help students stay focused, manage their time effectively and overcome academic challenges.

Key Benefit: Improved academic performance and increased motivation to succeed, as character traits like self-control and perseverance are critical for academic success

Evidence: According to Zins et al. (2007), students who participate in SEL programmes—which are often components of character education—show improvements in both their academic achievement and social behaviour. Studies also suggest that schools with strong character education programmes see a reduction in absenteeism and increased academic engagement (Durlak et al., 2011).

4. Development of Ethical and Moral Decision-making

Character education programmes provide students with tools to make ethical decisions by focusing on developing moral reasoning. This includes teaching students to consider the consequences of their actions and to act in ways that promote fairness and respect. As individuals grow, these lessons help them navigate complex moral dilemmas and make choices that align with their values and societal expectations.

Key Benefit: Development of ethical decision-making skills that promote personal responsibility and social harmony

Evidence: Kohlberg's (1981) theory of moral development emphasizes the role of character education in promoting higher stages of moral reasoning, helping individuals make decisions that are not self-serving but in alignment with ethical principles.

5. Positive Impact on Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility

Character education promotes the development of social responsibility and civic-mindedness. By teaching students about the importance of community involvement and ethical conduct, character education fosters a sense of duty toward others and encourages active participation in society. Students learn to contribute to the welfare of others through volunteerism, community service and responsible citizenship.

Key Benefit: Increased civic engagement and a stronger sense of responsibility toward the community and society at large

Evidence: Billig (2000) notes that service learning—a key component of character education—helps students become more engaged in community work and develop a sense of responsibility and empathy. These students are more likely to participate in community service and adopt behaviours that support social welfare.

6. Improved Long-term Outcomes for Individuals

The impact of character education extends beyond childhood and adolescence, contributing to positive long-term outcomes for individuals. Research suggests that individuals who are taught strong character traits early in life are more likely to develop into responsible, ethical and well-adjusted adults. This includes lower rates of criminal behaviour, improved mental health, and higher levels of workplace success.

Key Benefit: Positive long-term outcomes, such as increased well-being, higher employment rates and lower incidences of criminal activity

Evidence: According to Lickona (1991), the cultivation of strong character in youth leads to positive outcomes later in life, including greater life satisfaction, ethical behaviour in the workplace and reduced criminal activity.

7. Strengthened School Climate and Community Relationships

When schools adopt character education programmes, they contribute to a more positive school climate. Students are more likely to collaborate, resolve conflicts peacefully and support one another. Character education programmes often encourage family and community involvement, further strengthening the relationship between the school and its broader environment.

Key Benefit: A more positive and supportive school climate, with improved relationships between students, teachers and the wider community

Evidence: The research by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2021) highlights that schools implementing SEL programmes—which often include character education—experience improved school climate, higher student engagement and greater teacher satisfaction.

Challenges of Character Education

The challenges range from the complexity of defining character across diverse cultural contexts to difficulties in ensuring consistency and engagement among students, educators and parents. The following are the key challenges faced by schools, communities and organizations involved in character education, along with supporting research and evidence.

1. Cultural and Value Diversity

One of the primary challenges of character education is the inherent diversity of values across cultures and communities. What constitutes “good character” can vary

significantly, depending on cultural, religious and personal beliefs. Character education programmes that promote universal values, like honesty and responsibility, may not always resonate equally with students from diverse backgrounds, especially in multicultural societies. Defining a set of universal character traits that are inclusive of all cultures and perspectives can be difficult.

Challenge: The diversity of moral and ethical values makes it challenging to create a one-size-fits-all character education programme that is culturally sensitive and acceptable to all

Evidence: As noted by Lickona (1991), character education programmes must navigate the balance between promoting universal virtues and respecting cultural differences. In multicultural settings, there is a risk that the values emphasized in character education programmes may not align with the values of all families and communities.

2. Lack of Consistency across Environments

For character education to be effective, it needs to be consistently reinforced across different environments, including schools, homes and communities. However, achieving consistency in reinforcing character values is often difficult. While schools can integrate character education into their curricula, the attitudes and behaviours of parents, caregivers and community leaders may not always align with these teachings, leading to a mismatch between what students are taught in school and what they experience at home or in their communities.

Challenge: Inconsistent reinforcement of character values across home, school, and community settings can dilute the impact of character education programmes.

Evidence: According to Lickona (1991), effective character education requires collaboration between schools, families and communities. If these groups are not aligned in their approach to character development, students may receive conflicting messages about what constitutes good behaviour.

3. Teacher Training and Preparation

Implementing character education successfully requires that educators possess the knowledge, skills and resources to teach character effectively. However, many teachers are not specifically trained in character education and, as a result, they may lack the confidence or expertise to integrate character lessons into their teaching practices. Additionally, schools may lack the resources to offer professional development opportunities in this area, further hindering the implementation of character education programmes.

Challenge: A lack of adequate teacher training and resources can result in ineffective delivery of character education, leading to limited outcomes.

Evidence: Lickona (1991) highlights that successful character education programmes require continuous professional development for educators. Teachers need support in understanding how to integrate character education into their existing curricula, and they require resources to manage discussions around complex moral issues.

4. Measurement and Evaluation Difficulties

Evaluating the effectiveness of character education programmes can be challenging due to the subjective nature of character traits. Unlike academic achievements, character development is harder to measure quantitatively. While behavioural indicators, such as discipline referrals or academic performance, can be tracked, measuring intangible outcomes, like empathy, integrity and responsibility, is more difficult. Furthermore, the time required to see measurable improvements in character education outcomes can be lengthy, making it harder to assess immediate results.

Challenge: The subjective nature of character traits and the difficulty in measuring them makes it challenging to evaluate the success of character education programmes.

Evidence: According to Zins et al. (2007), while there is strong evidence that character education programmes can improve socio-emotional outcomes, comprehensive, long-term evaluations of these programmes remain rare. Measuring personal growth in character, particularly in areas like moral reasoning and empathy, is inherently complex.

5. Resistance from Students and Parents

In some cases, students may resist character education programmes, particularly if they view the lessons as irrelevant to their lives or as an imposition on their personal beliefs. Resistance can also arise if students feel that character education is being used to impose a particular moral or ideological perspective. Similarly, some parents may resist character education if they believe that values should be taught primarily at home or if they disagree with the specific values being promoted in school programmes.

Challenge: Resistance from students and parents, whether due to perceived irrelevance or ideological differences, can hinder the implementation and success of character education programmes.

Evidence: According to Berkowitz and Bier (2005), one of the barriers to successful character education is parental and student resistance. Some parents may feel that schools are overstepping their boundaries in teaching character values, and some students may view these lessons as extraneous to their academic pursuits.

6. Overemphasis on Moralizing or Authoritarianism

A common concern with character education is the potential for it to be perceived as moralizing or authoritarian. If character education programmes are overly prescriptive or rigid in their definitions of “good” and “bad” behaviour, they may alienate students by

limiting their autonomy or critical thinking. This can be especially problematic for adolescents, who are in the process of developing their own moral and ethical frameworks. Character education programmes that fail to encourage open dialogue and self-reflection may risk being perceived as top-down impositions rather than opportunities for personal growth.

Challenge: The risk of character education being perceived as authoritarian or overly moralistic may limit its effectiveness, particularly among adolescents.

Evidence: Kohlberg (1981) emphasizes that effective character education should encourage moral reasoning and reflection rather than simply promoting adherence to a set of prescribed values. If students feel that character education is simply about following rules without understanding the reasons behind them, they may disengage from the process.

7. Financial and Resource Constraints

Character education programmes often require significant resources, both in terms of funding and time. Schools may face financial constraints that limit their ability to implement comprehensive character education programmes or to provide continuous training for teachers. In addition, character education may be sidelined in favour of more traditional academic subjects, particularly when schools are under pressure to improve test scores and meet performance standards.

Challenge: Financial constraints and competing educational priorities can limit the implementation and sustainability of character education programmes.

Evidence: Durlak et al. (2011) note that, while there is strong evidence supporting the benefits of SEL and character education, schools with limited resources may struggle to integrate these programmes effectively into their existing curricula, particularly if there are competing demands for instructional time and funding.

Patterns of Character Education

Character education programmes are designed to foster ethical development and cultivate values like respect, responsibility, integrity and empathy in students. These programmes follow various patterns or models to teach students the principles of good character. These patterns range from direct instruction, integration into the curriculum, service learning to community-based approaches. Below, we explore key patterns of character education, supported by research and evidence.

1. Direct Instruction of Core Values

Direct instruction is one of the most common patterns of character education, where educators explicitly teach students about specific virtues, such as honesty, respect and fairness. In this approach, lessons are typically structured to highlight these values, often

through storytelling, role-play or discussions about moral dilemmas. The goal is for students to internalize the virtues through direct teaching, and subsequently apply them in their daily lives.

Pattern: Direct instruction is aimed at clearly identifying and defining key moral values and behaviours, often using structured curricula.

Example: Character Counts! utilizes a direct instruction model, focusing on six core values (trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship) to teach students how to integrate these principles into their lives (Josephson Institute of Ethics, n. d.).

Evidence: Lickona's (1991) research supports direct instruction in character education, emphasizing the importance of explicitly teaching moral values to help students navigate ethical challenges.

2. Integration into the Curriculum

Another pattern of character education involves integrating character lessons into academic subjects. Rather than offering separate, isolated lessons on character, teachers incorporate character education into subjects like Literature, History or Social Studies. This approach allows students to understand and discuss character traits in the context of real-life situations, historical figures and literary characters, promoting a more comprehensive and meaningful learning experience.

Pattern: Character education is woven into regular academic lessons, helping students see how values and ethics relate to all areas of life, including education.

Example: In Literature classes, students might analyze characters' moral decisions in novels or plays, or in History classes, they could explore the ethical implications of historical events or leaders' actions.

Evidence: Berkowitz and Bier's (2005) research suggests that integrating character education into academic subjects makes the values more relatable and allows students to see practical applications, thus deepening their understanding of character development.

3. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) focuses on developing students' emotional intelligence, which is closely aligned with character education. Social and Emotional Learning programmes teach students to recognize, understand, and manage their emotions, set positive goals, develop empathy for others and establish positive relationships. These emotional competencies complement traditional character traits by helping students navigate their social worlds more effectively.

Pattern: Social and Emotional Learning programmes are implemented to foster emotional regulation and social skills, which are foundational to good character.

Example: The **CASEL framework** (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) is a widely recognized SEL approach that emphasizes five key competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2021).

Evidence: According to Durlak et al. (2011), SEL programmes are proven to enhance students' academic performance, social skills and overall character development by addressing emotional and social growth alongside traditional academic learning.

4. Service Learning and Community Involvement

Service learning is an experiential approach to character education that combines academic learning with community service. Students engage in real-world projects that benefit others, allowing them to develop empathy, responsibility and a sense of civic duty. This hands-on approach to character education helps students practise virtues like teamwork, leadership and social responsibility in authentic contexts.

Pattern: Service learning integrates community service with educational objectives, allowing students to apply moral values in real-life situations.

Example: **The Leader in Me** programme, based on Stephen Covey's principles, encourages students to engage in service projects that emphasize leadership, responsibility and teamwork (Covey, 2008).

Evidence: Billig (2000) notes that service learning programmes not only promote character development but also improve academic engagement and increase student motivation by making learning more relevant and impactful.

5. Role Models and Mentorship

Another effective pattern in character education involves using role models and mentors to inspire students. Role models, whether teachers, community leaders, or even peers, demonstrate and model character traits in everyday interactions. This pattern of character education emphasizes the importance of seeing virtues in action and learning from the behaviours and attitudes of others.

Pattern: Students learn character values by observing positive role models who demonstrate integrity, responsibility and compassion.

Example: Schools often invite guest speakers, community leaders or alumni to speak to students about the importance of character in personal and professional success. Mentorship programmes also pair students with adults who guide them in developing ethical decision-making and leadership skills.

Evidence: Lickona (1991) emphasizes that the presence of role models is essential in character education, as students often learn as much from observing the behaviours of trusted adults as they do from formal lessons.

6. School-wide and Community-based Approaches

Some schools adopt a holistic approach to character education by fostering an entire school culture centred on core values. This approach is often referred to as a “school-wide” or “community-based” pattern, in which all members of the school—teachers, administrators, students and parents—work together to create an environment that promotes positive character development. This approach includes efforts such as creating a positive school climate, organizing assemblies, and engaging in school-wide discussions about ethical behaviour.

Pattern: Character education is embedded in the school’s culture and daily routines, ensuring that all members of the school community are aligned in promoting good character.

Example: The **Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS)** programme emphasizes a school-wide approach to teaching and reinforcing positive behaviours, creating a unified culture of respect and responsibility across the school (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

Evidence: Research showed that school-wide approaches to character education, which involve all stakeholders, lead to positive changes in behaviour, better school climate and improved academic performance (Zins et al., 2007).

7. Reflective Practices and Ethical Decision-making

A pattern of character education that emphasizes reflective practices encourages students to think critically about their actions, decisions and the consequences of their behaviour. This approach often includes discussions, journaling or debates about moral dilemmas, fostering a deeper understanding of ethical principles. Students are encouraged to reflect on their personal values and to make decisions that align with a strong moral framework.

Pattern: Character education through reflection encourages students to consider the ethical dimensions of their actions and decisions, promoting moral reasoning.

Example: Teachers might lead discussions on ethical dilemmas from literature or current events, prompting students to think critically about the choices made by characters or individuals in real life.

Evidence: Kohlberg’s (1981) work on moral development underscores the importance of reflective practices in promoting higher stages of moral reasoning, where individuals are able to think critically and independently about ethical issues.

The Role of Character Education in Peace and Development

Character education plays a vital role in fostering peace and development within societies. It equips individuals with the values, ethical standards and social skills necessary

to contribute to peaceful coexistence and sustainable development. Below is a discussion of the roles character education plays in these areas, along with relevant references.

1. Fostering Social Cohesion and Peace

Character education promotes virtues such as empathy, respect, integrity and tolerance, which are essential for maintaining social harmony. These values help reduce conflicts, discrimination and violence, allowing people to live together peacefully despite their differences. By teaching individuals how to handle conflicts non-violently, character education fosters a peaceful mindset and enhances the ability to engage in constructive dialogue.

2. Encouraging Ethical Leadership

Character education helps nurture ethical leadership by instilling values such as honesty, responsibility and accountability in individuals. Ethical leaders who demonstrate these qualities can effectively guide societies toward sustainable development and conflict resolution. In regions facing political instability or corruption, the presence of morally sound leaders can be a key factor in promoting peace and development.

3. Promoting Human Rights and Social Justice

Character education helps individuals understand and respect human rights, which is critical for creating a just society. By emphasizing fairness, justice and equality, character education empowers people to challenge injustices and support the rights of others. This commitment to social justice is crucial for peace and development, as it ensures that all members of society have access to opportunities for advancement.

4. Building Resilient Communities

Character education fosters resilience by teaching individuals how to persevere in the face of adversity, cope with challenges and demonstrate perseverance. This is essential for sustainable development, as resilient individuals and communities can better navigate economic, social and environmental challenges. In post-conflict societies, character education can help rebuild trust and cooperation among people who may have been divided by conflict.

5. Encouraging Sustainable Development

Character education is closely aligned with the values of sustainable development, including environmental stewardship, social responsibility and ethical decision-making. By instilling a sense of responsibility for the planet and future generations, character education contributes to the achievement of the SDGs. It encourages individuals to make choices that promote the well-being of society and the environment.

6. Creating Global Citizens

Character education can also play a significant role in fostering global citizenship by promoting understanding and collaboration across cultures and nations. This is crucial in today's interconnected world, where peace and development require global cooperation. By emphasizing shared human values and interdependence, character education can cultivate a sense of responsibility toward global peace and development.

Curriculum of Character Education

Character education involves the intentional teaching of values, ethical behaviour, and socio-emotional skills aimed at helping students develop a moral compass and make responsible decisions. The curriculum of character education typically includes various methods and activities designed to instil virtues such as respect, responsibility, fairness, empathy and integrity. Below is an outline of the typical components and structure of a character education curriculum, including the key elements that are commonly included in such programmes.

1. Core Values and Virtues

At the heart of any character education curriculum is the identification and teaching of core values and virtues. These values are often seen as universal, promoting ethical behaviour and personal responsibility. The most common virtues taught in character education programmes are as follows:

- i. **Respect:** The need to prioritize mutual respect cannot be downplayed. Understanding the worth and dignity of all individuals, including self-respect is crucial.
- ii. **Responsibility:** Taking ownership of one's actions, including fulfilling obligations and duties
- iii. **Integrity:** Upholding honesty, fairness, and ethical behaviour even when no one is watching
- iv. **Fairness:** Making decisions that are just and equitable, and treating everyone with impartiality
- v. **Caring:** Demonstrating empathy, kindness, and compassion for others
- vi. **Citizenship:** Contributing positively to one's community and society, including following rules and laws.

2. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Integration

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is often integrated into the character education curriculum to help students develop the emotional intelligence necessary for positive social interactions. It involves teaching students to manage their emotions, set positive goals, make responsible decisions and build healthy relationships. The five core

competencies of SEL, as identified by CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning), are as follows:

- i. **Self-awareness:** Recognizing one's emotions, thoughts, and values
- ii. **Self-management:** Regulating one's emotions and behaviours in healthy ways
- iii. **Social awareness:** Understanding the perspectives of others and showing empathy
- iv. **Relationship skills:** Establishing and maintaining healthy, respectful relationships
- v. **Responsible decision-making:** Making choices that are respectful and socially responsible (CASEL, 2021)]

3. Moral and Ethical Decision-making

Teaching students to make ethical and moral decisions is a central aspect of character education. This component encourages students to think critically about the consequences of their actions and to make choices based on ethical principles. Typically, it involves the following:

- i. **Discussing moral dilemmas:** Teachers present hypothetical scenarios or case studies that require students to consider multiple perspectives and ethical principles.
- ii. **Encouraging critical thinking:** Students are guided to reflect on the impact of their decisions on others and the greater community.
- iii. **Promoting personal responsibility:** Students are encouraged to take ownership of their actions and understand the consequences, both positive and negative.

Example: In classrooms, students might read stories or case studies of historical figures or fictional characters who faced moral dilemmas. They are then encouraged to discuss what the characters should have done based on ethical principles.

4. Community and Service Learning

A key component of many character education programmes is service learning, which combines academic learning with community service. Service learning allows students to apply the values and principles they have learned in real-world situations. This pattern helps foster the following:

- **Civic responsibility:** Understanding the importance of contributing to society and being an active citizen
- **Empathy and compassion:** Encouraging students to help others and see the world from different perspectives
- **Leadership:** Teaching students how to take the initiative and lead projects that benefit the community

Example: The Leader in Me uses service projects and community engagement as part of their curriculum, encouraging students to develop leadership skills and contribute positively to their communities.

5. Reflection and Self-Assessment

Reflection is an essential part of the character education curriculum, helping students internalize and apply what they have learned. Reflective activities encourage students to examine their behaviour, values and the outcomes of their decisions. Key practices may include the following:

- **Writing:** Writing about personal experiences, challenges, and lessons learned
- **Group discussions:** Sharing reflections with peers to gain different perspectives
- **Self-assessment:** Evaluating one's behaviour and setting personal goals for improvement

Example: After completing a service project or moral dilemma discussion, students may be asked to reflect on how the experience influenced their values or decision-making processes.

6. Role Models and Mentorship

Another important aspect of character education is the involvement of role models and mentors. Students can learn much by observing the behaviour of trusted adults, teachers, and community leaders who exemplify strong character. In this approach, students often:

- **Observe good character:** Teachers and other community leaders serve as role models who demonstrate virtues like honesty, kindness and perseverance.
- **Engage in mentorship:** Older students may mentor younger students, reinforcing the importance of leadership and responsibility.

Example: Many schools integrate mentorship programmes where older students guide younger students, helping to reinforce the importance of good character and social responsibility.

7. Positive School Culture and Environment

The curriculum of character education also extends to the overall environment of the school. A positive school culture that fosters respect, inclusivity and cooperation is essential for character education. It includes the following:

- **Creating a safe and supportive environment:** Ensuring that all students feel respected and valued
- **Promoting inclusivity:** Encouraging diversity and teaching the value of respecting others' differences
- **Celebrating character achievements:** Acknowledging and rewarding students who demonstrate exceptional character

Stakeholders and Institutions of Character Education

Character education is a comprehensive process that involves multiple stakeholders and institutions working together to foster the development of ethical, moral and social values in students. These stakeholders play critical roles in designing, implementing and

sustaining effective character education programmes. The primary stakeholders include educators, parents, students, school administrators, community leaders and policymakers. Various institutions, such as schools, community organizations, religious institutions and government bodies, also contribute to the success of character education initiatives.

1. **Educators and Teachers**

Educators, particularly teachers, are at the forefront of character education. They have the responsibility to actively model and teach character traits, both through formal curricula and informal interactions. Teachers can influence students by:

13. **Teaching values:** Directly incorporating lessons on values like responsibility, respect, fairness and honesty into their academic teaching
14. **Modelling good character:** Demonstrating ethical behaviour and positive social interactions as role models for students
15. **Creating a positive classroom culture:** Establishing an environment where virtues such as kindness, inclusivity and empathy are encouraged and reinforced. Teachers often use literature and case studies to discuss character traits as well as lead classroom discussions about moral dilemmas or ethical decision-making (Lickona, 1991).

2. **Parents and Families**

Parents and families are critical stakeholders in the success of character education. They are the primary influence on a child's early development and can reinforce the values taught in school. Parents contribute by:

- **Modelling values:** Children observe and learn from their parents' behaviour. So parents who demonstrate good character traits (e.g. integrity and empathy) provide a powerful example.
- **Supporting school efforts:** Parents can engage in school-based character education programmes, volunteer for activities, and attend workshops to learn how to support their children's character development.
- **Creating a character-friendly home environment:** Encouraging moral conversations at home and setting clear expectations for respectful, responsible behaviour (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005).

3. **School Administrators and Leaders**

School administrators, including principals, vice-principals and counsellors, are essential to the strategic implementation and sustainability of character education programmes. Their roles include the following:

- **Creating a supportive school culture:** Administrators set the tone for the entire school by fostering a climate that prioritizes respect, integrity and responsibility.

- **Supporting teachers and staff:** Providing resources, professional development and time for educators to integrate character education into their curricula and classroom management.
- **Developing policies and practices:** Establishing clear policies related to discipline, bullying prevention and conflict resolution that reflect the school's commitment to character education. A principal might lead school-wide initiatives, such as "Kindness Week." or organize assemblies where students are recognized for demonstrating exemplary character (Zins et al, 2007).

4. **Students**

Students are central to the character education process. Their engagement and participation are critical for the success of the programme. Students contribute by:

- **Learning and internalizing values:** Actively engaging with the content and lessons related to character education, reflecting on their own behaviour and moral choices
- **Participating in character-building activities:** Taking part in activities such as community service, peer mentoring or school-wide initiatives that promote positive behaviour
- **Modelling positive character:** As students develop strong character traits, they influence their peers and contribute to a positive school culture. Students may participate in peer-led initiatives where they lead projects that promote kindness or take part in a school council that helps guide character-related decisions (Lickona, 1991).

5. **Community Leaders and Organizations**

Community leaders, including religious leaders, civic organizations, and local businesses, play a significant role in promoting character education beyond the school environment. Their contributions include the following:

- **Providing mentorship and role models:** Community leaders can serve as mentors to students, sharing their life experiences and models of ethical behaviour.
- **Offering service learning opportunities:** Local organizations can partner schools to offer service learning projects that allow students to engage with and contribute to their community.
- **Promoting community-wide values:** Civic organizations and leaders can organize campaigns, workshops or events that emphasize the importance of character in society. Local charities or service organizations may collaborate with schools to create volunteer opportunities for students, where they can demonstrate values like empathy and civic responsibility (Billig, 2000).

6. Religious Institutions

Religious institutions often have a strong influence on character education, particularly in communities where faith plays a central role. These institutions contribute by:

- **Teaching ethical principles:** Many religious institutions offer programmes or teachings that align with character education, emphasizing moral values, like compassion, honesty and justice.
- **Providing community support:** Religious leaders can support families and schools by providing guidance on character development and creating opportunities for service and outreach.
- **Modelling virtuous behaviour:** Religious leaders often serve as role models for ethical behaviour, demonstrating how to live according to strong moral principles. Many religious schools integrate character education with their faith-based teachings, while churches and religious groups may offer youth programmes that emphasize virtues such as kindness, respect and humility (Kohlberg, 1981)

7. Policymakers and Government

Policymakers and government institutions are responsible for creating and implementing policies that promote character education at the national or local level. Their roles include the following:

- **Developing educational standards and curricula:** Governments may set standards for character education and integrate these values into national or state educational curricula.
- **Providing funding and resources:** Policymakers can allocate funding for character education programmes and initiatives, ensuring that schools have the necessary resources to implement them.
- **Creating supportive laws and policies:** Laws related to bullying prevention, student behaviour and school climate can directly support character education efforts. For instance, some governments mandate the inclusion of SEL and character development as part of the school curriculum (Durlak et al., 2011).

8. Media and Technology Providers

In this era of technological advancement, media and technology providers also play a crucial role in character education. Their involvement includes the following:

- **Promoting positive messaging:** Media outlets and social media platforms can be powerful tools for spreading messages of kindness, respect and social responsibility.

- **Offering educational content:** Various media providers offer programmes, apps or content that can be used to promote character education, especially in the form of online games, videos or interactive platforms. Many programmes like **Sesame Street** or **Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood** have used media to teach values such as empathy and cooperation to children (Zins et al., 2007).

Non-formal character education for out-of-school youth will influence leadership styles and followership patterns to shape peace and development outcomes. This implies that the emergence of transformational leaders at all levels and times to enlighten, empower and protect the patriotic followers will promote sustainable peace and development in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. In the words of Socrates, "True peace arises when the soul lives in harmony with virtue." This is why virtue, wisdom and integrity are critical for harmony and peace.

Concluding Remarks

The curriculum of character education has many areas of focus, including the development of both moral and socio-emotional competencies in students. It combines explicit teaching of core values, ethical decision-making and emotional intelligence with hands-on activities, like service learning and mentorship. Schools can create a well-rounded educational experience that not only promotes academic success but also helps students become responsible, empathetic and ethical citizens. The scope of character education is vast and interconnected, with various aspects of personal, social and academic development. Through moral and ethical development, emotional intelligence, social responsibility and leadership skills, character education programmes help foster well-rounded individuals who can contribute positively to their communities and society at large. The widespread impact of character education programmes in schools, homes and communities emphasizes the importance of instilling good character in individuals from a young age.

Character education programmes follow a variety of patterns, each designed to foster the development of ethical, moral and social competencies in students. From direct instruction of core values to service learning, role modelling and reflective practices, these programmes aim at cultivating well-rounded individuals who exhibit empathy, integrity, responsibility and leadership. The most effective programmes integrate multiple approaches and involve the entire community in reinforcing positive character traits. These patterns of character education help students become better individuals and contribute positively to society at large.

Although character education offers significant benefits, there are numerous challenges that need to be addressed for it to be effective. These challenges include navigating cultural and value diversity, achieving consistency across different

environments, providing adequate teacher training, measuring programme effectiveness, managing resistance from students and parents, avoiding moral authoritarianism and securing adequate resources. Overcoming these obstacles requires a thoughtful, inclusive and flexible approach that engages all stakeholders and ensures that character education is aligned with both the values of the community and the developmental needs of students.

Character education is a collaborative effort that involves a wide array of stakeholders and institutions. Educators, parents, students, school administrators, community leaders, policymakers, religious institutions and media all have roles to play in fostering the development of strong character in students. These stakeholders can create a supportive, cohesive environment that encourages students to become responsible, ethical and compassionate individuals, both inside and outside the classroom.

The development of sustainable peace in the Niger Delta is attainable when leaders and followers embrace the timeless wisdom of Proverbs 22:1, “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.” By prioritizing integrity, transparency and accountability, leaders can foster trust and credibility with their constituents. When followers demand these values from their leaders and uphold them in their own lives, a culture of mutual respect and cooperation can flourish.

In this way, the principles of good character, as outlined in Proverbs 22:1, can serve as a foundation for sustainable peace in the Niger Delta, transcending fleeting material gains and instead cultivating a lasting legacy of trust, harmony and prosperity. The development of sustainable peace in the Niger Delta requires a commitment to doing God’s will, as expressed in the Lord’s Prayer: “Thy will be done” (Matthew 6:10). This means prioritizing integrity, transparency and accountability, and seeking to do what is right and just.

As we seek to build a more peaceful and prosperous future, we must also recognize the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation. As our Lord taught us, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Matthew 6:12). By seeking forgiveness and working towards healing and restoration, we can begin to break down the barriers that have divided us for so long.

Ultimately, the pursuit of sustainable peace in the Niger Delta requires a commitment to resisting the temptation of corruption and instead seeking to do what is right. As our Lord prayed, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matthew 6:13). By prioritizing good character and seeking to do God’s will, we can build a brighter future for ourselves and for generations to come.”

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32**ADVANCEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
VIA TEXTILE CONSUMPTION HABITS IN NIGERIA****By****Ngozi Kesiah Okeke**

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Abstract

Since ancient times, people have worn clothing to protect their bodies from the weather and to enhance their appearance. The demand for textiles increased as a result of the population boom. The Industrial Revolution, brought about by the necessity to meet the growing demand for textiles, resulted in the creation of fast fashion items, which, in turn, contributed to the depletion of natural resources. People can now more easily purchase more clothing than they truly need thanks to the availability of inexpensive fast fashion materials; some of these items are often worn just once before being confined to closets and finally thrown away. Additionally, this has resulted in unsustainable excess consumption of natural resources. The goal of this qualitative study was to improve Nigeria's sustainable resource management through the country's textile consumption habits. This was done by analyzing Nigerian textile consumption patterns, analyzing the effects of these patterns on the environment, showcasing sustainable textile options in Nigeria, and ultimately proposing ways that natural resources could be managed sustainably through the discussion of textile consumption patterns. A review of relevant journal articles and fieldwork were conducted to determine the degree of public awareness regarding sustainable textile consumption practices. Based on the findings of the conducted fieldwork, it was found that certain organizations are already embracing the idea of sustainable resource management through the reuse of textiles encouraged by individual contributions of worn clothing. The study suggested that more campaigns be launched to encourage Nigerians to conserve natural resources by adopting sustainable textile consumption practices.

Keywords: Sustainable, Resource, Conservation, Textile, Consumption, Habits**Introduction**

One of the primary requirements of man has been met by textiles: clothing to protect the body from harsh weather and to keep man from being nude. Throughout history, clothing has been utilized to enhance one's appearance. The population boom and these and other applications for clothing increased the demand for textiles. The Industrial

Revolution, which was prompted by the need to supply the growing demand for textiles, resulted in the depletion of natural resources. Both environmental scholars and textile designers have recently become interested in reducing the use of natural resources, which has led to a large number of papers concentrating on sustainability. This is due to the fact that the textile industry is one of the sectors that primarily relies on the utilization of natural resources, and the amount of clothing produced and discarded has increased as a result of fast fashion. According to European Parliament (2024), the rise in fast fashion has accelerated the expansion of the textile industry's consumption and, as a result, the disposal of trash in recent years. The overuse of natural resources has also resulted from this. For example, the production of textiles requires a lot of water, and the cultivation of cotton and other natural fibres needs land.

Radhakrishnan (2022) avers that the fashion and textile industries have a history of using a lot of natural resources and producing waste goods that contaminate the environment and endanger the planet's living things. European Parliament estimates that 2,700 liters of fresh water are needed to produce one cotton T-shirt in 2024, which is sufficient to supply one person's drinking needs for two and a half years. For a T-shirt alone, that is a significant amount of water. According to estimates, the textile industry was the third largest contributor to land use and water degradation in 2020. European Parliament (2024) asserts that it took on average nine cubic metres of water, 400 square metres of land and 391 kilogrammes (kg) of raw materials to provide clothes and shoes for each EU citizen.

According to Okafor, Madu, Ajero, Ibekwe, and Nzekwe (2021), the textile and apparel sector uses over 93 billion cubic metres of water a year. Approximately 4% of the yearly freshwater withdrawal is accounted for by its water use. Additionally, it takes 200 litres of water to make one kilogramme of fabric. The fibre, dye, bleach and final product are all cleaned with water. Subsurface water is contaminated because waste waters are frequently not reprocessed before being released into the environment. Additionally, the study claims that textile dyestuffs include a significant amount of organic chemicals that are resistant to aerobic degradation and do not readily decompose. Similarly, 500,000 tons of plastic microfibres, or 50 billion plastic bottles, are released into the ocean each year as a result of clothing washing. Around the world, cotton production consumes roughly 16% of pesticides and requires 2.5% of agricultural land (Okafor, Madu, Ajero, Ibekwe, and Nzekwe, 2021). It also accounts for 4% of the use of NPK fertilizer. The run-off pollutes the water.

One of a man's essential wants is clothing, and as the population grows, so will the demand for clothing. Nigeria now relies heavily on imports for her apparel needs, and certain of her consumption patterns contribute to resource depletion and environmental pollution. Nigerian consumers should be made aware of the negative effects that unsustainable textile consumption practices have on the environment and encouraged to

adopt sustainable practices that would slow the depletion of natural resources. Clothing materials will last longer if consumers adopt sustainable textile consumption practices, preserving the raw materials and funds that would have been used to purchase new clothing, as well as lowering the pollution that results from their manufacture and use.

The data for this qualitative study came from fieldwork, first-hand observation and review of relevant literature. The types of textiles consumed, purchase patterns, and disposal methods were examined. The paper analyze the effects of Nigerian textile production and consumption on the environment, and drew attention to Nigeria's sustainable textile possibilities in relation to promoting their use to help achieve the 12th SGD target.

Statement of the problem

Consumption patterns are a key component of sustainable natural resource management, but they have not got much attention in Nigeria when it comes to textile resource management. The *aso-ebi* culture is one of the fashion trends that has led to a rise in textile consumption in Nigeria. This technique involves dressing in the same style or pattern for ceremonies. Originally, the *aso-ebi* culture was mainly practised by the Yoruba people. This method of purchasing, selling, sharing and wearing clothing was first limited to family members. But in recent years, this system has been made available to and feasible for well-wishers, and it also acts as a way to identify with family and friends during a variety of celebrations, including religious and political affiliations, cultural events, courtship and marriage, education, funerals and other events that demand celebration (Olabiyi and Kolawole, 2022).

Beyond south-western Nigeria, these behaviours have spread to other parts of the nation. The accessibility of inexpensive fast fashion Ankara materials has facilitated the *aso-ebi* culture. Most times, people purchase more clothing than they truly need, some of which are worn just once before being unused and kept in closets and eventually discarded. Kamble and Behera (2021) claim that fast fashion has increased textile consumption, which has led to an increase in textile waste and the depletion of natural resources. Nigerian consumers of fashion, who are fixated on trends and novelty, frequently disregard sustainability. Sustainable natural resource management should be promoted through textile consumption habits in order to lessen the depletion of natural resources utilized in textile production, given the strain that excessive textile consumption is placing on the environment and natural resources.

Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to promote sustainable textile consumption habits in Nigeria, in order to reduce the environmental impact of over-consumption of textiles and production

processes of new textiles as a means of advancing sustainable resource management. The aim was achieved through the following objectives:

- Evaluating textile consumption pattern in Nigeria, by looking at the types of textiles consumed in Nigeria, purchasing habits and disposal practices;
- Examining the environmental impacts of textile production and consumption pattern in Nigeria, including water pollution, energy consumption and waste generation;
- Highlighting sustainable textile options, such as Funtua cotton, locally dyed and woven fabrics made from locally sourced materials; and
- Suggesting ways natural resources could be sustainably managed through textile consumption habits in Nigeria.

Research Questions

- What type of textiles are mainly purchased and consumed in Nigeria?
- What impacts does textile production and consumption pattern in Nigeria have on the environment such as water, energy and waste generation?
- What sustainable textile options are available in Nigeria?
- In what ways can natural resources be sustainably managed through textile consumption habits in Nigeria?

Significance of the Study

The results of this study have cultural, economic and environmental implications. Promoting environmentally-friendly textile consumption practices could reduce the amount of textile waste produced, which significantly adds to pollution and landfill garbage. Natural resources like water, land and energy utilized in textile manufacture would be preserved by promoting sustainable natural resource management through Nigerian textile consumption patterns. Sustainable textile consumption practices could aid lowering greenhouse gas emissions from the textile industry, which would help to mitigate climate change. Promoting sustainable textile consumption could draw the attention of Nigerian consumers to their role as agent of change in the management of natural resources. It could also motivate more Nigerians to patronize locally-made textiles, such as hand-woven fabrics and fabrics dyed from locally-sourced organic dyes and materials. This way, the indigenous method of fabric production which is sustainable, but is rather going into extinction, can be preserved. Finally, it will could help in the achievement of sustainable Development Goal 12; Responsible Consumption and Production.

Textile Consumption Pattern in Nigeria: Types of Textiles Consumed in Nigeria, Purchasing Habits, and Disposal Practices

The consumption patterns of textiles in Nigeria differ slightly between regions and socioeconomic groups. Consumption habits encompass a wide variety of actions from the problem awareness stage to post-purchase behaviour, concept development, to experiences to satisfy people's needs and desires. They are not limited to the actual purchase of things. They involve researching consumer demands, motives and decision-making processes, as well as trends in the acquisition of various goods and services. They basically focus on how people and organizations choose, purchase, utilize and discard products (Orji, Sabo, Abubakar, and Usman, 2017).

It is evident that Nigerians' consumption patterns of textiles may have a big impact on how our natural resources are managed. When it comes to textiles and apparel, Nigerian consumers are still not very conscious of sustainability. According to Ajila (2019), 78% of the respondents used in the study had a low degree of awareness of the effects of post-consumer solid textile waste on the environment in Oyo State. Similarly, the findings of the survey conducted by Okeke (2023) to determine the degree of awareness of eco-friendly textile materials in Anambra State revealed that, out of the 116 respondents surveyed, 67% of the men and 87% of the women were unfamiliar with sustainability in clothes. Therefore, it can be concluded from the data that a larger proportion of Nigerians are not aware that their textiles consumption pattern may affect the environment or natural resources. According to Austgulen (2016), the textile and apparel business is largely controlled by the purchasing habits and financial resources of the average customer.

Austgulen (2016) examined the traits of customers who intentionally consume textiles and apparel in an environmentally-friendly manner. Political consumption served as the prism through which the study was conducted, based on a cross-national study that was carried out in five nations in Western Europe. The textile and garment industries were used to evaluate factors that had been established in prior research to predict general political consumption. The results demonstrated that, with notable country variations, there were both parallels and differences with earlier research on political consumption.

Adejuwon, Aodu, and Onwudiegwu (2024) examined how socioeconomic factors affected the use and disposal of apparel among employees of tertiary institutions in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. According to the survey's mean assessment (on a five-point frequency scale), the respondents occasionally burnt (2.86) and dispose of unwanted garments with solid garbage (3.32). However, they hardly ever disposed of textile apparel in water bodies (1.82), landfills (2.30), or recycling platforms for reuse (2.14). Furthermore, the respondents frequently (4.04) purchased apparel made of natural fibres, but they also occasionally (3.10) purchased apparel made of synthetic fibres and *aso ebi* (special occasion attire) (3.32). Those with higher incomes were more likely to use formal trash

disposal systems ($r=.31$, $P<.05$), while those with lower incomes were more likely to prefer recycling ($r = -.37$; $p<.05$) and buying used clothes ($r=-.34$; $p<.50$). Those with more education had a lower propensity to purchase aso-ebi ($r = -.32$; $p<.05$). In order to encourage ecologically-appropriate disposal methods, the study emphasized the necessity of infrastructure development and targeted marketing for various socioeconomic categories. The main goals of policy proposals were to promote recycling and lessen the negative environmental effects of textile waste.

Types of Textiles Consumed in Nigeria

Ankara Fabrics

Beyond just garments, Nigerian fashion now symbolizes identity, history and cultural inspiration that reflects the richness of the nation's inherited traditions. Clarke (2024) asserts that traditional textiles, like Adire and Ankara contain vivid colours that convey tales of societies, historical occurrences and values that have been passed down through the ages.

Because of its vivid patterns and striking themes, Ankara fabric has come to be used in Nigeria as a general term for all 100% cotton fabrics, including Dutch wax, African print, and Holland wax. Nigeria is at the forefront of its cultural acceptance, and it has also come to represent African fashion. In Nigeria, Ankara is essentially an African wax print that is frequently bought for apparel. It is renowned for its vivid hues and striking designs that can be incorporated into dressy outfits for special occasions or worn on a daily basis. Its traditional African designs are easily incorporated into modern fashions, which is why ready-to-wear clothing also uses them.

Originally constructed of 100% cotton, Ankara fabric is renowned for its breathability, eco-friendliness, absorbency, comfort and colour fastness even after numerous washings. However, contemporary Ankara fabrics made of synthetic materials, such as polyester, have lost some of their outstanding quality and durability compared to classic cotton Ankara fabrics. Because it is less expensive, Ankara made of a polyester blend might be categorized as fast fashion. Ankara fabrics made of non-cotton sometimes lose their textures and colours after washing Clarke (2024).

Adire / Ukara Fabric

In southwestern Nigeria, the Yoruba people are known for using handcrafted fabrics called Adire. Sustainable cotton materials dyed with natural (organic) indigo dye are used to make Adire fabrics. One traditional Nigerian fabric that has endured in local and global fashion to this day is this one. It can be made into clothing for special occasions or daily use, just as Ankara, especially among the Yoruba. Popular in southeast Nigeria, Ukara is another traditional handmade fabric from Nigeria that is highly prized by members of the Ekpe community. Similar to Adire, it is constructed entirely of cotton and stained with indigo, a natural dye created from plant leaves.

George Fabric

Although George fabric originated in India, it has since assimilated into the cultural identities of the Igbo of southeast Nigeria as well as other tribes in southern Nigeria. African George, like the original Ankara fabric, was originally made entirely of cotton, but more recently, some George fabrics have been manufactured with a blend of polyester. High-quality cotton fabric George is renowned for its rich embroidery designs and vibrant colours. There are various brands of George, including Plain George, Intorica Brocade George and Intorica George. In southern Nigeria, the Indian Raw Silk George has also gained popularity as a dress for special events.

Lace Fabrics

Rofiquazzam is cited by Okeke (2023) as saying that lace is an open fabric made of a web of strands weaved into intricate designs. The fabric known as lace has become popular among individuals from all around the nation. Nigeria offers a variety of lace styles, including French, Swiss, paper and cord lace. Lace fabric's timeless style makes it appropriate for a wide range of outfits, including blouses and skirts, special occasion dresses and even business attire.

Brocade Fabric

Brocade, a beautifully textured and patterned fabric, is another popular fabric that is frequently used in Nigeria. It is particularly popular among the Hausa and Fulani people of northern Nigeria for traditional clothing. It has elaborate patterns and decorations created with metallic threads. There are various types of brocade; some are composed entirely of cotton, which is perfect for hot weather because to its breathability and comfort. Others are composed of polyester or silk.

Textile Purchasing Habits and Disposal Practices

Since the majority of Nigeria's textile industries have closed, the country is primarily dependent on imported textiles for its apparel needs. There are a lot of elements that affect Nigerian customers' buying patterns, including socioeconomic status and cultural and religious background. Orji (2017) asserts that consumer buying behaviour encompasses the purchasing behaviour of the final consumer as well as numerous other elements and traits that impact the individual's identity, decision-making process, shopping habits and brand preference. Social character, which is based on social class, is one of the elements that the study found to be important in Igbo consumers' decision-making when it comes to the purchasing of textile materials. According Orji (2017), persons in a particular social class always seem to have the same purchasing habits. High earners are more likely to shop for new clothes more regularly, thereby producing more textile waste. There are textiles that are specifically associated with a certain ethnic group when one looks at the kinds of textiles that are consumed in Nigeria.

Adejuwon, Onwudiegwu, and Aodu (2024) found that individuals with greater incomes prefer to buy more clothing items and have little interest in recycling used clothing, supporting the idea that socioeconomic factors also play a significant influence in textile shopping behaviours. However, they relied on a formal trash disposal system and were less likely to dispose of clothing in water bodies. The study also found that there were no appreciable differences between the ways that natural and synthetic fibre textile materials were disposed of, as both were frequently dumped in landfills or dump sites, burned, or dumped in waterways where they could cause major environmental risks. Disposal through formal waste management infrastructure and burning were preferred by their respondents.

Due to Nigeria's weak economy, middle-class and lower-class individuals are increasingly acquiring used clothes, which are primarily made of fast fashion materials. In an effort to safeguard the environment and domestic textile manufacturers, the government has attempted to control the importation of used fast textile materials, but to little or no avail. This is because new clothing's pricing and availability are constantly hampered by a lack of resources. However, some of these old clothes are inexpensive and already worn out; so, they are thrown away readily, and their trash pollutes the environment.

Sustainable Textile Options in Nigeria

Funtua Cotton

It is made entirely of locally grown cotton that is spun, woven and grown in Funtua, Katsina State, Nigeria. Its conventional weave and loose weave improve its breathability. Northern Nigeria is renowned for its cotton spinning heritage, which is still practised today through Funtua cotton spinning and textile weaving. Cotton crops are typically cultivated in June and July and harvested in November and January (Ismail, (2024)). In the past, Katsina, Sokoto, and Zaria farmers produced the majority of cotton. Furthermore, according to Ismail (2024), cotton accounted for up to 25% of Nigeria's GDP in 1980. The collapse of more than 150 Nigerian textile enterprises left Funtua Textile Limited as one of the few survivors. The company's capabilities for spinning, weaving, finishing and ginning draw clients from both inside and outside of Nigeria.

Adire / Ukara Fabric dyed with Indigo Dye

Nigerian traditional handcrafted fabrics known as Adire fabric are constructed entirely of cotton and naturally dyed indigo. These are made utilizing methods that cause the least amount of environmental harm possible by combining caustic soda with plant extract dyes. Used dyes are frequently recycled repeatedly, which contributes to the preservation of natural resources. Nonetheless, certain Adire textiles are dyed synthetically. Another handcrafted fabric that is native to southeast Nigeria is Ukara, which is manufactured using a natural indigo dyeing technique. Ukara is manufactured from indigo dye derived

from at least 800 species of the leguminous *Indigofera* plant, of which roughly 600 are present in Africa, according to *This Is Us*, which was sourced from Lagos Fashion Week (2024). The leaves are crushed to produce the colours, which are then utilized to create exquisite, detailed designs on cotton textiles. Because no hazardous chemicals are used in the production processes, Ukara fabrics are environmentally-friendly.

Hand-woven Fabrics

Various hand-woven fabrics have managed to withstand the effects of Nigeria's importation of foreign textiles, although some are struggling to survive. Some of these textiles are made from cotton or synthetic yarn blends made by businesses outside Nigeria. On the contrary, hand-woven fabrics are considered sustainable because of the low environmental impact of their production procedures. Akwete cloth, Akwa-ocha and Orii are examples of sustainable hand-woven fabrics made and used by the Igbo people. The Yoruba are known for weaving and wearing *Aso-oke*. Anger-woven fabrics from the Tiv and Atu-woven fabrics from the Idoma and Okene peoples are found in the Middle-Belt Region of Nigeria.

Ways Natural Resources could be Sustainably Managed via Textile Consumption Habits in Nigeria

Increasing Reuse

The term “textile reuse” describes a variety of techniques for extending the useful life of textile items by giving them to new owners, either with or without previous alteration (such as patching). Renting, trading, swapping, borrowing and inheriting are ways to accomplish this (Peters and Sandin, 2018). Even if the second-hand market has made it easier to reuse textiles, the majority of Nigerians who buy used clothing do so because of the country's difficult economic situation rather than because they are environmentally-conscious. The environmental impact of textile consumption patterns is largely unknown to many individuals. Increased reuse of leftover textile material is one strategy for the sustainable management of Nigeria's natural resources used in textile production. Because it eliminates the need to produce new products, textile reuse has a greater positive impact on the environment than recycling (Sandin and Peters, 2018).

Okirika, the second-hand market, has been a booming industry that has given many Nigerians a source of income and allowed middle-class and lower-class people to get alternative clothing at a lower cost. However, these used clothes are imported from other nations, like the USA, China, Germany and the UK. One starts to wonder what happens to textiles that are created in Nigeria and utilized there. It is crucial to implement tactics that would increase the use of Nigerian-made and used clothing, because it may not be feasible to sell them abroad for reuse, unlike other nations who export theirs to Third-World nations. In this manner, traditional Nigerian clothing that is influenced by the

culture can be reused and marketed at a lower cost, protecting the environment and resources from textile waste.

Another method of reusing clothing that reduces the resources required to produce new garments is renting them. Church wedding bridal gowns are unique pieces of clothing that are frequently worn only once in a lifetime, and they can be costly to make or buy already produced ones. Thus, in order to conserve resources, the majority of individuals turn to renting them. Some tailors and seamstresses in Nigeria hire out bridal gowns for church weddings; this practice may even be extended to clothing for traditional weddings.

Donating used clothing that is still in good condition to churches, extended family members, or non-profit organizations, like Motherless Baby's Homes or the Old People's Homes is another way that textile consumption patterns can manage resources sustainably. During the fieldwork conducted on March 2, 2025, at the Regional Head Quarters of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Seed of David Parish Awka, it was noted that the Welfare Department, under the direction of Mrs. Nnonyelu, gathered and displayed used clothing on the first Sunday of each month for individuals to freely select as needed; see Plates 1 and 2. This tactic has given people a way to donate their unwanted clothing rather than burning it or throwing it in a landfill, which would harm the environment.



Plate 1: Display of Used Cloth by the Welfare Department of RCCG Seed of David Church Awka

Source: Fieldwork at the RCCG Regional H/Qtrs. Awka (Okeke, 2025)



Plate 2: Selection of Used cloth by People at the Welfare Department stand of the RCCG Seed of David Church

***Source: Fieldwork at RCCG Regional H/Qtrs., Awka
(Okeke, 2025)***

Upcycling

The practice of turning unwanted, discarded fabrics into new, more valuable items is known as upcycling. Various upcycling processes can be used to enhance or transform old, worn cloth into standout items. For example, an old clothing item can be given new life by using dyeing techniques, like tie-dye and marbling, which give it a brilliant colour and flare. To create modern fashion with a hint of tradition, pieces of Ankara cloth can be appliquéd onto ordinary old fabrics, like Jean material. Creating embroidery patterns on simple coloured cloth or adding embellishments with beads are two other ways to upcycle fabrics. In order to give the woven fabric a new lease on life, old *Aso-oke* wrappers or headgear can be repurposed into gowns, skirts, tops, and bags, and cushion covers, among other items. See plate:3 and 4.

Another way to upcycle old clothing into more fashionable looks is by re-styling. By using crochet stitches, for example, a sleeve can be added to a top or sleeveless dress. A combination of traditional and contemporary motifs can be achieved by upcycling an old Ankara cloth skirt or gown by adding scallops using crochet stitches. One may also upcycle old skirts into tote bags. According to Mohammed (2024), upcycling techniques give clothing a new lease on life and physical transformation, enabling one to experience a new piece of apparel that expresses one's creativity and tells a narrative.



Plate 3: Used Aso- oke Wrapper Transformed into Gown
Source: Fieldwork at the RCCG Regional H/Qtrs, Awka
(Okeke, 2025)



Plate 4: Used Shirts Transformed into Seat Cover
Photo: Courtesy Anuprema

Recycling of Worn Textiles

According to Jarvis (2023), there are two different types of recycling: open-loop recycling and close-loop recycling. Open-loop recycling is a type of recycling that takes one item or material and turn it into a different item or material. It is a handy solution for keeping resources out of landfills, but it does not really reduce the demand for new, virgin resources. For example, there will still be the need to produce new plastic bottles to replace the ones recycled into a sweater. Conversely, closed-loop recycling is a system that closes the loop on resources and actively reduce demand for new, virgin resources. An instance, when aluminium can be recycled into another aluminium can.

There are two types of textile recycling: mechanical recycling and chemical textile recycling. Mechanical textile recycling involves the physical shredding of textiles into their components source which often results in lower quality materials, while chemical textile recycling involves adding chemicals to textiles to break down the polymers that make up the materials. This type of recycling produces the same quality of materials as the virgin material but the technology for doing this is currently not readily available (Jarvis, 2023). As a result, it is preferable to employ the mechanical textile recycling method, which is simple to undertake on a personal level for unwanted clothing that cannot be upcycled or repurposed. For example, old clothing can be torn up and used as stuffing for pillows and beds, or it can be used to make heat-resistant insulation pads. Foot mats can be woven from the torn old fabric by twisting it into a rope. Additionally, it could be utilized as rags for another purpose.

Conclusion

According to the study, Nigerians' consumption of textiles may help manage natural resources sustainably by boosting reuse, upcycling and recycling of worn textiles. Some of these methods can even be done at home. The field study's findings indicated that, while some people already understand this idea, further campaigns should be launched to educate Nigerians about the importance of consciously choosing to consume textiles in a sustainable manner. By doing this, the environmental damage caused by careless textile waste disposal will be lessened, and the limited resources required to produce new textile materials will be preserved.

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ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP PERSONALITY FORMATION AND MENTORSHIP ACUMEN OF PROF. OKECHUKU ONUCHUKU, VICE CHANCELLOR OF IGNATIUS AJURU UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, RUMUOLUMENI, PORT HARCOURT

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Abstract

The paper discusses academic leadership personality formation and mentorship acumen of Professor Okechuku Onuchuku, Vice Chancellor of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt. The paper X-rays leadership as espoused by researchers, namely leaders are born, leaders as talented individuals, leadership as authoritative language and leaders as capacity builders and mentors. Leadership involves developing a vision for the organization, and aligning people with that vision. The study stresses that the management process involves strategic planning, organizing, budgeting, staff and controlling in achieving the objectives of an enterprise. Encapsulated in this paper are leadership transportation and dynamism of Professor Okechuku Onuchuku, who has served in many esteemed administrative positions in the university, such as Head of Department, Dean of Studies, director, senate member, and currently Vice Chancellor of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Introduction

Education is power. In other words, knowledge is power. The wealth of a nation is knowledge. Eze (2022), in agreement with Nelson Mandela, notes that education is power. The power is vested in leadership. The success of any institution is greatly dependent on its leadership. It is against this backdrop that the leadership strategies of Professor Okechuku Onuchuku will be discussed, particularly his influential nature in taking cogent decision on administrative issues related to education.

Efficiency and effectiveness are crucial in determining the level of attainment. Leadership is one of the basic needs in management. It plays a prominent role because it sets the achievement strides of an organization. A serious issue in Nigeria today is the issue of leadership that involves the economic, political, social and well-being and security of citizens. The public and private sector demand of leadership is enormous in achieving the optimal level of equal equilibrium.

What Is Leadership?

Leadership is development of a clear and complete system of expectation in order to identify, evoke and use the strength of all resources in the organization, the most important of which is people. According to Cohen (1990), cited in Eze (2024), leadership is the art of influencing others to their maximum performance to accomplish any task, objective or project. Leaders are individuals who establish direction for a working group of individuals who gain commitment from the group members to the direction, who then motivate these members to achieve the direction's outcomes. Drawing from the definition of Cohen and Bothale (2018), leadership is the sum of attitudes, aptitudes, competences and skills of leaders. Luke Waldo Edison, cited in Eze (2022) asserts that nothing great can be achieved without effective leadership. This implies that the management of human and natural resources takes place in an organization.

The Concept of Leadership

Leadership is an authoritative language that denotes power. Power implies capacity, ability to do work. An essential ingredient is competence and influence, without which the operation is zero-result oriented. According to Cohen (1990), Institutions or corporate organizations need strong leadership and strong management for optimal effectiveness. In today's dynamic workplace, leaders are needed to challenge the status quo and to inspire and persuade organization members. Managers are needed to assist in developing and maintaining a smoothly functioning workplace.

Kotter, quoted in Eze (2024), holds that the leadership process involves, developing a vision for the organization, aligning people with that vision through communication and motivating people to action through empowerment and basic need fulfilment. The management process involves planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, and controlling and problem solving. Algantani (2014) submits that management skills are used to plan, build and direct organizational systems to accomplish missions and goals. In the view of Eze (2024), the essence of life is building capacity and enlarging coast, while leadership skills are used to focus on a potential change by establishing direction, aligning people and motivating and inspiring. Nevertheless, leaders set strategic goal, motivate workers, even with sympathy and empathy in challenging period. They equally inspire others to achieve goal, as evident of the Vice Chancellor in his benevolent nature in administration.

Leadership Personality Formation of Professor Okechuku Onuchuku

Professor Okechuku Onuchuku is divinely formed and endowed with great leadership virtues. He is an advocate of effective leadership, which is obtained from excellent family background, with good parentage and character formation. Excellent character is in-built,

developed and nurtured consistently throughout an individual's whole life. It is a gradual process that entails practice through perseverance and patience. Effective leaders cultivate vital attitudes, characteristics and qualities that are pertinent to leadership and management. Professor Okechuku Onuchuku has inculcated a peaceful atmosphere, ensuring management consistently works to achieve organizational goals and objectives.

His intellectual capability in policy creation and management has led to increase in departments, faculties and new programmes in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Professor Okechuku Onuchuku has never been frightened by the challenges confronting the school. He identifies problems and offers solutions. Eze (2024) submits that problem solving is the cardinal function of management in goal attainment. Problems are inevitable. Perhaps, the significant aspect of management is the rising and falling in decision-making on human and material resources. The character of leaders determines the extent of their success. Professor Okechuku Onuchuku has been a law-abiding citizen, even in taking instructions from the governors of the state, both previous and present.

Professor Okechuku Onuchuku was born in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria in the late 1960s. His early education was in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. He attended the University of Port Harcourt, where he studied Economics. He was the best graduating student in the Department of Economics in the 1990 set. He continued for his Master's degree in the same course and university; he came out with distinction in 1994. In 1998, he bagged his PhD in Economics and proceeded to New York University Canada, Schulich School of Business Executive Education Centre in 2009, to be certified in Performance Indicator in Government Measurement and Management. His areas of specialization are economic theory and policy and quantitative economics (economics and mathematical economics).

Personality of Professor Okechuku Onuchuku

Professor Okechuku Onuchuku is the Vice Chancellor of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt. He is a prolific writer. He has over 100 academic publications, including books, monographs, as well as articles in national and international journals. He has also presented many conference papers in his field and other related fields. He is a member of many professional bodies in Nigeria and overseas and sits on the boards of many reputable organizations. He is a member of Nigerian Economic Society and was also a National Vice President of the society.

His Professional Contributions to the Academic Community

Professor Okechuku Onuchuku is a well-known philanthropist, who has turned lamentation into laughter in the past three years in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, as staff members, including casual ones, go home with bags of rice and financial gifts as

bonus for Christmas. As the principal instructional leader, he impacts staff, parents and students through strategies that affect what happens in classroom. His instructional leadership is distributed through networks of influence across the school. He is a transformational leader; his infrastructural development in the entire Ignatius Ajuru University of Education is visible in every area.

Professor Okechuku Onuchuku's Journey to the Pinnacle of His Calling

Professor Okechuku Onuchuku is a seasoned teacher/lecturer and administrator. He began his teaching profession as a Lecturer I with the Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, where he also served as the dean. He was Director, University of Port Harcourt Business School, and a member University of Port Harcourt Governing Council. He was appointed as the Acting Vice Chancellor of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) during the administration of Chief Barr. Nyesom Wike, formal Executive Governor of Rivers State.

Contributions to Knowledge

Professor Okechuku Onuchuku has taught at postgraduate and undergraduate levels in University of Port Harcourt, before being appointed the Acting Vice Chancellor of IAUE.

Services to the University Community

He is serving the university in the following areas:

- Vice Chancellor
- Administrator
- Appointment of Heads/Directors
- Election of Deans in diverse faculties
- Automated ITC Traffic booth
- Promotion of deserving staff
- Payment of the consequential monetary value
- Recruitment of lecturers/administrators
- Good relationship with host communities through corporate social responsibilities
- Adequate security in and around the campuses
- Staff accommodation/offices
- Student hostel construction
- Constitution of the University Alumni Association
- Enhancement of University Health Service and so many others

Mentorship Acumen of Professor Okechuku Onuchuku

Mentoring literally means building capacity through coaching, teaching, discipline and advocacy (Eze, 2024). Mentoring is a teaching-learning process acquired in the course of personal experiences within a one-to-one reciprocal career development relationship between two individuals varied in age, personality, life cycle, professional status, and/or credentials. Mentoring is a dynamic and non-competitive nurturing process that promotes independence, autonomy and self-actualization in mentees while fostering a sense of pride, fulfilment support and continuity in the mentor (Ololube, 2019).

Mentoring is about systematic learning and mentees look for different things, like encouragement, critical friendship emotional support, knowledge. Mentoring is an extension of the action learning approach requiring on-the-job presence to develop skills and knowledge (Mentoring Kit, 2007). Mentoring is a collaborative learning relationship that proceeds through stages over time and has the basic primary goals of serving a less-experienced person to acquire the essential competencies required for success in a chosen career.

Generally speaking, IAUE researchers are doing exploits in branding and rebranding the resources, personnel and students. The products of the school have emerged first class in many quiz competitions.

Substantially, Professor Okechuku Onuchuku is pragmatic in mentoring and building capacity as an administrator. He maintains conflict resolution in accommodating a peaceful learning environment within his jurisdiction, and voluntarily agrees to help mentees develop skills and competencies in academic writing. He is also an advisor and role model who is willing to invest in the personal growth and professional development of his mentees.

Effective Mentoring Skills

Professor Okechuku Onuchuku is efficient and effective in goal attainment, working well with the governing council of the institution, He created a favourable internal work environment to enable members and every officer of the school to function maximally.

Mentoring is a practical way of helping an individual grow personally and professionally. It gives mentors the opportunity to share perspectives, experiences, skills, expertise and values with the mentees. Be it formal, within an institution or informal, mentoring provides support, valuable feedback and the drive needed to unlock the potential of mentees.

Professor Okechuku Onuchuku ignites the desire to grow or awakes sleepy and potential abilities of mentees. His mentoring is predominantly based on effective growth of students, building capacities and infrastructural provision. A distinguishing quality of a

leader is personal character. This is the first theory in leadership, called the Trait Theory. It is also known as the Great Man Theory. Unfortunately, fifty years of research work has not produced personality traits or a set of qualities that can be used to distinguish between leaders and those who are not leaders. For instance, when a leader builds reputation, attention is on the person and not on the job itself (Eze, 2024). As students open for a new academic session, the Vice Chancellor organizes prayers for two consecutive days tagged “Rededication Prayers.” This initiative is meant to build students spiritually, physically and academically, so that the students can triumph in their works.

Strides in Leadership

Eze (2024) has propounded a theory of leadership based on the following sixteen fundamental concepts:

- Leaders are designated for top and not bottom.
- Leaders see difficulties as a stepping stone.
- Leaders’ growth determines the peoples’ growth.
- Leaders never give up; winners never quit and quitters never win.
- Leaders have great mental capacity.
- Excellence is the gradual result of always striving to do better.
- Leadership functions on the basis of trust and confidence.
- Difficulties mastered are opportunities won.
- Commitment in the face of conflict produces character.
- Admit your failures quickly and humbly.
- Never take shortcuts; they never pay off in the long run.
- Leadership is servanthood.
- Experience count as you do exceptional.
- Progress always involves risk-taking; every generation needs a new revolution. If your vision does not cost you something, it is a daydream.
- Leading others requires courage.
- God chooses a leader and what he/she goes through in life.

Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Ranked Top Institution by World Education Services (WES) Canada

Ignatius Ajuru University of Education is among the institutions in Nigeria ranked top by World Education Services (WES) Canada based on integrity and trust. A letter to the university dated March 8, 2024 signed by Frank Roil Rice of World Education Services Canada stated that, since 2016, IAUE academic results verified through WES have been certified with integrity in document evaluation and that many of IAUE graduates are now international students in Canada, United States of America, Australia and Russia. The

university is on the WES International Platform for Academic Document Evaluation. World Education Services enjoined the university management to engage the professional IT departments for the configurations.

Professor Okechuku Onuchuku Appreciates the Governor for Reconstituting Governing Council

The Vice Chancellor, Professor Okechuku Onuchuku, has expressed gratitude to the State Governor, Sir Siminalayi Joseph Fubara GSSRS, for reconstituting the governing council of the institution. Speaking during the statutory senate meeting which held on Wednesday February 28, 2024 at the Postgraduate Hall of the university, he also lauded the governor for the choice of Chief Barrister Adokiye Amiesimaka CON, DSSRS as the Pro-chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council. The Governor, through the Secretary to the State Government, Dr. Tammy Wenike Danagogo, had in a letter dated February 26, 2024 appointed the Pro-chancellor and Chairman alongside six other members.

Admonition to Students during Matriculation

Professor Okechuku Onuchuku admonished fresh Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) students for the 2024/2025 academic session to shun cultism, examination malpractice and other related crimes. He gave the admonition during the matriculation ceremony of the newly admitted students for the 2024/2025 academic session on Saturday March 16, 2024 at the University Auditorium. While congratulating the students on being among the select few, he looked forward to helping them succeed in their search for quality higher education that would make them fit in the 21st century knowledge-driven economy. He encouraged parents and guardians to always monitor the academic performance of their children and wards and to support them by paying their school fees promptly. He solicited the support and assistance of the parents in the maintenance of adequate security on campus.

Admonition for Graduating Students

The Vice Chancellor of IAUE, Professor Okechuku Onuchuku, charged graduates of the institution to demonstrate to the world that they truly deserve the certificates and prizes conferred on them by the university. He gave the charge during the 42nd convocation ceremony for first degree graduates, which took place on Friday April, 26, 2024 at the University Auditorium.

He charged them to go into the larger society and bring honour and glory, without spoiling the name of the university He admonished them not to abandon any projects started but to celebrate the end of their programmes in the various disciplines, bearing in mind that their graduation would mark a new beginning in their career and personal

life. Also, he implored them to join any branch of the alumni association of the university close to them and to use their extended contacts to seek after the good of the university at all times. He added that the university expected more commitment from them to the society and their alma mater.

The Economy and Sustainable Higher Education in Nigeria

Sustainable development requires balancing environment and societal and economic considerations in the pursuit of development and an improved quality of life. It is a dynamic approach to improving the well-being of people. Sustainable development means development that continues to meet daily needs of the educational sector within a geo-political region (Eze, 2022). Since the educational system involves different projects which differ in form or category, there is the need for feasibility study to meet the goals of any government. The major essential tools for achieving sustainable development include the following areas:

1. Improve the quality of basic education.
2. Developing public awareness and understanding.
3. Provide training for all sectors of private and civil society.
4. Re-orient existing education programmes to address sustainable development.

In addition, the World Commission on Environment and Development identifies sustainable development as that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Ojalage and Ojaleye, 2002).

Roles of Government in Nigerian Education

In educational management, the three tiers of government in Nigeria that are involved in management of schools are

- Federal government
- State government
- Local government

Federal Government

The Federal government manages education through the Federal Ministry of Education, an organ responsible for the administration, financing and control of education at the federal level. This organ is headed by a Minister of Education, who is directly appointed by the President. He then passes through a screening process by the Senate. The minister has professional educational administrators and planners as well as civil servants under him.

Quality Education in Nigeria

Nigeria places a high premium on education. Apart from the proliferation of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions across the country to demonstrate the depth of interest in the education of its citizens by the Nigerian government, the education sector enjoys high budgetary allocation by the federal and state governments every year.

In all of this, the Niger Delta region and Rivers State, in particular, have produced some of the best brains in the country. The reason is very simple: education is said to be a better safeguard of liberty than a standing army. It makes people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern, but impossible to enslave. A former American President, Benjamin Franklin once said, "If a man empties his purse into his head, no man can take it away from him." It implies that an investment in knowledge always pays the most interest. Government at all levels believe that, to enjoy the full benefits education offers society, efforts must be made to explain policies to ensure public participation. Even in this era of falling standard of education, especially in the Third-World countries, occasioned by corruption, compromise, lust for materialism and get-rich-quickly syndrome, private schools and private universities have effectively cushioned the effects of the precarious situation by filling the yawning gap.

However, most of these patriotic Nigerians with the requisite knowledge, skills and experience to transform the education sector to international standards are forced to withhold their resources or at best invest in other areas of the state economy other than education.

Conclusion

This chapter evaluated the philanthropist Professor Okechuku Onuchuku's academic leadership, personality formation and mentorship acumen. He is an erudite scholar, a teacher with distinction, who has mentored and built transformational leadership. He ensures effective and efficient leadership in every facet of human endeavour. He is creative and endowed with great virtues in accomplishing organizational goals and objectives in the university sector, among others. His core values of strong conviction, accountability, humility, integrity, equality, responsibility, discipline and sacrifice enrich his leadership. His aims and objectives distinguish him among academics of his time globally. He is a resource person and consultant. His emotional intelligence and collaborative skills aid his mentoring capabilities. Professor Okechuku Onuchuku is saddled with various responsibilities at state and federal levels. He is a disciplinarian par excellence, and a celebrity in every endeavour.

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**WOMEN AND THE LEADERSHIP OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA:
INTERROGATING THE MISSING LINK WITH UNSC RESOLUTION
1325 ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY**

By

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Abstract

Since 1999, when Nigeria returned to civil rule after decades of military rule, women in the country have not actually occupied significant positions like their male counterparts in various political parties, despite the numerical value of women which stands at 49% of the entire population. With emphasis on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the paper examines the exclusion of women from the leadership of political parties in Nigeria, and interrogates the factors responsible for the poor representation of women and implications for the implementation and achievement of UNSCR 1325. The paper responds to the following questions: (a) Why is patriarchy detrimental to the leadership of political parties by women? (b) What are the factors that sustain the domination of political party leadership by the men? (c) What is the peacebuilding role of women in political parties? (d) How does UNSCR 1325 determine women's strategic contributions to the leadership of political parties in Nigeria? (e) What are the consequences of ignoring the strategic role of women in political parties in Nigeria? In the Fourth Republic, the domination of party leadership by men who disregarded 35% affirmative action, has not been helpful, as various parties were engulfed in intra-party disputes that caused factionalization, thereby depriving women the opportunity to contribute to conflict resolution and decision-making. The paper stresses that the limited participation of Nigerian women in political participation and electioneering processes can be addressed through adequate mobilization and sensitization, particularly with the aim of extending their role beyond functioning as women leaders and party and campaign agents at the grassroots. Peacebuilding role of women is imperative for the rescue of political parties that witness instability and anti-party activities of their male counterparts, considering litigations and suspensions that undermine the stability of the parties affected. This cannot be ignored if Nigeria is determined to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals 16 on peace and justice.

Keywords: Nigerian women, party leadership, peacebuilding, political parties, UNSCR 1325

Introduction

Gender equity is one of the core priorities of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to the extent that various states in the international political system have been mandated to implement international protocols that advance the interest and well-being of women. Since time immemorial, the female gender has remained instrumental in the sustenance of social relations, family building and societal transformation at community, national and international levels. The foregoing manifested in the role of women in salvaging some complex situations that the males could not resolve, especially in war situations, during economic or environmental crises and other moments of uncertainties that threatened the well-being and growth of the human race. Thus, such innovative and productive gender cannot be relegated to the background in politics and national economy.

The political marginalization of women across the world has manifested for years, to the extent that in Africa, Europe and other continents, they were prevented from voting or being voted for, and being involved in decision-making, thereby making the women voiceless when critical issues were discussed (Worugji, 2023). This meant that conclusion of various issues did not accommodate the involvement of women.

Since 2000, Nigerian women have been showing serious concern in responding to conflicts that have had devastating socio-political, economic and human consequences, especially the ones having resource control, political, ethnic and religious motivation. In the past, conflict resolution, like other decision-making roles, was the domain of men but recent events in Nigeria motivated women to deepen their involvement in conflict resolution. At the family level and society, women are not only peace practitioners but also partners in development and societal transformation.

Despite many attempts to address the imbalance, disparity manifests at international and national levels. Gender divide manifests in various sectors of Nigeria's economy, namely information technology, education, politics, trade and investment, social protection and well-being and the security sector.

Since the early years of Nigeria's independence, in 1960, most political issues have remained the domain of the men whose political ambitions involved struggle for power in the polity to the extent that most of the previous electoral processes were controversial and disputed by the losers.

Although some studies have been conducted on women in politics and the attitude of female candidates (Takao, 2007; Eto, 2010; Dolan and Lynch, 2015), there is still a knowledge gap in the area of the exclusion of women from the leadership of political

parties in Nigeria, and the factors responsible for the poor representation of women within the context of UNSCR 1325.

With emphasis on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the paper examines the exclusion of women from the leadership of political parties in Nigeria, and interrogates the factors responsible for the poor representation of women and its implications for the implementation and achievement of UNSCR 1325. The paper responds to the following questions: (a) Why is patriarchy detrimental to the leadership of political parties by women? (b) What are the factors that sustain the domination of political party leadership by the men? (c) What is the peacebuilding role of women in political parties? (d) How does UNSCR 1325 determine women's strategic contributions to the leadership of political parties in Nigeria? (e) What are the consequences of ignoring the strategic role of women in political parties in Nigeria? This study is qualitative, using secondary and primary sources, including key informant interviews involving male and female politicians at national, state and grassroots levels; some members of political parties were also interviewed.

Overview of Women's Experiences in Nigeria's Electoral System Since 1999

Nigeria's political landscape has been characterized by inequalities. Consequently, gender inequality limits the potential of women, and this threatens the achievement of the sustainable development goals (Okolie-Osemene and Udeke, 2013). Experiences of women have not been encouraging as far as politics in Nigeria is concerned. This is because the country undermined the contributions and efforts of women in state building without considering the long-term implications for the electoral system, in which the struggle for power has become the order of the day. According to the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, women and men are not having equal opportunities to actualize their potential in areas of politics, economy and education development, and this undermines the principle of non-discrimination as contained in Section 2 of the 1999 Constitution.

Despite women's advocacy efforts aimed at improving their representation in leadership positions, there are still men in high places whose perception that women should remain in the home settings has not changed. This situation contradicts and undermines global movements that champion women's leadership awareness and preparedness to aspire for enviable positions in a society dominated by their male counterparts.

From the local government level to the national level, women's efforts to establish their footprints in leadership positions received little support of their male counterparts whose political culture have been overshadowed by godfatherism and prebendalism, as seen in previous presidential and gubernatorial elections.

Political parties have made some progress, but women still occupy a fraction of elected positions in both state and national legislatures. The Women's Manifesto in Nigeria, launched in 2006, is an important policy document that pushes for gender-responsive political party reforms, although its full implementation has faced resistance. Women's participation in political parties has brought attention to specific issues like women's rights, education, healthcare and social justice. However, research suggests that women within political parties often adopt strategies and positions aligned with the broader party line, sometimes prioritizing party loyalty over gender-based advocacy (Olayanju, 2018; Odukoya & Akinsanya, 2020).

Female politicians who break through party lines, such as Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala or Aisha Alhassan, offer examples of how women can influence policy on a larger scale, but these women remain exceptional cases. Recent studies (e.g., Shiel & Iroanya, 2021) examine efforts to increase women's participation through grassroots mobilization, digital media and youth involvement in politics.

Theoretical Explanation of Leadership of Political Parties and Women in Contemporary Nigeria

Leadership is synonymous with human existence in every society. There are different views on what leadership is and how a leader should handle situations.

Akinola (2009: 32) notes that:

Leadership is central to the problems associated with the human condition in Nigeria. As a means of helping to chart a direction, or of inspiring and mobilizing social collectivities, like groups, communities, or nations, for development and change, leadership serves several functions, namely establishing the goals, purposes, or objectives of the collectivity, creating the structures and institutions through which these purposes are met, as well as maintaining and enhancing them.

Theory of Intersectionality: The intersection of multiple inequalities is one of the issues of concern across the world (Walby, Armstrong, & Strid, 2012). According to McCall (2005), the theory contributed to the advancement of research on women's experiences of societal discrimination and oppression (Bose, 2012). Intersectionality, propounded by Alice Walker, who drew from a word coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, refers to the framework for analysing people's socio-political identities with the aim of enhancing understanding of the modes of privilege and discrimination which determine advantage and disadvantage such as sex, sexuality, class and racial identity (Bose, 2012; Bajaj, 2022). As a phenomenon that explores the dynamics of difference and sameness, intersectionality facilitates the consideration of race, gender, class and other axes of power in many political discourses across society (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, L 2013).

Political intersectionality manifests the relations of power to the disadvantage of women who are excluded from social, economic and political lenses, especially in terms of contributing to the rule formation and accessing resources (Colfer, Basnett and Ihalainen, 2018), in political parties in Nigeria. The exclusion of women in political leadership of political parties because of their gender is not only unjust treatment of women but also a disadvantage to the masses.

Politics is one of the domains where masculinity remains a major issue of concern to observers; and this has motivated the masculinisation of women with the aim of demonstrating their capability to perform the tasks reserved for many men in a world characterized by masculine values and standard (Jeong, 2017). In his study on the poor representation of women in politics, Eto (2020) outlines the factors that hinder their participation in the decision-making process, namely the electoral system, socio-political culture, electoral quotas, and attitude of women to political representation. It is not disputable that women's attitudes contribute to the masculinization of politics and elections from party level to the general elections period. This supports the small male elite groups who control institutions and daily activities of government (Jeong, 2017).

A major issue that affects the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security is implementation of the policy, which remains a global standard of addressing gender inequality. This is because gender politics usually characterizes such narrative (Lyytikäinen and Yadav, 2021). This is where leadership determines how and the extent policies are implemented.

The challenge is that many male politicians would desire to extend the practice in traditional society, where there is male domination, to the political scene in order to sustain male superiority as decision-makers. Addei and Addei (2010) identify how women in male African novels were categorized based on female stereotypes as good time girls, girlfriends, secretaries or wives, even when female characters are not weak, as seen in female novels. Additionally, the traditional views about women are not helpful because there are many societies where proverbs and wise sayings depicting women as important, resourceful and innovative, like Akan traditional society in Ghana (Addei and Addei, 2010). If given the opportunity, some male politicians would want to disregard the psychological advantage of men in political party leadership over the females in the parties.

Therefore, the issue of party leadership cannot come without perception change in terms of male superiority and promotion of a participatory approach for all social groups in politics (Nwankwo, 1996; Okolie-Osemene and Udeke, 2013). The implementation of equality of gender within the context of UNSCR 1325 is an opportunity for women to engage positively with the men in terms of participation, beyond peacebuilding and security, and to accelerate the representation of women in politics,

especially at the political party level, where leadership is almost synonymous with the men (Okolie-Osemene and Udeke, 2013).

Features and Patterns of Party Politics in Nigeria and Why Patriarchy is detrimental to the Leadership of Political Parties by Women

Politics is synonymous with human existence (Badejo, 2023). Politics has become a major interest of some individuals in Nigeria; they can do anything humanly possible to hijack the political party of their choice with the aim of actualising their political ambition. This is what Badejo (2023) describes as individual interest, which may sometimes undermine the collective interest of some groups.

Patriarchy is one of the features of party politics in Nigeria, where being a member of the ruling party is not just an advantage but also significant means of patronage, with high probability of accessing power through appointments, award of contracts and other political and economic benefits directly or indirectly. In fact, having one's relative or party member in power could give hope for a better future to many whose expectations remain high until the exit of their party member from such a position of authority.

According to Jeong (2017:66):

The patriarchal system is entrenched in control of state over coercive capabilities and unequal socio-economic structures. It lays down relations between men and men as well as between men and women by imposing a hierarchical structure. It gives more value to masculine tasks while demeaning feminine oriented work. In a patriarchal system, men are taught to be masculine, to compete with each other, and to hide their fears....

The foregoing shows how men became the main political actors.

Socio-economic factors greatly contribute to the marginalization of women in politics, thereby making their interest in political participation decline despite the advocacy by various stakeholders (Othman and Okpe, 2021). Similarly, political leadership is one of the challenges in the country, with men having dominated politics for decades, in a society where there is the power of oligarchy, recruitment of political allies and clients united by plain opportunism, with the tendency to use political groupings platforms for self-interest (Akinola, 2009). The problem here is in the use of such groupings to exclude the minorities in terms of gender or ethnic affiliation, for their own benefits.

The patriarchal nature of politics that has been tolerated for decades only privileges political inclusion of men over women, with little or no effort to address the policy-making gap created to the detriment of women and entire society. Patriarchy gives men undue political advantage and leaves women stranded; it portrays women as politically unprepared. Patriarchy makes women to be unjustly excluded from the planning and management of political party affairs.

Women's Recognition of Principles that Regulate Conflict Resolution in Nigeria and Their Significance in Political Parties

Women adopt and demonstrate the functionality of the principles that regulate conflict resolution in Nigeria and their significance in political parties when properly harnessed in resolving conflicts in all parts of the country. Women acknowledge these principles especially in the process of mediation. Mediation is facilitated negotiation which involves the intervention of a third party or mediator who facilitates communication between parties to a conflict.

The following principles guide women's involvement in conflict resolution:

1. Principle of impartiality, neutrality and transparency;
2. Respect for the rule of law: this principle recognizes the fact that no one is above the law;
3. Principle of truth: it involves cross examination of facts to find out the truth;
4. Principle of equity and fairness;
5. Principle of consensus to avoid hasty decisions;
6. Principle of respect for the rights and views of others;
7. Principle of common humanity which stresses that, despite cultural differences, humans are basically the same. It encourages community living in the society;
8. Principle of justice, the restoration of rights, dignity, interest and wellbeing of victims, offenders, and the entire community; and
9. Principle of restoration and transformation, which demands giving assistance to the victims to restore their injury, losses, and their sense of security and dignity.

Women have also applied alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in conflict resolution in various states with a view to promoting continued relationship between adversaries. The significance of negotiation in conflict resolution cannot be overemphasized. Women always encourage proper communication between parties in conflict. A gender that recognizes the principles of conflict resolution, especially those of equity, fairness, consultation, transparency, and the rule of law, can handle matters of conflict in political parties; such social group has the capability to perform beyond expectation in the interest of the public.

For instance, Women in Peace Network (WIPNET) carried out a survey to find out the extent to which women are really involved in conflict resolution and decision-making in the face of continued exclusion of women in issues affecting them. Surprisingly, about 57% of those polled were of the opinion that women are involved, while 40.9% did not agree with this assertion. Since women are most vulnerable in crisis and conflict situations, their being more actively involved in conflict resolution and decision-making is a welcome development. Since women have social networking and conflict analysis skills, they are positioned to respond to intra-party conflicts that affect harmonious relationship

and could undermine party leadership and loyalty amongst members. With the useful information available to them, women are able to enhance trust and loyalty of members.

Obstacles to the Involvement of Women in Political Party Leadership and Conflict Resolution

1. *Intimidation of women by men:* Major challenges that hinder the proper representation of women at political party level and resolution of conflicts in Nigeria include money politics, personality politics, ethnicity, pull him/her down syndrome and insecurity. Most of these problems create more opportunities for men to exclude women, as threats like insecurity and personality politics privilege men's political interests over those of women politicians. These challenges threaten the full involvement of women by intimidating and prohibiting women from attaining their potential in politics and many sectors of the economy. In fact, these same challenges emerge as significant constraints to women's participation at various decision-making positions.

2. *Lip service to the rule of law and religion:* Both the law and religion discourage politics of exclusion. Therefore, the contribution of women in leading political parties has to be given consideration instead of being limited by the discriminatory or autocratic policies of their male counterparts who lead the parties. Women should be given opportunity to be represented at the leadership level, especially national working committees of parties, especially in this era when peaceful management of intra-party conflicts has become more demanding.

3. *Violence and conspiracy in politics:* The interviews conducted during this research revealed that there are some reasons some party leaders capitalize on to justify the exclusion of women from being actively involved in leading political parties as chairpersons. It is noteworthy that most of these reasons are not unrelated with the patriarchal structure that has existed for centuries across Africa. "Politics is tough in Nigeria; If you must lead, you may need to be violent sometimes; And the violence that is associated with politics makes it difficult for women to be active leaders and direct leaders in political parties. In fact, the core leadership rests with men. Women do not lead political parties due to the patriarchal nature of politics." (Interviews with party leaders, 2023).

According to the chieftains of some political parties, women only lead at the wing level namely;

- a) Youth Wing
- b) Women Wing
- c) Mobilization Wing
- d) Welfare Wing

Although there is relevant significance of women being leaders at these levels, they only support the parties in mobilizing the masses for campaigns and elections. The implication is the exclusion of women from strategic positions that have become the domain of male party members.

What are the factors that sustain the domination of political party leadership by men?

- The nature and character of political parties in Nigeria
- Economic demands of party politics
- Prebendalism and clientelism
- Disregard of diversity and promotion of ethnic politics
- Political violence
- Party structure and constitution
- Godfatherism

What is the peacebuilding role of women in political parties?

The peacebuilding role of women in political parties is required in order to restore stability to most of the troubled parties, which have been divided by the controversial primary elections prior to the general elections in recent times. This is timely because of the conflicts arising from power tussle which contributed to litigation and factionalization of the parties affected. It is instructive to note that these problems are common in both the ruling party and other parties, including the ones that do not even have any federal or state political position.

The peacebuilding role of women centres on identifying the issues, actors and opportunities for conflict transformation, in order to take advantage of their involvement to discourage litigation by changing mindsets. The peacebuilding role of women also positions them to advocate recognition of diversity and inclusiveness in political parties where exclusion remains the order of the day.

The foregoing is apt because notable women from the country demonstrated their capability in governance (Okolie-Osemene and Udeke, 2013), through international platforms like World Bank, International Monetary Fund and other international organisations. What can women do when political and economic decision-making responsibilities are dominated by men who would go to any level to sustain feminization of women's efforts? (Okolie-Osemene and Udeke, 2013).

Political parties should begin at their level to implement the National Gender Policy, which was produced by the Nigerian government through the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, for inclusive society that abhors discrimination of social groups because of their gender, ethnicity or economic status.

How does UNSCR 1325 Determine Women's Strategic Contributions to the Leadership of Political Parties in Nigeria?

As significant number of women have contributed to leadership at some levels in Nigeria, it is not difficult for political parties to continue ignoring this remarkable achievement. According to Worugji (2023: 605) "inclusiveness of women in Rivers state from 2015-2023 contributed immensely to the success of the administration; in all areas managed by women, there was relative peace, accountability, respect for human rights, prompt execution of duty, integrity, honesty, progress and concrete development. That was why the government did not hesitate to engage them whenever the need arose for meaningful services for sustainable development."

The existence of UNSCR 1325 and the significant impact of Nigerian women in many parts of the world still point to the fact that they can no longer be excluded from active participation in party leadership. The UNSCR 1325 positions women to have a platform for contributing to the peacefulness of political activities in parties where conflict of interest usually manifests during electioneering. The resolution determines the strategic contributions of women to the leadership of political parties in many ways. The missing link with the UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security is that, while many women are allowed to participate as members of major political parties, the same women are given opportunity to have positions that are not directly decision-making posts, and excluded from the main leadership posts that would have given them the opportunity to preside over sensitive leadership position where party disputes are resolved and appointments are made ahead of party conventions.

How the UNSCR 1325 Determines Women's Strategic Contributions in Political Parties

The UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security is an instrument which determines the strategic contributions of women to the leadership of political parties, especially in the area of enhancing their involvement in peacefulness of the parties, through their activities that promote the harmonious relationship and well-being of party members. This is apt because as women have excelled in various capacities as women and youth leaders in those parties, they still have much to offer when they occupy top leadership positions as party leaders.

What are the Consequences of Ignoring the Strategic Role of Women in Political Parties in Nigeria?

A society that disregards the contributions of women is destined to make errors in governance. Badejo (2023:59) states that:

Leadership is necessary for the handling of other governance issues like corruption, ensuring of the rule of law, left movements in nation-states to avoid being the victims of predators at the international level, the

starting of the continuous process of building sustainable just institutions to assist on the articulation and aggregation of interests as well as the management of resources for the realisation of utmost freedom by all.

When women are excluded, it would be difficult for political parties and leaders to articulate the collective interests of the entire society without excluding some social groups and still prioritize few individual interests who are privileged to occupy some significant positions in the country. It is even discouraging and surprising that a society which believes in equity would design the National Gender Policy (NGP) that recommends mere 35% affirmative action as if women were not partners in political transformation; such initiative does not have gender parity focus.

From the interviews conducted with key informants, some of the consequences of disregarding women are

- Escalation of party crisis
- Weakness of social control both in the political parties and the polity
- Loss of women's checks and balances efforts in managing party finances
- Sustenance of men's domination of leadership at national and state levels – This would make it difficult for political parties to produce leaders who have the interest of the country at heart when the female gender is sidelined from the leadership of political parties through which elections are made for the governance of the country; corrupt practices can be easily covered by few party leaders who sideline women, especially in their bid to disregard the rule of law and use their positions to undermine the interest of the masses.

In the Fourth Republic, the domination of party leadership by men who disregarded 35% affirmative action has not been helpful, as various parties were engulfed in intra-party disputes that caused factionalization, thereby depriving women the opportunity to contribute to conflict resolution and decision-making. Since 2015, both the ruling party and opposition parties have been affected by leadership crisis arising from disputes owing to the domination of party leadership by male members.

The limited participation of Nigerian women in party politics and electioneering processes can be addressed through adequate mobilization and sensitization, particularly with the aim of extending their role beyond functioning as women leaders and party and campaign agents at the grassroots. The peacebuilding role of women is imperative for the rescue of political parties that witness instability and anti-party activities of male members, considering the litigations and suspensions that undermine the stability of the parties affected. This cannot be ignored if Nigeria is determined to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals 16, on peace and justice.

Conclusion

This paper has examined women and the leadership of political parties in Nigeria, indicating the missing link with the UNSCR 1325 on women. With the domineering activities of males, women are denied the opportunity of contributing to Nigeria's quest for policy restructuring for good governance. With this, it is not disputable that, despite being active party members, women's impact has not been felt in the area of party manifestoes as far as the Fourth Republic is concerned.

The issue of women's active role in political party leadership is not about gender parity, as some scholars and practitioners advocate, but based on the capability of women to deliver good governance through the parties and foster stability. So, beyond discussions on affirmative actions, one could begin to consider mapping the track records of few women who achieve tremendously as commissioners, ministers and deputy governors among others.

Since the Fourth Republic, the poor representation of women in political party leadership at various levels does not mean that women lack the mental capability to oversee the affairs of political parties or lack the qualities of leadership required by such positions. Rather, it is due to the unwelcoming and inconsiderate attitude of their male counterparts who only wish to permit women to coordinate non-strategic sections of political parties, thereby reserving the juicy and strategic positions at state and national levels for the men. Recent events revealed how many of the male leaders were embroiled in intra-party disputes that culminated in litigation and controversial exit of some party chieftains.

With the growing footprints of women in the labour market and political arena in different parts of the world and their remarkable home-building efforts in Africa and Nigeria, politicians cannot continue to claim that positions of authority are not for females. Nigerian women who are interested in politics do not have to adopt male characteristics in order to be firmly established and recognized as leaders in political parties. They only need to change their perception, take advantage of their number and work with the few men who believe in their ambitions and establish a common leadership platform for the change they desire.

Involving political parties in addressing women's exclusion from decision-making creates an opportunity for Nigerian leaders to address the country's governance challenges since women are custodians of family values and transparency. With this, women could make impact in areas of peace and security provision, as well as identifying and transforming the deep-rooted political issues that aggravate social conflicts in Nigeria.

It is almost difficult to advocate the actualization of Sustainable Development Goals, especially the goals on gender equity and peace, justice and strong institutions,

when some strategic areas are an exclusive preserve of men, who use such platforms to discriminate against some women. To sustain women's conflict management efforts in accordance with UNSCR 1325, it has become necessary to consider gender-sensitive policies that prioritize active involvement of women political leaders in the major political parties at the federal and state levels.

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**REVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY AND TARGET ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE
ISSUES FOR TODAY'S MANAGERS**

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Abstract

Organizations are facing an environment that is changing rapidly, and the task facing managers is to help organizations respond and adjust to the changes taking place. No organization is in a particularly stable environment. Even those with a dominant market share must change, sometimes radically. This paper reviews contemporary and target organizational change issues for today's managers. The issues include technology in the workplace, stimulating innovation, creating a learning organization and managing change. The study suggests that the real world is turbulent, requiring organizations and their members to undergo dynamic change if they are to perform at competitive levels.

Keywords: Contemporary, Change, Organization, Managers Human Resource, Workplace, Innovation, Technology, Structure

Introduction

"Change or die" is the rallying cry among today's managers worldwide. Change is just as inevitable for companies as it is for individuals, and each company will have its own way of responding to current changes and strategizing for future changes. A study of 309 human resource executives by Lee (1998) across a variety of industries found that all respondents went through at least one of the following changes: mergers, acquisitions, divestitures, global competition, and management and/or organizational structure. Earl (2002) identifies the types of changes that Canadian businesses went through: integrating different functional areas; modifying the degree of centralization; downsizing; relying more on temporary and/or part-time workers; re-engineering; increasing overtime hours; adopting flexible working hours; reducing the number of managerial levels; relying on job rotation and/or multi-skilling; implementing Total Quality Management; and outsourcing and collaborating more on inter-firm research and development, production, or

marketing. The extent to which businesses underwent change varied by organizational size. The research further indicated that more than 80% of the companies that employed 100 or more people underwent at least one of these changes. Only 40% of the smaller companies underwent change.

Earl (2002) also argues that organizational change is not just confined to larger organizations: 18% of self-employed individuals also reported organizational change. The same study identified the following types of changes for the self-employed: engaging in collaborative work, new inventory systems, introducing sub-contracting, new financial management techniques, computerization of organizational practices, and introduction of new corporate strategic orientation or redefining operating hours. Thus, organizations face continuously changing environments. As a result, organizations must not only be aware of opportunities for change but also consider how best to respond to them. They must also appoint people to help them manage organizational change efforts. Beer (1980) and Porras and Silvers (1991) observed that the goal of planned organizational change is to find new or improved ways of using resources and capabilities in order to increase an organization's ability to create value and improve the returns to its stakeholders. Thus, it is the process by which organizations move from their present state to increase their effectiveness.

Contemporary and Target Organizational Change Issues for Today's Managers

Planned organizational change is normally targeted at improving performance at one or more of the contemporary issues.

Technology in the Workplace

Recent advances in technology are changing the workplace and affecting the work lives of employees. This paper considers two specific issues related to process technology and work. These are continuous improvement processes and process re-engineering.

Continuous Improvement Process: Quality management seeks to preserve customer satisfaction by continually improving all organizational processes. Quality management programmes seek to reduce variability in outcomes and performance. However, as tens of thousands of organizations introduce continuous improvement processes, how will employees be affected? They will no longer be able to rest on their previous accomplishments and successes. So some people may experience more stress in a work climate that no longer accepts complacency with the status quo. This tension may be positive for the organization, but the pressures from an unrelenting search for process improvements can create anxiety and stress in some employees.

Process Re-engineering: Re-engineering involves the rethinking and redesign of business processes to increase organizational effectiveness (Hammer and Champy, 1993). The

term re-engineering comes from the process of taking apart an electronic product and designing a better version. As applied to organizations, process re-engineering means that management should start with a clean sheet of paper, that is, rethinking and redesigning the processes by which the organization creates value and does work, ridding itself of operations that have become antiquated (Hammer and Champy, 1993). Thus, instead of focusing on an organization's functions, the managers of a re-engineered organization make business process the focus of attention.

Organizations that take up re-engineering deliberately ignore the existing arrangement of tasks, roles and work activities. They start the re-engineering process with the customer, not the product or service. Process re-engineering requires management to reorganize around horizontal processes. This means using cross-functional and self-managed teams. It means focusing on processes rather than on functions. It also means cutting out unnecessary levels of middle management. The three key elements of process re-engineering are identifying an organization's distinctive competencies, assessing core processes and reorganizing horizontally by process.

Technological capabilities give an organization an enormous capacity to change itself in order to exploit market opportunities. The ability to develop constant stream of new products or to modify existing products so that they continue to attract customers is one of an organization's core competences. Similarly, the ability to improve the way goods and services are produced in order to increase their quality and reliability is a crucial organizational capability. At the organizational level, an organization has to provide the context that allows it to translate its technological competences into value for its stakeholders. This task often involves the restructuring of organizational activities.

Stimulating Innovation

Innovation is a more specialized kind of change. It is a new idea applied to initiating or improving a product, process, or service (Kanter, 1988). It is the process by which organizations use their skills and resources to develop new goods and services or to develop new production and operating systems so that they can better respond to the needs of their customers (Burgelman and Maidique, 1988). It can result in spectacular success for an organization. So, all innovations involve change, but not all changes necessarily involve new ideas or lead to a significant improvement.

Sources of Innovation: Structural variables have been the most studied potential source of innovation (Damanpour, 1991). A comprehensive review of the structure-innovation relationship leads to the following conclusions:

1. Organic structures positively influence innovation. Because they are lower in vertical differentiation, formalization and centralization, organic organizations

facilitate the flexibility, adaptation and cross-fertilization that make the adoption of innovation easier.

2. Long tenure in management is associated with innovation. Managerial tenure apparently provides legitimacy and knowledge tasks and obtained outcomes.
3. Innovation matures when there are slack resources. Having an abundance of resources allows an organization to afford to purchase innovations, bear the cost of instituting innovations, and absorb failures.
4. Inter-unit communication is high in innovative organizations (Monge et al., 1992). Innovative organizations are high users of committees, task forces, cross-functional teams and other mechanisms that facilitate interaction across departmental lines.

Innovative organizations tend to have similar cultures. They encourage experimentation. They reward both successes and failures. They celebrate mistakes. However, in too many organizations, people are rewarded for the absence of failures rather than for the presence of successes. Such cultures extinguish risk-taking and innovation. People will suggest and try new ideas only when they feel such behaviours exact no penalties. Managers in innovative organizations recognize that failures are a natural by-product of venturing into the unknown.

Creating a Learning Organization

The learning organization has recently developed a groundswell of interest from managers and organization theorists looking for new ways to successfully respond to a world of independence and change (Brown and Brudney, 2003). A learning organization is an organization that has developed the continuous capacity to adapt and change. Just as individuals learn, so too do organizations. According to Kim (1993), "all organizations learn, whether they consciously choose to or not, it is a fundamental requirement for their sustained existence." However, some organizations do it better than others.

Managing Learning

1. Establish a strategy. Managers need to make their commitment to change, innovation, and continuous improvement explicit.
2. Redesign the organization's structure. The formal structure can be a serious impediment to learning. By flattening the structure, eliminating or combining departments, and increasing the use of cross-functional teams, independence is reinforced and boundaries between people are reduced.
3. Reshape the organization's culture. Learning organizations are characterized by risk-taking, openness and growth.

Managing Change

A number of change issues are culture-bound, meaning that they do not necessarily apply well cross-culturally. To illustrate let us briefly look at five questions.

1. Do people believe change is possible? Cultures vary in terms of beliefs about their ability to control their environment. In cultures in which people believe that they can dominate their environment, individuals will take a proactive view of change.
2. If change is possible, how long will it take to bring it about? A culture's time orientation can help us answer this question. Societies that focus on the long term, such as Japan, will demonstrate considerable patience while waiting for positive outcomes from change efforts.
3. Is resistance to change greater in some cultures than in others? Resistance to change will be influenced by a society's reliance on tradition. Italians, for example, focus on the past, whereas Americans emphasize the present. Italians, therefore, should generally be more resistant to change efforts than their American counterparts.
4. Does culture influence how change efforts will be implemented? Power distance can help with this issue. In high power distance cultures, such as Spain or Thailand, change efforts will tend to be autocratically implemented by top management. In contrast, low power distance cultures value democratic methods.
5. Do successful idea champions do things differently in different cultures? Evidence indicates that the answer is yes (Shane et al., 1995). People in collectivist cultures, in contrast to individualistic cultures, prefer appeals for cross-functional support for innovation efforts. People in high power distance cultures prefer champions to work closely with those in authority to approve innovative activities before work is conducted on them. The higher the uncertainty avoidance of a society, the more champions should work within the organization's rules and procedures to develop the innovation. These findings suggest that effective managers will alter their organization's championing strategies to reflect cultural values.

Human Resources

Human resources are an organization's most important asset. Ultimately, an organization's distinctive competences lie in the skills and abilities of its employees. Because these skills and abilities give an organization a competitive advantage, organizations must continually monitor their structures to find the most effective way of motivating and organizing human resources to acquire and use their skills. Typical kinds of change efforts directed at human resources include the following:

1. New investment in training and development activities so that employees acquire new skills and abilities;

2. Socializing employees into the organizational culture so that they learn the new routines on which organizational performance depends;
4. Changing organizational norms and values to motivate a multicultural and diverse workforce;
5. Continuous examination of the way in which promotion and reward systems operate in a diverse workforce; and
6. Changing the composition of the top-management team to improve organizational learning and decision-making.

Functional Resources

Each organizational function needs to develop procedures that allows it to manage the particular environment it faces. As the environment changes, organizations often transfer resources to the functions where the most value can be created. Crucial functions grow in importance, while those whose usefulness is declining shrink. An organization can improve the value that its functions create by changing its structure, culture and technology. The change from a functional to a product team structure, for example, may speed the new-product development process. Alternations in functional structure can help provide a setting in which people are motivated to perform. The change from traditional mass production to a manufacturing operation based on self-managed work teams often allows companies to increase product quality and productivity if employees can share in the gains from the new work system.

Organizational Capabilities

Through the design of organizational structure and culture, an organization can harness its human and functional resources to exploit technological opportunities. Organizational change often involves changing the relationships between people and functions in order to increase their ability to create value. Changes in structure and culture take place at all levels of the organization and include changing the routines an individual uses to greet customers, changing work group relationships, improving integration between divisions, and changing corporate culture by changing the top-management team. Because these four levels at which change can take place are obviously interdependent, it is often impossible to change one without changing the others. The incremental changes that an organization makes to its strategy and structure can culminate over time in a major change in the nature of an organization.

Restructuring

Restructuring is a form of revolutionary change that organizations often undergo because of rapidly deteriorating performance. There are two basic steps to restructuring: (1) an organization reduces its level of differentiation and integration by eliminating divisions,

departments, or levels in the hierarchy and (2) an organization downsizes by reducing the number of its employees to reduce operating costs.

There are many reasons why restructuring becomes necessary and why an organization may need to downsize its operations. Sometimes a change in the environment occurs that cannot be foreseen, for example, a shift in technology, may make the company's products obsolete; a worldwide recession may also reduce the demand for its products. Sometimes, an organization has excess capacity because customers no longer want the goods and services it provides because they are outdated or offer poor value for the money paid. Sometimes, organizations downsize because, over time, they have grown too tall and bureaucratic and operating costs have become much too high. Sometimes organizations restructure even when they are in a strong position simply to stay on top. However, often organizations are forced to downsize and lay off employees because they have not continually monitored the way they operate, that is their basic business processes, and made the incremental changes to their strategies and structures that would allow them to contain costs and adjust to changing conditions. Paradoxically, because they have not paid attention to the need to re-engineer themselves, they are forced into a position where restructuring becomes the only way they can survive and compete in an increasingly competitive environment.

Forces for Change

There are many forces in the environment that impact on an organization, and recognizing the nature of these forces is one of a manager's most important tasks (Kanter, 1984). If managers are slow to respond to these forces, the organization will lag behind its competitors and its effectiveness will be lower.

Competitive Forces: Hill and Jones (1985) posit that organizations constantly strive to obtain a competitive advantage over other organizations. Competition is a force for change because organizations must attempt to match or exceed their competitors on at least one of the dimensions of competitive advantage: efficiency, quality, quantity, innovation, or customer responsiveness (Hill and Jones, 1995). To lead on the dimensions of efficiency, for example, an organization must constantly adopt the latest forms of technology, such as computerized manufacturing, as they become available. Adopting new technology normally involves an organization changing task relationships also, as workers have to learn new skills or techniques to operate new technologies. To lead on the dimension of innovation and obtain a technological edge over competitors, a company must possess skills in managing the process of innovation. The ability to manage organizational change is central to the ability to obtain and sustain a competitive advantage in an environment in which different organizations compete for the most important resource of all: customers.

Economic, Political and Global Forces: Hill (1997) claims that economic, political and global forces continually affect organizations and force them to change how and where they produce goods and services. Economic and political unions between countries are becoming an increasingly important force for change. In the words of Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989), the rise of low-cost foreign competitors, the development of new technology that can erode a company's competitive advantage, and the failure to exploit low-cost sources of inputs abroad can spell doom for an organization that does not change and adapt to the realities of the global marketplace. According to Prahalad and Doz (1987), other global challenges, facing organizations include the need to change an organization's structure to allow expansion into foreign markets and the need to adapt to the nature of different national cultures.

Demographic and Social Forces: Changes in the composition of the workforce and the increasing diversity of employees have presented organizations with many challenges and opportunities (Jamieson and O'Mara, 1991). Interestingly, changes in demographic characteristics of the workforce have led managers to change their styles of managing employees and to learn how to effectively understand, supervise, and motivate minority and female organizational members (Jackson, 1992). Managers have had to abandon the stereotypes they may have unwittingly used in making promotion decisions, to accept the importance of equity in the recruitment and promotion of new hires, and to appreciate the needs of "baby busters," who often desire a lifestyle that better balance work and leisure. As more and more women enter the workforce, companies have to accommodate the needs of dual-career and single parent families, to provide child care, and to allow their members to adopt work schedules that allow them to manage work-life linkages (Cox and Blake, 1991).

Ethical Forces: Change usually benefits some people, function, or divisions at the expense of others. Aveni (1994) comments that, when change causes power struggle and organizational conflict, an organization is likely to resist it. Suppose, for example, that a change in purchasing practices will help materials management achieve its goal of reducing input costs but will harm manufacturer's ability to reduce manufacturing costs. While materials management will push for the change, manufacturers will resist it. Katter and Schlesinger (1979) assert that the conflict between the two functions will slow down the process of change and perhaps prevent it from occurring. Thus, if powerful functions can prevent change from occurring, an organization will not change. It is this kind of resistance that many large organizations have experienced.

Determining the Need for Change

To determine the need for change, managers must identify problems that need to be solved. Frequently, the need for change is recognized because somebody in the

organization perceives a gap between desired performance and actual performance. Much pressure causes organizations to re-evaluate their current situation. Changes in competitive conditions, such as the emergence of global competitors, can cause an organization to re-evaluate its use of resources. The introduction of superior products and technologies by competitors is a clear indication that an organization needs to restructure its resources.

Determining the Strategy for Change

Together, people's tendency to follow routines unthinkingly and the tendency of an organization's structure and culture to perpetuate the use of existing routines constitute formidable obstacles to change. Given these obstacles, organizations must choose between "evolutionary and revolutionary change." An organization that pursues revolutionary change adopts a "top-down change strategy." Top-down change often involves a massive dislocation of organizational task and reporting relationships. It emphasizes finding solutions for problems as they arise and adopting an unstructured approach to decision-making to allow managers to experiment and find new ways to organize. In contrast to revolutionary change, evolutionary change depends on a "bottom-up change strategy." Managers perceive that the uncertainty associated with organizational change is best managed through an incremental process in which managers continually make adjustments to their strategy and structure. Managers using a bottom-up strategy prepare the organization for change by involving managers and employees at all levels in discussions about the need for change and the need to identify the problems facing the organization. Top-management guides these change efforts and ties them in with the overall corporate objectives. Total quality management, for example, is used to bring about evolutionary change.

Conclusion

Organizational change is the process by which organizations move from their present state to some desired future state to increase their effectiveness. The goal of planned organizational change is to find new or improved ways to use resources and abilities to increase the organization's ability to create value for its shareholders. Some of the contemporary and target organizational change issues for today's managers include helping employees deal with technological change, making organizations more innovative, creating learning organizations, and understanding the influence of culture on managing change, human resources, functional resources, organizational capabilities and restructuring. Managing organizational change is one of management's most difficult and challenging tasks. To understand the process of change, it is useful to examine various types of change that organizations can pursue.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following for improved organizational change effort:

1. Organizations and their members should undergo dynamic change if they are to perform at competitive levels.
2. Organizations should recognize forces for change, which include competition; economic, political, and global pressures; demographic and social forces; and ethical issues.
3. Managers should help employees deal with technological change, make organizations more innovative, create learning organizations and understand the influence of culture on managing change.
4. Organizational managers should develop a set of criteria that can be used to evaluate whether change is necessary, continually evaluate organizational performance against these criteria, and update these criteria as organizational performance improves.
5. Managers should carefully evaluate the obstacles to change that will arise as they change organizational policies and procedures. They should work out strategies for dealing with these obstacles, and incorporate those strategies into their plan for change.
7. Whenever possible, managers should use a bottom up change strategy, involve people at all levels in the change process, and keep them informed about how the change will affect them.
8. Managers should recognize that change is easiest to manage when the organization and its members are used to change. They should consider using a total quality management programme as a way of keeping the organization attuned to the need for change.
9. Managers should always use the criteria that they defined at the beginning of the change process to evaluate the effects of their change efforts.
10. Organizations should create a culture of change.
11. Organizations should stimulate a culture of innovation.

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36**QUALITY SUSTENANCE IN NIGERIA EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: A CASE FOR
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

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Abstract

This paper examines some of the problems facing the education system, such as policy issues, enrolment explosion, financial input, inadequate facilities, human resource input and decadence in standard, in relation to perspectives on Nigeria's development. Nigeria's philosophy of education is based on development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen, full integration of the individual into the community, and provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels inside and outside the formal school system. However, keen observation of the Nigerian educational system reveals that quality instruction is lacking, which has seriously prevented the realisation of the lofty goals of the country's education philosophy. Consequently, the paper recommends measures to be taken by the government in order to ensure sustenance in the education sector. The central coordination of the sector lies heavily on the government, by engaging in transformational leadership, while ensuring that caution is exercised in embarking on a hasty privatization of the education sector. Finally, the government is advised to sustain quality in the educational system through, amongst others, sincere implementation of the National Policy on Education and allocation of reasonable funds to education.

Introduction

Education is a multifaceted and dynamic concept that encompasses various aspects of human development. It is the socialization of learning for societal cultural values. Noddings (2013) states that, at its core, education is a process of teaching, learning and development that enables individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary for personal growth, social mobility and civic engagement. One veritable way of developing the minds of citizens of any country is through putting in place well-articulated curricula that address contemporary realities and equip individuals with knowledge and skills required for responding adequately to emerging challenges, especially in economic, social and political spheres.

In Nigeria, the issue of providing quality education and functional curriculum for the school population led to the National Curriculum Conference which was convened in

September 1969. The conference drew its delegates from the Ministry of Education, Nigerian universities and educationists of international repute. A follow-up curriculum conference was convened in 1973 (under the chairmanship of Chief S. O. Adebayo) to argue the recommendations of the 1969 curriculum conference and make final recommendations to the Federal Government. The September 1973 conference drew its membership from all known organizations and bodies interested in education. The far-reaching recommendations made by this body were studied by the government and later accepted in a white paper titled "National Policy on Education" in 1977.

In 1979, Nigeria adopted a new constitution for the country. With its adoption, it became necessary to update the National Policy on Education to accommodate the new realities in the constitution. The updated and revised version is the current National Policy on Education (1981). The policy brought in its wake innovative changes that would revolutionize the entire education system. One such innovation was the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system of education. In this new system, pupils would be expected to spend six years at the primary education level and six years at the secondary education level and four years at the tertiary level. The secondary education was to be given in two stages: 3 years of junior secondary school (JSS) and 3 years of senior secondary school (SSS).

The entire purpose of the JSS and SSS programme in the National Policy on Education (1981) was to prepare students for useful living within the society and for higher education. Specifically, some of the objectives mapped out in the policy document to be achieved at the secondary education level are as follows:

- Diversifying the curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and roles possessed by or open to students after their secondary school course;
- Equipping students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology;
- Inspiring students with a desire for achievement and self-improvement both at school and in later life.

Quality Education

UNESCO (2015) describes quality education as a learner-centred approach that focuses on providing students with a well-rounded, inclusive and effective learning experience. Quality education is relevant to the needs of learners, communities and societies. It promotes equity, providing opportunities for all learners to access and benefit from education, regardless of their background, socio-economic status, or location. Quality education is inclusive, recognizing and valuing diversity, promoting social cohesion and addressing the needs of marginalized and disadvantaged groups. It is also effective, achieving its intended outcomes and preparing learners for their future roles in society; and, efficient, making optimal use of resources, minimizing waste, and maximizing outcomes (UNESCO, 2020).

Brighthouse (2018) identifies the following as key components of quality education:

1. **Well-trained Teachers:** Quality education requires well-trained, motivated and supported teachers who can provide high-quality instruction and support.
2. **Inclusive Curriculum:** A quality education curriculum is inclusive, relevant and responsive to the needs of diverse learners.
3. **Safe and Supportive Learning Environment:** A quality education requires a safe, supportive, and well-maintained learning environment that promotes learner engagement and motivation.
4. **Assessment and Evaluation:** Quality education involves ongoing assessment and evaluation to ensure that learners are meeting their full potential and to identify areas for improvement.
5. **Community Engagement and Partnerships:** Quality education fosters community engagement and partnerships, promoting collaboration and cooperation between schools, communities and other stakeholders.

The Quest for Quality Sustenance in the Nigeria Educational System

The quest for quality sustenance in the Nigeria educational system has its genesis in the evolution of the system. Nigeria has a rich and diverse history of education that spans centuries. This system has come a long way since the pre-colonial era. From traditional indigenous education to the introduction of Western-style education during the colonial era, Nigeria's education system has undergone significant transformations over the years. Despite the challenges faced by the education system, Nigeria has made progress in increasing access to education and improving academic performance.

In their works on the history of the Nigeria educational system, Ajayi (1963), Fafunwa (1974) and Ogundele (2002) identify the following trends:

A. Pre-colonial Era (Before 1842)

Before the arrival of European colonizers, Nigeria had a well-established system of indigenous education. Various ethnic groups had their own unique systems of education, which were designed to pass on cultural values, traditions and skills to younger generations. For example, the Hausa people in northern Nigeria had a system of education that emphasized Islamic studies, while the Yoruba people in southwestern Nigeria had a system that focused on traditional crafts and skills.

B. Colonial Era (1842-1960)

The introduction of Western-style education in Nigeria dates back to 1842, when the first missionary school was established in Abeokuta. The school was founded by the Church Missionary Society (CMS), a British missionary organization. The CMS and other

missionary organizations established numerous schools throughout Nigeria, providing education in English and other Western subjects.

During the colonial era, education was largely reserved for the children of colonial officials and the local elite. The colonial government also established schools, which were designed to train Nigerians for roles in the colonial administration.

C. Post-Colonial Era (1960-1970s)

After Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the government prioritized education as a key driver of national development. The government expanded education, making it more accessible to the general population. In 1976, the government introduced the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme, which aimed to provide free primary education to all children.

D. Modern Era (1980s-Present)

In the 1980s, Nigeria's education system underwent significant reforms. The government introduced the 6-3-3-4 system, which consisted of six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary education, three years of senior secondary education and four years of tertiary education.

Despite efforts to improve education, Nigeria still faces significant challenges, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure and shortage of qualified teachers. In recent years, the government has introduced initiatives aimed at addressing these challenges, such as the National Education Summit and the Education for Change initiative.

Philosophy of Nigerian Education

Since a national policy on education is the government's way of achieving that part of its national objectives that can be achieved using education as a tool, no policy on education can be formulated without first identifying the overall philosophy and objectives of the nation.

The five major national objectives stated in the Second National Development Plan, and endorsed as the necessary foundation for the National Policy on Education, are the building of:

- i) a free and democratic society;
- ii) a just and egalitarian society;
- iii) a united, strong and self-reliant nation;
- iv) a great and dynamic economy;
- v) a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

Nigeria's National Objectives of Education

Nigeria's National Policy on Education (NPE) outlines the country's national objectives of education. These objectives are designed to guide the development of education in Nigeria and ensure that the education system meets the needs of individuals, communities and the nation, as a whole. The national objectives of education in Nigeria are as stated below:

- Development of the Individual: To develop the individual's mental, physical and moral capacities to live a fulfilling and productive life
- Development of the Society: To develop the society by fostering national unity, promoting social mobility and enhancing social cohesion
- Acquisition of Skills and Knowledge: To acquire skills and knowledge necessary for personal and national development
- Promotion of National Values: To promote national values, such as respect for human rights, dignity of labour and patriotism.
- Development of Critical Thinking and Problem-solving Skills: To develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary for addressing the challenges of a rapidly changing world
- Preparation for Citizenship and Leadership: To prepare individuals for citizenship and leadership roles in society
- Promotion of Cultural Heritage: To promote Nigeria's cultural heritage and preserve its rich cultural diversity

Principles of the National Policy on Education

- a. Education as a Right: Education is recognized as a fundamental human right.
- b. Free and Compulsory Education: Education is free and compulsory for all citizens.
- c. Equity and Inclusivity: Education is accessible to all, regardless of background, socio-economic status, or locale
- d. Relevance and Flexibility: Education is relevant to the needs of individuals, communities and the nation, and is flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances.
- e. Community Participation: Education involves the participation of communities, parents and other stakeholders.

Implementation Strategies

- i) Curriculum Development: Develop a curriculum that reflects Nigeria's cultural heritage and promotes national values.
- ii) Teacher Training and Development: Provide ongoing training and development for teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge.

- iii) Infrastructure Development: Develop and maintain education infrastructure, including schools, libraries and other facilities.
- iv) Community Engagement and Participation: Foster community engagement and participation in education through partnerships with parents, communities and other stakeholders.
- v) Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of education programmes and policies.

Challenges to the Issues of Quality Sustenance in the Nigerian Educational System

Despite efforts to improve the Nigerian educational system, numerous challenges hinder the sustenance of quality education. A careful observation of the Nigerian Educational system reveals a number of factors hindering quality sustenance in the Nigerian educational system. Ukeje (1986), Jaiyeoba and Atanda (2005) and Enyiazu (2022) highlight the following as some of the key problems:

1. Policy Issues:

- Inadequate policy implementation
- Inadequate implementation of educational policies and reforms
- Limited monitoring and evaluation of educational programmes and policies

2. Inadequate Funding

- Insufficient budget allocation for education
- Inadequate infrastructure, including classrooms, libraries and laboratories
- Limited resources for teacher training and development

3. Poor Teacher Quality and Motivation

- Low teacher morale due to poor working conditions and low salaries
- Inadequate teacher training and professional development opportunities
- High teacher absenteeism and turnover rates

4. Inefficient Curriculum and Assessment

- Outdated and irrelevant curriculum
- Inadequate assessment methods, leading to inaccurate measures of student learning
- Limited emphasis on critical thinking, problem-solving and creativity

5. Inadequate Infrastructure and Resources

- Overcrowded and poorly maintained classrooms
- Limited access to technology, including computers and Internet
- Inadequate library resources and textbooks

6. Corruption and Mismanagement

- Corruption in the education sector, including embezzlement of funds and bribery
- Mismanagement of educational resources, leading to inefficiencies and waste

7. Security Challenges

- Insecurity in schools, including kidnapping and terrorism
- Limited access to education in conflict-affected areas

8. Societal and Cultural Factors

- Societal and cultural attitudes that devalue education
- Limited parental involvement and support for education

9. Brain drain and Talent Flight

- Emigration of highly skilled educators and professionals
- Limited opportunities for career advancement and professional growth

10. Limited Access to Education

- Limited access to education, particularly for marginalized groups, including girls, children with disabilities and those from low-income backgrounds
- High dropout rates, particularly in rural areas

1. Policy Issues

Voican (2008) describes policy as a deliberate system of guidelines to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. A policy is a statement of intent and is implemented as a procedure or protocol. Policies are generally adopted by a governance body within an organization. Policies can assist in both subjective and objective decision-making.

In education, as in other fields of human endeavour, every official action of an organisation must have a backing or a basis. It is for this purpose that a policy is needed. A policy defines the area in which decisions are to be made, but it does not make the decision. It usually provides a general guide that facilitates decision-making. Educational policies provide the direction for educational activities. Ukeje (1986) notes that the formulation of an educational policy sets the stage for implementation; and that policy implementation in education is a conspicuous national problem that has taken centre stage in Nigeria.

According to Enyiazu (2022), policy issues in Nigeria's educational system can have a number of negative effects, including inadequate implementation of educational policies and reforms; and limited monitoring and evaluation of educational programmes and policies.

Poor quality of facilities

Inadequate implementation of educational policies and reforms can lead to outdated libraries, laboratories, and ICT facilities.

- **Poor Quality of Education:** The quality of education can decline in both the public and private sectors.
- **Disparity in Education Quality:** There can be a significant difference in the quality of education between urban and rural areas.
- **Teacher Shortages:** There can be a brain drain of qualified teachers and scholars.
- **Poor Working Environment:** A poor working environment can impact job satisfaction and teaching effectiveness.
- **Social Justice Implications:** Only wealthy families can afford to tutor their children at home.
- **Wastage of Educational Resources:** Educational policy instability can lead to wastage of educational resources.
- **Increased Administrative and Management Expenditure:** Educational policy instability can lead to increased administrative and management expenditure.

Some factors that can contribute to educational policy instability in Nigeria poor consultation, political instability, poor coordination and cooperation of policy formulation, and appointment of non-professionals as heads of educational institutions.

2. Inadequate Funding

Ineye-Briggs (2023) identifies Inadequate funding as a major challenge to the quality of education in Nigeria. Inadequate funding includes insufficient budget allocation for education, inadequate infrastructure, including classrooms, libraries and laboratories, and limited resources for teacher training and development

- **Poor Infrastructure:** Some education institutions may not be able to build or repair basic infrastructure, like lecture halls, laboratories and student hostels.
- **Low-quality Graduates:** Poor funding can lead to a mass production of graduates who are not well-prepared to address the country's developmental challenges.
- **Poorly-paid Staff:** Higher education institutions may not be able to pay staff salaries, research grants, allowances and medical bills.
- **Poorly-stocked Libraries:** Libraries may not have up-to-date books.
- **Insufficient laboratory equipment:** Laboratories may not have enough chemicals and basic equipment.

Other challenges to education funding in Nigeria include the following:

Political interference and instability, inaccurate statistical data, population explosion, indiscipline, corrupt leadership and diversion of funds.

The Nigerian government has taken some steps to improve the quality of education, including the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, which aims to provide free and compulsory education to every child in Nigeria.

3. Poor Teacher Quality and Motivation

Poor teacher quality and motivation is another major challenge to quality sustenance in the Nigerian educational system. This includes low teacher morale due to poor working conditions and low salaries; inadequate teacher training and professional development opportunities, and high teacher absenteeism and turnover rates.

Continuous increase in enrolment across all levels of education without a corresponding increase in the number of teaching staff brings about a high ratio of students to the teacher. Citing Hallak (1990), Daramola and Atanda (2005) mention that the quality of the education system depends on the quality of its teachers. The National Policy on Education (1998), in aligning with the foregoing, states that no education system quality could rise above the quality of its teacher. In a study on evaluation of resource provision and utilization in Lagos State Public Secondary School, Adeogun (2001) notices a high student-teacher ratio. This is as a result of non-recruitment of additional teaching staff to meet the increase in enrolment, which affects the educational standard.

4. Inefficient Curriculum and Assessment

The term “curriculum” describes a planned sequence of instruction that outlines what students will learn, how they will learn it and how their learning will be assessed. It is a framework for teaching and learning that is designed to achieve specific educational goals and objectives.

As mentioned by Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) (2015), a good curriculum should have the following characteristics:

- **Relevance:** A good curriculum should align with the needs and interests of students and society.
- **Coherence:** It must be logical and consistent in its structure and organization.
- **Comprehensive:** It must be comprehensive and cover all aspects of the subject matter and learning objectives.
- **Flexibility:** It must be flexible and allow for adaptations and modifications to meet the needs of different learners.
- **Evaluative:** This includes continuous assessment and evaluation to ensure effectiveness.

It can therefore be inferred that any curriculum that lacks the foregoing characteristics is inefficient. An inefficient curriculum therefore has outdated and irrelevant content. The curriculum is not aligned with current societal needs, technological advancements and global trends. It is irrelevant to local context because it may not be tailored to a nation’s unique cultural, economic and environmental context.

Boyd (1985) posits that an irrelevant curriculum focuses too much on theoretical knowledge, neglecting practical skills and hands-on experience. In addition, the curriculum does not adequately develop critical thinking, problem-solving and creativity

skills. Finally, the curriculum is often fragmented, with little integration across subjects and disciplines.

Another problem is inefficient assessment. This is a situation where assessment relies too heavily on examinations, neglecting other forms of assessment, such as project-based evaluations and competency-based assessments. It includes limited use of technology in assessment by limiting the use of digital tools and online platforms; is lack of standardization because assessment standards and criteria are not consistently applied, leading to inconsistencies in grading and evaluation; inadequate feedback mechanisms, failing to provide students with constructive feedback to improve their learning; and problem of high-stakes testing, leading to undue stress and anxiety for students, rather than promoting love of learning.

Ornstein and Hunkins (2013) list the following as consequences of inefficient curriculum and assessment:

- **Poor Student Outcomes:** Inefficient curriculum and assessment lead to poor student outcomes, including low academic achievement and limited employability skills.
- **Limited Economic Growth:** Inefficient education system hinders economic growth, as graduates lack the skills and knowledge required to drive innovation and entrepreneurship.
- **Reduced Global Competitiveness:** Nigeria's education system falls behind global standards, reducing the country's competitiveness in the global economy.
- **Decreased Public Trust:** Inefficient education system erodes public trust, leading to decreased enrolment rates and increased dissatisfaction with the education system.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure and Resources**

Studies by Adeniyi (2017), Oyedepi (2019) and Adeyinka (2020) indicate that the Nigerian educational system faces the challenge of inadequate resources and infrastructures, which hinder the provision of quality education, affecting the overall development of the country. These issues include inadequate budget allocation for education, leading to a lack of resources for schools; insufficient number of qualified teachers, particularly in rural areas; lack of modern teaching materials, including textbooks, digital resources and equipment; and inadequate access to computers, the Internet, and other digital tools, hindering the integration of technology in education.

Inadequate infrastructures are apparent through dilapidated school buildings, where many school buildings are in disrepair, lacking basic amenities, such as toilets, water and electricity; and inadequate classroom space, leading to overcrowding and congestion and limited access to water and sanitation. Many schools in Nigeria lack access to clean water and sanitation facilities, posing health risks to students. In addition, there

is the issue of inadequate library and laboratory facilities because many schools lack well-equipped libraries and laboratories, hindering the provision of quality education.

“Nigeria's Education Sector: A Review of the Challenges” by the *Daily Trust* (2018) “Inadequate Infrastructure: A Major Challenge to Education in Nigeria” by *Vanguard* (2019), “Nigeria's Education System: Challenges and Prospects” by *Premium Times* (2020) show that consequences of inadequate resources and infrastructures are serious.

Consequences of Inadequate Resources and Infrastructures Include the following:

- a) Poor Academic Performance: Inadequate resources and infrastructures contribute to poor academic performance and low educational outcomes.
- b) Limited Opportunities for Students: Inadequate resources and infrastructures limit opportunities for students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- c) Teacher Demotivation: Inadequate resources and infrastructures demotivate teachers, leading to high turnover rates and decreased job satisfaction.
- d) Negative Impact on Economic Development: The inadequate state of educational resources and infrastructures hinders Nigeria’s economic development, as the country struggles to produce a skilled and educated workforce.

5. Corruption and Mismanagement

It is obvious that there is corruption in the Nigerian education sector, including embezzlement of funds and bribery. There is also the issue of mismanagement of educational resources, leading to inefficiencies and waste.

6. Security Challenges

The problem of insecurity in schools is not limited to Nigeria. It is a global phenomenon. Insecurity in schools has become a pervasive issue globally, particularly in conflict-affected areas. Kidnapping, terrorism and limited access to education have created a toxic environment, depriving millions of children of their right to education.

According to UNESCO (2010), in some states of the nation, schools have become soft targets for terrorist groups seeking to disrupt education and create fear. There is the issue of kidnapping for ransom. Students and teachers are being kidnapped for ransom, forcing families and communities to live in perpetual fear, which results in psychological trauma because survivors of school attacks often suffer from long-term psychological trauma, affecting their ability to learn and thrive. This issue is so germane that there are demands for the international community to act collectively to address insecurity in schools, so as to ensure that all children have access to quality education, regardless of their location or circumstances.

7. Societal and Cultural Factors

Education is a fundamental right, essential for personal growth, economic development and social mobility. However, societal and cultural factors can significantly impact an individual's access to and engagement with education. Two of these factors are societal and cultural attitudes that devalue education and limited parental involvement and support for education.

According to Rogoff (2003), Apple (2018) and Banks (2019), the societal and cultural factors are as follows:

a) Societal and cultural attitudes that devalue education including:

- **Cultural Norms and Values:** In some cultures, education is not valued as a means of achieving success or improving socio-economic status.
- **Poverty and Economic Pressures:** In impoverished communities, the pressure to work and support one's family can lead to devaluation of education.
- **Gender Bias and Stereotypes:** In some societies, girls' education is undervalued and girls are expected to prioritize domestic and childcare responsibilities.
- **Limited Access to Resources:** Inadequate access to educational resources, such as books, technology and qualified teachers, can perpetuate negative attitudes towards education.

b) Limited Parental Involvement and Support for Education, such as:

- **Lack of Parental Education:** Parents who have not experienced the benefits of education themselves may not value or prioritize their children's education.
- **Socio-economic Constraints:** Parents from low-income backgrounds may struggle to provide basic necessities, how much less alone support their children's educational endeavours.
- **Cultural and Language Barriers:** Parents from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds may face challenges in engaging with their children's education due to language barriers or cultural differences.
- **Parental Expectations and Aspirations:** Parents who have limited expectations and aspirations for their children's educational attainment can inadvertently undermine their children's motivation and engagement with education. A consequence of these factors is low academic achievement because negative societal and cultural attitudes towards education, combined with limited parental involvement, can lead to low academic achievement and poor educational outcomes. Another issue is disparities in educational access and opportunities. These factors can exacerbate existing disparities in educational access and opportunities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and disadvantage.

Similarly, these factors have serious social and economic implications because the devaluation of education can have far-reaching social and economic implications, including reduced economic growth, increased poverty and decreased social mobility.

In addition to the foregoing, studies have confirmed that the exodus of the country's brightest minds is a daunting challenge, which the Nigerian educational system is facing. According to Kefale (2015), Oyedele (2017) and Adeniyi (2020), the issue of brain drain and talent flight is endemic, with far-reaching consequences for the quality of education in the country, such as economic stagnation, social instability and decreased global competitiveness. Emigration of highly skilled educators and professionals result in limited opportunities for career advancement and professional growth. Finally, there is the issue of limited access to education, particularly for marginalized groups, including girls, children with disabilities, and those from low-income backgrounds, resulting in high dropout rates, particularly in rural areas.

Recommendations

Nigeria's philosophy of education is built on development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen, the full integration of the individual into the community, and the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary level inside and outside the formal school system. However, poor management, policy issues, enrolment explosion, underfunding of education, inadequate facilities, human resource input and decadence have caused schools to lack good libraries, laboratories, seats and classrooms. In view of the foregoing, the paper recommends that two drastic measures should be taken by the government in order to ensure sustenance in the education sector. One, the central coordination of the sector lies heavily on the government, through engaging in transformational leadership, while ensuring that caution is exercised in embarking on a hasty privatization of the education sector. Two, the government is advised to sustain quality in the educational system through, amongst others, sincere implementation of the national policy on education and allocation of reasonable funds to education.

These measures are analyzed below.

Addressing the Problems of Inadequate Resources and Infrastructures in Nigeria Educational System

1. **Increased Funding for Education:** The government should allocate more funds to education, prioritizing the provision of solutions to the problems of inadequate resources and infrastructures in the Nigerian educational system.
2. **Teacher Training and Development:** The government and private school owners should provide regular training and development opportunities for teachers, to enhance their skills and knowledge.

3. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Partnerships should be fostered between government, private sector, and the civil society to support the development of educational resources and infrastructures in Nigeria.
4. **Community Engagement and Participation:** The government should encourage community engagement and participation in educational development, by promoting ownership and sustainability, quality resources and infrastructures.

Addressing the Problems of Insecurity in Schools

1. **Increased Funding for Education:** Governments and international organizations must prioritize funding for education in conflict-affected areas.
2. **Improved Security Measures:** Schools must be protected through improved security measures, including the presence of security personnel and infrastructure upgrades.
3. **Community Engagement and Support:** Communities must be engaged and supported to promote education and protect schools from insecurity.
4. **The international community must act collectively to address insecurity in schools,** ensuring that all children have access to quality education, regardless of their location or circumstances.

Addressing the Brain Drain Conundrum

1. **Improve Economic Conditions:** Addressing Nigeria's economic challenges can help stem the tide of brain drain and talent flight.
2. **Enhance Infrastructure and Resources:** Investing in modern facilities, equipment and technology can make Nigerian educational institutions more attractive to professionals.
3. **Promote Good Governance and Meritocracy:** Ensuring transparency, accountability and meritocracy in the educational sector can help retain talent and promote excellence.
4. **Develop Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborating with international institutions and organizations can facilitate knowledge transfer, capacity building and talent retention.

Addressing Societal and Cultural Barriers

1. **Cultural Sensitivity and Awareness:** Educational institutions and policymakers must be aware of and sensitive to the cultural and societal factors that influence educational engagement.
2. **Parental Education and Empowerment:** Programmes that educate and empower parents, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can help to promote positive attitudes towards education.

3. Community-based Initiatives: Community-based initiatives that promote education and provide resources and support for students and families can help to address the root causes of educational disadvantage.
4. Policy Reforms and Interventions: Policy reforms and interventions that address systemic barriers to education, such as poverty and inequality, are essential for promoting educational equity and social mobility

Conclusion

Nigeria's educational system is at a crossroads. Despite efforts to improve it, many challenges hinder the sustenance of quality education. Careful observation of the Nigerian educational system reveals a number of factors hindering quality sustenance. For the government to sustain quality in the educational system through sincere implementation of the National Policy on Education and allocation of reasonable funds to education, the underlying causes of these problems must be addressed, and appropriate strategies should be implemented to retain and develop the country's most valuable resources.

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37**MATHEMATICS EDUCATION: THE TOOL FOR INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
TEACHING IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS****By****Nchelem Rosemary George**

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Abstract

Mathematical skills are the pivot for the greatness of the economy of great nations. Mathematics exist as a discipline from the beginning of civilization, because it is considered as an excellent integral part of human existence and development of society. Over the years, Nigeria has clamoured for its citizens being self-reliant, self-sufficient and self-actualized as a result of the high rate of unemployment and poverty. Entrepreneurship education is a type of education that helps students develop the skills and knowledge to be successful entrepreneurs. Mathematics teaches students how to make sense of quantification, collect data, analyze given information and make informed decisions and inferences based on numerical evidences. Mathematical literacy skills are extremely valuable for the entrepreneur to understand how information can be presented in order to make a decision differently from how it might be presented if it is presented in a different way. Entrepreneurs require the knowledge of mathematics to thrive, as it is crucial to perform tasks such as financial planning, budgeting, analyzing market data and making informed business decisions, which all rely on mathematical skills to access the viability and potential success of a venture. In this present Nigerian setting where unemployment is the order of the day, there is an urgent need to integrate practical mathematics into the existing Mathematics curriculum to cater for the needs of students who will forge ahead with their education and those who will go into vocations/crafts. Entrepreneurial mathematics is a branch of mathematics that focuses on the application of mathematical principles and techniques in the context of entrepreneurship and business. Entrepreneurial mathematics helps entrepreneurs and business leaders make data-driven decisions, analyze complex problems and optimize business processes to achieve their goals and succeed in the competitive business environment. Entrepreneurial ventures are crucial to Nigeria's economy, as they drive job creation, stimulate economic growth by introducing new products and services, alleviate poverty, increase competition in the market, and contribute to overall development by addressing local needs and challenges, particularly in areas where traditional employment opportunities are limited. This, therefore, makes it imperative that students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education be taught entrepreneurial elements in connection to mathematical knowledge and

skills. The principal value of Mathematics arises from the fact that it is a utility subject. The mathematics knowledge and skill which students acquire should be applied to solve problems in both familiar and unfamiliar situations. Both basic mathematics knowledge and advanced mathematics knowledge are frequently used in other academic disciplines, including entrepreneurship. Use of innovation instructional strategies to teach mathematics concepts and entrepreneurial elements creates the much needed synergy in workplaces, which eventually leads to success.

Keywords: Mathematics, Entrepreneurship, Success, Tool, Innovative Teaching

1.0 Introduction

Mathematics is a branch of knowledge that deals with numbers, quantities, shapes, patterns, arrangements and measurement. The subject Mathematics is referred to as the tool which is employed to transform and develop society. Its knowledge and skills are the bedrock of all societal transformation. Throughout human history, mathematics is found to be an inevitable ingredient for human, economic and physical development (Hassan & Garba, 2014). Historical records revealed that the demands for mathematical skills arose in response to practical needs in vocations, agriculture, business and industry in ancient civilizations, such as Babylon, Egypt, Mesopotamia, China and India. The need of mathematics in the ancient civilization paved the way for the need of mathematics in the modern world.

Mathematical skills are the pivot for the greatness of the economy of great nations. Mathematics exists as a discipline from the beginning of civilization because it is considered as an excellent integral part of human existence. This may suggest why Ubalaka and Kwenta (2021) opine that the development of mathematics is hinged on the need of mankind as they arise. Mathematics can, therefore, be said to increase both in context and application at different times and different civilization. It largely hinges on its application to solve real-life problems in human daily activities. The knowledge of mathematics helps in critical thinking and problem-solving. The application of mathematics in real-life means the use of mathematics to solve problems and make sense of the world.

Mathematics is categorized into pure and applied. Pure mathematics, according to Nicolle (2023), is the branch of mathematics that focuses on the development and study of mathematical structures and concepts for their own sake, rather than for their practical applications. It has no intent or motivation for application. Pure mathematics lays emphasis on exploration of the theoretical aspects of mathematical structures rather than solving specific real-world problems. Applied mathematics, on the contrary, is the application of mathematical methods by different fields and vocations. Thus, Ahang et al. (2020) posit that applied mathematics is a combination of mathematical science and specialized knowledge. The various areas in which mathematics knowledge can be

applied include cooking, managing finances, shopping, modelling complex systems, data analysis, engineering, medicine, biology, economics, business, computer science, law, planning trips, fashion design, budget, recreational sports, conflict resolution and entrepreneurship.

The term entrepreneurship has been defined by various scholars. The definition of entrepreneurship has evolved over time, but it generally has to do with the identification of opportunities and putting ideas into reasonable actions. Smith (1910), cited in Bullet and Yalon (2022), defines entrepreneurship as the act of creating a commercial organization and managing it. The definition by Smith is a product of his belief that entrepreneurs are capitalists who act as intermediaries between consumers and labourers. Say (nd) refines the definition of entrepreneurship to be individuals creating value by shifting resources from lower to higher-valued activities. Drucker (nd) defines entrepreneurship as the act of searching for changes, responding to it and exploiting it as an opportunity. Entrepreneurship can, therefore, be seen as the purposeful activity of an individual or a group of associated individuals, undertaken to initiate, maintain or increase profit by production or distribution of economic goods and services. The various definitions of entrepreneurship have elements of mathematics, including number and numeration, measurement of variables, initiation of ideas, identifying an opportunity, hypothesizing, problem-solving, computation, making informed decisions under uncertainty, collection of data, prediction/forecasting and application of results in the environment. Entrepreneurship, therefore, constitutes the process of creating, owning, controlling and the combining of heterogeneous assets by an entrepreneur to produce goods and services in pursuit of economic profit. The higher value activities which an entrepreneur engages in bring values to both the individuals and society.

Entrepreneurship is a composite of three basic elements, namely invention, innovation and adaptation. This makes it imperative that the entrepreneurial elements be linked to the teaching and learning of mathematics at all levels of education. There is a relationship between entrepreneurship, creation of wealth and growth of firms, industries and economies (Michael, 2007). This connection is very vital because the various activities of entrepreneurs bring about the desired wealth creation that every nation craves for. Lawal et al. (2023) posit that the contents of Mathematics curriculum at all levels of education, if well implemented in the classroom, inculcate knowledge, attitude, skills and values that help learners in any entrepreneurial skill development.

Mathematics Education in Nigeria and every other nation has long been accepted as a veritable tool and a driving force for national development. It is on the basis of the importance of mathematics Education that Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) made it a compulsory subject at both primary and secondary levels of education. The acquisition of

basic mathematics knowledge and skills paves the way for most citizens to make effective contribution to their personal and national development.

2.0 Objectives of Teaching Mathematics in Schools

It is universally acknowledged that education is the tool or instrument for national development. Education is also known as a process which society adopts to instill in its members behaviour patterns that are deemed desirable for individual and societal development. In the view of Gbamanja (2001), cited in Ogunkunle and George (2015), the primary function of education of any society is to preserve and transmit the cultural heritage to the young, transform the cultural heritage and develop in individuals the skills to enable them to contribute meaningfully to the solutions to daily problems and provide for the needs of society. It is the contents of the various school subjects that are used to bring about the desired stated goals of education.

Mathematics is one school subject that has been accorded a central position in the development of man and society. Fananlat (2021) avers that Mathematics is one of the school subjects that every nation needs for industrial, entrepreneurial and technological advancement. As a utility subject, it has been viewed from different perspectives by different experts. Sidhu (2006) views it as a very useful subject for most vocations and higher specialized courses of learning. One interesting thing about the various views is that they all converge on the point that mathematics is the key subject for individual and national development. Mathematics has almost universally been considered a critical and necessary component of a well-rounded education.

One of the objectives of teaching Mathematics in schools is to develop the critical thinking skills of students. Mathematics helps students develop analytical and problem-solving skills, thus teaching them how to think logically and critically. It is also taught in school to enhance the quantitative reasoning and literacy of students. It teaches students how to make sense of quantification, collect data, analyze given information and make informed decisions and inferences based on numerical evidences. It helps students become more informed and critical consumers of data, enabling them to understand and evaluate information presented in numerical form. It improves the problem-solving abilities of students. It teaches students how to tackle complex problems, break them down into manageable parts and develop strategies to solve them.

Creativity is another skill that is developed amongst students when they learn Mathematics. The teaching of Mathematics in schools helps to foster and encourage creativity and innovation by challenging students to think out of the box and come up with new approaches to solving problems. Mathematics requires students to explain their reasoning and solutions clearly, helping them to improve their communication skills.

Mathematics is a fundamental subject that provides the knowledge and skills necessary for success in other fields, such as science, technology, engineering,

entrepreneurship and economics. Mathematics is taught primarily for its practical values and aims. Students are expected to be taught mathematical knowledge and skills needed in their day-to-day life and enabled to make use of that knowledge and skill. This objective makes the study of Mathematics functional and purposeful and establishes relation between the subject and practical life. Mathematics is taught in school to prepare students for various vocations where the knowledge of Mathematics is applied (Sabhapandit, 2023). Mathematics prepares students for work. It provides the skills and knowledge needed for many careers, vocations and entrepreneurial ventures.

3.0. What Mathematics Topics are Needed for Entrepreneurs to Succeed?

Mathematical literacy skills are extremely valuable for the entrepreneur to understand how information can be presented in order to make a decision differently from how it might be presented if it is presented in a different way. For an entrepreneur to run a business, he has to navigate around an income statement, a balance sheet and cash flow analysis. Yertan (2018) asserts that it is the knowledge of accounting basics that an entrepreneur really needs to succeed. Sure, one needs to understand how the basics of accounting works to succeed in business, but the basics of accounting are the knowledge of basic mathematics, which includes addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

Bot (2021) opines that entrepreneurs benefit from a variety of mathematical skills to effectively manage their businesses. By possessing a solid grasp of the vital mathematical concepts, entrepreneurs can make more informed decisions, analyze their business performance and strategize for growth. Entrepreneurs require the knowledge of mathematics to thrive, as it is crucial to perform tasks such as financial planning, budgeting, analyzing market data and making informed business decisions, which all rely on mathematical skills to access the viability and potential success of a venture. The following are the various mathematics topics that can help an entrepreneur to succeed.

- **Basic Arithmetic:** The four basic arithmetic operations are an integral part of everyday activities. Nwachukwu (2021) posits that understanding addition, subtraction, multiplication and division is fundamental for everyday calculations in the entrepreneurship venture. Entrepreneurs need basic mathematics to interpret financial statements, project cash flows and calculate key metrics, like break-even points.
- **Percentages:** The knowledge of percentages is important for calculating profits margins, discounts and sales tax.
- **Algebra:** The algebraic curriculum contents are useful for solving equations and understanding relationships between variables, which can help in pricing, budgeting and forecasting.

- **Geometry:** Geometric visualization is useful in areas like space planning for physical locations, inventory management and product design.
- **Statistics:** This is essential for analyzing market trends, customer data and financial performance. Concepts such as mean, median, mode, variance and standard deviation are important to carry out computation. Statistical knowledge is needed to carry out market research in entrepreneurship venture. Analyzing market data to understand customer demographics and trends requires statistical interpretation.
- **Financial mathematics:** The various aspects where financial mathematics boosts entrepreneurship includes; **interest calculation**, which deals with understanding simple and compound interest for loans and investments; **cash-flow analysis**, which has to do with the knowledge of how to project cash inflows and outflows to maintain liquidity; and **break-even analysis**, which involves the determination of when a business will become profitable.
- **Data analysis:** This involves skills in interpreting data through metrics such as ROI (Return on Investment) and KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) to make informed business decisions. The efficient management of inventory, staffing and other resource allocation relies on mathematical calculations.
- **Calculus:** ThoughtCo (2024) defines calculus as a branch of mathematics that involves the study of rates of change. It is concerned with instantaneous rates of change and summation of many small factors. However, while not essential for all entrepreneurs, understanding basic calculus can be beneficial for optimizing processes and understanding growth rates. Calculus is employed in pricing strategy. Determining the right price for a product or service often involves calculations based on cost, market competition and desired profit margins. Smarter (2024) states that calculus has many applications in the business world, from calculating the optimal order from a supplier to figuring out how the demand for a product will change in response to fluctuations in the price of the product.

4.0. Entrepreneurial Mathematics

The integration of practical mathematics into the present Mathematics curriculum focuses on curricula that have the potential for facilitating self-employment or good skills in the new Nigerian society. It is a Mathematics curriculum that is aimed at providing unemployed Nigerian youths with the basic skills needed for both higher learning and vocation. In this present Nigerian setting where unemployment is the order of the day, there is an urgent need to integrate practical mathematics into the existing Mathematics curriculum to cater for the needs of students who will forge ahead with their education and those who will go into vocations/crafts. Owing to this, Nigerian curriculum planners

have introduced entrepreneurship education in the Nigerian educational system. One of the millennium goals is the reduction of poverty and acceleration of economic growth and development. It is the development of the right entrepreneurial skills in individuals that forms the springboard for economic growth. To this end, Schumpeter (1969) argues that entrepreneurship is the nucleus to national development. One of the stances taken by many educators is that it is crucial to acknowledge the vocational context of Mathematics for students by teaching entrepreneur-based mathematics that students can relate to.

Entrepreneurial mathematics is a branch of mathematics that focuses on the application of mathematical principles and techniques in the context of entrepreneurship and business. It can also be said to be the application of mathematical concepts and tools specifically used by entrepreneurs to manage and analyze their businesses, such as doing calculations related to pricing, costs, revenue, profit margins, financial forecasting, market analysis and making investment decisions, essentially using mathematics to make informed business choices and drive growth. It involves using mathematical tools and concepts to analyze and solve problems related to starting, managing and growing a business. Hence, Theo (2015) opines that entrepreneurial mathematics is synonymous to business mathematics or commercial mathematics.

Entrepreneurial mathematics helps entrepreneurs and business leaders make data-driven decisions, analyze complex problems and optimize business processes to achieve their goals and succeed in the competitive business environment (Kemp, 2019). It also provides a solid foundation for understanding and managing the quantitative aspects of running a business effectively. Entrepreneurial mathematics encompasses a variety of topics, which include the following:

- Financial mathematics: Calculating interest rate, present and future values, annuities, and other financial metrics to make informed decisions about investments, loans and business finances
- Data analysis: Using statistical methods to analyze data, identify trends, make predictions and support decision-making in areas such as market research, sales forecasting and customer behaviour analysis
- Optimization: Applying mathematical optimization techniques to maximize efficiency, minimize costs, and improve decision-making in areas such as production scheduling, inventory management and resource allocation
- Risk assessment: Using probability theory and statistical analysis to assess risks, model uncertainties, and make decisions about risk management strategies in business operations.

- Market analysis: Applying mathematical models and techniques to analyze market trends, competitor behaviour, consumer preferences, and other factors that can impact business strategy and decision-making

Entrepreneurial mathematics is important because it helps in the continuous leverage of entrepreneurial ventures. The knowledge of entrepreneurial mathematics helps entrepreneurs to understand and apply mathematical concepts that will give them the capacity to make informed data-driven decisions rather than relying solely on intuition. Another importance of entrepreneurial mathematics is that it aids entrepreneurs in risk mitigation. Mathematical analysis and modelling can help identify risks and opportunities in the market, thereby allowing entrepreneurs to make calculated decisions. Mahmud et al. (2022) posit that entrepreneurial mathematics is important in the development of entrepreneurship because it is about creativity and innovation.

Besides, entrepreneurial mathematics acts as a tool that helps in solving and controlling various business problems. Therefore, the primary objective of studying entrepreneurial mathematics is to adapt the various mathematical tools and techniques and models, which helps in dealing with real-life business situations.

5.0 Entrepreneurial Ventures in Nigeria

A country such as Nigeria, where unemployment rate is high, requires its citizens to engage in one form of entrepreneurial venture or the other. When entrepreneurs venture into businesses, there is creation of job opportunities for the population (Oladele, 2022). Engagement in entrepreneurial ventures can also lead to diversification of the Nigerian economy beyond reliance on crude oil exports. Entrepreneurial ventures are crucial to Nigeria's economy, as they drive job creation, stimulate economic growth by introducing new products and services, alleviate poverty, increase competition in the market and contribute to overall development by addressing local needs and challenges, particularly in areas where traditional employment opportunities are limited. Pascal (2018) avers that entrepreneurial ventures in Nigeria are important because they aid the development of the economy. In Nigeria, there are various entrepreneurial ventures across different industries that offer opportunities for innovation and growth. There are countless examples of entrepreneurial ventures across various industries and sectors in Nigeria.

Entrepreneurs have the opportunity to create innovative solutions, disrupt industries and make a positive impact on society through their ventures. Nigeria has a dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem with opportunities for growth and innovation in various industries. Below are examples of the diverse range of entrepreneurial ventures that exist in the business world:

- Agribusiness: Entrepreneurs in Nigeria are involved in agricultural ventures, such as crop farming, livestock rearing, agro-processing and agricultural technology start-ups.
- Tech start-ups: Nigeria has a growing tech ecosystem with start-ups in e-commerce, fintech, edtech, health tech, and other technology-driven ventures. Companies like Google, Facebook and Amazon started as entrepreneurial ventures in the tech industry and have grown into global giants.
- Food and beverage businesses: Entrepreneurial ventures in Nigeria involved in the food and beverage industry include restaurants, cafés, food trucks, food delivery services, catering businesses, packaged food products and specialty food products.
- E-commerce businesses: Online retailers like eBay, Etsy and Shopify are examples of entrepreneurial ventures that have revolutionized the way people shop and do business online.
- Health and wellness start-ups: Entrepreneurs in Nigeria are launching health and wellness start-ups focusing on fitness programmes. Companies focused on wellness products, fitness apps, health supplements and alternative medicine service are examples of entrepreneurial ventures in the health and wellness industry.
- Fashion/textile industries and beauty brands: Entrepreneurial ventures in the fashion and beauty industry include clothing brands, cosmetic companies, modelling brands and accessories designers. Entrepreneurs in Nigeria are setting up fashion brands, clothing lines, handmade accessories businesses and textile manufacturing companies.
- Renewable energy: Entrepreneurs in Nigeria are investing in renewable energy ventures, such as solar power companies, biomass energy projects and wind energy initiatives.
- Social Enterprises: These are entrepreneurial ventures that prioritize social or environmental impact, such as fair-trade businesses, sustainable fashion brands and renewable energy companies.
- Real estate development: Entrepreneurial ventures in real estate development involve buying, renovating and selling properties for profit, as well as building and managing rental properties. Entrepreneurs in Nigeria are involved in real estate ventures, including property development, rental property management and real estate investment.
- Educational e-learning start-ups: Companies focused on e-learning platforms, tutoring services, educational technologies and online courses are examples of entrepreneurial ventures in the education sectors. Entrepreneurial ventures in Nigeria's educational sector include e-learning platforms, online tutoring services, educational technology start-ups and vocational training programmes.

6.0 The Synergy of Mathematics and Entrepreneurial Elements

The principal value of Mathematics arises from the fact that it is a utility subject. This may suggest why Sidhu (2006) asserts that one of the objectives of teaching Mathematics in schools is its practical and utilitarian aim. Everybody needs mathematics and uses mathematics in day-to-day activities. When students are taught Mathematics in connection to its application, they think and reason precisely, logically and critically in any given situation (Davut & Greener, 2021). The application of mathematical knowledge also makes students to identify, concretize, symbolize and use mathematical skills to take informed decisions concerning their businesses. While many people think of mathematics as a school subject, mathematics is extremely useful in real world as well. Both basic mathematics knowledge and advanced mathematics knowledge are frequently used in other academic disciplines, including entrepreneurship is one of them.

Nigeria, like most developing nations of the world, is faced with myriads of problems, such as poverty and unemployment. These situations pose concerned challenges to the citizens, the nation and the globe. Madagwa (2020) states that there is a high positive relationship between mathematics and entrepreneurship education. This, therefore, makes it imperative that students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education be taught entrepreneurial elements in connection to mathematical knowledge and skills. George (2020) carried out a research on the impact of Mathematics on entrepreneurship education and found that there was a high positive relationship between both disciplines. However, the same study found out that most of the teachers taught Mathematics by disconnecting it from application. Teaching Mathematics by disconnecting it from application means focusing solely on the abstract concepts and rules of Mathematics without actively demonstrating how those concepts are used in real-world scenarios or other disciplines. Application of Mathematics in entrepreneurial venture brings it into the world with personal finances, statistics and measurement.

The question that arises from the foregoing is, how then can Mathematics be taught? Although there is no one best way to teach Mathematics in school, it is noteworthy to state that research evidence has proven that innovative teaching of Mathematics has always made the difference. Innovative teaching of Mathematics refers to the use of creative and engaging methods to teach its concepts by incorporating hands-on activities, real-world applications, technology and differentiated instruction to foster deeper understanding and retention. Innovative teaching strategies prioritize the needs and engagement of students, fostering active participation in the learning process. Use of innovation to teach mathematics concepts creates the much needed synergy in work places (George & Charles-Ogan, 2023). It leads to flexibility and adaptability of classroom instruction.

Thompson (2024) states that embracing innovation in education promotes critical thinking, a sense of adventure and an openness to adapt that will help students in the classroom and provide them with the necessary tools to tackle the challenges of their future workplace. Innovative entrepreneurship teaching methods help students to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills which prepare them for the ever-changing business world. Some of the innovative ways that teachers employ to carry out classroom instruction include individual and group project-based learning, blended learning, case studies, problem-solving sessions, interactive sessions and brainstorming, simulation and games.

The goals of innovative entrepreneurship teaching are to:

- help students think differently and innovatively;
- equip students with skills that can be applied beyond the classroom;
- prepare students to succeed in the dynamic business landscape; and
- cultivate critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Innovation simply means the process of creating new ideas, products or methods, or improving existing ones. Innovation and entrepreneurship are key drivers of economic growth and highly valued in the business world. Schumpeter's theory of innovation focuses on the idea that entrepreneurs drive economic progress by introducing new products, services, and business practices. This may suggest why Menu and Frank posit that entrepreneurs are different from the common business person. The curricula should, therefore, be constantly evolving to equip students to succeed in today's dynamic business world. Bozward (2024) asserts that entrepreneurship is not just about starting a business. It is a mindset that drives innovation, problem-solving and adaptability. In today's fast-paced world, entrepreneurship education is more than a nice-to-have education; it is a must-have. This brings in the notion of the big deal about teaching entrepreneurship innovatively by incorporating mathematical elements.

7.0 Conclusion

This paper provided an insight into the concepts of entrepreneur, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial elements, identification of some entrepreneurial ventures in Nigeria, and the relationship between entrepreneurial ventures and mathematics. The paper X-rayed the benefits of entrepreneurial ventures to an individual and the economy of nation. The high rate of unemployment has paved the way for increased involvement in entrepreneurial ventures. Since mathematical knowledge is a major variable that contributes to the success of any entrepreneur, the teaching of mathematics at various levels of education should be channelled to its application and not just the memorization of mathematical fact, theorems, formulae and laws. The application of mathematical knowledge of basic arithmetic, probability, geometry, statistics, calculus, percentages and

data analysis can help entrepreneurs succeed in business activities, such as pricing, budgeting, forecasting, space planning for physical locations, inventory management, product design, cash-flow and break-even analyses.

Entrepreneurship is fundamentally based on innovation. Therefore, it should be taught making use of innovative instructional strategies. In the present era, entrepreneurial ventures are regarded as the economic propelling engine in both developed and developing economies. Therefore, there should be practical teaching of the bond which exists between mathematics and entrepreneurship in schools.

8.0 Suggestions

Based on the discussions so far, the following suggestions are made:

- Entrepreneurship education should be given commended because it is negotiator of national development.
- The teaching of Mathematics should be geared towards its practical application to solve daily life problems.
- Students should be encouraged to develop interest in the study of Mathematics since its knowledge boosts the entrepreneur's success in business.
- Students should also be encouraged to develop interest and engage in entrepreneurial ventures for self-reliance and alleviate poverty.
- The teaching of mathematics topics should be linked to entrepreneurial elements.
- Students should be taught to appreciate the role, value and use of Mathematics in society.
- Teachers should employ innovative teaching strategies to carry out classroom instruction.

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**PROMOTING DIGITAL LITERACY AND INCLUSION: THE ROLE OF
THE LIBRARY**

By

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Abstract

The proliferation of Internet and digital technologies presents lots of opportunities, including access to education, economy, networking, collaboration and socialisation. While digital literacy equips people with the skills needed to access, evaluate and effectively use digital tools and resources, empowering them to navigate the digital platforms becomes inevitable. Digital inclusion ensures that all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic status, geographic location, or abilities, have access to digital technologies and the opportunities they provide. However, harnessing these opportunities requires digital literacy and inclusion. Libraries play significant roles in promoting digital literacy and inclusion. This chapter, therefore, focuses on the roles of the library in promoting digital literacy and inclusion. It explains the meaning of digital literacy and why digital literacy and inclusion are necessary. It also explains the various roles of the library in promoting digital literacy and inclusion as well as the future of digital literacy and inclusion. It concludes that digital literacy and inclusion are necessary for navigating the digital world and the library is a formidable player in promoting digital literacy and inclusion. The paper recommends that, well-meaning organisations, institutions, agencies and individuals should make intentional efforts to support the library in its role of digital literacy and inclusion. This could be through donation of digital tools and equipment, financial support and donation of information resources.

Introduction

In this digital age, libraries play a pivotal role in promoting digital literacy and inclusion among students, faculty and the broader academic community. Libraries do this by offering access to digital resources, equipping individuals with skills, like computer literacy, critical thinking and data comprehension. Libraries also empower many functions, like media literacy and fact-checking. Librarians are respected for their ability to guide users in the ever-changing digital landscape. Collaborative learning spaces allow

users to interact with technologies, engage in digital communications and create new ideas. Libraries collaborate with educational institutions and advocate amplifying digital literacy programmes (Ghosh et al., 2025). By adopting emerging technologies, adapting to user needs and encouraging lifelong learning, libraries continue to drive digital literacy.

Digital literacy is the ability to effectively use digital technologies to find, evaluate, create and communicate information. It encompasses the skills needed to navigate the vast online landscape effectively and access information to critically evaluate its credibility. Libraries play a vital role in democratizing access to technology and knowledge by ensuring that all community members have the opportunity to develop essential digital skills. Libraries do this by serving as hubs for fostering these skills through various services, resources and programmes. They offer workshops, training sessions and one-to-one consultations to help users navigate digital tools, online databases and other information resources (Ifijeh et al., 2016). By doing so, libraries empower individuals to engage with the digital world confidently and responsibly, a crucial skill in today's knowledge-driven society. Moreover, libraries address digital inclusion by ensuring equitable access to digital resources and technologies. They provide access to computers, high-speed Internet and specialized software, particularly for students who may not have such resources at home. They also empower individuals to thrive in an increasingly digital world through initiatives such as computer classes, technology workshops and access to digital resources. Furthermore, university libraries serve as inclusive spaces where users can collaborate, share ideas and learn from one another, enriching their digital literacy journey (Firdaus & Saufa, 2024). As technology continues to evolve and integrate into individual daily lives, the role of libraries in promoting digital literacy remains paramount in equipping individuals with the tools they need to succeed in the 21st century.

Libraries also curate a diverse range of digital content, including e-books, academic journals and multimedia materials, ensuring that all users, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, can access the information they need. In addition, libraries adopt assistive technologies and design inclusive learning environments to support users with disabilities, further promoting digital equity. Through their commitment to digital literacy and inclusion, university libraries contribute to bridging the digital divide and preparing students for the challenges of an increasingly digital world. By integrating these initiatives into their services, libraries reinforce their role as essential partners in education, research and lifelong learning.

Digital Literacy

Digital literacy encompasses the skills, knowledge and competencies required to navigate and effectively engage with the digital world. It involves accessing, understanding, evaluating and creating digital content using various technological devices and platforms. Digital literacy entails technical skills, critical thinking, problem-solving abilities and

ethical considerations in digital environments. Individuals with digital literacy can confidently use digital tools and technologies to access information, communicate, collaborate and create content for personal, academic and professional purposes (Nsirim & Okeke, 2024).

Digital literacy enhances efforts to access information through digital means. This includes knowing how to use search engines, databases and online libraries to find relevant and reliable information. It also involves understanding how to evaluate the credibility of sources and discern between trustworthy information and misinformation or fake news. Erwin and Mohammed (2022) note that digital literacy requires proficiency in using digital tools and applications for various purposes. This literacy includes basic skills such as using word processors, spreadsheets and presentation software, as well as more advanced skills such as coding, multimedia editing and data analysis. Additionally, digital literacy encompasses using communication tools such as email, social media and video conferencing effectively for personal and professional communication.

Another notable aspect of digital literacy is critically evaluating digital information and media. In an era of information overload, individuals must be able to analyze and assess digital content's accuracy, reliability and bias. This involves understanding concepts such as fact-checking, source verification and media literacy to responsibly navigate the complexities of digital information landscapes (Ashukuzzaman, 2024). Digital literacy also includes considerations of Internet safety, security and privacy. Individuals must know about potential online threats, such as phishing scams, malware, identity theft and cyberbullying. They should also understand how to protect their personal information, maintain privacy settings and practise safe online behaviour.

Digital Inclusion

Undoubtedly, information and communication technology (ICT) has affected every area of human life. The level of deployment of ICT in a country can determine its level of development and placement among nations. Ifijeh et al. (2016) note that digital inclusion goes beyond the quantitative and technological aspects of the concept of digital divide.

Digital inclusion refers to the efforts and initiatives aimed at ensuring that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and can effectively use ICT (Reisdorf, & Rhinesmith, 2020). It is a set of public policies that relates to the installation, administration, expansion, creation and development of content on wired or wireless public networks in countries, regions and communities. It includes privacy and security, training and incentives to develop new tools. It encompasses not only the availability of devices and Internet connectivity but also the skills, knowledge and resources needed to utilize digital tools effectively.

Digital inclusion is critical in today's world, as access to technology increasingly determines participation in economic, educational and social opportunities. Without

these, individuals and communities risk being excluded from essential services, job opportunities and modern forms of communication. At its core, digital inclusion involves three key components: access, adoption and meaningful use (Ifijeh et al., 2016). Access ensures that technology and Internet services are available and affordable to all, particularly in underserved areas. Adoption addresses the ability of individuals to utilize these tools, which often requires digital literacy education, training and continuous support. Meaningful use ensures that technology is applied in ways that improve quality of life, such as through telehealth services, online education, e-commerce or civic engagement. These components work together to bridge the digital divide and promote equity in a technology-driven society.

Achieving digital inclusion requires collaborative efforts from governments, private organizations and community stakeholders. Policies to expand broadband infrastructure, programmes to distribute affordable devices and initiatives to enhance digital literacy are essential. Additionally, addressing systemic barriers, such as economic inequality, geographic isolation and disabilities is crucial in fostering an inclusive digital environment. By promoting digital inclusion, societies can reduce disparities, empower individuals and create more equitable opportunities in the digital age. This can be achieved by taking digital inclusion into cognizance and transforming members of society from the digitally excluded to the digitally included.

Why Digital Literacy and Inclusion Ares Necessary

Digital literacy and inclusion are essential in today's interconnected world because they enable individuals to participate fully in economic, educational and social activities. Digital literacy equips people with the skills needed to access, evaluate and effectively use digital tools and resources, empowering them to navigate the digital landscape confidently. Digital inclusion ensures that all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic status, geographic location, or abilities, have access to digital technologies and the opportunities they provide. Together, digital literacy and inclusion foster equity, promote economic growth and enable individuals to thrive in a technology-driven society. The following reasons have been identified by authors, including Lew (2021), Reddy et al., (2022) and Sieck et al. (2021) and Wang & Si (2024), as the reasons digital literacy and inclusion are necessary:

Access to Education: Digital inclusion ensures that education becomes accessible to everyone, regardless of their location or abilities. Technology helps overcome barriers such as geographic distance, limited resources or disabilities, enabling students to learn at their own pace and select courses that align with their needs and interests. This is particularly beneficial for individuals in rural areas or those with responsibilities that prevent them from attending traditional schools. Modern technology has transformed

education from being confined to physical classrooms to a global, virtual experience, allowing students to access world-class educational systems from their homes. Virtual learning provides diverse options for marginalized groups, individuals with learning disabilities and those who have left mainstream education, thus offering a flexible and inclusive approach to learning.

Lifelong Learning: Information and communication technology has revolutionized education by extending learning opportunities beyond traditional formats, promoting the concept of lifelong education. Digital technologies support continuous learning, enabling individuals to acquire new skills and remain competitive in the global workforce. Through online education, people of all ages can enhance their qualifications, secure better positions within their organizations or pursue new career opportunities. Technology-driven learning not only improves professional prospects but also boosts personal satisfaction, as individuals become more skilled, productive and valuable to their employers. This emphasis on continuous development creates a more capable workforce and contributes to overall job satisfaction and life fulfilment.

The Role of Libraries in Promoting Digital Literacy and Inclusion

Libraries stand at the forefront of promoting digital literacy, assuming a pivotal role in equipping individuals with the skills necessary to navigate an ever-expanding digital landscape. Beyond their traditional role as repositories of books, libraries have metamorphosed into dynamic hubs of digital learning and access. In today's society, where proficiency in digital tools and information technology is essential, libraries serve as catalysts for bridging the digital divide. They offer free access to technology, Internet connectivity and educational programmes tailored to diverse skill levels. By providing these resources and opportunities, libraries empower their patrons to develop the digital literacy skills vital for success in the modern world. Through their dedication to digital inclusion and education, libraries emerge as indispensable pillars, ensuring everyone has the means to thrive in an increasingly digital society. Ashukuzzaman (2024), Tom-George et al., (2024) identify the following as the roles of libraries in promoting digital literacy and inclusion:

Bridging the Digital Divide: Libraries play a crucial role in addressing the digital divide by providing access to technology and the Internet, which remain inaccessible for many in various communities. Offering free use of computers, high-speed Internet and digital devices, libraries become essential hubs for those who lack such resources at home. By ensuring equitable access to digital tools and information, libraries create opportunities that help create a level playing field for all members of society.

Fostering Digital Inclusion: Digital literacy extends beyond access to technology, encompassing the ability to use technology effectively and confidently. Libraries actively promote digital inclusion by addressing systemic barriers and championing initiatives that improve access and participation. By collaborating with governments, educational institutions and community organizations, libraries work to enhance digital infrastructure, make technology more affordable and expand digital skills training programmes, ensuring everyone can benefit from the opportunities of the digital age

Promoting Digital Citizenship: Beyond basic digital skills, libraries also play a crucial role in promoting digital citizenship. Digital citizenship encompasses ethical behaviour, responsible online interactions, and understanding digital rights and responsibilities. Libraries offer educational programmes and resources on online privacy, cybersecurity, digital etiquette and copyright laws. By fostering a culture of responsible digital behaviour, libraries help individuals become conscientious and empowered digital citizens who contribute positively to the online community.

Supporting Digital Creativity and Innovation: Libraries are incubators for digital creativity and innovation, giving their patrons access to tools and resources that allow them to experiment and express their creativity in digital formats. From 3D printers and coding kits to multimedia production studios with video editing software, libraries provide a variety of resources to support digital experimentation and innovation. By encouraging their patrons to pursue creative endeavours and experiment with new technologies, libraries promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship within their communities.

Addressing Digital Inequities: In addition to bridging the digital divide, libraries also address broader disparities in access to information and opportunities, acknowledging that some demographic groups, such as low-income individuals, members of underrepresented groups and people with disabilities, may encounter particular difficulties in using and accessing digital resources.

Empowering Lifelong Learning: Libraries have always supported lifelong learning, and this role has grown even more important in the digital era. They offer a variety of programmes, workshops, and training sessions to help people of all ages acquire vital digital literacy skills. From beginner-friendly computer lessons to advanced coding workshops for those who want to deepen their expertise, libraries provide learning opportunities tailored to meet diverse needs. By encouraging curiosity and exploration, they help individuals embrace new technologies and expand their digital capabilities with confidence.

Cultivating Information Literacy: In a time characterized by overwhelming amounts of information and widespread misinformation, libraries act as reliable guides. They grant access to a wide range of digital resources while teaching users how to evaluate the credibility and relevance of online content. Through dedicated programmes, libraries empower individuals with the skills to critically assess information, enabling them to make informed choices and navigate the complexities of the digital world responsibly.

Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing: Libraries serve as hubs for collaboration and knowledge sharing, bringing together individuals, community organizations and local businesses to address digital literacy challenges collectively. Through partnerships with schools, universities, non-profit organizations and government agencies, libraries leverage collective expertise and resources to deliver comprehensive digital literacy initiatives. By fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange, libraries maximize their impact and effectiveness in promoting digital literacy across diverse communities.

Tailoring Services to Diverse Needs: Libraries recognize their patrons' diverse needs and preferences and strive to tailor their digital literacy initiatives accordingly. They offer personalized assistance and support to individuals needing additional help in developing digital skills, such as seniors, immigrants or individuals with disabilities. Librarians are trained to provide one-to-one guidance, adaptive technology resources and accessible materials to ensure that everyone, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, can access and benefit from digital literacy programmes.

Empowering Economic Opportunities: Digital literacy is closely linked to economic empowerment, as proficiency in digital skills opens up many employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. Libraries empower individuals to pursue economic opportunities by providing job search assistance, résumé -building workshops, and entrepreneurship training programmes. Through partnerships with local businesses and workforce development agencies, libraries connect their patrons with job opportunities, training programmes and resources to help them succeed in today's digital economy.

Advocating Digital Rights and Access: Libraries are staunch advocates of digital rights and access, ensuring everyone can access and use digital information and resources freely and equitably. They advocate policies that promote open access to information, protect user privacy, and safeguard digital freedoms. Libraries also work to address issues of digital censorship, net neutrality and digital rights management, campaigning for policies that uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and information access in the digital age.

Empowering Digital Advocacy: Libraries equip individuals with the knowledge and tools to become champions of digital rights, access and literacy within their communities and beyond. By offering education and resources on digital advocacy, libraries enable their patrons to actively participate in public discussions, engage policymakers and support initiatives that promote digital inclusion and equity. By cultivating a culture of digital advocacy, libraries empower individuals to influence digital policies and drive meaningful change in their communities.

Innovation in Digital Literacy Programmes: Libraries consistently evolve their digital literacy programmes to address the changing demands and challenges of the modern digital era. They adopt emerging technologies, explore new teaching strategies, and design creative programme formats to engage learners and enhance their experiences. From workshops on virtual reality to coding boot camps, libraries use innovative approaches to digital education, fostering creativity, curiosity and a commitment to lifelong learning among their patrons.

Nurturing Digital Communities: Libraries serve as vibrant hubs of community life, bringing people together to connect, collaborate and share ideas. In the digital age, libraries foster online communities through social media platforms, online forums and virtual events. They curate digital content and resources that reflect the interests and needs of their communities, creating spaces where individuals can engage with one another, share knowledge and participate in meaningful discussions. By nurturing digital communities, libraries foster a sense of belonging and collective empowerment among their patrons, enriching the social fabric of their communities.

Collaborative Research and Knowledge Development: Libraries act as hubs for collaborative research and knowledge creation by providing access to advanced digital tools, resources and shared spaces. They support interdisciplinary research, digital humanities projects and community-led initiatives, encouraging partnerships and innovative thinking among researchers, academics and the public. By serving as facilitators of collaboration, libraries advance scholarly endeavours and enrich community engagement, contributing to the growth of knowledge and public discourse in the digital age.

The Future of Digital Inclusion

Digital literacy and inclusion will be characterized by the widespread incorporation of digital tools technology in different phases of life. As technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality and Internet of things continue to be prevalent, the request and need for advanced skills will increase.

Skills such as basic computer skills and Internet skills will evolve to skills that will enable the use of emerging technologies, understand data driven decision making and ensure cybersecurity. The ability to access the ethical implications of technology will also become a key component of digital literacy, as it will enable individuals to navigate complex digital environment. The future of digital literacy will likely see greater emphasis on policies that prioritize affordable Internet connectivity, widespread digital infrastructure and tailored digital skills training for underserved populations. Initiatives focusing on inclusivity, such as developing assistive technologies for individuals with disabilities and ensuring that rural and remote areas have reliable internet access, will play a crucial role (Okeke et al., 2024). Partnerships between the public and private sectors will be essential to fund and implement scalable solutions, ensuring that no one is left behind in the digital transformation. Also commitment to lifelong learning and adaptability will shape the future of digital literacy. This is because educational systems will need to focus on upskilling and innovation

Conclusion

The role of libraries in promoting digital literacy is not just providing access to technology and information. It involves serving as centres of learning, creativity and community engagement, giving individuals of all categories the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge required to thrive in the digital age. This includes bridging the digital divide and encouraging lifelong learning, promoting digital citizenship and innovation. Thus, libraries play significant roles in empowering individuals and communities to navigate the difficulties of the digital world with confidence and competence. Libraries, therefore, remain formidable in the commitment to promoting digital literacy and ensuring that everyone can harness the transformative power of technology for enhanced society.

Recommendation

This paper recommends that well-meaning organisations, institutions agencies and individuals should make intentional efforts to support the library in its role of digital literacy and inclusion.

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TEACHER EDUCATION AND ITS CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA**By****Eucharia Sotonye Somieari-Pepple****Abstract**

This paper is an overview of teacher education and its challenges in Nigeria. This paper explored various dimensions of teacher education in Nigeria, including its historical evolution, the policies and frameworks governing it, and the significant challenges it faces. It also highlighted the necessity of teacher education for national development, emphasizing how well-trained teachers contribute to societal growth by fostering a skilled, knowledgeable workforce. Despite its importance, teacher education in Nigeria is plagued by many challenges, such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, insufficient professional development opportunities, inconsistent policies, and the low status of the teaching profession. These challenges hinder the ability of teacher education programmes to produce competent and motivated educators who can meet the demands of modern classrooms. The paper concluded that teacher education in Nigeria plays a prominent role in shaping the quality of the nation's education system, directly influencing the development of the country. Amongst others, the paper suggested that educational policymakers should prioritize increased funding for teacher education institutions to enhance their infrastructure, resources and programmes. Allocating adequate financial resources will enable these institutions to upgrade facilities, provide modern teaching materials, and invest in technology that can facilitate better learning environments for teacher trainees.

Keywords: Teacher education, professional development, education policy, national development, teacher training

Introduction

Teacher education is a cornerstone of any nation's educational development and societal progress. The critical role that teachers play in shaping future generations cannot be overstated, as they are directly responsible for imparting knowledge, skills and values to learners who will, in turn, contribute to the social, economic and political fabric of society. The quality of education provided in any country, to a large extent, reflects the quality of its teacher education programmes. Therefore, ensuring that teachers are well-prepared, competent and equipped with the necessary tools to succeed in the classroom is paramount to national development (Okeke & Ugwu, 2020). In Nigeria, teacher education has evolved over the decades, responding to changes in societal needs, technological advancements and global educational trends. However, it remains fraught with challenges that impede its effectiveness and impact on the broader educational sector.

The necessity of teacher education in any society cannot be overlooked because the quality of education is directly proportional to the quality of teachers. According to Afe (2006), the production of quality teachers is the most significant factor in achieving quality education. Therefore, teacher education must be comprehensive and continually responsive to the demands of the evolving educational environment. In Nigeria, teacher education is not only an essential element of the educational system but also a vital part of the country's development strategy. Over the years, Nigeria has developed various policies and initiatives aimed at strengthening teacher education, recognizing that teachers are central to achieving national educational goals (Federal Ministry of Education, 2014).

Teacher education in Nigeria is designed to provide prospective educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to manage the classroom effectively, create an enabling learning environment, and foster students' academic, social and moral development. The process of teacher education is comprehensive, encompassing pre-service training for those entering the profession and in-service training for current teachers. Pre-service teacher education programmes typically take place in colleges of education, faculties of education in universities, and the National Teachers' Institute (Nwankwoala, 2021). These institutions focus on both the theoretical aspects of teaching and the practical application of these theories in classroom settings. In-service training, on the contrary, is aimed at improving the skills and knowledge of teachers already in the workforce to help them keep pace with new developments in pedagogy, curriculum and technology (Osuji, 2012).

The significance of teacher education extends beyond the mere preparation of individuals to teach in schools. It plays a pivotal role in shaping the entire educational system and, by extension, the future of the nation. Teachers, as key agents of change, influence the intellectual and ethical development of their students, who are the future leaders and workforce of the country. Therefore, a well-structured and effective teacher education system is fundamental to ensuring that teachers are equipped to meet the diverse needs of students and contribute meaningfully to the development of society (Fafunwa, 1991). Teacher education must be dynamic, adapting to new educational methodologies, technologies and societal expectations, while still grounded in sound educational theory and practice.

One of the key reasons for the emphasis on teacher education in Nigeria is the pressing need for qualified and competent teachers to address the growing demand for education at all levels. The expansion of the Nigerian educational system, especially with the introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, has led to a significant increase in student enrolment in primary and secondary schools (Federal Ministry of Education, 2014). This rapid expansion has, in turn, created a substantial demand for more teachers, particularly those who are well-trained and capable of

delivering quality education. However, despite efforts to improve teacher education in the country, there are still many challenges that need to be addressed.

Despite these efforts, the Nigerian teacher education system faces significant challenges that affect the quality of the education provided. One of the most pressing challenges is the issue of funding. Teacher education institutions, like many other sectors of the Nigerian educational system, suffer from inadequate funding, which limits their ability to provide high-quality training programmes (Osuji, 2012). Many teacher training colleges and faculties of education lack the necessary infrastructure, such as well-equipped classrooms, libraries and laboratories, which are essential for effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, the salaries and working conditions of teachers in Nigeria are generally poor, with a negative impact on the motivation and retention of teachers in the profession (Nwankwoala, 2021).

Another major challenge facing teacher education in Nigeria is the inconsistent implementation of policies. While the government has introduced several policies aimed at improving teacher education, such as the National Teacher Education Policy and the establishment of the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), these policies are often not fully implemented or are inconsistently applied across the country (Adelabu, 2005). The lack of continuity in government policies and frequent changes in leadership within the education sector also contribute to the ineffective implementation of teacher education reforms. This inconsistency creates gaps in the training and professional development of teachers, affecting the quality of education in Nigerian schools.

In addition to these structural and policy challenges, there is the issue of the quality of teacher education programmes. Many teacher education programmes in Nigeria are criticized for being overly theoretical and lacking in practical application (Okeke & Ugwu, 2020). Teacher trainees often receive limited opportunities for hands-on teaching experience, which is crucial for developing the skills necessary to manage classrooms and engage students effectively. Moreover, the curriculum in many teacher training institutions is outdated and does not reflect the latest developments in educational research and pedagogy. This results in teachers who are ill-prepared to meet the demands of modern classrooms, particularly in areas such as technology integration and differentiated instruction.

The quality of teacher education is also affected by the calibre of educators who train prospective teachers. Many lecturers in teacher education institutions are themselves products of an inadequate educational system and may lack the necessary pedagogical skills and professional knowledge to train the next generation of teachers effectively (Osuji, 2012). There is a need for continuous professional development and capacity building for teacher educators to ensure that they are equipped to deliver high-quality training to their students. Additionally, the recruitment process for teacher

educators needs to be improved to ensure that only qualified and competent individuals are appointed to teach in teacher education programmes.

However, despite these challenges, there have been some positive developments in the Nigerian teacher education sector. The establishment of the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) has been a significant step towards professionalizing the teaching profession and ensuring that only qualified teachers are allowed to practise. The TRCN is responsible for setting standards for teacher education and licensing teachers, thereby helping to improve the quality of teaching in Nigerian schools (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). Additionally, there have been efforts to improve the curriculum in teacher education programmes and incorporate modern pedagogical techniques, such as inquiry-based learning and technology integration. However, these efforts are still in their infancy and require sustained investment and commitment from the government and other stakeholders.

Teacher education in Nigeria is a critical component of the nation's educational system and plays a central role in shaping the country's future development. While there have been significant efforts to improve teacher education, the system still faces many challenges, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, inconsistent policies and outdated curricula. Addressing these challenges requires concerted effort from the government, educational institutions and other stakeholders to ensure that teacher education in Nigeria is of high quality and capable of producing competent and effective teachers. The future of Nigeria's educational system and, by extension, its national development, depends on the quality of the teachers who are trained today.

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored to Human Capital Theory developed by Gary Becker in 1964, as cited in Hanushek and Woessmann (2015).

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory, developed by Gary Becker in 1964, offers a profound perspective on the relationship between education, individual productivity and economic growth. Becker's seminal work "Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education." established the foundation for understanding education not merely as a public service or a social benefit but also as a critical economic investment. According to Becker, just as businesses invest in physical capital, such as machinery and buildings, to increase production and efficiency, individuals can invest in their own education and skills to enhance their productivity and earning potential. This conceptual shift emphasizes that education and training are essential components of human capital, which significantly contribute to overall economic development.

Human Capital Theory is of the notion that individuals possess skills and knowledge that can be enhanced through education, training and experience. This improvement in human capital leads to higher productivity and income. Educated individuals are not only more productive workers but also contribute to innovation and technological advancement, which are pivotal to economic growth. The theory quantitatively frames education as an investment decision, where individuals weigh the costs of obtaining education against the anticipated benefits, typically represented in higher wages over their lifetime. This perspective provides a robust rationale for public investment in education, as a more educated workforce can drive economic performance, reduce poverty and enhance social well-being.

Hanushek and Woessmann build upon Becker's foundational ideas by exploring the role of educational quality in contributing to economic growth. They argue that it is not merely the quantity of education that matters but also the effectiveness and quality of educational systems. Their research stresses that investments in human capital should prioritize enhancing the skills and competencies of individuals to meet the evolving demands of the labour market. This view addresses critiques of Human Capital Theory, which have highlighted disparities in educational access and outcomes, particularly in developing nations.

The application of Human Capital Theory to the study of teacher education in Nigeria is particularly pertinent. As the nation strives for educational reforms to improve the quality of its workforce, understanding the implications of this theory can provide critical insights. In Nigeria, where the education sector faces numerous challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient training for teachers and a lack of resources, Human Capital Theory offers a framework for policymakers to advocate targeted investments in teacher education programmes. By viewing teacher education as a vital investment in human capital, the government and educational institutions can emphasize the need for continuous professional development, improved training methodologies and access to modern teaching resources.

Moreover, the application of this theory highlights the necessity of aligning educational outcomes with labour market demands. In Nigeria, where unemployment rates remain high, ensuring that teachers are equipped with the skills to prepare students for the job market is crucial. This includes integrating technical and vocational education into teacher training programmes, thereby creating a workforce that meets the needs of various industries. By prioritizing the development of human capital within the educational system, Nigeria can foster a cycle of growth where improved educational outcomes lead to higher productivity and economic advancement.

Conceptual Clarifications

Teacher Education

Teacher education refers to the formal training and development programmes designed to equip prospective teachers with the necessary knowledge, pedagogical skills and professional competencies required to perform their duties effectively. In Nigeria, teacher education is delivered through institutions such as colleges of education, faculties of education in universities, and the National Teachers' Institute. The goal is to prepare teachers for both basic and higher education levels.

Teacher education has evolved significantly, transitioning from informal apprenticeship models to structured university-based programmes that integrate theory and practice. In the early stages of formal education systems, teaching was often viewed as a natural extension of one's knowledge and experience, leading to minimal training requirements (Darling-Hammond, 2006). However, as educational theories and pedagogical approaches developed, it became clear that effective teaching requires a deeper understanding of child development, learning theories and subject matter expertise. The establishment of teacher training colleges and universities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries marked a crucial shift towards formalized teacher education, with a focus on both academic rigour and practical teaching skills (Sahlberg, 2011).

One critical aspect of teacher education is the integration of theory and practice, which allows prospective teachers to apply pedagogical concepts in real classroom settings. Teacher education programmes often include a blend of coursework and supervised teaching experiences, commonly referred to as practicum or field experience. During these periods, student teachers engage with learners, develop lesson plans and reflect on their teaching practices under the guidance of experienced mentors (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). This hands-on experience is vital, as it helps future educators develop their instructional styles, adapt to diverse student needs and refine their classroom management techniques.

Moreover, teacher education is essential for producing educators who are responsive to the diverse needs of learners. In today's multicultural classrooms, teachers must be equipped to address the varying backgrounds, learning styles and abilities of their students (Gordon, 2018). Effective teacher education programmes incorporate training on cultural competence, differentiated instruction and inclusive education practices, preparing teachers to create equitable learning environments. This is particularly important in regions with significant diversity, where teachers must navigate the complexities of language barriers, cultural differences and socio-economic disparities.

In addition to preparing teachers for immediate classroom challenges, ongoing professional development is a crucial component of teacher education. As educational theories and technologies continue to evolve, teachers must engage in lifelong learning

to remain effective in their practice. Professional development opportunities can take many forms, including workshops, conferences and collaborative learning communities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). By fostering a culture of continuous improvement, schools can ensure that educators are equipped with the latest strategies and resources to enhance student learning.

Furthermore, teacher education plays a critical role in shaping educational policy and reform. Well-prepared educators are essential for implementing curricular changes and pedagogical innovations aimed at improving educational outcomes. As researchers and practitioners advocate evidence-based practices, teacher education programmes must align with current educational standards and policies to produce competent graduates who can effectively contribute to school improvement initiatives (Wenglinsky, 2000). This alignment is vital for creating a cohesive educational system that meets the needs of students and society at large.

Teacher education serves as the foundation for developing skilled and effective educators who can positively impact student learning and educational outcomes. Through a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical experience, teacher education programmes prepare individuals to navigate the complexities of modern classrooms while addressing the diverse needs of learners. As the landscape of education continues to evolve, the importance of robust teacher education cannot be ignored. Investing in high-quality teacher education is essential for fostering a competent and responsive teaching workforce that can adapt to the challenges of an increasingly diverse and dynamic educational environment.

Need for Teacher Education

Teacher education is paramount in fostering an effective educational system capable of addressing the diverse challenges faced by learners in today's rapidly changing world. As society evolves, the role of teachers extends beyond mere information dissemination; they are now facilitators of critical thinking, creativity and emotional intelligence among students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This shift demands a well-prepared teaching workforce that can adapt to the dynamic nature of the classroom environment, which is increasingly characterized by technological advancements, diverse student populations and varying learning needs. Consequently, a robust teacher education system becomes essential for equipping educators with the requisite skills and knowledge to enhance student learning outcomes and overall educational quality.

One primary reason for the need for teacher education is the complex nature of teaching. Educators are tasked with the responsibility of not only imparting knowledge but also creating a supportive and engaging learning environment that nurtures student motivation and participation (Gordon, 2018). Effective teacher education programmes provide aspiring educators with a comprehensive understanding of pedagogical theories

and practices, classroom management strategies and assessment techniques that are crucial for successful teaching. Through structured training, future teachers learn to employ various instructional methods, adapt to individual learning styles and utilize technology to enhance educational delivery, which is essential in meeting the diverse needs of today's learners (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Furthermore, teacher education plays a vital role in promoting educational equity and inclusivity. As classrooms become more heterogeneous, characterized by students from diverse backgrounds and abilities, it is crucial for educators to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to address these disparities effectively. Teacher education programmes that emphasize culturally responsive teaching and differentiated instruction prepare educators to create inclusive learning environments where all students feel valued and supported (Ladson-Billings, 2014). This is particularly important in societies where socio-economic disparities exist, as well-prepared teachers can implement strategies that help bridge achievement gaps and promote success for all students, regardless of their backgrounds.

Another critical aspect of the need for teacher education lies in its contribution to the overall professionalization of the teaching profession. By establishing clear standards for teacher preparation, ongoing professional development and accountability, teacher education enhances the status of educators within society (Ingersoll, 2003). When teachers are well-trained and recognized for their expertise, a culture of respect for the profession is fostered and individuals with strong academic backgrounds are encouraged to pursue teaching as a viable career option. This professionalization is essential for attracting and retaining high-quality educators, which ultimately translates to improved student performance and educational outcomes.

Moreover, the evolving landscape of educational technology further underscores the necessity of comprehensive teacher education. In an age where digital literacy and technology integration are integral to the learning process, teachers must be able to utilize various technological tools and resources to enhance instruction (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010). Teacher education programmes that incorporate technology training equip educators with the skills to effectively integrate digital resources into their teaching, preparing students for the demands of a technology-driven society. Additionally, by promoting technological competence, teacher education supports the development of innovative teaching practices that can enhance student engagement and achievement.

Additionally, the need for teacher education is also reflected in the ongoing requirement for educational reform and improvement. Policymakers and educational leaders recognize that a well-prepared teaching workforce is critical for implementing curricular changes and pedagogical innovations aimed at enhancing student outcomes

(Wenglinsky, 2000). Teacher education programmes that align with current educational standards and policies ensure that teachers are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills to effectively implement reforms. This alignment is vital for creating a cohesive educational system that meets the evolving demands of students and society, ultimately fostering a culture of continuous improvement within the education sector.

Importance of Teacher Education for National Development

Teacher education is highly important in nation development in many areas.

1. Quality of Education

Teacher education is a fundamental pillar for enhancing the quality of education within a nation. Well-trained teachers possess the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver effective instruction and facilitate meaningful learning experiences for students. They are equipped with various teaching methodologies, assessment strategies and classroom management techniques that contribute to improved educational outcomes. A strong emphasis on teacher preparation helps ensure that educators can meet diverse student needs and adapt to varying learning environments. Improvement in the quality of education leads to better academic performance among students, which engenders a more informed and capable citizenry. High-quality education is essential for addressing national challenges, such as poverty, unemployment and social inequality. Furthermore, a well-educated population can contribute to the economic growth of a nation by promoting innovation, creativity and critical thinking, all of which are cultivated through quality education. By investing in teacher education, nations can ensure that their educational systems produce graduates who are not only academically proficient but also socially responsible and engaged, ultimately contributing to national development (Akpan, 2017).

2. Social Cohesion and National Identity

Teacher education plays a crucial role in promoting social cohesion and fostering a sense of national identity among citizens. Educators are responsible for instilling values, norms and cultural heritage in students, shaping their understanding of citizenship and community. Through a well-structured teacher education programme, teachers are trained to teach not only academic content but also social values, ethics and civic responsibility. This dual focus is vital for nurturing responsible citizens who are aware of their rights and duties within a society. As students learn about their cultural heritage, history and societal values through the guidance of well-prepared teachers, they develop a sense of belonging and pride in their nation. Inclusive teacher education that addresses the diverse backgrounds of students can also help mitigate social divides and promote understanding among various ethnic and cultural groups, leading to a cohesive society

(UNESCO, 2015). Ultimately, by cultivating social cohesion and national identity, teacher education contributes significantly to the stability and unity necessary for national development.

3. Economic Growth and Productivity

Teacher education is intricately linked to a nation's economic growth and productivity. A skilled and knowledgeable workforce is essential for driving economic development, and teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the capabilities of future generations. By equipping students with the skills needed for the modern workforce, teachers contribute to the development of a competitive economy. Furthermore, effective teacher education programmes not only prepare educators to teach core subjects, such as mathematics, science, and literacy but also emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving and adaptability—skills that are highly valued in today's job market. As the labour force becomes increasingly skilled, productivity rises, leading to enhanced economic output and growth.

Moreover, investing in teacher education can lead to lower unemployment rates, as a more educated workforce is better positioned to meet the demands of the labour market. Therefore, by prioritizing teacher education, nations can lay the foundation for sustained economic growth, ultimately contributing to improved living standards and overall national development (World Bank, 2018).

4. Innovation and Global Competitiveness

The importance of teacher education extends to fostering innovation and enhancing a nation's global competitiveness. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancements and globalization, it is crucial for educators to prepare students for a world that is constantly evolving. Teacher education programmes that emphasize creativity, critical thinking and collaboration equip teachers with the tools necessary to produce an innovative mindset among students. By encouraging students to think out of the box, engage in problem-solving, and pursue entrepreneurial endeavours, teachers can cultivate the next generation of innovators and leaders.

Furthermore, nations that prioritize teacher education are better positioned to compete on the global stage, as they produce graduates who are not only knowledgeable but also adaptable to changing circumstances. This adaptability is essential for addressing global challenges, such as climate change, public health crises and economic disparities. By investing in teacher education, countries can enhance their capacity for innovation and ensure their place in the global economy, ultimately contributing to sustained national development (Akpan, 2017).

Historical Evolution of Teacher Education in Nigeria

The evolution of teacher education in Nigeria can be traced back to the pre-colonial period, when education was predominantly informal and community-based, aimed at transmitting cultural values and skills essential for survival within various ethnic groups. In these early societies, elders and skilled individuals played pivotal roles in educating younger generations through apprenticeships and oral traditions, focusing on vocational skills and cultural heritage (Afolabi, 2016).

The introduction of formal education in Nigeria began in the 19th century, primarily influenced by British colonial policies, which aimed at establishing a Western-style educational system. The missionaries were at the forefront of this movement, setting up schools that emphasized literacy and religious teachings. As a result, the first teacher training institutions, such as CMS Grammar School in Lagos, were established, providing initial training for teachers to deliver education in these missionary schools.

With the establishment of these early training institutions, the need for a more organized approach to teacher education became evident. In 1908, the first formal teacher training programme was initiated, with the establishment of the first teacher training college in Nigeria, located in Lagos. This programme aimed at training individuals who would serve as teachers in primary schools, marking a significant milestone in the history of teacher education in Nigeria. The curriculum was predominantly focused on subjects such as reading, writing and arithmetic, combined with religious education. Over time, these colleges were expanded, and more institutions were established in different regions of Nigeria, contributing to the growth of teacher education (Babalola, 2015).

The post-independence era in the 1960s marked a turning point in the evolution of teacher education in Nigeria. The Nigerian government recognized the critical role of education in national development and began to implement policies aimed at improving the quality of teacher training. The establishment of the National Teachers' Institute (NTI) in 1978 further emphasized this commitment, with the goal of providing in-service training for existing teachers and enhancing their professional skills. The NTI played a crucial role in addressing the shortages of qualified teachers and improving the overall quality of education across the country (Awofala, 2013). The introduction of the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) as the minimum qualification for teaching in primary and secondary schools was another significant development during this period, underscoring the importance of standardized teacher education.

In the late 20th century, the introduction of new policies and reforms aimed at addressing the challenges facing teacher education became increasingly important. The National Policy on Education, produced in 1977 and revised several times, provided a comprehensive framework for the development of education in Nigeria, including teacher education. This policy emphasized the need for continuous professional development for teachers and the integration of modern teaching methods into teacher training

programmes. Additionally, the Federal Government launched numerous initiatives to enhance the quality of teacher education, including the establishment of universities of education and the introduction of the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) programme, meant to provide more advanced training for prospective teachers (Uche, 2020).

The challenges facing teacher education in Nigeria became more pronounced in the 21st century, as the country sought to improve educational outcomes amid the growing population and the increasing complexity of teaching in diverse classrooms. The introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in 2004 was a significant step in addressing these challenges, as it targeted providing free, compulsory and universal education for all Nigerian children, thereby increasing the demand for qualified teachers. To meet this demand, teacher education programmes were expanded, and the curriculum was revised to include contemporary pedagogical approaches and subjects relevant to the current educational landscape (Okebukola, 2016).

Despite these advancements, the evolution of teacher education in Nigeria has faced several many challenges, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure and a lack of qualified educators to train prospective teachers. These challenges have implications for the quality of teacher education and the overall effectiveness of the educational system in Nigeria. Furthermore, there has been a growing recognition of the need to incorporate technology into teacher education programmes, in order to prepare educators to navigate the digital age and engage students effectively (Ogunyemi, 2019).

The historical evolution of teacher education in Nigeria reflects the dynamic nature of the educational landscape in response to social, political and economic changes. From informal community-based education to the establishment of formal teacher training programmes, Nigeria has made significant strides in enhancing teacher education. However, many challenges continue to pose threats to the quality and effectiveness of teacher education, necessitating continued efforts to improve and adapt the system to meet the needs of a changing society.

Teacher Education Policy and Framework in Nigeria

Teacher education policy and framework in Nigeria is fundamental to the overall quality of education in the country. It sets the direction for the training, development and professionalization of teachers, so as to align teacher competencies with national educational goals. The National Policy on Education (NPE) serves as the central guide for educational development in Nigeria, including teacher education. It outlines key objectives for teacher education, such as ensuring a continuous supply of highly qualified and competent teachers for all levels of the educational system (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). The policy emphasizes that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers; this underscores the importance of a solid teacher education framework to foster national development.

The framework for teacher education in Nigeria is built on several core elements, including the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE), the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), and in-service training programmes designed to enhance the professional development of teachers. The NCE is regarded as the minimum qualification for teaching in primary and junior secondary schools, while B.Ed. is required for senior secondary school teachers and those aspiring to work in higher education. These qualifications reflect the national commitment to raising the standards of teaching and ensuring that teachers are well-prepared to meet the diverse needs of learners across various educational settings (Urevbu, 2014). Teacher education programmes are delivered through colleges of education, faculties of education in universities, and specialized institutions, such as the National Teachers' Institute (NTI), which focuses on distance learning for professional development of teachers.

The NTI, established in 1978, plays a significant role in enhancing teacher quality by offering in-service training programmes to update teachers' knowledge and skills. It provides a flexible learning platform for teachers, enabling them to upgrade their qualifications while still working in the classroom. Additionally, the institution offers professional diplomas in education and postgraduate diplomas in education, particularly for individuals who may not have a formal background in education but wish to transition into the teaching profession (Ogbonnaya, 2015). This aspect of the framework is essential for addressing the shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in rural and underserved areas of the country.

The establishment of the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) in 1993 further strengthened the framework by promoting professionalism in teaching. The TRCN is responsible for the registration, licensing and regulation of teachers in Nigeria, ensuring that only qualified individuals are allowed to practise (TRCN, 2017). This initiative was aimed at eliminating unqualified teachers from the system and raising the status of the teaching profession in Nigeria.

Moreover, teacher education policy in Nigeria places a strong emphasis on continuous professional development (CPD). Teachers are expected to engage in lifelong learning to keep pace with evolving educational trends, technological advancements and changes in curriculums. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme introduced in 1999 also underscores this by mandating continuous professional development as part of efforts to improve the quality of teaching in basic education. Continuous professional development activities include workshops, seminars and short-term courses aimed at helping teachers acquire new teaching strategies and methodologies to better serve the needs of their students (Alade, 2017). These initiatives reflect a policy commitment to ensuring that teachers remain relevant and effective throughout their careers.

In addition to formal qualifications and professional development, the teacher education framework in Nigeria also incorporates quality assurance mechanisms. Accreditation processes for colleges of education and faculties of education ensure that

these institutions maintain high standards in teacher preparation programmes. The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) is tasked with regulating and overseeing the curriculum for teacher education at the NCE level, while the National Universities Commission (NUC) performs a similar role for teacher education programmes at the university level. These bodies set benchmarks for the content, delivery, and evaluation of teacher education programmes, ensuring that they align with both national and global best practices (Ogunyinka, 2016).

Challenges Facing Teacher Education in Nigeria

Despite the well-established policy framework, teacher education in Nigeria faces many challenges.

1. Inadequate Funding

Inadequate funding remains one of the most pressing challenges confronting teacher education in Nigeria. Teacher training institutions, such as colleges of education and faculties of education in universities, often suffer from limited financial resources, which adversely affect their operations and the quality of education they provide. The infrastructure in many of these institutions is outdated, with insufficient modern facilities, such as libraries, laboratories, and ICT resources, which are needed to offer quality training (Okebukola, 2015). This funding shortfall results in overcrowded classrooms, a lack of necessary teaching materials, and insufficient practical teaching opportunities for trainees. Additionally, many teacher educators are underpaid, leading to low motivation that affects the overall standard of instruction. Without substantial financial investment in teacher education, the ability to produce highly qualified and competent teachers will continue to be hindered, which will impact the quality of education in Nigeria as a whole.

2. Poor Quality of Teacher Trainees

Another significant challenge facing teacher education in Nigeria is the poor quality of teacher trainees. Due to the low status of the teaching profession in the country, teaching is often viewed as a choice of last resort for those unable to gain admission into other more prestigious programmes. This results in a situation where individuals with low academic qualifications or limited passion for teaching enrol in teacher education programmes. This lack of motivation and commitment among teacher trainees negatively impacts their training experience, and many graduate without acquiring the necessary skills or knowledge to be effective educators (Adu & Olalekan, 2020). Consequently, they enter the classroom unprepared to handle the demands of teaching, further exacerbating the cycle of poor educational outcomes in Nigerian schools. Addressing this issue will require efforts to improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession and implement stricter entry requirements for teacher education programmes.

3. Inadequate Professional Development and Training

The lack of continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities for teachers is another major challenge. While the National Policy on Education emphasizes the importance of CPD to ensure teachers keep pace with advancements in educational practices, many teachers do not have access to regular training or professional development programmes (Alade, 2017). Teachers are expected to improve their teaching skills and stay updated on new teaching methodologies, but they often lack the resources or opportunities to do so. As a result, many teachers in Nigeria rely on outdated methods that do not meet the diverse needs of their students. The absence of in-service training programmes further exacerbates this issue, as teachers may remain stagnant in their practices for years, without any external support to improve their pedagogical approach. To overcome this challenge, it is critical that the government and stakeholders in the education sector invest in CPD initiatives that can provide teachers with the tools and strategies they need to adapt to changing educational environments.

4. Inconsistent Teacher Education Policies

The inconsistencies in teacher education policies also present a challenge for teacher education in Nigeria. Over the years, teacher education has been affected by various changes in government policies, which often result in discontinuity in training programmes and a lack of coherence in educational goals. These policy inconsistencies create confusion and affect the quality of teacher training, as institutions are often left without clear guidelines on what should be prioritized in their curriculum (Ogbonnaya, 2015). Furthermore, there are discrepancies between the National Policy on Education and its implementation at the state and local government levels, leading to disparities in teacher quality across different regions of the country. For instance, while the National Policy on Education mandates that the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) should be the minimum qualification for teaching, many states still employ teachers with lower qualifications, especially in rural areas. To address this, there is a need for stronger policy implementation mechanisms and alignment between federal, state and local governments in promoting quality teacher education across the country.

5. Low Status of the Teaching Profession

The low status of the teaching profession is a significant factor affecting teacher education in Nigeria. Teaching is not seen as an attractive career choice compared to other professions, largely due to the relatively low remuneration, poor working conditions and limited opportunities for career advancement (Bolarinwa, 2018). This perception discourages many bright and talented individuals from pursuing a career in teaching. As a result, teacher education programmes tend to attract candidates who are less motivated or academically qualified, leading to a decline in the overall quality of teaching in the country. Moreover, the lack of recognition and respect for teachers within society

further diminishes the appeal of the profession. To elevate the status of teaching, there is a need for comprehensive reforms that address salary structures, improve working conditions and provide clear pathways for professional growth. Additionally, societal attitudes towards teaching must shift, with greater appreciation and recognition given to the role teacher's play in nation-building.

Conclusion

Teacher education in Nigeria plays a significant role in shaping the quality of the nation's education system, directly influencing the development of the country. There is the need for a well-structured and adequately funded teacher education system, as it ensures that teachers are equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and values to foster learning in their students. The challenges facing teacher education in Nigeria, including inadequate funding, poor quality of teacher trainees, inconsistent policies, insufficient professional development opportunities and the low status of the profession, hinder the ability of the system to produce competent and motivated educators. Addressing these challenges is essential for improving teacher education outcomes, which will enhance the quality of the education provided to students.

Suggestions

Based on the literature reviewed the following suggestions are important:

1. Educational Policymakers should prioritize increased funding for teacher education institutions to enhance their infrastructure, resources and programmes. Allocating adequate financial resources will enable these institutions to upgrade facilities, provide modern teaching materials and invest in technology that can facilitate better learning environments for teacher trainees.
2. School heads should establish and enforce stringent recruitment criteria for teacher education programmes. This step includes setting higher academic standards for prospective students and implementing comprehensive assessments to ensure that only qualified candidates enter the teaching profession.
3. Ministries of education should create and promote regular CPD programmes for in-service teachers to keep them updated with the latest teaching methodologies and educational trends. This can include workshops, seminars and online training courses tailored to various subjects and teaching strategies.
4. Government agencies should work towards creating a cohesive educational framework that addresses the inconsistencies and gaps in current teacher education policies. This should involve synergising federal, state, and local government policies to ensure a unified approach to teacher training and professional standards.
5. School heads should actively seek partnerships with community organizations, businesses, and international educational agencies to support teacher education

initiatives. Collaborating with local entities can provide additional resources, expertise and training opportunities, enriching the teacher education landscape in Nigeria.

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AN EVALUATION OF GENDER INEQUALITY IN MUSIC CONDUCTING IN NIGERIA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

By

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Introduction

Music conducting is an art of leading or directing an ensemble of musical performance, either instrumental or vocal, or both by the use of gestures. This process involves teaching, directing, communicating by pantomimes and making decisions that have interpretative consequences so as to get the desired responses from the members of the ensemble. A conductor is the person who directs a musical group in the interpretation and performance of musical works. The conductor performs his/her functions, preparing the musicians during practices and rehearsals and conducting them during performances, considers every feature or aspect of the music to be performed and how to make it as interesting and magnificent as possible, working with the ensemble to make the music come alive. In addition, the conductor is saddled with the responsibilities of conveying to the audience the thoughts of the composer(s) in the created works, through personal study, musical knowledge and effective management of the members of the ensemble, with the consciousness of their musical and artistic standards and integrity.

Just as there are sole authorities or directors in other sectors, establishments or groups, a music conductor is the sole authority who takes the responsibility of organising, training, practising and rehearsing a musical ensemble until it becomes a unit whose ultimate goal is to manifest music to the best of its ability. Traditionally, music conductors communicate with their musicians basically through the use of hand gestures; this may be done with the support of a baton and the use of other signals, such as facial expressions, and a nod with the head.

Generally speaking, the practice of music directing/conducting has been male-dominated almost everywhere in the world. The issue of male dominance is very prominent in directing/conducting music in Nigeria. It has been observed over time that, in most music gatherings in Nigeria, where different groups (instrumental or choral) perform, the conductors are mostly men. Also at forums for music directors and choirmasters/conductors, women are hardly found as members. The handful of women found seem, most times, to remain quiet, unrecognised or relegated to the background.

It is really not fascinating to see mostly men direct/conduct music ensembles whereas there are very many women that may possess the adroitness to be good music conductors. It is as if the women were not allowed to participate or not interested in it, or did not possess the skills for the art, and were only involved in solo/chorus singing and operatic performances, or handling other responsibilities and offices, such as secretary, treasurer, curator and welfare officer of the music ensembles.

Obasi, cited in Ugochukwu (2018), states that:

Gender imbalance exists in almost all spheres of human endeavour everywhere. Nearly in every society, females face disadvantages relative to males in political, social, economic and educational spheres of life. There is then the danger that some aspects of knowledge may erode time-held values and even encourage marginalisation or outright oppression (p. 83).

The underrepresentation of females in music conducting is viewed by many scholars differently. In the words of Ugwuode (2013), the issue of gender marginalisation has become a strong social construct, especially in Africa. In the society, it is believed that gender disparity exists biologically and should be seen and held that way. But women also have the same mental ability as men such that they play major roles as managers, organisers, caretakers and planners. Despite all these roles women play, could it be that the Nigerian society and the male gender still deny them recognition and acceptance, coupled with the inequity they face due to some cultural standards, customary practices and tyrannical communal structures?

The main thrust of this study is the long-time observation of male dominance in the field of music conducting in Nigeria. What could be the cause of this male domination? Are there no women who are competent enough to participate fully in the field of music conducting or is the art meant for the male gender alone? There are female music conductors in Nigeria but they seem to be unrecognised or underrepresented in the field and have little encouragement from the Church and society. Women are hardly seen leading and conducting music ensembles in Nigeria. Carli and Eagly in Bryan (2016) say "leadership has traditionally been viewed as a male endeavour, and women attempting to traverse this minefield must do so cautiously" (p. 15). Ridgeway (2001) maintains that gender standards are linked "with social perception that assume greater overall ability with men than women thus evolving a system of imbalance" (p. 67).

From the foregoing, it is seen that in almost all aspects of life, including music, women seem to be less dominant or prominent. There are many women who are skillfull and competent in the art of music conducting and should be encouraged and given opportunities by their male counterparts, the Church and society to participate fully in the art. Macleod (2001) asserts that "the forward movement of women as non-amateur

music conductors must be understood through the history of women in other executive spheres" (p. 18). Women do not really participate fully in music directing/conducting in Nigeria. This necessitates the following questions: Where is the place of women in the art of music directing/conducting in Nigeria? Do gender issues affect female music conductors in Nigeria? Are the women interested in the art or not? Are they recognised and encouraged to fully participate in the art? Can Nigerian women do the job of leading and conducting music? Are there qualifications?

In the Western world, although there still exists the marginal acceptance of women as music conductors, women pacesetters in music conducting, such as Gena Branscombe, Ethel Leginska, Antonia Brico, Margaret Hills and Betsy Burleigh, are still well known. However, female music conductors in Nigeria are unsung.

The interest of the current author began as a child/young teenage girl in choral directing and conducting though without any formal training then, with her late father as her first choirmaster, music instructor and mentor. As she grew in the field, she realised that there were not many women in the field. She decided to pursue it as a career with the encouragement and belief that if she worked hard she would achieve her goals and become a female music conductor to be reckoned with within and outside Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications

Music Conducting

Music conducting has over the years been a very important aspect of music directing, both choral and instrumental. Nwankpa (2003) defines music conducting as "the art or process of leading an ensemble, choral and/or instrumental, through the use of gestures to convey sonic symbols and interpretations in a rehearsal or performance" (p. 26). Music conducting is the art of leading or directing a musical performance with the use of gestures. According to Nnamani (2009), conducting is "the communication of an interpretation of a musical work to a group of musicians performing it, by means of gestures; the group may be an orchestra, band, chorus, or mixed vocal and instrumental ensemble" (p. 1). To conduct means to direct a musical performance with the gestures of the hands and facial expressions.

Kennedy and Bourne-Kennedy (2007) see conducting as "the art of controlling or directing a musical performance, such as an instrumental or choral concert" (p. 128). It is the art of directing a group of musical performers, either singers or instrumentalists, or both. Weigle (2004) notes that "conducting is the act of directing a musical performance either, choirs, concert bands, orchestras, and other musical ensembles by the use of visible gestures" (p. 45).

Conducting can be said to be the art of leading, controlling or directing an ensemble or a musical group of performers, such as a chorus or instrumentalists. It could

be seen as the act of leading, controlling, or directing a group of musical performance, such as a band, choir, orchestra, or opera with the use of gestures.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is an approach to growing, improving or enhancing the prowess of a person or people in a particular career by using resources in a way that permits them to carry on or continue to subsist for others. For the purposes of clarity on sustainable development as a concept, the terms sustain/sustainability, and development are first discussed separately.

To sustain means to make something continue for some time without becoming less important. Zhang, Wenjun and Yiming (2021) note that sustainability is “causing or allowing something to continue for a period of time” (p. 6). Mead (2001) sees sustainability as “the series of actions of living within the limits of available physical, natural and social resources in ways that allow the living systems in which humans are embedded to succeed in perpetuity” (p. 3). The United Nations Brundtland Commission (1987) views sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without causing damage to the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Sustainability is giving support or relief to something; it could be seen as nourishing, keeping up, or prolonging something's existence. Essentially, it is seen as keeping something alive for it to continue over a period of time or *the power to keep a process in existence over time*; allowing something to continue over a long period of time. Sustainable means something that is viable and continuous.

Development is the gradual growth or increase of something so that it becomes more advanced, stronger or promoted. It can be seen as a series of actions taken for growth, evolution from one period of progress or height to another. Amadi (2002) defines development as “the improvement or advancement of something” (p. 62). Development can be seen as the process of improving somebody or something to make progress or succeed; it is the progress that is made. Solaja (2014) says development is “*a process that creates positive change, progress or growth*” (p. 31).

From the above, development can be seen as the action of moving forward in position, growing or making progress in something. It can also be seen as the act of raising or promoting something or someone to a more advanced level. Sustainable development therefore means continuous career training and education after a person has entered a particular field of career in order to stay updated on ongoing trends, develop new skills and promote their career. In the context of this study, sustainable development is all about the future of female music conductors in Nigeria, their actions, concerns and growth towards the art of music conducting.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- investigate the effects of gender issues on female music conductors in Nigeria; and
- identify the encouragements that can be offered to female conductors in Nigeria for increased participation in the field of music conducting.

Research Questions

- How do gender issues affect female music conductors in Nigeria?
- How can female music conductors in Nigeria be encouraged for increased participation in field of music conducting?

Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by two theories: the Theory of Male Dominance, propounded by Stephen Goldberg in 1973, and the Expectation States Theory, propounded by Joseph Berger, an American social psychologist and sociologist in the early 1970s.

Theory of Male Dominance: This theory, according to Goldberg (1973), states that “social institutions that are characterised by male dominance may be explained by biological differences between men and women, which suggests that male dominance (patriarchy) could be inevitable” (p. 24). The theory implies that it is natural or biological for women to be dominated by men; the natural ego of men makes them to be domineering and rule over women in almost all spheres of life. However, this study seeks to find out if the natural egocentricity of men affects full participation of female music conductors in Nigeria in any way.

The Expectation States Theory: This theory explains why social hierarchies emerge in small, task-oriented groups. Berger’s (1970) concept of this theory is that both known information and implicit assumptions based on certain characteristics lead to a person developing an assessment of another person’s abilities, skills and values. When this combination is favourable, there will be a positive view of their ability to contribute to the task at hand. When the combination is poor, there will be a negative view of their ability to contribute. Within a group setting, this results in hierarchy forming in which some are seen as more competent, more valuable and more important than others. The higher or lower a person is on the hierarchy, the higher or lower his or her level of esteem and influence within the group will be.

Crossman (2019) describes the Expectation States Theory thus:

An approach to understanding how people evaluate other people’s competence in small task groups and the amount of credibility and influence they give them as a result. Central to the theory is the idea that we evaluate people based on two criteria. The first criterion is specific

skills and abilities that are relevant to the task at hand, such as prior experience or training. The second criterion is composed of status characteristics such as gender, age, race, education, and physical attractiveness that encourage people to believe that someone will be superior to others, even though those characteristics play no role in the work of the group (p. 23).

In the context of this study, the theory implies that women who are privileged to occupy leadership positions outside traditionally female spheres might face negative effects from their male counterparts and be seen as inferior or incapable of handling some tasks.

Gender is a complex issue. Akintunde (2003) avers that “women are believed to be auxiliary tools intellectually, it is argued that their investigative intellect is not strong enough to seek knowledge” (p. 23). Gender issue is general in every society; the natural ego of men make them most times see the women as inferior or incompetent to handle some tasks. Loko (2016) affirms that “women are generally regarded as inferior to men; they are believed to be different from their male counterparts physically and intellectually” (p. 1). However, if women show interest, responsibilities, adroitness or capabilities in handling some tasks; they can also dominate.

Methodology

This study used observation, structured face-to-face and telephone interviews to collect data from the respondents. Fifteen women and fifteen men in Nigeria were randomly selected for the study.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the reasons for gender inequality in music conducting and how women can be encouraged to participate in the art of conducting in Nigeria, through observation and interview data. The findings of the study are discussed following the outline of the research objectives and questions. For research question one, responses from the female participants are stated first, followed by those of the male respondents. For research question two, the responses of both gender are presented without separation.

Research Question 1: How do gender issues affect female music conductors in Nigeria?

The Female Participants’ Responses

According to one of the respondents, Wuraola Osagiede:

When inadequacies or less proficiencies become the order of the day, women are found not to be equal with their male counterparts in all aspects of life; although most of the men feel intimidated with women

who are capable of doing what they can do, and sometimes even better, the men most times subdue the women.

Another respondent, Jegbefumen Toghanro, responded in a similar manner:

Most people feel that males should always lead while females follow; the discrimination or relegation of women by the men in the area of music conducting in Nigeria is just too much. The female genders are most times seen as weak vessels and are not allowed to feature in the art like the male gender; this area of music is just too male dominated to the relegation of the women. I am the music director of my Church choir but only on few occasions have I been permitted to direct my choral group; my assistant who is a male does the directing while I sing. My Church authority has made it so because of my gender.

This is an unfortunate situation, that an assistant to the director “calls the shots” when there is a substantive director. Some things do not add up! Jegbefumen Toghanro’s situation is somewhat pathetic.

Another respondent, Elizabeth Anthony, spoke thus:

Music ensemble members seem to respond more positively to mostly the male conductors than the females. The natural egocentric nature of the male counterparts make them feel that the females should sing or handle other responsibilities of the choir while the men direct.

In a similar manner, another respondent, Esther Idahor, stated this:

The thing is, men most times generally feel women cannot do anything outside the kitchen. This has gone a long way to instil fear in some women, except for those very women who believe in the saying that “what a man can do, a woman can also do.” I personally feel very bad most times over the discriminatory attitude of men, the Church and the society over this gender issue in music conducting in Nigeria. It is very glaring that this area of music has been male dominated for ages; this should not be so. There are women who are very good in this area and should be allowed to participate fully in the art.

The women shared their experiences and observations on how gender issues affect their full participation in the field of music conducting. They expressed their anguish in their experiences and the inability to full participate in the art because of male chauvinism.

However, Emem Alade offered the following advice:

If I am to generalise, I would say that many women are not involved in music conducting. They really have not tried to break the barrier. I believe

that if we (women) show that we are capable and are found worthy, the opportunities would present themselves.

Similarly, Helen Dennis said:

Many women have not really shown their capabilities. I think if women are bold enough to show their potential, they would function like their male counterparts. Because music conducting has been dominated by males makes many women to shy away from it. I do not think the issue of gender (male or female) has any negative effect on women's participation in music conducting.

Inimfom Edet stated thus:

I do not think gender should be an issue in music conducting. Yes, music performance, whether choral or instrumental, has perpetually been dominated by men but there are women who are also in it. I think if females engage more on being vibrant and active in the art, then, the issue of gender inequality will not be a problem.

Each of the women discussed this question differently. Some women were not happy about other women's withdrawing attitude towards their career in music conducting. Most women believe that the art of music conducting is a male endeavour because of their experiences with their male counterparts regarding them as inferior or weak vessels; this has done more harm than good to women. It makes them to be less committed and enthusiastic about the art. Although it is very glaring that this area of music has been male-dominated for ages, gender issue should not be an excuse for women not to embrace the art as a career.

Male Participants' Responses

Nathaniel Ugochukwu explicitly stated thus:

The issue of gender inequality should not be a problem in music conducting in any way. Any woman who is interested in the art should indicate and show commitment to participate in the art. I am someone who enjoys seeing a female conductor teaching or conducting a musical group. I have met many women who possess the skills for the art but unfortunately they are not interested in it and therefore do not show any form of commitment. No man in his right thinking senses would deprive a woman from showcasing her skills in the art unless the man is proud and feels that music conducting task is meant for the male gender. On the other hand, I have seen a case where a male conductor was intimidated by the expertise of his female counterpart conductor and most times refused her from performing, and the woman gradually lost interest in the art. In this kind of case, I can boldly say that gender inequality played a role by

making the male conductor feel intimidated over the performance of his female counterpart.

Asibong Offiong averred thus:

From observation and experience from my female counterparts, many women prefer to sing in the choir, or handle other leadership positions to the neglect of the art of music conducting even with their skills. My wife is a typical example. She is very skilful in the art of music conducting but often makes the statement "It is very stressful. Let me sit and sing in the choir. I do not have the strength to do the work; it is actually demanding." This is not a good approach for anyone who is competent or skillful in the art of music conducting or any other art someone finds himself/herself in.

Christian Adekunle and Michael Ossai had similar views, as one of them stated thus: "Music conducting is not for men alone; women can do it. Any woman who can, should be serious with it."

Enitoun Iyalla asserted that:

Music conducting is a very difficult task and I think that is one major reason why it is dominated by the male gender and it looks like there is gender inequality in that area of music. I am not and will never be against women being involved in the art because of its demanding nature. I am usually excited whenever I see a woman doing it, especially if she does it well. Any woman who is skilful or interested in the art should be involved in it.

The men expressed their opinions differently and some in similar ways. Some of the men were not happy with the attitude of many women towards the art of music conducting, stating that most of the women did not really indicate interest and commitment.

Research Question 2: How can female music conductors in Nigeria be encouraged for increased participation in field of music conducting?

The respondents (male and female) expressed the following as ways in which female conductors in Nigeria can be encouraged for increased participation in the field of music conducting:

- The female conductors in Nigeria should be resilient, determined, and courageous towards criticisms; be passionate about their duties, rise up against social constructs, seeming marginalisation and bias, be morally upright and have cordial relationship with their male counterparts and all.

- Every female conductor is blessed intellectually by God as the men. Therefore, the females should never give up; they should rise up, face the challenges associated with the art and become champions.
- Women need to do more; excellence is expected. Leading is possible for the women if they have something meaningful to offer.
- Women should not seclude themselves from the art with the belief that it is a man's work.
- Female music conductors should show some sort of commitments and enthusiasm for the art and be fully involved in it. There is no literature that says music conducting, whether instrumental or choral, is for the male gender alone or that a music conductor is the "boy or man" that directs a music ensemble. Rather, literature defines a music conductor as the "person" who directs a musical group, meaning it could be a male or a female.
- No one encourages the men to be committed to the art; they see it as a responsibility and task which must be accomplished. In the same manner, the women should wake up from their slumber, have the same attitude like the men and be committed to the art. It is usually very fascinating when a woman mounts the podium to conduct; people always get excited to see what the woman can do because the art has been seen as a male endeavour for a very long time.
- Again, the male conductors, the Church and the society can also encourage the women by showcasing the very proficient and zealous ones, giving them the opportunities to lead, teach and conduct musical groups even when their male counterparts are readily available. This will encourage other women to strive for excellence.
- The field of conducting in music has been dominated by males for so long. So, anytime/where a female conductor is performing, it is usually very fascinating, especially when the women is proficient in the art. Women should therefore make themselves available to be showcased regularly in their local churches, music societies, and other music functions as the case may be.

The researcher shares in their words and their voices – be focused and committed to the art of music conducting; know what is ultimately important. As much as they show passion, commitment and responsibility, they should invest their time and be committed to the art. Women should see it as a very important endeavour and embrace it wholeheartedly, and the art will propel the to greatness.

Conclusion

This study investigated the reasons for gender inequality in music conducting and how women can be encouraged to participate in the art in Nigeria. It concludes that many female music conductors in Nigeria shy away from the art even with their potential. Attention has often been on the male conductors. This is not ideal because women are also created with special abilities; they possess great potential and should be given full opportunities and encouragements to function as their male counterparts. There is absolutely nothing wrong for a woman to be the leader, teacher and conductor of a music ensemble if she possesses the skills to lead, teach and conduct the group. Women need to rise, regardless of the challenges they face with their male counterparts, the Church and society, and showcase their skills for national recognition and acceptance.

The Holy Bible, in Matthew chapter 5:15-16 says:

No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see... (NLT).

Let women music conductors rise and show forth their skills before men so that their good works may be seen and appreciated. Although there are women who shy away from the art of music conducting, there are also many women who are very passionate about it and should not hide their skills because of male domination. Music directing/conducting is not for the male gender alone. There are females who can do it and some are very enthusiastic about the art, and they should be encouraged to participate in it.

Recommendations

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

- The natural egocentricity of men is inevitable. Therefore, the passionate and serious-minded female conductors should ignore male domination, and regularly make themselves available to lead, teach and conduct music groups even when their male counterparts are readily available. This will encourage other sleeping women in the field to strive more for excellence.
- Women should be given the opportunities to conduct in major programmes, like national and state music functions/festivals like Christmas carols, Easter and Independence Day.
- More awareness should be created for women in the art of conducting for career choice, national recognition and appreciation.

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41**ADVOCACY AGAINST COLOURISM IN NIGERIA****By****Eberechi Emmanuel-Okogbule**

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Introduction

Countries all over the world are faced with one challenge or the other. While some have few challenges, others are almost overwhelmed with more challenges. Developing nations face more challenges because they are going through different phases that will lead to a full-blown development; one of such countries is Nigeria. One unique country in Africa that is clothed with cultural diversity, different languages, different colours but one people is dealing with the problem of colourism. It is, therefore, important to take a microscopic look at this negative stereotype and proffer solutions that will change the narrative. Advocacy against colourism is a call for eradication of colour inferiority complex that has been continuously passed from one generation to the other within Nigeria and beyond.

There is no doubt that society is segregated, and Nigeria is no exception. People are separated by social class and status. From affluence to tribe, religion, values and personal dispositions, it is evident that people will most likely tilt towards identity. However, colourism is a concept that affects everyone that exists within the social system.

Colorism is simply the discrimination against certain people of colour. It is a permeating issue that conserve low self-esteem, discrimination and social inequality. It is, therefore, important to address the root cause of colourism and advance advocacy narratives that will promote a more inclusive society. According to Ugoeze (2021), colourism is a social phenomenon in which individuals with lighter skin tones are often privileged and valued more than those with darker skin tones." This means that one needs to be of a particular colour to enjoy certain privileges. Different studies have shown that those with light skin are often valued or privileged more than those with darker skin tones. Colourism is so subtle that some people are deeply rooted in this discrimination without even knowing it. Imagine a scenario in Nigeria where one calls someone "Blacky" or "Charcoal" and the person gets offended but when one calls same person "Yellow Pawpaw" or "Oyibo" he or she gives one a smile. Colourism is a discriminatory practice

that perceives darker complexion as inferior and lighter skin as superior. This ideology permeates society, perpetuating the notion that dark skin is unattractive and unsuitable.

In some cases, policy makers or people that should assumedly know and do better in terms of advocacy against it are actually the ones pushing this negative narrative. Emodi (2024) affirms that there is the problem of colourism in Nigeria but many people do not realise it. It is in subtle social media challenge, in lyrics of songs, and in how models are overlooked because they are dark-skinned. These overt and covert attitudes and views are gradually strengthening the stereotype that dark skin is not beautiful. That is why Nigerian businesses will use foreign models to sell their products and services. One might not really know until one has a child that is faced with the pressure of trying to change his/her colour. The scary part is how this stereotype is expanding the bleaching skin industry and causing more harm to the human body. Some of the statements that push colourism narratives are perceived as joke or fun but they are not. By talking, one can challenge these negative stereotypes, because some people are even unaware; change will not happen overnight but people must play their part.

The Social Learning Theory, as propounded by Albert Bandura in 1977, explains that attitude and behaviours can be modelled by observing the behaviour and attitudes of others. One can imitate attitudes. Within the context of colourism, this theory explains how Nigerians learn to associate lighter skin tones with beauty, intelligence, affluence and superiority by simply observing what is obtainable within the social system, media narratives and cultural values. When this anomaly is corrected, individuals will adjust and, on their part, propagate the gospel of equality for all skin tones.

Method Applied

This essay examined a campaign powered by Joy Beauty Nigeria titled “My Life My Script.” a documentary on colourism by Beverly Naya titled “Netflix’s Skin: Colourism in Nigeria and Beyond” and a memoir by Viola Davis titled “Finding Me.” The campaign by Joy Beauty Nigeria centred around discourses on societal issues impacting mostly women, particularly concerning traditional beauty standards. It also focused on giving beauty gatekeepers, like advertisers, modelling agents and family members the platform to speak about beauty standards to gain deeper insights into their perspectives.

Here is an excerpt from “*My Life My Script Campaign*”:

The modelling industry has shown preference for certain types of beauty, leaving many feeling insufficient and insecure, I had always dreamt of being a model is not enough, you should do your research to know where and if you can fit into that industry; how many Nigerians look like these models that you find on billboards and on products? According to Jasmine Ofoegbu, the CEO of Pillars and Pride Africa, advertising and modelling agency industry is a money-making industry, it is not a charity industry,

so you need to give your client what would make them pay. When asked why don't they change the narrative? She responded that the economy is not smiling so nobody would even begin to think of trying to change anything at her own expense, maybe later we will set up a foundation to change the narrative but right now, we want to narrate the one we are narrating, she noted. Being light skin is also very important because client believe people who are light skinned are more camera friendly and attractive to look at. You have to give the client what they want.

The major objective of the Joy Beauty Nigeria campaign is to challenge traditional beauty standards and societal expectations that often perpetuate colourism and limitations on women's potential. It is obvious that the gatekeepers of beauty standards are not even ready to change the narrative; this makes colourism even more difficult to eradicate in Nigeria.

One of the major themes of the memoir by Viola Davis titled "Finding Me." is the author's experience with colourism and self-acceptance. She talked about the scrutiny she faced from fellow black actors on the set of *How to get away with murder* who doubted her beauty and ability to play the lead role due to her darker skin tone. She noted that colourism is still prevalent in Hollywood and if she was "five shades lighter" her career might have been different. Her experiences serve as a powerful reminder of the need to address colourism and promote greater inclusivity in the entertainment industry.

With regard to colourism in Nigeria, studies have shown that racism emanating from colonialism is one of the contributory factors of colourism. On the global landscape, Africans or people with darker skin are treated as inferior while those that are light-skinned or fair continue to be the preferred of society, causing the darker individuals to desire social acceptance by bleaching their skin. According to Atabuh (2024), "the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism have contributed significantly to the prevalence of colorism in Nigeria. European colonisers often associated light skin with beauty, intelligence and superiority while dark skin was linked to inferiority and primitiveness. This mindset was internalized by many Nigerians, leading to a societal preference for lighter skin."

Some hide under the umbrella of trying to tone their skin or use creams that will "bring out their fair colour." As subtle or as funny as this might sound, health practitioners condemn bleaching; however, this is a social issue that took its root in colourism. Different social media platforms, such as X, Instagram and Facebook, went agog during the campaign against colour discrimination powered by Joy Beauty Nigeria. Colourism is a societal issue that may appear subtle but dangerous. According to World Health Organisation, "an alarming 77% of Nigerian women regularly use skin lightening creams." The pride of Africa is all-encompassing, which includes the different shades of the skin. If Nigeria is dealing with low self-esteem of colour, where then is the place of the pride of

the giant of Africa? Let us examine the documentary of Beverly Naya as reviewed by Alicia Renda.

Netflix's Skin: Colorism in Nigeria and Beyond

The documentary explores the way in which colorism has affected the lives of women in Lagos, Nigeria. Colorism is the way in which lighter skin tones are desired and darker skin tones are discriminated against within a race. The focus of the film is on how colourism has affected women, specifically African women. In Nigeria, 77% of women use skin-lightening products. Throughout the documentary, Naya seems to be searching for what has led to the development of colourism. She interviews doctors, actors, children and street vendors. While it is difficult to name a direct cause, the documentary seems to arrive at a few lines of reasoning. The first being colonialism and the idea of white being superior. It goes further to show the way white has been associated with qualities, like purity and innocence, in religion, literature, and other aspects of culture. Over time, colonial influence has created associations of light skin with success and desirability and a lot of it is so deeply ingrained that it is unconscious. One Nigerian schoolgirl says, "I like light-skin because it is making me more special. I don't like Black skin...I'm Black but not Black-Black." The act of lightening one's skin in the case of Nigerian women seems to revolve around the pressure of making oneself desirable. Many of the interviewed women explain that the reason they bleached their skin was in order to please men.

The actors that Naya interviews speak about their own experiences and struggles with skin colour. Actor Diana Yekinni talks of her own struggle with never having her skin being perceived as beautiful. When it comes to her work, she talks of how she was told that being light-skinned would be better for her career. Too often, actors of colour are told they are too dark for the role. Eku Edewor, a presenter and actress, speaks about her struggle with casting, "Is this about colour? Or is this about character? If this character is a strong female, I'm a strong female." The attitude of viewing darker skin as being less desired manifests in the way dark skin is photographed for film.

When white or pale skin is seen as the norm, other skin tones are relegated to secondary status. Dark skin is sometimes inadequately illuminated in films, or the make-up used on actors renders them seemingly lighter than their actual complexion. Darker cosmetic hues have just lately begun to be manufactured on a popular basis.

The skin lightening business is now valued at \$23 billion. The market offers tablets, toners and lotions designed for skin whitening and bleaching. The documentary addresses colourism in Nigeria, a phenomenon that is prevalent globally and affects all races. The skin-bleaching business is generating profits worldwide. Johnson & Johnson once ceased the sales of two of its skin-lightening products; it is hoped that this trend will continue.

Nearly all women questioned expressed remorse for whitening their skin. Numerous individuals acknowledge that their diminished self-esteem was the cause.

Colourism takes different shapes that are gradually pushing the narratives. Most women and some men use skin-lightening products to get fairer complexion. There are reported cases where mothers added lightening products to their children's cream to bring out their colour. Health practitioners have noted that bleaching can damage the kidney and cause skin cancer. People with lighter skin tone are perceived as rich and influential because it takes money to bleach and maintain a light skin.

Therefore, the dark-skinned individuals spend nothing or less on their beauty products and are also shamed as being broke because they cannot afford to buy the bleaching products to tone their skin. The media that is supposed to advocate against colourism are also in one way or the other encouraging colourism by featuring light-skinned individuals in leading roles, newscasting and anchoring programmes, thereby supporting the notion that light skin is camera-friendly. Atabuh (2024) asserts that:

Colourism reinforces narrow beauty standards, prioritising lighter skin tones as the epitome of beauty and desirability. This can lead to harmful beauty practices such as skin bleaching, where individuals use chemical products to lighten their skin in pursuit of societal beauty ideals. Skin bleaching can have severe health consequences, including skin damage, cancer risk, and psychological harm.

Colourism can affect those with darker skin tones because discrimination against their skin colour can lead to feelings of low self-esteem or have inferiority complex. This can eventually lead to mental health related problems like depression and identity struggles. With respect to socio-economic disparity, colourism supports persons with lighter skin in various aspects of life, such as education, employment and social mobility. For instance, jobs in the banking sector, aviation (as air hostess), advertising agency, and movie roles, are perceived to favour light-skinned female job seekers than the dark-skinned ones.

The Way Forward

A one-sided beauty standard does not represent the universe; there is the need to recognize and celebrate the incredible variety of beauty around and within us. This can be achieved if advocates will understand that changing this narrative will take time and will entail changing our ways of thinking and perception. We have to speak up against colourism anywhere it appears no matter how subtle it may seem. In the workplace, family, the media and everywhere.

I have experienced colourism in my family but did not perceive it as such until recently. When I had my triplet of two girls and a boy, my sisters and most people that visited would always say, "Why did God give the boy light skin and gave the girls not so

light skin? It is a waste for a boy to be light skinned.” This sentence does not just smack of colourism; it is also gender-biased. Why would anyone prefer girls to be light-skinned and the boys dark-skinned? What are the girls supposed to do with light skin? This is obviously because society has placed beauty standards to be light-skinned. How about my aunties when they looked at the babies’ ears: They pray to God that though their ears appeared dark, they should not be dark-skinned when they grow up. We would eventually laugh off those comments, take them as jokes and unknowingly and gradually buy into those ideas, which will be evident in the choice of the baby creams and soaps bought for these children. They will grow up knowing and following same path. If we must fight colourism, it has to start from the family.

The media are the platforms that have the power to amplify our voices. Therefore, media representation is necessary for diverse and inclusive representation through advertising, films and popular culture. The Agenda-Setting Theory of the media accords the media the power to play up salient issues such that the audience perceive those issues as important. Media contents that border on advocacy against colourism in Nigeria and beyond can be played up by the media. Media outlets should be encouraged to feature a wide range of skin tones and celebrate the beauty of diversity. Content creators and platforms that promote positive representations of all skin tones should be supported. A good example is the “My Life, My Script” campaign by Joy Beauty Nigeria, which is an advocacy to promote self-acceptance, empowerment and inclusivity among Nigerian women. There is also the need to embrace individuality and appreciate the fact that humans are all created in the perfect image of God.

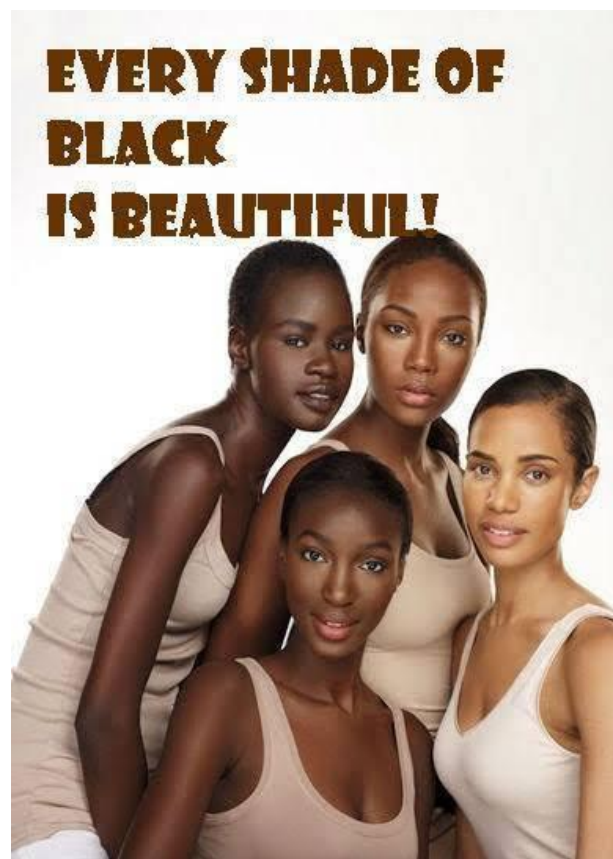
Advocacy strategies will include the use of social media to share inspiring stories and expressions of the real definition of black is as beautiful as fair. This can be by using powerful and influential Nigerian women or celebrities to amplify the campaign message and reach. An example, is what Miss Olive Emodi, a female media personality, is doing. She embraced the campaign by Joy Soap and expressed her thoughts on colourism while calling other stakeholders to join the campaign against colourism in Nigeria. Academics should start to encourage their students to take up research of this nature to push further the advocacy. The academic environment is one place to unlearn colour biases. This can be taught in class under a course like Health Communication in the Department of Mass Communication. And very importantly, people should give same beautiful compliments to dark-skinned and light-skinned individuals. According to Naya, “It is important to work to continually uplift dark skin as beautiful. From a young age we need to start affirming the beauty of dark skin so that girls can grow up confident in being black. If we don’t do that, they will pick up the wrong information elsewhere.” It may look like this battle might not be won because the gatekeepers of beauty standards are not even ready to change

the narrative. However, positive progress will be made, just as is being experienced with issues like female genital mutilation, child abuse, gender-based violence and the likes.

Colourism will profoundly impact society unless decisive measures are implemented to combat it. By implementing these measures and fostering an inclusive and accepting atmosphere, progress can be made towards the reduction of colourism. This initiative may foster a more equitable and varied society, whereby people are recognised for their abilities, character and accomplishments, free from prejudice based on skin colour. Nigeria is blessed with diverse customs, traditions, languages and colours. I hereby propose a narrative titled “Being Colourless in a Coat of Many Colours.” This simply means colour should no longer be the benchmark for the definition of beauty in a country blessed with different colours. Dark skin is as beautiful as light skin, as ordained by the Creator.

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42**WOMEN DEVELOPMENT: WHERE THEY WERE, WHERE THEY ARE AND
WHERE THEY ARE GOING****By****Boma B. Obi**

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Abstract

Women development has always been an important aspect of human development because God “created them male and female” and women development directly affects the well-being and growth of individuals, families, communities and societies. Women were not initially developed due to some repressive cultural, traditional and societal norms. Later, women development started. In spite of some significant programmes established by government and others that drive women development, women have continued to face concerns, challenges and hindrances, which basically include disparity, discrimination and social insecurity. This paper considers the concept of women development, its importance, strategies for promoting equal opportunity for women and empowering them. It opines that women development should be a continuum.

Keywords: Repressive norms, Emancipation, Empowerment, Development

Introduction

Women studies have been on the discourse table in every society for quite a while. It will never stop until there is a realistic significant paradigm shift from what used to be. Gender does not determine development, career options, broadened perception, self-development or progression. It should not also determine political participation, inheritance or hunger. There should be maximally equal human rights and development for all for an egalitarian society to thrive.

Where They Were

About 150 years ago, when societies were replete with gender disparity, cultural discrimination and restrictions, women were at home from adolescence to womanhood. They were not sent to school, which had existed at the time. Parents placed much premium on the boys and sent them to school to get educated. Women were sentenced to marriages, sometimes forcefully and, in some areas, very young girls were pushed into early marriages that brought infirmity and affliction upon them. Women were seriously involved in domesticity, mandatorily rearing children and giving care. Women were that

formidable segment of the community that provided unskilled labour everywhere, and every time. Sometimes, the girl child was forcefully sent into slavery or caregiving to raise money for the education and development of the male children in the family. In all these, women's position was in the "kitchen" and the "other room." They were never to be "seen" nor "heard" for they had no voice, no dignity nor identity in the scheme of things. They were intimidated.

Women Development

According to *E'Dictionary.com* (2024), development is a complex process that involves improving people's quality of life and well-being. A development expert, Dudley (2009) buttresses this definition by stating that, when a country experiences a reduction of poverty, inequality and unemployment, then humans are developed. Women development, therefore, means the improvement of their quality of life and well-being which had been subjugated in negativity and repressive cultural norms. Development comes through the perspectives of education, economic, social and political dimensions –and women longed for them.

As time changed, things took different turns and women came to self-realization and became conscious of the deplorable situation they were immersed in. They became aware of the societal and repressive norms, the disparity and the slavery practices around them that will not allow them to breathe, and they became irritated and reacted.

Women fought for their development by asking for freedom through diverse women groups and movements, women activism and campaign programmes, and they got victory. They became emancipated from the shackles of psychological and physical slavery. That emancipation was a major tool for development. As a result of this win, female children were sent to school to get education. Other subsequent characteristics of women development were empowerment and acquisition of authority to do things they desired. Women gained confidence in themselves and tried to raise their voices to be heard.

Women development is not only getting emancipated; it is also laden with social, economic and political advancements, which will enable women to realize their full potential and contribute effectively to society as men do. With this wave of realization, women have made some tremendous progress in most fields of human endeavours, as some have availed themselves of opportunities they were exposed to.

Women development also includes ability to address those barriers and biases that hindered their progress initially. Such biases include the repressive norms of old, which are seen to be rearing their heads even in this new normal, discriminatory laws that remove women from access to quality education, maternal health care and economic opportunities (that could give them financial independence) and other developmental factors. It is pertinent to state that women development is essential for achieving the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which stretch to 2030 and embody poverty reduction, promotion of human rights and particularly woman rights. When a woman is developed, she is emancipated, educated and empowered and this status helps her to contribute to the economic growth of herself as well as her family and their health, education and their general well-being. Women empowerment, which is a critical tool of development, enhances their democratic participation in governance. This promotes social justice and human rights because women are closer to the people. Developing women makes them stand firm and tall to address unequivocally violence of any form against them, the girl child and others around them.

The age-old denial of women development propelled an upsurge in aggressive agitation for the emancipation of women. Education of women started and one could have heard each one of them scream “I am a woman and so what?” Women became more irritated by the disparity, indignity and the slavery they suffered from such acts. They agitated and fought for freedom and won partially. Some of their action tools were the Aba women riot of 1929 and Abeokuta feminist movement of 1940, and many others all over the world, particularly the one led by the little Malala, the 12-year-old Pakistani girl in 2008 advocating education for the girl child among other things. As a result of these and similar aggressive activism and movements ongoing, women enjoyed the following:

- were emancipated from psychological and physical slavery;
- were sent to schools;
- became empowered through education and acquired some skills;
- possessed authority to pursue what they desired; and
- became confident in themselves and could make decisions on matters affecting them.

Concerns

A number of factors that constitute women development have been presented concisely. The development is not without some concerns or challenges. In this new normal, the developed women are expected to act in a dual way in their modern state. The society wants them to conform to both the traditional repressive and the modern developed roles, which are quite complex and seem punitive. The emancipated women are expected to be both career women and full-time traditional housewives. In spite of the clarion call for education for all, there is yet limited access to it for women; there is limited access to resources that propagate good and functional education.

Other challenges of the era include some religious restrictions in some societies that hinder women development. In the area of autonomy and property ownership, women do not still have free hand. Domestic violence, which manifests in wife-battering, cheating, intimidation, sexual harassment and rape, are meted out to women by men.

Economically, women face difficulties in accessing loans or other credit services from financial institutions. Most times, they are requested to bring their husbands along in order to attain credibility and get the facilities. One cannot be developed without financial resources, support or assistance. The very low-paying jobs most times are left for the women even with their acquired skills and qualifications. Dame Patience Jonathan, wife of former Nigeria President, Dr Goodluck E. Jonathan, advocated and got 35% affirmation for women representation in jobs appointment and political positions, but this was not totally adhered to.

There is also the trending situation of shifting of home responsibilities to the developed woman, in addition to the reproductive health care challenges that hinder the women. Most women cannot access maternal health care for the families. Consequently, there is high rate of maternal and infant mortality, particularly in rural areas. There is hardly any justice for women because of the limited access to courts most times.

These and many other concerns often cause depression for women both at home and in office. These challenges distort the developmental process and progress of women.

Where They Are

Women development has been laudable irrespective of the aforementioned challenges. Some of the developmental processes women have passed through have produced some impressionable qualities and achievements in women which pass as marks of development. They include the following:

- Women have left the “kitchen.” where they were confined to, to the “offices.”
- Women have learnt, unlearnt and relearnt.
- Women have left the “other room” to the “board room” to participate in decision making.
- Women are found in diverse professions and positions as men.
- Women have found their voices to ask unequivocally for equal opportunities and affirmations.
- Women are emancipated, empowered, included and free.
- Women are “happy.”

However, women development should be a continuum. Although women have made some impressionable achievements socially, economically, educationally and politically, globally and nationally, there is yet a big gap to be filled. Women do not need to rest on their laurels. They should strive harder to develop themselves. According to the UNESCO (2022) statistics, about 66% of all illiterate adults globally are women. Women receive only 10% of the world's whole salaries. This implies that only very few women are employed. In most of the national assemblies globally, women make only 1% of the members (UNESCO, 2020). In Nigeria, the educational gap is much as the ratio of male to female professors is 10:1. These lapses are also found in appointments of vice chancellors and other principal officers in higher institutions and other organizations.

Only about 15% of women have bank accounts (Oti, 2021). A random sampling of female traders and others will confirm this assertion. The National Assembly in Nigeria has few women out of about 500 members. Women face more of the social insecurity and experience starvation among other vices than men. Nevertheless, there is hope if certain strategies for women development are consistently applied.

Where They Are Going

Promotion of Women Development

Women development is major aspect of human capital development. It is critical to give women quality education which will enable them to acquire knowledge and opportunities and utilize resources to overcome biases and barriers to development.

Organizing campaigns for skills acquisition and political awareness by government and non-governmental organizations will end some of the lingering discriminatory and repressive norms against women development.

Women development is capital-intensive. Therefore, incentives should be provided for women. Schemes such as bursary, scholarships, fellowships, in-service training and off-the-job training should be made available to them.

Establishment of more girls' institutions, which appear to be dwindling, should be encouraged. Support for women's organizations will definitely enhance their development.

Women should deliberately be given equal opportunities as men to compete for jobs and placements. This will enhance their development.

Dividends of Women Development

Everything and every circumstance have some advantages. Women development, if enhanced and sustained, will yield the following:

- Developing a woman will translate into developing a nation.
- There will be better health for future generations.
- Poverty will be eradicated.
- Women will be economically empowered and become entrepreneurs.
- Women will get into more leadership positions.
- Most importantly, the rates of infant and maternal death will drop.
- There will be emergence of many modern women.

Conclusion

Women development could be likened to the story of the blacks in America who suffered slavery for a very long time under their white masters. Blacks never thought they could be free even when they sang "we shall overcome someday!" They got liberated, emancipated and empowered. Eventually, as history has it, a Black became the president

of America “someday” (Barack Obama). So shall the story or history of women development read and bring forth more great women into notable positions in Nigeria and many other nations “someday.” If the identified challenges and concerns that limit the ability of women to participate in developmental processes and access resources and services can be removed, women will achieve their full potential. Investing in women development will surely unlock their potential, promote economic growth and create more equitable egalitarian and prosperous societies. The developed women will also participate in politics and make decisions. Developing women will reduce gender inequality, that seems to be getting wider. Women development will promote social justice and stability.

Women development should be recognized and placed in the forefront of every developmental programme. Removal of all repressive norms, hindrances, biases and the stereotypical expectations from women will help strengthen women development. Women should therefore arise, read more, achieve more and speak out.

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43**EFFECTIVE NUTRITION COUNSELLING FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS
(PREGNANT WOMEN) BY RURAL HEALTH WORKERS IN
IKWERRE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA****By****Stella O. Mandah**

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Abstract

The study investigated effective nutrition among vulnerable groups by rural health workers in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The objective of the study was to determine the effects of nutritive counselling on pregnant women. It adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study consisted of all the rural health workers in Ikwerre Local Government Area (218 people). Census sampling was adopted because the population was small. The main instrument used was a questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Effective Nutrition Counselling for Vulnerable Groups (Pregnant Women) by Rural Health Workers in Ikwerre Local Government Area." which was divided into two sections, with a four-point Likert scale. The reliability of the instrument was carried out through Pearson moment co-efficient, which was 0.75. The findings revealed that food rich in iron, calcium, vitamins D, A and C are nutritive for pregnant women, increasing life expectancy and improving morbidity and functions. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that rural health workers should attend workshops and use modern facilities to teach pregnant women. Also, the government should employ more health workers in rural areas.

Keywords: Counselling, venerable group, pregnant women, rural, health workers

Introduction

Vulnerable groups are those that experience a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion than the general population (Neerakkal, 2006). Examples are children, pregnant women and elderly people. Malnourished people are people who are ill or immune-compromised, and are particularly vulnerable when a disaster strikes and takes a relatively high share of the disease burden associated with emergencies. Maternal nutrition continues to gain interest in many parts of the world. This could be attributed to the fact that pregnancy is associated with increase in the physiologic, metabolic and nutritional demands placed on the woman by her growing baby. During pregnancy, the

body's need for energy, protein, vitamins and minerals increases by 13%, 54% and 50%, respectively.

Thus the period of pregnancy becomes a critical time to meet these demands for both macro and micronutrients (*Robins, 2011*). This in turn places high demands for healthy dietary lifestyle choices on the mother as the growing foetus draws a lot of energy and nutrients from the mother in order to enhance physical and psychological development. Healthy eating habit in pregnancy helps to prevent pregnancy complications, aids recovery from childbirth, effectively sustains breastfeeding and also prevents the occurrence of diseases in adulthood (*Bearak and Popinchalk, 2018*).

However, when adequate nutrition is not maintained during pregnancy, malnutrition ensues. Malnutrition is a serious public health challenge which has been directly associated with increased mortality and morbidity rates, especially in many parts of developing countries. According to World Health Organization (WHO), (2014), 585,000 deaths resulting from pregnancy and childbirth-related complications occur globally, with about 1,500 deaths recorded daily, and most of these deaths occur in developing countries. In Nigeria, there still remains a dearth of published studies showing the exact number of deaths recorded. However, an incidence rate of 10-40% has been reported in a rural community in the northern part of Nigeria. Also, 75% of pregnant women from the western part of Nigeria were reported to have had inadequate dietary energy intake. Poor nutrition in pregnancy negatively affects the woman's health and that of the unborn child. To the woman, it causes weakness and lethargy, anaemia and loss of life for the mother (and the foetus) and reduces the woman's lactation performance (*Leveno, 2014*).

Furthermore, due to the fact that there is little amount of nutrients and low energy transferred to the foetus, intrauterine growth restrictions occur and the baby becomes small for his gestational age, may develop some abnormalities and could be born prematurely with a low birth weight and resultant death, in some cases. Pregnant women residing in rural and low-income areas have been observed to be mostly affected due to high consumption of inadequate amount of micronutrients as a result of resource limitations. Intake of micronutrients less than the recommended values increase women's risk of micronutrient deficiencies (*Singh, 2014*).

Pregnancy is divided into three trimesters. The first trimester is from week one through 12 and includes conception, which is when the sperm fertilizes the egg. The fertilized egg then travels down the fallopian tube and attaches to the inside of the uterus, where it begins to form the embryo and placenta. During the first trimester, the possibility of miscarriage (natural death of embryo or foetus) is at its highest. The second trimester is from week 13 through 28. Around the middle of the second trimester, movement of the foetus may be felt. At 28 weeks, more than 90% of babies can survive

outside of the uterus if provided with high-quality medical care. The third trimester is from 29 weeks through 40 weeks (*Haider, 2019*).

Prenatal care improves pregnancy outcomes. It may include taking extra folic acid, avoiding drugs and alcohol, regular exercise, blood tests, and regular physical examinations, eating food rich in vitamins D, A and C, eating foods rich in folic acid and dark green leafy vegetable and Omega-3 fatty acid (National Academy of Science, 2005). Multiple micronutrient supplements taken with iron and folic acid may improve birth outcomes for women in low-income countries. Complications of pregnancy may include disorders of high blood pressure, gestational diabetes, iron-deficiency anaemia, severe nausea and vomiting. The ideal childbirth labour begins on its own when a woman is “at term.” Babies born before 37 weeks are “preterm” and at higher risk of health problems, such as cerebral palsy. Babies born between weeks 37 and 39 are considered “early term.” while those born between weeks 39 and 41 are considered “full term.” Babies born between weeks 41 and 42 are considered “late term.” while those born after the 42nd week are considered “post term” (*Mendola, 2008*).

About 213 million pregnancies occurred in 2012, of which 190 million (89%) were in the developing world and 23 million (11%) were in the developed world. The number of pregnancies in women aged 15 to 44 is 133 per 1,000 women. About 10-15% of recognized pregnancies end in miscarriage. In 2016, complications of pregnancy resulted in 230,600 maternal deaths, down from 377,000 deaths in 1990. Common causes include bleeding, infections, hypertensive diseases of pregnancy, obstructed labour, and complications associated with miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy or elective abortion. Globally, 44% of pregnancies are unplanned. Over half (56%) of unplanned pregnancies are aborted (*Mensah, 2008*).

Rural Health Workers (RHWs) are trusted, knowledgeable frontline health personnel who typically come from the communities they serve. They bridge cultural and linguistic barriers, expand access to coverage and care, and improve health outcomes. As critical links between their communities and the health care system, RHWs reduce health disparities; boost health care quality, cultural competence and affordability; and empower individuals and communities for better health (*Ugwa, 2016*).

Rural health workers are also members of a community who are chosen by community members or organizations to provide basic health and medical care to their community. They are capable of providing preventive, promotional and rehabilitation care to these communities. Other names for this type of health care providers include village health workers, community health aides, community health promoters and health advisors. They contribute to community development and can help communities improve access to basic health services (*Kuche, 2014*). They are most effective when they are properly trained to provide information and services to the community. They are the

most promising form of delivering health services to resource-constrained areas. They are seen as secondary health services in most low-income countries and available as a service to the community.

Besides, they perform a wide range of vital healthcare roles in their communities. *They supervise the treatment of patients living with terminal illness so that they can live healthier and longer lives. They serve as counsellors, helping poor patients overcome the barriers that prevent them from seeking vital healthcare.* Patient barriers to care include transportation, lack of awareness, fear and healthcare costs. Rural health workers are knowledgeable about local needs and sensitivities, and thus are in a position to gain their patients' trust and to bring them to the clinics to receive medical treatment (Martins, 2015).

Moreover, they act as healthcare educators, providing vital education about the healthcare options that are available. By leading education campaigns in their communities and raising awareness among community members regarding health issues, RHWs encourage community members to take charge of their own health. They also see the effects of illness and poverty in their community. Their insights are important for shaping healthcare policies and healthcare delivery methodologies. *Patients are sometimes trained as community health workers so that they can initiate outreach programmes to help their peers.*

Statement of the Problem

The need for pregnant women to be on effective nutrition cannot be overemphasized. This is because the various effects of poor nutrition on the outcome of pregnancy have led to the premature delivery, stillbirth and other obstetric complications. In rural areas, many pregnant women lack knowledge of some nutritional food that will keep them healthy and prevent disease in their body systems. The majority of them lack the knowledge of nutrition education, belief of food taboo, food habit, and what to do about a particular food that will help to nourish their body systems. Because there is no proper nutritional counselling by the rural health workers, they end up giving birth to children that have one nutritional deficiency or the other. It has been observed that the current medical and nursing school cannot train enough workers to keep up with the increasing demand for healthcare service. Besides, rural health workers are given a limited amount of training supplies and support to provide essential primary health care service to the population. It is on this note that this study investigated effective of nutrition counselling on pregnant women among rural health workers in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate effective nutrition counselling for a vulnerable group (pregnant women) among rural health workers in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers state. Specifically, the study sought to:

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1. ascertain the forms of nutritive counselling for pregnant women by rural health workers in Ikwerre Local Government Area and
 2. find out the effects of nutritive counselling on pregnant women in Ikwerre Local Government Area.
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Research Questions

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1. What are the forms of nutritive counselling for pregnant women by rural health workers in Ikwerre Local Government Area?
 2. What are the effects of nutritive counselling on pregnant women by rural health workers in Ikwerre Local Government Area?
-

Methodology**Design of the Stud.**

The design of the study was descriptive survey design.

Area of the Study

The area of the study was Ikwerre local Government Area.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all the 218 rural health workers in Ikwerre Local Government Area.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The census technique was applied based on the 218 population. In other words, all the 218 health workers were used for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection

The main instrument used was a questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Effective Nutrition Counselling for Vulnerable Groups (Pregnant Women) by Rural Health Workers in Ikwerre Local Government Area." which was divided into two sections. Section A was on personal data. Section B was used to elicit information on effective nutrition counselling on pregnant women by rural health workers. This part contains a four-point likert scale of Agreed (4), Strongly Agreed (3), Disagreed (2) and Strongly Disagreed (1).

Validation of the Instrument

The face and content validity of the instrument was done by three experts in the Departments of Home Economics and Hotel Management, and Measurement and Evaluation in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Reliability of Instrument

The test-retest type of reliability was used to obtain the reliability co-efficient. The two set of scores were collated using Pearson product moment co-relation (PPMC), which gave a value of 0.74, confirming the instrument to be reliable.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the respondents and retrieved by hand with the help of research assistants.

Method of Data Analysis

Mean was used to analyze the data based on the research questions.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the forms of nutritive counselling for pregnant women by rural health workers in Ikwerre Local Government Area?

S/N	Items	SA 4	A 3	SD 2	D 1	Cumulative Rating	N	Mean x
1	Abstinence from consumption of caffeine.	10	90	100	18	558	218	2.42
2	Taking prenatal vitamins containing iodine	200	10	4	4	846	218	3.88
3	Eating food rich in vitamins D, A and C	200	4	4	10	830	218	3.80
4	Foods rich in iron and calcium	150	50	6	12	774	218	3.55
5	Eating food rich in folic acid, fruit and dark green leafy vegetable.	100	80	20	18	698	218	3.20
6	Drink less alcohol	100	100	10	8	728	218	3.33
7	Eat enough fish than meat	150	50	12	6	780	218	3.57
8	Exercise regularly	200	10	4	4	830	218	3.80
9	Engage in sexual activity	100	20	80	18	698	218	3.20
10	Sleep	100	60	80	18	678	218	3.1
11	Personal hygiene	120	80	10	8	748	218	3.43

Table 1 shows the mean score of the respondents on the nutritive counselling for pregnant women by rural health workers. It shows that item 1 had a mean score of 2.42;

items 2, 3 and 4 had mean scores of 3.8, 3.80 and 3.55, respectively; items 5 and 9 had a mean score of 3.20; items 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11 had mean scores of 3.33, 3.57, 3.80, 3.1 and 3.43, respectively. This result proves that the health workers counselled the pregnant women effectively.

Research Question 2: What are the effects of nutritive counselling on pregnant women by rural health workers in Ikwerre Local Government Area?

S/ N	ITEMS	SA 4	A 3	SD 2	D 1	CUMULATIVE RATING	N	MEAN x
1	Increased life expectancy	100	80	20	18	678	218	3.11
2	Increased concentrating, better sleep habits to prevent or contracting certain disease.	200	4	6	8	832	218	3.81
3	Understanding how diet and exercise plan affect their health	80	80	40	18	658	218	3.0
4	Helps to improve morbidity and joint function	100	90	18	10	716	218	3.28
5	Saves future generation from succumbing to injuries exacerbated by a lifestyle of poor diet and exercise habit.	120	40	48	10	706	218	3.23
6	Helps to control weight	100	100	18	0	736	218	3.37

Table 2 captures the mean scores of the respondents on the effects of nutritive counselling on the pregnant women. Item 1 had a mean score of 3.11; items 2, 3 and 4 had mean scores of 3.81, 3.0 and 3.28, respectively; while items 5 and 6 had mean scores of 3.23 and 3.37, respectively.

Discussion of Findings

The study was on effective nutrition counselling among pregnant women in Ikwerre Local Government Area.

Research Question 1 considered the forms of nutritive counselling for the pregnant women. The results revealed that eating food rich in vitamins D, A and C, eating foods rich in folic acid and dark green leafy vegetable, and Omega-3 fatty acid, among others, are the nutritive counselling used for the pregnant women. The result is in line with the view of National Academy of Science (2005), that multiple micronutrient supplements taken with iron and folic acid may improve birth outcomes for women in low-income countries. These supplements reduce the number of low-birth-weight babies, small-for-gestational-age babies and stillbirths in women who may not have many micronutrients in their usual diets. Undernourished women can benefit from having dietary education sessions on balanced energy and protein supplements. A review showed that dietary education increased the mother's protein intake and helped the baby grow more inside the womb. The balanced protein and energy supplement lowered risk of stillbirth and small babies and increased weight gain for both the mother and the baby.

Supplementing one's diet with foods rich in folic acid, fruits and dark green leafy vegetables and Omega-3 fatty acid helps to prevent neural tube birth defects in the foetus and eye development. In addition, prenatal vitamins typically contain increased amounts of folic acid, iodine, iron, vitamin A, vitamin D, zinc, and calcium over the amounts found in standard multi-vitamins. Zinc supplements engender reduced preterm births by around 14% mainly in low-income countries, where zinc deficiency is common. However, the World Health Organization does not routinely recommend zinc supplementation for all pregnant women.

For women with low calcium diets, there is low quality evidence to suggest that calcium supplementation during pregnancy may reduce the risk of preeclampsia. Low-quality evidence also suggests that calcium supplementation may reduce the risk of the mother having the baby before the 37th week of pregnancy (preterm birth).

Pregnant women are advised to pay attention to the foods they eat during pregnancy in order to reduce the risk of exposure to substances or bacteria that may be harmful to the developing foetus. These can include potentially harmful pathogens, such as listeria, toxoplasmosis, and salmonella. Intake of large amounts of retinol has been linked to birth defects and abnormalities. Although seafood contains high levels of Omega-3 fatty acids, which are beneficial for both the mother and the baby, there is no consensus on consuming seafood during pregnancy. Pregnant women are advised to eat seafood in moderation.

During pregnancy, a woman's mass increases by about 12 kg. The European Food Safety Authority recommends an increase of 300 mL per day compared to the normal intake for non-pregnant women, taking the total adequate water intake (from food and fluids) to 2,300 mL, or approximately 1,850 mL/ day from fluids alone.

A mother's nutritional intake during pregnancy is believed to influence and possibly offer protective effects against the development of allergic diseases and asthma in children. Maternal intake of vitamin D, vitamin E, and zinc has been associated with a lower likelihood of wheezing in childhood, suggesting a protective effect. Additionally, maternal intake of Omega-3 long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids (n-3 LC-PUFAs) has been associated with a reduced risk of development of eczema in childhood and reduced likelihood for infants to exhibit sensitivity to foods in the first year of life.

Foetal alcohol spectrum disorders are a group of conditions that can occur in a person whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. The most severe form of the condition is known as foetal alcohol syndrome. The problems may include an abnormal appearance, short height, low body weight, small head size, poor coordination, low intelligence, behaviour problems, hearing loss and vision problems. Those affected are more likely to have trouble in school, have legal problems, participate in high-risk behaviours, and have trouble with alcohol and recreational drug use. Foetal alcohol syndrome usually occurs when a pregnant woman has more than four drinks per day. Milder symptoms have been found with two drinks per day during the early part of pregnancy.

The American Academy of Pediatrics established a conservative set of recommendations in 2015: "During pregnancy no amount of alcohol intake should be considered safe; there is no safe trimester to drink alcohol; all forms of alcohol, such as beer, wine, and liquor, pose similar risk; and binge drinking poses dose-related risk to the developing fetus." The World Health Organization recommends that alcohol should be avoided entirely during pregnancy, given the relatively unknown effects of even small amounts of alcohol during pregnancy.

Fish consumption during pregnancy is encouraged by European, Australian and American guidelines. The reason given is that fat-containing fish, such as salmon and tuna, contain eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). These are termed long chain, Omega-3, polyunsaturated fatty acids, and are considered important for foetal neurodevelopment. Additionally, fish are good sources of vitamins A, D, and B12, as well as the mineral iodine.

Due to risks of heavy-metal toxicity on foetal neurodevelopment, many mothers are concerned about eating fish during pregnancy. Overall, current research favours the notion that the benefits of fish consumption during pregnancy outweigh the risks; however, the type of fish is important. Current research suggests that 2-3 servings of low-methyl mercury-containing fish per week in pregnancy are both safe and beneficial.

Folic acid, which is the synthetic form of the vitamin folate, is critical both in pre- and per-conception. Deficiencies in folic acid may cause neural tube defects (NTDs).

Women who had 0.4 mg of folic acid in their systems due to supplementing 3 months before childbirth significantly reduced the risk of NTDs. More than 80 countries use fortification of certain foods with folic acid as a measure to decrease the rate of NTDs.

Research Question 2 considered the effects of nutritive counselling on the pregnant women. The findings revealed that increased life expectancy, improvement of morbidity and joint function, and controlling of weight were the main effects. The result may not be unconnected to the fact that some of the pregnant women were ignorant of what to do and, some of the aged had the habit of food taboo and food choice. The finding is in line with World Health Organization (2014), Eiknes (2000) and Uganda Ministry of Health Human Recourse Strategy (2002), that recognised increased life expectancy, improvement of morbidity and joint function, controlling of weight as the effect of nutritive counselling.

Conclusion

The revealed that increased life expectancy, controlling of weight, improvement of morbidity and joint function are the importance of nutritive counselling for the pregnant women.

Recommendations

Based on the major findings of the study, the following are recommended:

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- Rural health workers should go for more training
 - They should use modern facility with practical examples when counselling pregnant women.
 - They should hold seminars.
 - They should teach the pregnant women the importance of nutrition education.
 - They should attend workshops.
 - They should educate pregnant women on how to utilize and prepare food.
 - The government should employ more health workers into rural areas.
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SECTION E

POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES

44

CIVIL MILITARY RELATIONS IN NIGERIA

By

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Introduction

Civil-military relations (CMR) refer to the dynamic interactions between civilian authorities and the military, highlighting issues of control, influence and the balancing of power. In Nigeria, civil-military relations have a complex history marked by periods of military rule and democratic governance. The nature of civil-military relations is integral to Nigeria's political stability, governance and development, as the country has faced challenges in defining the boundaries of military influence in civilian affairs. Understanding this is essential to analyzing the country's political landscape, security apparatus and the broader implications for democracy.

Historically, Nigeria's post-independence era was dominated by military coups, which began in 1966 and continued until the return to democracy in 1999. These periods of military rule reshaped the relationship between the armed forces and civilian structures, embedding the military in political and economic spheres (Ihonvbere, 2011). The military regimes often justified interventions by pointing to perceived failures in governance, corruption and economic mismanagement by civilian authorities (Agbese, 2014). However, this militarization of governance also led to the erosion of democratic institutions, limited political freedoms and human rights abuses.

With the transition to democratic governance in 1999, Nigeria embarked on a path towards redefining civil-military relations to support democracy. Despite efforts to establish clear lines between military and civilian roles, challenges persist, such as military involvement in internal security operations due to issues like terrorism, insurgency and civil unrest (Abdulrahman & Tar, 2008). The military's expanded role in internal security has blurred the boundaries, sometimes raising concerns about accountability and human rights (Obasanjo, 2021).

One of the core issues in civil-military relations is the principle of "civilian supremacy" over the military, particularly in democratic societies. The military's role is to protect the nation's interests, while elected civilian leaders make policy decisions. Janowitz (1960) notes that effective civil-military relations require a delicate balance, where the military is strong enough to defend the state but remains subservient to civilian

leadership. When the military's influence over civil affairs grows unchecked, it can lead to militarization of politics, impacting civil liberties and democratic governance (Feaver, 2013). Civil-military relations are also influenced by the security environment and perceived threats. During times of war or national crises, governments often grant the military more authority to respond effectively. Conversely, in peacetime, governments tend to reassert civilian control to maintain a stable democratic structure (Burk, 2012). This dynamic is evident in many post-colonial states, where civil-military relations continue to evolve as they strive for stability and security amidst internal and external pressures (Luckham, 2004).

Conceptual Review of Civil-Military Relations

Civil-military relations encompass various theoretical frameworks and concepts that help understand the balance between military power and civilian authority. At its core, this field examines how the military can be both a robust institution for national defence and a disciplined body under civilian control. This review explores key theories and concepts that shape civil-military relations, providing insights into the complexities of this dynamic relationship.

- **Civilian Control and Military Professionalism:** One of the foundational concepts in civil-military relations is the principle of civilian control over the military. Samuel Huntington's *Objective Civilian Control Theory* suggests that maintaining a high level of military professionalism keeps the military separate from politics, allowing for effective defence while respecting civilian authority (Huntington, 1957). Huntington contrasts this with *subjective civilian control*, where the military is politicized and often susceptible to intervention in civilian governance. According to Huntington, *objective control* promotes national security by aligning military interests with civilian objectives without compromising the military's professional expertise. Janowitz (1960) expands on this by examining the role of the *professional soldier* as a socially integrated actor. He posits that military leaders must align with democratic norms to ensure loyalty to civilian leadership. His theory underscores the importance of socialization within military institutions, where soldiers are trained to respect democratic norms and values, reinforcing a stable civil-military relationship.
- **Principal-Agent Theory:** Peter Feaver's Principal-Agent Theory applies economic principles to analyze civil-military relations, viewing the civilian government as the "principal" and the military as the "agent" (Feaver, 2013). This theory posits that civilian leaders delegate authority to the military to protect national security, but they must also oversee the military to ensure it acts in accordance with civilian preferences. Feaver highlights the risk of agency loss, where the military might pursue its interests

rather than adhering to civilian directives, particularly if civilian oversight is weak. The theory emphasizes the importance of oversight mechanisms to prevent military autonomy from undermining civilian control.

- **Concordance Theory:** Rebecca L. Schiff's Concordance Theory presents an alternative view, suggesting that stable civil-military relations occur when three elements—the political elite, the military, and the citizenry—are in agreement or “concordance” on issues of social composition, institutional roles, and the military's relationship with society (Schiff, 2015). Schiff argues that instead of focusing solely on civilian control, a balanced relationship is achieved when these three groups cooperate and agree on the role of the military within society. The theory is particularly applicable to diverse, multi-ethnic societies, where social unity can prevent conflicts between civil and military spheres.
- **Institutional Theory:** Institutional Theory examines how civil-military relations are shaped by the formal and informal rules governing the military's role within the state. This theory suggests that stable civil-military relations are maintained through clear institutional boundaries and regulations that define the military's role. Burk (2012) argues that in well-institutionalized democracies, civil-military relations are structured by institutional norms that delineate the military's functions from civilian roles. However, in emerging democracies or authoritarian regimes, weak institutions can lead to blurred boundaries, which may result in military intervention in politics or civilian domains.
- **Coup-Proofing and Civil-Military Tensions:** In many countries, especially in regions with histories of military interventions, governments adopt “coup-proofing” strategies to prevent the military from gaining excessive power. Coup-proofing includes tactics like building parallel military forces, promoting loyalty through ethnic or political alignment, and limiting the military's operational autonomy (Powell, 2022). While these strategies can prevent military takeovers, they may also weaken military effectiveness and create civil-military tension by fostering distrust between civilian leaders and military institutions.
- **Societal and Cultural Influences:** Cultural values and societal beliefs also shape civil-military relations. In societies with high regard for military institutions, there may be greater public support for military involvement in civil affairs. Conversely, in societies that prioritize democratic principles, there is a stronger expectation for military subordination to civilian leadership. Luckham (2004) highlights how societal values influence military behaviour, and how historical contexts, such as colonial legacies, impact civil-military dynamics in post-colonial states.

Importance of Civil-Military Relations in Nigeria

Effective civil-military relations are crucial for consolidating democracy in Nigeria. In line with the theories of Huntington (1957) and Janowitz (1960), which emphasize the necessity of civilian control over the military to prevent authoritarianism, Nigerian civil-military relations need robust frameworks that ensure military professionalism and subordination to civilian authority. Yet, Nigeria's governance has sometimes relied on the military to address critical national issues, inadvertently undermining civilian institutions and risking militarization (Williams, 2015). Scholars argue that sustainable democracy requires not just civilian oversight but also institutional reforms that foster accountability, transparency and respect for human rights within the military (Ebo, 2015).

Civil-military relations are central to Nigeria's democratic consolidation, governance and stability. With Nigeria's unique political history marked by prolonged military rule and democratic transitions, effective civil-military relations help balance the military's role in security and national defence with the need for civilian control over the armed forces. This balance is essential to prevent authoritarianism, protect human rights, and foster sustainable development in Nigeria.

The following are the advantages of Civil-Military Relations in Nigeria:

- **Safeguarding Democracy and Preventing Military Intervention**

One of the primary reasons for establishing effective civil-military relations in Nigeria is to protect democratic governance. Samuel Huntington's Theory of Civilian Control posits that democratic stability is achieved when the military remains subordinate to civilian authorities (Huntington, 1957). Nigeria's history of military coups, beginning with the 1966 coup and followed by repeated interventions until 1999, demonstrated the detrimental effects of military rule on democracy and institutional development (Agbese, 2014). Ensuring strong civilian oversight is, therefore, necessary to prevent a return to military authoritarianism and to consolidate Nigeria's democracy (Williams, 2015).

- **Enhancing Accountability and Transparency**

Civilian control over the military promotes accountability and transparency, especially in defence spending and internal security operations. In Nigeria, the military is often allocated substantial budgetary resources, especially in times of insecurity (Sambo & Eme, 2020). However, corruption and lack of accountability within the military have raised concerns among the public and government officials. Civilian oversight mechanisms, including legislative review of defence budgets and expenditures, help to mitigate corruption and ensure funds are used efficiently (Abdulrahman & Tar, 2008). Civil-military relations thus play a vital role in building public trust and credibility, both of which are essential for the legitimacy of the military and government.

- **Protecting Human Rights and the Rule of Law**

A professional military that respects human rights and the rule of law is fundamental to civil-military relations. Nigeria faces numerous internal security challenges, including Boko Haram insurgency, banditry and communal conflicts, which have led to extensive military involvement in civilian areas (Duruji, Ebohon, & Akinola, 2018). However, human rights abuse and excessive use of force by military personnel have often been reported during these operations, undermining the military's reputation and causing public resentment (Ebo, 2015). Civilian oversight in the form of human rights education, military justice reforms and transparent rules of engagement can mitigate these issues, ensuring that the military's role aligns with democratic values and respects civil liberties (Obasanjo, 2021).

- **Strengthening National Security and Stability**

The military's role in Nigeria extends beyond traditional defence; it is often involved in counter-terrorism, anti-insurgency and other domestic security operations. Effective civil-military relations foster better coordination between the military and civilian agencies, such as the police and intelligence services, creating a more comprehensive and unified approach to national security (Abdulrahman & Tar, 2008). This collaboration is particularly relevant in Nigeria's fight against Boko Haram and other internal threats, where civilian agencies benefit from the operational expertise of the military. Good civil-military relations support these agencies while also ensuring that the military does not encroach on areas that are typically the domain of civilian institutions.

- **Promoting Economic and Social Development**

Stable civil-military relations contribute to economic and social development by ensuring a peaceful and stable environment for growth. When the military remains apolitical and focused on national defence, the likelihood of political stability increases, creating a conducive environment for foreign investments, social programmes and infrastructure development (Cohen, 2014). Furthermore, military professionalism is characterized by training, discipline and adherence to democratic norms, as it reduces the chances of internal conflict and supports civilian government initiatives in areas like disaster relief, development projects and public health.

Best Practices of Civil-Military Relations in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the effective management of civil-military relations is essential for national stability, security and democratic consolidation. Best practices in civil-military relations emphasize clear boundaries between military and civilian authorities, promote accountability and respect for human rights and build public trust. These practices are necessary for establishing a professional military that is supportive of, but subordinate to,

civilian authority. These practices have been evolving in Nigeria as the country navigates democratic governance amid complex security challenges.

The following are the best practices for civil-military relations:

- **Clear Legal Frameworks for Civilian Control**

One of the foundational best practices for effective civil-military relations is the establishment of legal frameworks that clearly delineate military and civilian responsibilities. Nigeria's *1999 Constitution*, for example, explicitly defines the roles of the military and its subordination to civilian authority, particularly under the executive branch (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). Clear legal structures ensure that military actions are authorized and overseen by civilian institutions, preventing potential abuses of power. The Nigerian National Defence Policy also reflects this principle by mandating military loyalty to the constitution and respect for democratic governance (Duruji, Ebohon, & Akinola, 2018). This structured civilian oversight contributes to military professionalism and instils a culture of accountability.

- **Institutionalized Civilian Oversight**

Institutional oversight mechanisms, such as legislative committees on defence and security, are essential for monitoring military activities and budgets. Nigeria's National Assembly has an active role in reviewing military budgets, operations and procurement, ensuring accountability and transparency in defence spending (Sambo & Eme, 2020). This oversight curbs corruption and builds trust with the public by ensuring that resources are used effectively. For example, in 2021, the National Assembly investigated military spending to address allegations of mismanagement and improve accountability in defence operations (*Premium Times*, 2021). This institutionalized oversight holds military leaders accountable and reinforces the military's commitment to supporting civilian governance.

- **Respect for Human Rights and the Rule of Law**

A significant best practice in Nigeria's civil-military relations is the military's commitment to respecting human rights and operating within legal limits. The Nigerian Armed Forces have taken steps to reduce instances of human rights abuses by implementing training programmes focused on humanitarian law, rules of engagement, and human rights practices (Abdulrahman & Tar, 2008). The military's response to the Boko Haram insurgency highlights this, where, under increased civilian and international scrutiny, the Nigerian Army has incorporated human rights guidelines and collaborated with human rights organizations to address past abuses (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Efforts to adhere to legal protocols in conflict situations build public confidence and improve the military's image.

- **Enhanced Military Professionalism and Training**

Maintaining a well-trained, professional military that respects democratic principles is a core best practice in civil-military relations. In Nigeria, professional training programmes have been introduced to help officers understand their roles within a democratic framework. For example, military academies now incorporate modules on civil-military relations, constitutional law and democratic governance to educate personnel on the importance of civilian control (Obasanjo, 2021). Such training strengthens the professionalism of military personnel and reinforces their allegiance to the constitution over any political interests. Moreover, Nigerian military personnel participate in international peacekeeping missions, which expose them to global standards of professionalism and human rights, further enhancing civil-military relations at home (Williams, 2015).

- **Civil-Military Dialogue and Public Engagement**

Open communication and mutual understanding between the military and civilian populations foster better civil-military relations. Nigeria's military has made strides in engaging with communities through initiatives like "Operation Safe Corridor," which rehabilitates ex-combatants and integrates them back into society (Duruji, Ebohon, & Akinola, 2018). By involving communities in security efforts, the military not only addresses security issues but also builds trust with civilians. Additionally, Nigeria has seen the establishment of military-civil relations units, particularly in conflict-prone areas, to mediate between military personnel and local communities, reducing tensions and promoting a positive military image (Ebo, 2015).

- **Transparency in Military Operations**

Transparency in military operations, especially regarding domestic security and counterinsurgency efforts, is essential for building public trust and ensuring civil rights are respected. The Nigerian Armed Forces have made efforts to keep the public informed about ongoing military operations and security initiatives, which promotes transparency and accountability (Sambo & Eme, 2020). For example, the military has used press briefings and public reports to disclose details on anti-terrorism operations, thereby reducing the likelihood of misinformation. This transparency helps the public understand military activities, strengthens accountability and provides a platform for feedback and grievances, which is critical to improved relations.

Conclusion

The study of civil-military relations in Nigeria highlights the complex interplay between military influence and civilian control in a nation striving to consolidate democracy and maintain security. Given Nigeria's history of military rule and recent democratic developments, understanding and improving civil-military relations are crucial. Key

elements of Nigeria's civil-military relations include establishing legal frameworks, implementing civilian oversight, enhancing transparency and accountability and promoting human rights. These best practices contribute to building a professional military that aligns with democratic principles, which, in turn, fosters public trust and upholds the rule of law. Historically, Nigeria's military played a dominant role in governance, staging coups and establishing authoritarian rule. However, the transition to democracy in 1999 marked a turning point, emphasizing the need for a clearly defined and balanced relationship between civilian and military institutions.

The Nigerian constitution, military training reforms, and initiatives for greater transparency and accountability reflect efforts to consolidate democratic norms within the military. This balance is also crucial to preventing abuses of power, ensuring the military remains apolitical and enhancing national security through cooperation between the military and other civilian agencies. Nigeria's security challenges, including insurgency, terrorism and communal conflicts, highlight the military's role in domestic affairs while also raising concerns about human rights and civilian impacts. Effective civil-military relations practices, such as legislative oversight, human rights training and public engagement, address these challenges by ensuring the military's actions align with the values of democratic governance. These practices promote professionalism within the military, improve public trust, and support Nigeria's broader goals of stability and socio-economic development.

In conclusion, strengthening civil-military relations in Nigeria is essential to consolidating democracy, maintaining public trust and achieving national stability. By institutionalizing civilian control, fostering military professionalism and emphasizing human rights, Nigeria can build a resilient democratic system, where the military functions as a true defender of the constitution and the people. Continued efforts in these areas will not only secure Nigeria's democratic future but also contribute to sustainable peace and development across the nation.

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45**GLOBAL POLITICS AND BALANCE OF POWER IN THE 21ST CENTURY:
REFLECTIONS ON THE MONROE DOCTRINE OF 1823****By****B. T. Michael**

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Abstract

This paper examined the Monroe Doctrine (1823) and the balance of power politics in the 21st century. The paper adopted secondary and multidisciplinary sources to collate the data for the study. It applied the liberalism theory as a template for analysis. The study showed that global politics in the 21st century has been characterized by a dynamic and evolving balance of power, shaped by shifting alliances, technological advancements and geopolitical rivalries. It revealed that the Monroe Doctrine is a cornerstone of American foreign policy that proclaimed opposition to European colonialism in the Western Hemisphere. Initially intended to protect newly independent Latin American nations and assert US influence, the doctrine evolved over time into a justification for American interventionism and regional hegemony. The study showed that the doctrine's core ideas of non-interference and the assertion of influence over a defined sphere intersect with global trends, including the rise of multi-polarity and the resurgence of great power competition. It revealed that its impact on developing countries, particularly those of Africa, have been far-reaching and, in most cases, burdensome. The study evaluated the doctrine's enduring influence on US policy toward Latin America, and analyzed the implications for regional sovereignty, economic partnerships and security dynamics. It gave recommendations, and concluded that the Monroe Doctrine is a fundamental foreign policy tool of the United State government, used to forge colonialism and US expansionism.

Keywords: Monroe Doctrine, Influence, Colonialism, Hegemony, Multi-polarity

Introduction

The Monroe Doctrine, enunciated by President James Monroe on December 2, 1823, during his annual speech to Congress, represented a critical event in the history of American foreign policy. The doctrine was written in a time after Napoleon's death in Europe and as independence movements grew in Latin America. It told European powers very clearly that they should not colonize or meddle in the Western Hemisphere again. Monroe asserted that the United States would view any such endeavours as acts of hostility, necessitating intervention (Stevenson, 2025). Although initially lacking the military might to enforce it, the doctrine's significance lay in its articulation of a

hemispheric sphere of influence, positioning the United States as a guardian of the Americas and setting the stage for its future ascendancy on the global stage. The effects of the Monroe Doctrine on global politics have been profound and enduring, shaping not only US foreign relations but also international power dynamics over the past two centuries. Throughout the 19th century, the doctrine served as a rhetorical shield against European imperialism in the Americas, aligning with the broader anti-colonial sentiment that characterized much of the Western Hemisphere. Notably, it bolstered US support for Latin American nations seeking to consolidate their independence, even as the United States pursued its territorial expansion under the guise of “Manifest Destiny” (Bryne, 2020). This dual role as protector of sovereignty and expansionist power revealed the inherent contradictions within the doctrine, foreshadowing tensions that would manifest in later interpretations and applications.

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Monroe Doctrine has grown into a cornerstone of US imperial aspirations. The Roosevelt Corollary, enunciated by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1904, redefined the theory to rationalize US action in Latin America for the purpose of preserving stability and averting European intrusion. This broadening of the doctrine's reach underlay the United States' rising position as a regional police force, typified by operations in the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Nicaragua (LaFeber, 1994). These actions, while framed as protective measures, often fostered resentment and distrust among Latin American nations, highlighting the doctrine's dual legacy of regional dominance and contested legitimacy. The Monroe Doctrine's influence extended beyond the Western Hemisphere, intersecting with global political developments in the 20th and 21st centuries. During the Cold War, the doctrine assumed renewed significance as the United States sought to counter Soviet influence in Latin America. Interventions in Guatemala (1954), Cuba (1961) and Chile (1973) were justified through a Cold War lens, portraying the Western Hemisphere as a vital battleground in the ideological struggle between capitalism and communism (Gaddis, 2005). These interventions underscored the doctrine's adaptability, as its original anti-colonial ethos was repurposed to serve the geopolitical imperatives of the United States in a bipolar world order.

In the contemporary era, the Monroe Doctrine's relevance still persists, albeit in a transformed geopolitical context. The rise of multi-polarity and the increasing influence of external powers, such as China and Russia, in Latin America have prompted renewed debates about the doctrine's applicability. While US officials, such as former National Security Advisor John Bolton, have invoked the doctrine to reaffirm American interests in the region, critics argue that such rhetoric risks alienating Latin American nations and undermining cooperative approaches to addressing shared challenges (Erikson, 2019).

Moreover, the doctrine's historical baggage complicates its reception, as many in the region associate it with a legacy of interventionism and paternalism. As the bicentenary of the Monroe Doctrine has just passed, its enduring implications for global politics warrant critical examination. The doctrine's change from a defensive claim of hemispheric sovereignty to an instrument of American hegemony shows larger issues in international relations, such as how power, ideology and sovereignty interact. Furthermore, its resonance in contemporary geopolitics highlights the enduring tension between historical legacies and emerging realities in a rapidly changing world. Thus, this study illuminates the complex and often contradictory role the Monroe Doctrine played in shaping global political dynamics over the past two centuries.

Theoretical Framework

Liberalism, which is based on the ideas of individual freedom, the rule of law and economic interdependence, is a great way to look at how the Monroe Doctrine has affected world politics over the years. Originating in 1823 as a US foreign policy stance to deter European intervention in the Western Hemisphere, the Monroe Doctrine aligns with liberal ideals by promoting self-determination and sovereignty for the Americas (Smith, 2006). From a liberal point of view, the doctrine supported the idea of a global order that put an emphasis on respecting and not interfering with the sovereignty of sovereign states. This set the stage for friendly cooperation. However, liberalism also critiques the US later reinterpretation of the doctrine to justify interventionism, particularly through the Roosevelt Corollary and Cold War containment strategies. Such actions often contradicted liberal principles of mutual respect and equality among nations (Keohane & Nye, 1977).

In contemporary global politics, the Monroe Doctrine reflects liberalism's dual role in fostering stability and justifying power dynamics. The doctrine has influenced the US role in shaping hemispheric institutions, like Organization of American States (OAS), advocating collective security and economic cooperation. Yet, liberalism also underscores the doctrine's paradoxical implications, as US interventions sometimes undermined the sovereignty of Latin American nations, fuelling regional tensions (Schlesinger & Kinzer, 1982). Thus, in emphasizing institutional engagement and multilateralism, liberalism explains the doctrine's transition from a hemispheric policy to a tool for broader geopolitical influence, affecting US-China and US-Russia dynamics in Latin America today.

Conceptual Review

Initially established in 1823 as a unilateral declaration, the Monroe Doctrine aimed to deter European colonial ambitions in the Americas (Smith, 2005). Studies that look at its history have shown how it changed over time, from a policy of hemispheric isolationism

to a reason for the US to get involved. For instance, Sexton (2011) used primary sources, such as presidential addresses and diplomatic correspondences, to argue that the doctrine's interpretation shifted significantly during the late 19th and the early 20th centuries, especially under the Roosevelt Corollary. This adaptation legitimized US actions in Latin America, reinforcing its role as a regional hegemon.

Gonzalez and Perez (2019) conducted a comparative study of US interventions in Latin America from 1900 to 2000, arguing that the Monroe Doctrine served as both a justification and a framework for U.S. involvement in the region. Gonzalez and Perez's empirical analysis of US actions in Cuba, Nicaragua and Chile illustrates the use of the doctrine to suppress socialism and safeguard American economic interests.

Brown (2018) explored the Monroe Doctrine's evolution during the Cold War, emphasizing its use as a geopolitical tool to counter Soviet influence in the Western Hemisphere. The study used declassified CIA and UN records to show how the doctrine was deployed to defend US actions in Guatemala (1954) and Grenada (1983), saying they were needed to stop the spread of communism.

Moreover, Nguyen (2021) examined how the Monroe Doctrine continues to influence US foreign policy, particularly in relation to China's growing influence in Latin America. The study used a mix of trade data and diplomatic statements to argue that the doctrine has been changed in a way that goes against China's Belt and Road Initiative in the region.

Martinez (2022), used survey data and content analysis of international media to assess global perceptions of the Monroe Doctrine. The study found that many nations in Latin America view the doctrine as a form of neo-imperialism, while European countries often interpret it as a relic of 19th-century geopolitics. These findings highlight the doctrine's enduring divisiveness in global politics.

Historical Evolution of the Monroe Doctrine of 1823

Kindersley (2007) states that the principle defining what has become known as the Monroe Doctrine was first delineated by President James Monroe in his seventh annual address to Congress on December 2, 1823. He asserted that European states should not interfere with the sovereignty of nations in the Western Hemisphere. The doctrine was developed by Monroe and his cabinet members in response to the fact that France was enlisting the assistance of Russia, Austria and Prussia in a plan to help Spain reclaim its former American colonies. France's motive was to restore the Bourbons to power in Spain and gain access to the reclaimed colonies and lucrative trade routes, which were currently controlled by Britain. Alarmed, British Foreign Minister George Canning sought to issue a joint declaration with the United States, whose principles would be similar to those being considered by the Monroe administration. Former President James Madison encouraged

Monroe to pursue his bilateral approach, but Monroe's Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, concerned by both the Franco-Russian alliance and Britain's hidden motives, argued that sole authorship would not only state clearly the United States position on the issue but also establish the young country's unique presence in world affairs. Monroe agreed and created the cornerstone of American foreign policy for the Western Hemisphere (Stevenson, 2025).

By the end of the 19th century, the Monroe Doctrine was seen as a fundamental element in the foreign policy of the United States and one of its longest-standing principles. It has been mentioned by various U.S. politicians and multiple presidents, including Ulysses S. Grant, Theodore Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan. The intent and effect of the Monroe Doctrine survived with minor modifications for over a century. The goal of the doctrine was to make it possible for the United States to exert its influence without intervention from other world powers, free the newly independent Latin American colonies from European control and forestall any situation that may turn the New World into a battleground for the Old World powers. Given that the Old World and the New World were made up of completely separate states, the doctrine argued that these two regions should continue to be influenced by different powers. Following its adoption in 1898, the Monroe Doctrine was rethought by Latin American scholars and lawyers in the light of multilateralism and non-intervention, with a focus on the Organization of American States.

Elizabeth and Anthony (2003) contend that, during the 1820s, Spain conspired to reclaim its American territories. Britain resisted any action that might hinder commerce with Latin America. It urged the United States to endorse the declaration against any further colonization of the Americas. President Monroe, however, sought to evade "entangling alliances" with Britain. In 1823, he unilaterally proclaimed the Monroe Doctrine. He declared the American continent exempt from future colonization by any European power. The United States lacked the military capability to enforce the doctrine but recognized Britain's readiness to utilize its formidable navy to uphold the doctrine and deter European interference. Garraty (1989) claims that Adams counselled President Monroe to have the United States issue its own statement, which should address the entirety of relations between the United States, other nations in the Western Hemisphere, and the countries of Europe. Following extensive deliberation, the president acquiesced. On December 2, 1823, Congress convened to receive the president's annual State of the Union address. The address, akin to most similar speeches, addressed numerous topics. Monroe's remarks regarding foreign relations constituted a minor portion of the overall discourse. He did not emphasize the topic in any particular manner.

Hervig (1955) stressed that the steps that led to President Monroe's declaration of 1823 (one of the most fateful and durable utterances in the history of American

diplomacy) involved events in both America and Europe. On the American side, there had been the growing desire that European meddling in the Western Hemisphere be ended. This sentiment was solidified in 1811, when the United States Congress, faced with rumours of Spain transferring Florida to England, adopted a joint resolution stating that “the United States cannot, without serious inquietude, see any part of the said territory pass into the hands of any foreign power.” This “no transfer” resolution stands as the first official statement of the principle later enunciated by Monroe.

The Principles of the Monroe Doctrine

- The United States would refrain from intervening in any established European colonies in North or South America. The United States had no intention of compelling Great Britain to relinquish Canada or Spain to cede Cuba.
- The colonial era of North and South American history is concluded. No other colonies could be established in the Americas.
- The United States would see any effort to establish a new colony as a threat to its peace and security. In other words, the United States mythologizes its engagement in warfare to thwart such endeavours.
- The political systems of the United States and Europe are distinct and should remain separate. Consequently, the United States would refrain from engaging in exclusively European matters.

As Michael et al. (2013, p. 462) argue, the election of James Monroe to the presidency in 1816 continued the “Virginia Dynasty” of Jefferson and Monroe. It also marked the beginning of what historians have called the “*Era of Good Feeling*.” during which the old Federalist Party of Washington and Adams collapsed. When Monroe ran for re-election in 1820, he faced no opposition. However, the dominance and seemingly unified republication shielded political factionalism, paving the way for the emergence of a new two-party system. The most major foreign policy action of the “*Era of Good Feeling*.” was the announcement of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, which announced that “the American continents are no longer subjects for any new European colonial establishments.” Michael et al. (2013) assert that the doctrine had minimal influence initially, although it later significantly contributed to the expansion of American hegemony across the hemisphere by the end of the century.

The Monroe Doctrine and American Politics since the 19th Century

The United States economy had surpassed all others in terms of productivity by the year 1890. Manufacturing in the United States was two times as productive as in Britain, its closest competitor. Nonetheless, American diplomatic and military clout was negligible. Less than thirty thousand men made up the army, while about ten thousand made up the

navy. Both the army and the navy of the United Kingdom were five times larger than those of the United States. Because of its location between two enormous seas and its closeness to either weak or friendly nations, the United States military was small. It showed no interest in extending its military might overseas and faced no serious military threats. Almost no one in the United States cared about expanding their territory between the Civil War and the 1890s. In 1967, the United States invaded the Midway Islands in the Pacific and seized Alaska from Russia (Hudson and Lens, 2003). A change in European views about expansion had an impact on American perspectives on growth by the mid-1890s.

Between 1870 and 1900, European nations annexed approximately one-fifth of the Earth's landmass, or 10 million square miles. Colonial powers ruled over 150 million people. There was growing concern among American politicians, financiers, industrialists and labour organizations that the country might be left behind in the race for raw commodities and international markets. Another factor that contributed to the rise of new boldness in America was the belief that all nations were engaged in a Darwinian struggle for survival, with less aggressive nations doomed to collapse. International commerce had grown more important to the American economy by the 1890s. The country exported half of its petroleum and a quarter of its agricultural products. Naval strategist and author of "The Effect of Sea Power upon History." Alfred Thayer Mahan argued that nations' prosperity and influence were dependent on their command of international shipping channels. "Whoever controls the waters of the ocean controls the world," Mahan wrote. To cement its position as a major naval power, the United States began replacing its wooden sailing ships with steel vessels propelled by coal or oil in 1883. Gaining control of the seas, however, called for the construction of naval bases and coaling stations (Bryne, 2020).

As the nineteenth century came to a close, the idea that America had a special responsibility to help "backward" people all over the world became more popular. There were 500 Protestant Christian missions in China by 1890, among many in Asia and Africa. American foreign policymakers started acting more aggressively in the late 1880s. The United States was on the verge of declaring war on Germany in 1889 over Samoa, Chile in 1891 over the treatment of US sailors, and Britain in 1895 over a territorial dispute including Venezuela. The United States' involvement in the 1893 coup d'état in Hawaii sparked a heated debate over America's place in the globe. People argued over whether the United States should act like a superpower and conquer other countries or keep to itself (Luce, 2025).

The United States was only beginning to tap into its full expansion and economic potential in the early 1800s. Simultaneously, the Latin American colonies of Spain were progressively becoming independent and might be at risk if the new Latin American

republics could not form a stable administration. Avoiding international conflicts and keeping America independent from foreign alliances were the initial objectives of US foreign policy at the time. The second objective was to increase US influence throughout North America. One of President James Monroe's greatest achievements was to get Americans to rethink America's position in international affairs, which began in the late 1800s. The Monroe Doctrine forbade the establishment of any new American colonies by Europeans. The growing American power in the Western Hemisphere was completely absent from the discussion. The United States engagement with Latin American nations grew stronger after the Civil War. James G. Blaine sought to develop stronger business connections with Latin America in the 1890s while serving as Secretary of State under Presidents Garfield and Harrison (Garraty, 1989). All the Western Hemisphere nations should feel like they belong to a larger group with common goals, according to Blaine. For this reason, several Latin American nations were hesitant to work with Blaine. In 1889, Blaine asked the Latin American countries to send delegates to a meeting in Washington. The first-ever Pan-American summit was held after these delegates had visited 41 different sites (Luce, 2025).

The United States solidified its position as a world power following its victory in the Spanish-American War. Quick transit of US naval vessels between the Atlantic and Pacific was considered critical by the country (Mounir & Andrea, 1997). The interests of the United States in Latin America were further bolstered by gaining control of the Panama Canal, which was necessary for crossing the narrow land bridge known as the Isthmus of Panama, which connects Central America and South America. Because of this, American influence remained strong in the area far into the twentieth century. President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Roosevelt Corollary, an expansion of the Monroe Doctrine, into law in 1904. European countries threatened to use force to recover debts owed by Latin American states that could not repay their loans. The idea that the United States would use its military might to compel Latin American countries to pay their debts was something Roosevelt categorically rejected. In addition to threatening to forcefully intervene in Latin America, the US made it clear that it would prevent European states from doing so.

In 1895, as observed by Garraty (1989), the United States once more asserted its influence in South America, particularly in Great Britain, Venezuela and British Guiana, a small British colony located on the North coast of South America. Venezuela had sought to settle the dispute in the past, but Great Britain always refused to accept an outside judge to define the line. Tensions rose in the 1880s, when the greatest gold was found in the land both countries claimed. In this situation, President Grover Cleveland was fearful that, if the British grabbed any more territory in the Western Hemisphere, other European nations might follow, and the economic and political interests of the United States in Latin

America would be compromised. He was resolute in his intention to compel Great Britain to resolve the dispute over territorial ownership through arbitration, permitting an impartial adjudicator to provide a decision. President Cleveland instructed his Secretary of State, Olney, to convey a severe communication to the British government. Olney's correspondence of July 20, 1895, was notably forceful and very disparaging in tone. Olney asserted that the United States was the preeminent force in the region; the Monroe Doctrine forbade additional European expansion in the Western Hemisphere; and that the United States would interfere in conflicts between European and Latin American states to ensure the Monroe Doctrine was upheld. Despite the severe tone of Olney's communication, the British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, regarded it as a mere bluff. He believed Cleveland was engaging in the political manoeuvre known as "twisting the British Lion's tail." Salisbury dismissed Olney's assertion that the Monroe Doctrine pertained to the boundary dispute. "He stated, both courteously and assertively, that Britain's conflict with Venezuela was not a concern of the United States."

This answer infuriated Cleveland greatly. The Monroe Doctrine was applicable to the situation. The United States would oppose any British appropriation of Venezuelan land by all available means. The president asked Congress for funding so that a United States panel could investigate the disagreement. If the British rejected its conclusions, the United States would resort to force. Almost all individuals appeared to endorse Cleveland's stringent position. A short conflict between the United States and Great Britain was imminent. However, neither administration sought conflict, mostly aiming to reaffirm the Monroe Doctrine to the globe. Great Britain had several diplomatic challenges, rendering it unwilling to engage in conflict for what it saw as a relatively insignificant territory in South America. Upon recognizing the perilous nature of the situation, Lord Salisbury consented to allow an independent committee to determine the boundary's placement. On the surface, the United States looked to be protecting a little Latin American republic against a large European power in what came to be known as the Venezuela border dispute. In reality, it served as a warning to both Europe and Latin America, highlighting the status of the United States as the most influential nation in the Western Hemisphere.

After seeing England, Germany, France and Belgium build empires in Asia and Africa, America went to war with Spain in the Spanish-American War. Simply put, Roosevelt's presidency expanded the Monroe Doctrine. Theodore Roosevelt invigorated foreign diplomacy. He wanted America to be a powerful force that could affect the world. Roosevelt formalized this approach in a major speech to Congress in 1904. He emphasized to his listeners that the point of the Monroe Doctrine was to prevent European meddling in American affairs. The use of "international police power" was Roosevelt's fundamental argument for keeping the hemisphere peaceful and protecting American interests. He

claimed that this power would protect weak nations and was an obvious follow-up to the Monroe Doctrine (Bryne, 2020).

The Monroe Doctrine was regarded as the sphere of influence. It impacted basically Cuba, which sparked off the Spanish-American War. The Spanish-American War was waged by a youthful, audacious nation seeking to rejuvenate itself, to emerge from economic malaise, and to assert its status in a haughty Europe. The discourse regarding America's international position escalated when Cubans commenced their struggle for independence from Spain in 1895 (Wisan, 1934, p. 30). The United States, rapidly drifting towards armed intervention, closely followed the war in Cuba. The US was motivated by a variety of contradictory considerations; imperialist sentiments were on the rise. It was argued that the US should take its place among the world powers by acquiring colonial possessions or, at least, by demonstrating its military might to the world. Theodore Roosevelt best exemplified this position. Spain tried to defuse the rising conflict with the US; a series of international incidents and US public opinion propelled the two countries towards war. Soon, Spain came to accept the inevitability of war events; things moved quickly. In January 1898, the US battleship Maine was sent to Havana "to protect U.S. lives and property." On 15th February 1898, an explosion on the Maine in the harbour of Havana killed 260 US officers and enlisted men. A US investigation concluded that the explosion was the result of a mine and accused the Spanish authorities of complicity.

The US press landed the slogan, "Remember Maine, to hell with Spain." Spain gave in to US diplomatic pressure by promising an armistice, termination of the re-concentration policy, arbitration in the case of the Maine, and the placing of the future of Cuba in the hands of the Cuban local government. However, it still did not offer full Cuban independence. On April 25, 1898, the United States Congress declared war against Spain. Congress enacted the Teller Amendment, which prohibits the complete annexation of Cuba. Congress initially implemented the Roosevelt Corollary, an extension of the Monroe Doctrine, in 1905. During that period, the United States assumed control of the Dominican Republic's customs agency, collecting duties and allocating them to the nation's debtors. From 1916, United States Marines occupied the Dominican Republic for eight years to maintain order. During the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, President John F. Kennedy invoked the Monroe Doctrine as justification for America's conflict with Soviet ballistic missiles on Cuban territory (Igbokwe & Okonkwo, 2011).

According to Mann (1998), in the early 2000s, Latin America and the Caribbean were a special concentration of US foreign policy. The United States considered this territory to be its "backyard." a strategic location from which it could exert its influence and strength. Panama piqued American interest in the middle of the nineteenth century. In an effort to connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, several nations considered building a canal through Central America. Both militarily and commercially, a canal of this kind

would be very important. In order to reach Cuba from California, the battleship USS Oregon had to sail more than 14,000 miles around the southern tip of South America during the Spanish-American War. With a canal, the distance would be less than 5,000 kilometres. Colombia included the narrow Panamanian Isthmus. The Colombian government turned down an offer from the Roosevelt administration to help acquire land in Panama so a canal could be built, but the plan was rejected. American agents sparked a Panamanian uprising in 1903. To prevent Colombian soldiers from taking part, Roosevelt sent warships. After the successful coup, the US quickly recognized Panama as an independent nation (Rathbone, 2025).

Puerto Rico is not the only island that the US influences. The US became heavily involved in the situation in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico's infrastructure development began with the establishment of a military administration following the Spanish-American War. It established the postal service and educational institutions. The government built roads and improved sanitation. An American governor led the United States' transition to a civilian government in 1900. Puerto Ricans founded political parties and constituted a legislature. But for the next 20 years, the island remained American property, and Puerto Ricans' resentment of American rule only grew. They did not qualify as either a sovereign nation or a citizen of the US. Rayford (1968) states that the United States wanted to maintain control over Puerto Rico because of the island's strategic importance in the Caribbean. The policy's impact extended to Central America and Caribbean America. As compensation for a debt that the country owed Germany, a piece of what is now the Dominican Republic—Santo Domingo—was claimed by Germany in 1904. After James Monroe and William McKinley were assassinated, Theodore Roosevelt took office and warned Germany not to meddle in the Western Hemisphere, saying the US would deal with the matter on its own. He proclaimed the Roosevelt Corollary, an amendment to the Monroe Doctrine.

Furthermore, in July 1915, after the mob had murdered Haiti's sixth president in seven years, the United States interfered in the country. After being forcibly expelled from the French delegation, Vilbrun Guillaume Sam was later killed by hacking. The crowd then paraded his desecrated body around the streets of Haiti's capital, Port-Au-Prince (Rayford, 1958). Haiti has been through 102 uprisings, conflicts or coups in the past 72 years; out of 22 presidents, just three served a full term, and four died of natural reasons. Amidst the engagement of European armies in World War I, President Woodrow Wilson worried about the danger of a German conquest of Haiti, which might imperil the marine path to the Panama Canal. In an effort to restore order and protect American interests, the president sent 330 sailors and marines to Haiti. In addition, the U.S. helped build nearly 1,000 miles of dirt roads, set up numerous vocational and agricultural schools, and trained the Haitian police and military. Furthermore, it facilitated the removal of

mulattoes, a group of people with mixed Black and White ancestries, from government positions. American businesspeople were given the legal right to own property in Haiti after the Haitians were forced to adopt a new constitution by the United States (*Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia*, 2008).

The United States thus became a major player in the Asia-Pacific region. American forces, aided by Filipino leader Emilio Aguinaldo, captured the Philippines during the Spanish-American War. Independence was a cause that Aguinaldo championed after the conflict. He asserted that the United States guaranteed the islands' independence. Although President McKinley maintained that the Filipinos were ill-equipped for self-governance, the US chose not to award independence. His goal, he said, was to "uplift, civilize, and Christianize" the islanders. In his efforts to prevent another country from assuming control of the island, he aimed to maintain American dominance. After electing Aguinaldo president and creating a constitution, the Filipino people moved forward with their plans for independence. Fighting broke out between American and Filipino forces in February 1899. In response to the uprising, the US sent hundreds of thousands of soldiers to the Philippines. Successive battles resulted in casualties for the Filipino army. Aguinaldo subsequently adopted guerrilla tactics, with rapid assaults on American forces. The United States retaliated with severe violence, obliterating communities and confining residents in internment camps. American forces finally captured Aguinaldo in 1901. After the conflict ended, the US helped build schools and fortified Philippine ports. It also encouraged Filipino involvement in local administration and established it. The Philippines remained under US rule for the next fifty years until gaining independence on July 11, 1946 (Garraty, 1989).

It was China that the United States focused on at the end of the nineteenth century. There was a huge potential customer base for American goods in this enormous country because of its wealth of resources. The US and other major nations closely watched the Korean War between Japan and China in the 1890s. This battle demonstrated China's weakness and instability. After the war ended, Germany, Russia and France all rallied behind China, hoping to get benefits in return. The definition of spheres of influence within Chinese territory was initiated by this power, along with Britain and Spain. There was a monopoly on trade rights in certain areas held by one country. There have been very few cases of foreign countries reclaiming land for military bases. The result was the quick partition of a large chunk of China into areas controlled by other countries. In order to maintain access to Chinese markets, the US wanted to prevent foreign colonization of the country. Secretary of State John Hay supported this goal with his foreign policy pronouncements, sometimes known as the "Open Door" policy.

In 1899, Secretary of State John Hay issued the first proclamation, requesting other nations to allow unrestricted trade with China. The replies given by a few international countries were vague. Conclusive and Hay's stern description of the "Open Door" policy was "irrevocable." It was initiated by the Boxers in 1900 with the intention of expelling the "foreign devils" from China. It did not take long for the US, Japan and European nations to band together and put down the rebellion. Hay was concerned that other countries might use the Boxer Rebellion as an excuse to increase their influence in China. Foreign governments must allow free business and honour Chinese sovereignty, he said, making a more categorical statement about the policy. To maintain peace with China, the other nations opted not to voice their complaints. Accordingly, American commerce and influence remained highly valued by China (Rathbone, 2025).

The Implications of the Monroe Doctrine on Global Balance of Power Politics in the 21st Century

The Monroe Doctrine has undergone significant reinterpretation and adaptation over two centuries, shaping global balance of power politics in profound ways. In the 21st century, the Monroe Doctrine remains relevant, albeit in a transformed geopolitical landscape characterized by multi-polarity, emerging powers and non-state actors. The doctrine's original purpose was to create the Western Hemisphere as a zone of US influence, warning European nations against future colonization or meddling (Rathbone, 2025). Subsequently, this policy framework was broadened, especially under the Roosevelt Corollary, which rationalized US action in Latin America to preserve peace and order. This interventionist approach cemented the United States as a regional hegemon, a status it has sought to maintain in the face of 21st century challenges, such as China's growing economic and political engagement in Latin America.

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which has extended into the Western Hemisphere through infrastructure investments and trade agreements, represents a direct challenge to the Monroe Doctrine's principles. Scholars argue that Beijing's investments in ports, railways and energy sectors across Latin America signify not only economic interests but also strategic positioning to counterbalance US influence (Ellis, 2020). Similarly, Russia's geopolitical manoeuvres in the Western Hemisphere, including military cooperation with Venezuela and Cuba, underscore the doctrine's enduring relevance in contemporary power politics. Russia's actions can be interpreted as attempts to undermine US dominance in its traditional sphere of influence, echoing Cold War dynamics (Kuzmarov, 2019). This resurgence of external actors in the Americas raises questions about the efficacy of the Monroe Doctrine in maintaining regional autonomy from extra-hemispheric powers. Some analysts suggested that the doctrine's principles need to be recalibrated to address non-traditional security threats, such as cyber warfare

and transnational organized crime, which also undermine US hegemony in the region (Bitar, 2021).

The doctrine's implications extend beyond the Americas, influencing global balance of power politics through its intersection with broader US foreign policy objectives. For instance, the US pivot to Asia, initiated during the Obama administration, reflects a strategic recalibration to address China's rise in the Indo-Pacific while maintaining influence in the Western Hemisphere. This dual-focus strategy highlights the interconnected nature of regional and global power dynamics. The Monroe Doctrine, in this context, serves as a template for managing spheres of influence, a concept that has gained renewed relevance in a multi-polar world order (Mead, 2014). Critics argued that the Monroe Doctrine's underlying assumptions, particularly its emphasis on US exceptionalism and unilateralism, are untenable in a globalized world. The rise of multilateral institutions and the growing interdependence among nations challenge the doctrine's traditional framework.

Furthermore, Latin American countries have demonstrated greater agency in pursuing independent foreign policies, as evidenced by the establishment of regional organizations, such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and increased engagement with non-Western powers (Keck, 2025). These developments underscore the limitations of the Monroe Doctrine in dictating regional affairs in an era of multi-polarity. Nevertheless, the doctrine's core principles continue to shape U.S. responses to emerging threats and opportunities. The Biden administration's approach to Latin America, for example, reflected a nuanced application of the Monroe Doctrine, focusing on fostering economic partnerships and addressing shared challenges, such as climate change and migration. However, this approach also involved countering China's influence through initiatives like the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity (APEP), which aims to strengthen trade and investment ties within the hemisphere (White House, 2022). This strategic balancing act highlights the enduring relevance of the Monroe Doctrine as a guiding framework for US policy, even as its application evolves to meet contemporary realities.

Moreover, the Monroe Doctrine also intersects with broader debates about the nature of global power in the 21st century. As emerging powers like China and India challenge traditional Western dominance, the concept of spheres of influence, central to the doctrine, has resurfaced in global discourse. Russia's actions in Ukraine, for instance, reflect its assertion of a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, a stance that parallels US claims in the Western Hemisphere under the Monroe Doctrine. This convergence of strategies among major powers underscores the doctrine's broader relevance in shaping global power politics, particularly in a multi-polar world order (Acharya, 2018).

Moreover, the doctrine's emphasis on regional stability and autonomy has implications for addressing non-traditional security challenges. Climate change, for example, poses existential threats to many Latin American and Caribbean nations, necessitating collaborative solutions that transcend traditional power dynamics. Similarly, the rise of transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking and human smuggling, points to the need for a cooperative approach to regional security, aligning with the doctrine's goal of safeguarding the Americas from external threats (Meyer & Seelke, 2021).

In Africa, also, the Monroe Doctrine has impacted the development of US foreign policy in a manner that seeks to consolidate influence over regions rich in natural resources while maintaining a geostrategic advantage. Historically, the U.S. has viewed the African continent through the lens of security and resource control, a perspective that traces its origins back to the Monroe Doctrine's emphasis on protecting the Western Hemisphere from external powers. For example, Africa's role in the global economy has become important due to its vast reserves of oil, minerals and other resources vital to industrialized nations. The U.S. and China, in particular, have deepened their engagement with Africa, recognizing the strategic significance of the continent in global supply chains and economic networks (Adebajo, 2015). In this context, the doctrine's foundational principle of defending one's sphere of influence transformed into modern-day competition for African resources and trade routes. This dynamic has also been evident in US military interests in Africa, particularly in the establishment of military bases and intervention in conflict zones under the guise of counterterrorism efforts and security cooperation with African states (Keck, 2025).

In the 21st century, specifically, the rise of Africa in global politics has been linked to the continent's growing economic and strategic importance. For example, China's increasing investments in Africa, particularly through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), have significantly altered the power dynamics traditionally dominated by Western countries. The US, while still a significant actor in African geopolitics, now faces competition from China, which has leveraged Africa's natural resources and infrastructure development to expand its influence. This competition is emblematic of the global shift in power relations, where traditional power brokers, such as the US and European countries, must contend with emerging actors like China and India, which have become increasingly interested in African economic and political landscapes (Taylor, 2016). African nations, recognizing their newfound importance, have also pushed for greater representation in international organizations, including the United Nations Security Council, advocating reforms that reflect the changing global order.

Furthermore, Africa's integration into the global political sphere is intricately tied to its involvement in multilateral organizations and diplomatic efforts. The African Union

(AU) has played a central role in consolidating the continent's political voice, seeking to address issues such as conflict resolution, human rights and sustainable development. The AU's peacekeeping missions in regions like Sudan and Somalia exemplify Africa's active role in managing security issues, thereby contributing to the larger international peace and security framework (Rathbone, 2025). Additionally, African states have become more vocal in global economic governance, particularly regarding trade, investment and climate change policies. Africa's participation in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and its calls for reform in global trade systems reflect growing consciousness of the need for a more inclusive approach to global economic governance (Adebanwi, 2018).

Despite these advancements, the impact of the Monroe Doctrine on Africa's global integration is not without challenges. The doctrine's legacy has often contributed to a paternalistic view of Africa, wherein Western powers have sought to exert control over the continent's economic and political trajectories. This view can be observed in the history of Western interventions in Africa, including during the colonial period and the Cold War, where the US often sided with authoritarian regimes to maintain influence against Soviet-backed governments. In the post-Cold War period, while the US has shifted its policy focus toward democratization and human rights, the legacy of interventionist policies continues to shape the relationship between the US and African countries (Kieh, 2009). Furthermore, Africa's reliance on foreign aid and its engagement in global institutions have sometimes resulted in dependency, limiting the continent's ability to assert its interests fully in the international arena.

Recommendations

Policy is a systematic framework of principles designed to inform decisions and attain logical results. A policy is an expression of intent, executed as a method or protocol. Policies are defined as political, managerial, financial and administrative instruments used to achieve specific objectives. The government must identify and bring attention to an issue before formulating a policy. Policy formulation entails adopting a strategy to address an issue. It is on this premise that this study puts forward the following recommendations:

- In the light of the rise of China, Russia and other emerging powers, there should be re-evaluation of the Monroe Doctrine's relevance and its application in the modern geopolitical environment. While it once aimed to limit European colonization in the Americas, the expanding influence of China in Latin America and other regions necessitates a broader reassessment. Policies that safeguard regional sovereignty without provoking these emerging powers should be designed.

- Multilateral frameworks that include both Western and non-Western powers to maintain regional stability in the Americas should be encouraged. The US should promote platforms like the Organization of American States (OAS) but also work with China, Russia and other international stakeholders to foster dialogue and cooperation.
- Instead of solely relying on military presence or diplomatic isolation, the US should integrate soft power strategies to reinforce its influence in the Western Hemisphere. This includes investing in education, cultural exchange, economic development, and promoting democracy and human rights in a manner that respects regional diversity.
- In the 21st century, global economic interdependence means that power dynamics are not just about military influence but also economic power. The US and other countries should create trade agreements that benefit both the Americas and global partners, ensuring that economic ties support a peaceful and cooperative balance of power.
- Given that geopolitical power is increasingly global in scope, the US foreign policy should focus on managing competition and cooperation with powers outside the Americas, particularly in regions like Asia, Africa and Europe. This includes revising the Monroe Doctrine to reflect a more inclusive approach to international relations, one that acknowledges the interconnectedness of global politics.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Monroe Doctrine remains a pivotal element of the global balance of power politics in the 21st century, albeit in a transformed geopolitical landscape. Its principles continue to influence US foreign policy, particularly in addressing challenges posed by China and Russia in the Western Hemisphere. At the same time, the doctrine's relevance is shaped by broader shifts in global power dynamics, including the rise of emerging powers and the increasing importance of non-traditional security threats. As the world moves toward a multi-polar order, the Monroe Doctrine serves as both a historical artefact and a living framework for understanding the interplay of regional and global power in an era of profound change.

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46**THE POLITICAL ELITE AND THE CRISES OF DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION
IN NIGERIA****By****Chimaroke Mgba**

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of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.Email address: marokemgba@yahoo.com**Abstract:**

The political elite in every society play leading and indispensable roles in democratic consolidation. Given their strategic position in the scheme of things, it would not have been otherwise. This is typified and symbolized by Michel's "iron law of oligarchy." This law synthesizes the notion of elite inevitability in controlling the levers of State power and governing society. Democratic consolidation is the process of embedding or institutionalizing democracy in any political system. However, democracy in Nigeria is facing crises of consolidation, and the political elite are at the centre of the crises. Thus, this paper problematizes the role of the political elite in Nigeria's democratization. The paper adopts the secondary method of data collection and the analysis is purely qualitative and descriptive. The study argues that the character of the political elite is responsible for the crises of democratic consolidation in the country. It argues that the parasitic, selfish and opportunistic tendencies of the political elite have serious negative implications for democratic consolidation. Their penchant for ignoring and suppressing core democratic values and institutions, especially in the country's electoral process, has not only promoted incessant and perpetual intra-party crises but has also vitiated opposition political parties. The reduction of the electoral process to means of capturing and privatizing State power through the imposition of candidates of political parties, which promotes a patronage system, has undermined the participation of the majority of the people in the process. The paper concludes that, until and unless the problems and/or characteristics of the political elite are concretely and adequately addressed, democracy and democratic consolidation in Nigeria will remain crises-ridden and embattled. It recommends transformation of the Nigerian State through constitutional reforms, economic empowerment of ordinary Nigerians and implementation of electoral reforms to ensure financial and administrative autonomy of INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission) and internal democracy in the political parties as key solutions to the problems.

Keywords: Political elite, democratic consolidation, political parties, election, oligarchy

Introduction

The political elite in every society play leading and indispensable roles in democratic consolidation. Given their strategic position in the scheme of things, it would not have been otherwise. Democratic consolidation is the process of embedding or institutionalizing democracy in any political system, especially in the contemporary era, where democracy is regarded as the “only game in town” (Linz and Stepan, 1996; Haynes, 2012). From the mid-1970s to date, there was unexpected, not regionally specific, shift from unelected to elected governments –the process of democratization. Huntington (1991), a US political scientist, was quick to identify the phenomenon and decided to give it a name: the “third wave of democracy” (Haynes, 2012, p.1). In history, the third wave of democracy, “is the most recent example of a long-term, historical trend towards more democratically viable regimes and away from authoritarian systems and leaders” (Croissant and Haynes, 2014, p. ix). This happened together with the end of the Cold War (Fukuyama, 1993, 2020; Galston, 2018). As aptly noted by Plattner (2019):

The demise of European communism accelerated a growing global consensus that constitutionalism, the rule of law, the protection of individual and minority rights and even market economies were universally desirable even if they were not easily achievable in countries with long histories of authoritarian rule (p. 8).

In the context of Nigeria, this is more or less a resurgence of democratization after several failed attempts in the past to institutionalize democracy during the First, Second and Third Republics. In the last 25 years, Nigeria, like most countries in the developing world, has been going through the democratization process under the Fourth Republic and, without doubt, the process is crisis-ridden; it is at a boiling or breaking point. Democratization in Nigeria is “slumping” (Diamond, 2020) and “embattled” (Plattner, 2020).

Beginning from May 29, 1999, when the military officially relinquished political power to the civilian wing of the elite (political elite), the country has been tortuously marching towards democratic consolidation or maturity. This march has left in its trail doubts and challenges, which are unmistakably and eloquently encapsulated in the widespread disappointment and disenchantment among the majority of Nigerians. This stems mainly from both the defective electoral process, where votes do not count and the will of the people is subverted, as well as the lack of improvement in the material or welfare conditions of ordinary Nigerians.

As Ake (1994, 1996) aptly states in a wider African context, the democratization taking place is not in the least emancipatory, resulting in the disempowerment of the ordinary people. Besides, the process has been reduced simply to multi-party elections among the political elite and so the people only vote without necessarily choosing their

leaders (Ake, 1994, 1996; Fawole, 2005). Ibrahim (2009) argues that elections in Nigeria seem to have been turned by the political elite, who control the state, into “occasions for the subversion of the democratic process” and the consolidation of their narrow interests. As Obi (2008) notes, the present forms of democracy being promoted, as part of a global project, while providing a legitimizing pretext for Nigeria’s political elite to capture and retain power, disempowers the majority of the people.

Overall, democratization in Nigeria is facing crises of consolidation and the political elite are at the centre of the crises. In the view of Albert (2005, p. 79), “the study of political elites and leadership is very important for understanding the trajectories of development in any society.” Thus, this paper problematizes the role of the political elite in Nigeria’s democratization and argues that the character of the political elite is responsible for the crises of democratic consolidation. The lawless, parasitic and opportunistic nature of the political elite is accountable for the crisis. To justify this, the paper is structured as follows: introduction, which outlines the issues, statement of problem and objective; conceptual clarification of political elite and democratic consolidation; analysis of the peculiar characteristics of the Nigerian political elite and their implications for democratic consolidation; conclusion; and recommendations. This is basically a documentary paper. In other words, the paper adopts the secondary method of data collection and the analysis is purely qualitative and descriptive.

Conceptual Clarification

The paper clarifies, albeit briefly, the two main variables, namely: political elite and democratic consolidation.

The Political Elite

The concept of “elite” is based on the notion that every society holds a ruling minority, a group that controls and disputes the most important power sources (Lopez, 2013). Elite theory is deep-seated in classical sociology, especially that of Weber (1922, 2005) and Michel (1911) {see Lopez, 2013}. These authors are labelled “classical elitists.” Classical elitists hold the view that democracy, as government of the people or “demos.” is necessarily elite-driven, meaning that the majority is necessarily ruled by a minority (Lopez, 2013). This is typified and symbolized by Michel’s “iron law of oligarchy.” This law synthesizes the notion of elite inevitability, formulating it as a natural law (Lopez, 2013). In other words, it is only natural that a few or a minority will rule the majority or masses. This class of individuals tend to influence and take major decisions of society; they have power and they dominate society. Mosca (1970), a notable political elite theorist, provides lucid insights into the political elite or “ruling class” when he avers that:

Among the constant facts and tendencies that are to be found in all political organisms, one is so obvious that it is apparent to the most

casual eye. In all societies –from societies that are very meagrely developed and have barely attained the dawns of civilization, down to the most advanced and powerful societies – two classes of people appear –a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous class, is directed and controlled by the first, in a manner that is now more or less legal, now more or less arbitrary and violent (p. 252).

He further states that, “whichever it may be, the management of public affairs is in the hands of a minority of influential persons, to which management, willingly or unwillingly, the majority defer” (p. 252).

One of the theoretical/classical foundations in our view of political elite can be found in Robert Michel’s classic work of political sociology, “Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy, 1911.” Michel’s main argument, known as the “iron law of oligarchy,” holds that modern mass democracy is a smokescreen for oligarchy (or aristocracy). The path toward oligarchization, as described by Michel, is something that no modern democracy can avoid, regardless of its leaders’ personal attitudes towards core democratic principles. In modern societies, democracy is doomed to become oligarchy (Nodia, 2020). Nodia (2020) provides two reasons. The first is the very nature of the people –especially their lack of knowledge and judgment necessary to make good political decisions. People who have the competence and skills of national leadership are few, and the masses are predisposed to accepting the leadership of that few. The second is the nature of organization –the masses cannot effectively function as a single body. They cannot quickly make or carry out decisions. Therefore, the masses have to delegate these crucial functions to the political elite and to trust that they will act in their best interest.

Over time, the political elite tend to naturally keep and maintain their power positions. They are inclined to determine almost everything and only provide a menu with limited options for the masses to vote or decide on. Dahl (2000), one of the most celebrated scholars on liberal democracy, identifies five criteria which a society would have to meet to be called a democracy, namely: effective participation, equality in voting, gaining enlightened understanding, exercising final control over agenda and inclusion of adults. This presupposes that a society without these criteria, especially effective participation, gaining enlightened understanding and exercising final control over agenda, cannot claim to be a democracy. This simply reinforces Michel’s iron law of oligarchy.

Furthermore, the political elite probably constitute the most researched elite sector, and often in the literature, the term “elite” is used as a synonym for “political elite” (Lopez, 2013, p. 3). “The political elite” is understood as the echelon of the political

power structure where major and critical policy decisions are taken and where control lies over the treasury and key institutions of government (Kifordu, 2011). From the pluralist (liberalist) perspective, the political elite is fragmented and dispersed over various groups formed on the basis of cross-cutting differences of interest in society. This concept of political elite gives the impression that, in terms of power and its usage, the class is divided along many lines- ideological, political, economic, regional and religious. However, this paper contends that, in relation to Nigeria, the political elite may be drawn from varying political parties, religious organizations, regional groups, etc. but is unified in terms of ideology and the purpose for which State power is used.

State power for the Nigerian political elite is used for self-aggrandizement and primitive accumulation. Once State power is captured by the political elite, as it has, it is used to advance the narrow interests of its controllers. As a result, popular interests suffer, rights are abridged, and pro-people issues are suppressed and neglected (Ihonvbere, 2002; Amuwo, 2008; Animashaun, 2009). State power appears to be exercised for the sake of power, not for the benefit of the people (Olaitan, 2006; Obianyo, 2008). It is observed that the political elite operate the Nigerian state in a way that “there is hardly any rule of law, no plausible system of justice, no transparency. The coercive instruments of the state are above the law, civil society is below it, ordinary people are out of sight far beyond its protection” (Ake, 1996, p. 6). This will be consolidated later. For now, let us turn to the concept of democratic consolidation.

Democratic Consolidation

Democratic consolidation is one of the stages of the democratization process. Democratisation is not a unilinear process, but one that is relative, incremental and variegated (Osaghae, 1999; Lewis, 2019). It is usually a transitional process involving overlapping stages, namely: political liberalisation, collapse of authoritarian regime, democratic transition and democratic consolidation (Huntington, 1991; Haynes, 2002; Shin and Tusalem, 2007). In the logic of causal sequence, the stages of democratisation may run from the decay and disintegration of an old authoritarian regime and the emergence of a new democratic system, through the consolidation of that democratic regime, to its maturity (Shin, 1994). In this sense, the process of democratisation is highly complex, with several analytically distinct stages that are empirically “complementary” and “overlapping.” It is also multidimensional, because one step of democratic development does not lead to a particular higher stage (Shin and Tusalem, 2007). Like Haynes, Shin identifies four stages of democratization: decay of authoritarian rule; transition; consolidation; and the maturity of democratic order. However, the transition and consolidation stages have received more attention from scholars and writers (Shin, 1994, p. 143).

Indeed, “after democratic transition, the main challenge is to institutionalize democratic competition between groups and organizations with conflicting interest and aspirations, previously united in opposition to authoritarian rule” (Haynes, 2002, p. 17). This is subsumed under the debate on “transitology” –the study of shifts from authoritarian to democratically-elected governments; and “consolidology” –the examination of the difficulties of making customary and deepening, democracy (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; Haynes, 2002). These stages as mentioned are by no means straightforward, but complex, involving contingent and structural factors as well as external forces (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; Haynes, 2002). It is, perhaps, because of this complexity and the variegated factors that engender it that Huntington (1991) argues that “the causes of democratisation are varied and their significance over time is likely to vary considerably” (p. 39). This implies that the forces that contribute to and impinge on democratisation are both time- and environmentally-bound.

Explaining further the aforementioned four-stages of democratisation, Haynes (2012) argues that political liberalization is the process of reforming authoritarian rule or regime, while the stage of collapse of authoritarian regime refers to when a dictatorship falls apart. Democratic transition is the material shift to democracy, normally characterized by the accession to power of a democratically elected government, via free and fair election. Democratic consolidation involves the construction of the institutions of divided power. It is said to have occurred when contending social classes and political groups accept both formal rules and informal understandings determining political outcomes or politics. The democratic consolidation stage also privileges “strong” civil societies that keep an eye on the state and what it does with its power (Haynes, 2012, p. 3). This is to avoid arbitrariness and the corruption and abuse of power to the detriment of democratisation. The transition to democracy stage embodies an institutionalized pattern of behaviour by political actors characterized by established process of political decision-making and coded procedure (Haynes, 2002). It features drafting of methods or rules of resolving conflicts peacefully, promulgation of a new constitution, and holding of elections to mark the formal end to authoritarianism (Shin, 1994). It is, therefore, convenient to say that Nigeria at the moment is going through democratic consolidation, having successfully transited from military rule to democratically elected government. It is at the stage of embedding and institutionalizing democracy to make it a culture and norm. However, the process of democratic consolidation is bedevilled by crises which are not unconnected with the character of the political elite.

Political Elite and Its Implications for Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

The political elite are a tiny but powerful group of individuals with vast network in Nigeria's political landscape. It is the group that controls the state and depends on

Nigeria's oil wealth to underwrite its class/group interests (Amundsen, 2012). Besides, being a direct product of British colonialism, the political elite is committed to promoting the attitudes and ideology of capitalism and maintaining the peripheral status of the country in the global capitalist system (Orugbani, 2002). They are those who are able, by virtue of their authoritative positions in powerful organizations and movements of whatever kind, to affect national political outcomes regularly and substantially.

The political elite occupy the apex of the elite hierarchy because of their role as initiators and supervisors of policies with pervasive social consequences (Kifordu, 2011a). They are drawn from Nigeria's diverse ethnic, religious, social and political groupings, lacking a clear vision or ideology for a broad social project, but united by a common goal of using the state as a source of patronage and corrupt enrichment (Obi, 2004; Kifordu, 2011a; Amundsen, 2012). Thus, it is a parasitic and opportunistic group which depends on the state for survival and dominance of the political landscape (Obi, 2004; Kifordu, 2011a, 2011b). Notable among this group at least in the present dispensation are members of the National Economic Council (NEC), a constitutional body made up of the President, Vice-President, past heads of state, including those who served under military governments and the governors of the 36 states of the Federation; the Federal Executive Council; and the National Assembly—consisting of the Senate and House of Representatives; and those formally responsible for making and implementing important national decisions even at the political party level (Obi 2004; Ibeanu, 2008; Kifordu, 2011b). As Sklar et al (2006) observes, regardless of their differences, the political elite share a more common belief on how to use the state to serve their own group interests rather than advancing the interests of their relatively poor kinsmen or supporters.

Ethnicity (and other primordial tendencies, including religion) is only functional for Nigeria's political elite who want to survive in the power struggle or to conceal exploitative practices by building solidarity across class lines (Ake 1991; Ihonvbere 1994; Obi, 2011). This tendency of the political elite is common and pervasive in the country (Obi, 2004; Kifordu, 2011a, 2011b). As noted by Ake (1996, p.5):

The political elite support democracy only as a means to power... Democratic elections are being held to determine who will exercise the power of the State with no question asked about the character of the state as if it has no implication. But its implication is so serious that elections in Nigeria (Africa) give the voter only a choice between oppressors.

The political elite are held up in this contraption called the Nigerian State. Given the unyielding dominance of the State, they see democracy as a means to reach and control it. Democratization is reduced to just multiparty elections. Elections have, therefore, become for the political elite a means to capture state power through the instruments or platforms of political parties (Ake, 1996; Nwosu, 2006). What is called

political parties in Nigeria are electoral machines, formed by the political elite for no other purpose than to win elections. They are formed by individuals who invest their money in them (as in stocks and shares) and expect dividends through contracts and lucrative appointments (Ojo, 2002). The verdict is that “a self-regarding, opportunistic political class treats party affiliations and elections as transactions to be exploited for personal gain” (Lewis, 2019, pp. 81-82). Anifowose (1999) graphically sums up this observation thus:

The average Nigerian political elite view political parties largely as economic organization which must make profit. The higher the profit the more prosperous the investment and of course its shareholders are considered to be, hence, the desperation to ensure that the parties nearly always make profit. In this unique economic investment, the surest means of making profit is to guarantee control of the state through the grip on political power, and for the parties this comes about through winning elections at all cost (p. 5).

The nature of this type of politics is such that it is reduced to the crude mechanics of opposing forces driven by the calculus of power. For everyone in this political arena, security lies only in the accumulation of power. The result is an unprecedented drive for power; power is made the top priority in all circumstances and sought by all means (Ake, 1996, p. 3). Furthermore, Ake avers that:

The winners in the competition for power win everything. Nothing can be worse than losing, nothing better than winning. Thus, everyone seeks power by every means, legal or otherwise and those who already control state power try to keep it by every means. What emerges from this is a politics which does not know legitimacy or legality, only expediency. This politics is not conducive to political stability, the rule of law, or democracy because it constituted as warfare (Ake, 1996, pp. 7-8).

In the current democratization, the political elite, through the instrumentalities of political parties, especially the notable ones among them, namely Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), All Progressives Congress (APC), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), and Labour Party (LP), all fight for elective positions guided by this same mentality of winning elections at all cost even against democratic principles and values. Since marketing political power investment is in itself conflictual, increase in its competitiveness raises the incidents of conflict and, beyond a certain threshold, the competition results in violence. And usually the spate of violence is so much that the majority of the voters refuse to come out to exercise their civic obligation and responsibility for fear of death, as the political gladiators promise to make the elections a do-or-die affair, hence the Hobbesian nature

of party politics and the lack of democracy and development in Nigeria. This is captured by Ake (1996) when he elucidates concerning political elite that:

They are totally absorbed in the quest for absolute and eternal power. They know only their interests... Where every leader wants absolute power, society is at war, war without end because amidst the defeats and victories of particular battles, the underlying social dynamics remain the same. There is no development in a state of war. What there is, is regression and that is what Africa (Nigeria) has had. There is no democracy in war. What there is, is power and the contestation for power... permitting the strong to take what they can, leaving the rest to suffer what they must (p. 13).

At another level, the political elite have put democratization under serious jeopardy by the development and institutionalization of "Personality Cult." The situation has degenerated as few individuals (the members of the cult) now dictate the course of democracy by choosing political party leaders at various levels (ward, local, state and federal) and candidates to contest general elections (Presidency, Senate, House of Representatives, Governorship, and Houses of Assembly). The scenario has come to be an acceptable practice, as political patronage, favours and rewards depend on individuals' loyalty to the "power that be" or "cult." This loyalty is now qualified to mean "military-type loyalty.' One must be slavish, foolish, conforming, non-opinionated, and a moral *tabula rasa* to be qualified to get political patronage and favours from members of the cult. This remains for the political elite the height of political participation in the democratization process in Nigeria (Okolie, 2006).

The institution of the "personality cult." as shown in many parts of the country, also manifests in the form of "godfatherism." Godfatherism fundamentally dictates the pattern and shape of party politics in Nigeria, a situation that portends grave danger to democratic consolidation, given its anti-democratic and anti-people manifestations. Nnamani (2003) paints a rather odious picture of the character of the Nigerian "godfather" (that is, the political elite) when he states:

Take it or leave it, the archetypal godfather in Nigeria is more than the ruthless Mario Puzo's kingpins in the Italian Mafia setting. While the fictional godfather is characterized as 'a shadowy, dare-devil recluse, who combines immense underworld financial muscle with near mythical powers of enormous proportions,' which is to attain a further greasing of the ever-increasing vast financial empire, the Nigeria type has the added characterization of conceit, ego, loquacity, pettiness, envy, strife, crudity, and confusion (quoted in Albert, p.79).

The present democratic process in Nigeria shows that aspirants to political offices who are less financially buoyant rely greatly on the financial and logistic support of the political elite or “money bags.” who invariably become their “political masters or godfathers.” Alternatively, the godfathers may look for a popular and very outstanding character or even the opposite to invest their money in by encouraging and sponsoring him to contest for an elective office, which will be manipulated in his favour through financial inducement of electoral officers, security operatives, thuggery or outright rigging of votes. The following are examples of cases of godfather/godson relationship in Nigerian politics: Chris Uba and Chris Ngige, in Anambra State; Lamidi Adedibu and Ladoja, in Oyo State; Bola Tinubu and Fashola/Ambode/Sanwo-Olu, in Lagos State; Olushola Saraki and Bukola Saraki, in Kwara State; m and Nyesom Wike and Sim Fubara, in -Rivers State. Accordingly, it is now known in Nigeria that:

... whenever an aspirant contested and lost an election, he expects the winner (godson) to settle him by offsetting whatever amount of money he had spent during the electioneering. The candidate in the first instance considers his electoral attempt as ‘investment’ which must yield profit, even though he may have known from day one that he cannot win a vote from his family talk-less of his ward or constituency (Awofeso, 2006, p. 3).

Usually the godfather and the godson sign nocturnal or secret agreements that ought to be binding on both parties. And most times, the content of the agreement compels the godson on assumption of office to remit certain percentage of the treasury to the account of the godfather at specified intervals. The godfather is also expected to nominate a reasonable number of persons into the cabinet of the godson. Other benefits or profits to be enjoyed by the godfather include: regular awards of contracts, unrestrained access to the godson and consultation on state matters by the godson. Thus, the political elite are busy trying all means to capture and privatize state power. With this, the process of democratization hardly means anything to the generality of the people. The process is a life-survival race, a zero-sum game, because the political elite using state power are not only dominant in the political space but also control the resources of the state (Amuwo, 2009).

The state, having been captured by the political elite, enjoys no special treatment from its controllers. It is personalized away from the masses (Nwosu, 2006). The political elite in this unique political situation reproduce a conservative, contaminated, compromised and corrupted form of politics. Once the state is captured and personalized, as is the case in the country, it is used to contain opposition at all levels (Ihonvbere, 2002). The containment of opposition to state power by the political elite is also justified in the name of development. To this end, Ake (1991) aptly asserts that, “To discourage opposition and perpetuate their power, they argued that the problems of development

demanded complete unity of purpose, justifying on these grounds the criminalization of political dissent and the inexorable march to political monolithism (p. 32). As Ake (1996) further explains, which is generally the reality in Nigeria's democracy:

The character of the state rules out a politics of moderation and mandates a politics of lawlessness and extremism for the simple reason that the nature of the state makes the capture of state power irresistibly attractive... What emerges from this is politics which does not know legitimacy or loyalty, only expediency (p. 15).

The Political Elite, the People and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

Another area where democratic consolidation in Nigeria has suffered grave deficit is the area of the people's involvement or participation in the entire process. Participation is one of the core democratic qualities and/or institutions of representative democracy, together with competition and legitimacy. Participation is considered a *sine qua non* of any kind of democracy. Rule by the people of logical necessity involves participation, especially through elections (Lindberg, 2004). Dahl (2000) identifies effective participation and equality in voting among the five fundamental criteria of democracy, without which no country or society can claim to be a democracy. Lindberg and Morrison (2008) note that, "The core institution of modern democracy whereby the right of the people to self-government can be exercised is competitive and participatory elections" (p. 95).

Thus, election becomes critical for democratic consolidation, as it enhances political participation and the legitimacy of government. Indeed, "democratization by election" is one explanatory mechanism for the "resurgence of democracy" under the "third wave" (Lindberg, 2009). However, as noted above, the subsisting democratization in Nigeria has been heavily deficient in terms of the people's participation in the process. This scenario is succinctly captured by Ake (1996) thus:

Our politics is not a lawful competition to select those to manage our commonwealth but a fight to capture and privatize an enormous power resource... there is only a battlefield where the act of doing battle constitutes us as purely negative unity... So democracy has a huge problem (p. 8).

This suggests that there is hardly any real involvement of the people in the process, especially in the selection of candidates from the party level to the general elections. The internal structures and processes of the political parties in Nigeria are fundamentally and largely undemocratic. National Democratic Institute {NDI} (2011) observes that "most party primaries were conducted under opaque conditions and several party leaders hand-picking many of the candidates" (p. 8). Similarly, "despite nominally open primary process... the public has virtually no input on how parties select candidates" (LeVan &

Ukata, 2012, p. 1). The ruling party particularly “chooses its leaders without meaningful transparency or public accountability” (LeVan, 2014, p. 116). Besides, “procedural problems included an overall lack of transparency, winners being subsequently changed by party leaderships, and parties not having objective criteria for screening candidates” (European Union-Election Observation Mission (EU-EOM, 2019, p. 4). Jega (2012), a former Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), contends that the situation is exacerbated by the fact that the Electoral Act “forbids INEC from removing a candidate from election list, once he was submitted by the party, for whatever reason, and we ended up with parties sending us people who did not even go through democratic primaries” (p. 5). Lending credence to Jega’s assertion, Obe (2019) argues that:

It would seem that although by law INEC is supposed to oversee party primaries and conventions, its presence is only felt when contending factions within a party are unable to reconcile their differences, or hold rival state conventions: INEC hardly scrutinizes the actual integrity of the primaries (p. 112).

Three cases are worth citing at this point. The first is the case in Rivers State in 2007, when former Governor Rotimi Amaechi, who originally was selected by the PDP as the governorship candidate of the party, was wrongfully and illegally substituted with Sir Celestine Omehia by the leadership of the party at the centre. However, this was overturned by the Supreme Court, which ruled that the replacement or substitution was in violation of the Electoral Act. The second is in Rivers State in 2019; the State chapter of APC conducted party congresses to select candidates of the party for the governorship and State Assembly elections with the exclusion of some members of the party and in gross violation of a valid court order. This subsequently led the final court at that level to nullify the entire process and consequently excluded the Rivers APC from participating in the governorship and State Assembly general elections in 2019. The third concerns Zamfara State in the northern part of the country; INEC tried to use the limited discretion it had to disqualify the APC from fielding candidates in Zamfara on the grounds that the party did not conduct primary elections in the state within the time stipulated by Independent National Electoral Commission {INEC} (EU-EOM, 2019).

Besides, most of the general elections since 1999 were rigged and bogged down with violence and low voter turnout and vote buying (Bratton 2008; NDI, 2011; Obe, 2019; EU-EOM, 2023). The last general elections in 2023 were conducted against the background of economic crises, with growing unemployment and poverty rates, high inflation and widespread fuel scarcity across the country. The situation was exacerbated by the Federal Government decision to implement the naira reissue policy. All this affected the participation of the majority of Nigerians (voters) in the elections, as the

existential economic and political realities led to increasing voter disenchantment (EU-EOM, 2023).

In addition, the activities and dominance of “big men” or “godfathers” (an influential section of the political elite) in Nigerian’s democratization process are responsible for the incessant and perpetual crises that have bedevilled and engulfed the major political parties in the country, including APC, PDP, LP, and APGA. This has equally snowballed into increased instability, incoherence, and distrust, as well as the inability of the ruling party to engender good governance, on the one hand, and the failure of opposition parties to promote effective and robust opposition, on the other hand.

Overall, democratic consolidation is undermined and, therefore in crises. The “End bad governance protests” of 1st to 10th August 2024 by ordinary Nigerians eloquently demonstrated the appalling state of governance in Nigeria under the ruling APC Federal Government and the intractable and unending crises bedevilling opposition political parties, especially the PDP and LP, which clearly make a potent case for weak opposition political party in Nigeria’s democracy. Political opposition is a prerequisite for democratic consolidation and without it “there is no choice and when there is no choice the people cannot exercise their right to rule” (Lindberg, 2006, p. 124). Furthermore, Uddhammar *et al.* (2011) argue that the democratic process is weakened when opposition political parties stumble and totter. Opposition political parties not only offer alternative platforms for citizens’ participation in politics and policy-making processes but also provide considerable resistance and check on the ruling party.

According to Jinadu (2007), the perverse form the crises of democratic consolidation has assumed has been fed by a combination of a political culture which depoliticizes politics, by reducing it to a lawless vocation, and disempowering the generality of the people through the violation of their sovereignty as constitutionally provided in Chapter 2 of the 1999 Constitution. Thus, ordinary people hardly matter to the political elite in Nigeria. There is hardly any incentive for the people to go and vote during elections, because the will of the people is easily subverted by the political elite in favour of their chosen or anointed candidates. This is worsened by the impoverished and wretched state of the majority of the people, who are easily bought with money or other material gifts/benefits. Consequently, to the poor, who remain indifferent to the crippling constraints of poverty, democratic consolidation is not significantly advanced by giving the vote.

Poverty disempowers and subverts democracy (Ake, 1996). In 2023, nearly 12% of the world population in extreme poverty live in Nigeria, making the country the capital of global poverty. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) 2022 report showed that 63% of Nigerians (133 million) are multi-dimensionally poor (NBS, 2022). The situation has only

deepened with the removal of fuel subsidy by the present Tinubu-led APC government at its inauguration on May 29 2023. Indeed, the political elite have failed in providing the majority of Nigerians the opportunity to participate meaningfully and benefit from the democratization process. Thus, democratic consolidation in Nigeria has very serious problems of thriving.

Conclusion

Against the foregoing, the paper concludes that, until the above problems and/or characteristics of the political elite are concretely and adequately addressed, democracy and democratic consolidation in Nigeria will remain crises-ridden and embattled. This is particularly so because societies and political systems rise and fall on leadership and, going by the “iron law of oligarchy.” the political elite will always rule. So, until the challenges facing that section of society are tackled, democratic consolidation will remain endangered.

Recommendations

The paper recommends as follows:

1. Transformation of the Nigerian State to make it a truly people's State through constitution reforms: This will fundamentally address the problems or challenges of the political elite and, by extension democratic consolidation. This will free the State from the grip of and privatization by the political elite.
2. Improve and increase citizens' political participation through mass education and enlightenment. This will help get the people to take ownership of democratization and make the political elite more accountable to the people.
3. Economic and welfare uplift of ordinary people through economic empowerment programme: Poverty subverts and disempowers democracy. Thus, improvement in the economic conditions of the majority of the people will enhance democratic consolidation.
4. Promotion of electoral reforms that will address the challenges confronting the electoral process, electoral management body- INEC, and the political parties. The reforms should ensure the financial and administrative autonomy of INEC and internal democracy in the political parties as well as ensure punishment of electoral offenders and defaulters.

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47**THE NEXUS BETWEEN DIPLOMACY AND POLITICS IN THE CONDUCT
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Introduction

The nexus between diplomacy and politics is a relationship that plays a crucial role in shaping international relations and the conduct of foreign policy. Diplomacy and politics are closely intertwined, as they both involve management of relationships, negotiations and decision-making processes within and between states. While diplomacy focuses on peaceful resolution of conflicts and promotion of cooperation, politics encompasses exercise of power, pursuit of national interests, and competition for resources and influence. However, the nexus between diplomacy and politics is an essential aspect of international relations. This is because diplomacy serves as a means for political leaders to pursue their national interests, negotiate agreements, resolve conflicts peacefully and project influence globally. Politics shapes foreign policy objectives and provides the context within which diplomatic efforts are conducted. Understanding this relationship is crucial for comprehending how states interact with one another and navigate complex global challenges (Rana, 2011).

Clarification of Terms

Diplomacy: Diplomacy is the practice of conducting negotiations and maintaining relations between states through dialogue, negotiation and compromise. It is a key tool used by governments to advance their interests, resolve disputes and promote cooperation on various issues, such as trade, security, human rights and environmental concerns. Diplomatic efforts are typically carried out by diplomats who represent their respective countries in international forums, like embassies, consulates and international organizations (Frechette 2013).

Politics: Politics refers to the activities, actions and policies used by individuals or groups to gain and hold power within a government or to influence government's decisions. Politics involves the formulation and implementation of policies that reflect a country's

domestic priorities and its interactions with other nations. Political leaders often shape foreign policy objectives based on their political ideologies, national interests, public opinion and strategic considerations (Nye Jr., 2004).

International Relations: International relations is the study of interactions between nations, states, and other international actors, including non-governmental organizations, multinational corporations, and international organizations (Waltz, 1979).

The Nexus Between Diplomacy and Politics

The nexus between diplomacy and politics is evident in various ways historical examples. For instance, during the Cold War, diplomacy played a central role in managing the tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, while political leaders engaged in diplomatic negotiations, such as the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), to reduce the risk of nuclear conflict and promote stability. Similarly, in recent years, diplomacy has been instrumental in addressing issues like the Iran nuclear deal and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Foreign Policy Formulation: Diplomacy is an essential instrument for implementing foreign policy objectives determined by political leaders (Thompson, 1992). Political considerations heavily influence the formulation of foreign policy goals, strategies and priorities. Political states engage in diplomatic negotiations to advance their political agendas, protect national interests, secure alliances or partnerships, resolve conflicts peacefully, or project their influence globally. This political engagement by political leaders in diplomatic environments brought politics to swimming in the same rivers with diplomacy (Lawrence 1976).

International Cooperation and Multilateralism: Diplomacy plays a crucial role in fostering international cooperation and multilateralism, which are essential components of global politics. Mahbubani (2015) asserts that multilateral diplomacy is a sunrise industry. Diplomatic efforts are often focused on building alliances, coalitions and partnerships to address global challenges, such as climate change, terrorism, nuclear proliferation and economic cooperation. Political leaders use diplomacy to promote their countries' interests within international organizations, like the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, and regional bodies.

Maintenance of Relationships: Diplomacy is a crucial tool in politics, as it helps to establish and maintain relationships between nations, resolve conflicts and promote cooperation. Strengthening diplomacy involves the use of various tools and strategies to enhance its effectiveness. These tools are categorized into three main areas: negotiation, communication and international institutions.

Negotiation: Strengthening diplomacy in politics involves utilizing diplomatic tools such as negotiation through diplomatic channels created by political leaders to pursue their

national interest in international relations. However, politics is a fundamental tool of diplomacy that facilitates discussions and compromises between nations with conflicting interests. Politics and diplomacy aim at finding mutually acceptable solutions to disputes or disagreements. Diplomats carry out their national political interest, called foreign policy, at various levels, including bilateral (between two countries), multilateral (involving multiple countries), and regional or international organizations. One important aspect in the nexus between politics and diplomacy is diplomatic dialogue, which allows diplomats to engage in open and constructive discussions. Diplomatic dialogue involves active listening, understanding different political interest by interacting states to find a common ground for peace. It helps build trust and rapport between parties involved, leading to more effective relationship between politics and diplomacy in international environment.

Mediation: The nexus between politics and diplomacy is intensified or utilized through mediation. Political states use mediation, which involves neutral third party, as a diplomatic tool to negotiate or facilitate negotiation in the international environment. Mediators are politically motivated. Even though it is claimed that some mediators are private mediators, they belong to a political institution called the state, hence the political involvement. According to Bercovitch (1997), mediation helps to bridge gaps between conflicting political states or groups by facilitating communication, encouraging compromise and suggesting potential solutions.

Communication: Plays a vital role in strengthening diplomacy. Effective communication enables diplomats to convey messages clearly, understand each other's positions and build relationships based on trust and respect. However, political states deepen or make use of various communication tools in their diplomatic efforts of projecting or pursuing national interest in other political states. These could justify the deep nature of the nexus between politics and diplomacy in the conduct of international relations.

Diplomatic Channels: These are formal channels of communication established by a political state in her diplomatic missions. The established diplomatic missions include embassies/high commissions, consulates and high-level diplomatic meetings. Diplomatic channels provide a platform for direct dialogue between nations through politically appointed diplomatic representatives. This is also a clear justification of the nexus between politics and diplomacy in the conduct of international relations. Diplomatic channels provide a platform for political leaders to engage in negotiations with other countries to address conflicts, resolve disputes and find common ground on various issues. Diplomats act as intermediaries, representing their governments' interests and engaging in dialogue to reach mutually acceptable outcomes. Political leaders rely on diplomatic negotiations to advance their political goals while maintaining peaceful relations with other nations (Berridge 2005).

Public Diplomacy: Public diplomacy involves engaging with foreign publics to promote a country's values, culture, policies and interests. It aims to shape public opinion abroad through various means such as cultural exchanges, educational programmes, media engagement and public speeches. Public diplomacy helps build understanding and goodwill between political states, meaning that public diplomacy is aimed at promoting politically established foreign policies and interest of one state. All channels of diplomatic operations are motivated by political principles of the state, called national policy or interest.

Digital Diplomacy: With the rise of technology, political states have employed the applications of digital diplomacy as an essential tool in the conduct of modern international relations. Political states regulate their citizens' involvement in the use of social media platforms, websites and other digital tools to communicate with foreign audiences, disseminate information and retrieve information to help them engage fellow states at the international environment.

United Nations (UN): The UN serves as a global forum for member political states to address international issues collectively. It provides a platform for diplomatic negotiations, peacekeeping operations and coordination of humanitarian efforts. The UN Security Council, under the watchful eyes of the political member states, plays a crucial role in resolving conflicts through diplomatic means. This could also justify the inseparable nature of diplomacy and politics in the conduct of international relations.

World Trade Organization (WTO): The WTO promotes international trade cooperation by providing a platform for negotiations on trade agreements, resolving trade disputes and monitoring global trade policies. Through its diplomatic channels, the WTO aims to create a more open and predictable trading system. Strengthening diplomacy in politics involves utilizing various tools, such as negotiation, communication and international institutions. These tools enable diplomats to engage in constructive dialogue, build relationships based on trust, and find mutually acceptable solutions to conflicts or disagreements.

Benefits in the Relationship Between Diplomacy and Politics

The relationship between diplomacy and politics has numerous sustainable benefits. Diplomacy refers to the practice of conducting negotiations and maintaining relations between states, while politics involves the exercise of power and decision-making within a states. When these two fields intersect, they contribute to the achievement of common goals, resolution of conflicts, promotion of peace and stability, fostering economic cooperation and addressing global challenges. Based on this, the sustainable benefits derived from the interplay between diplomacy and politics are as follows:

Conflict Resolution: Diplomacy plays a crucial role in resolving conflicts between states through peaceful means. Political leaders engage in diplomatic negotiations to find

mutually acceptable solutions, preventing the escalation of tensions into armed conflicts. This approach helps maintain stability and peace in the international arena.

Promotion of Peace: Diplomatic efforts contribute to the promotion of peace by facilitating dialogue and understanding among states. Through diplomatic channels, political leaders address grievances, build trust and establish frameworks for cooperation. This fosters peaceful coexistence and reduces the likelihood of armed conflicts amongst states.

Economic Cooperation: Diplomatic relations between countries often lead to enhanced economic cooperation. Through diplomatic negotiations, political states establish trade agreements, investment partnerships and economic alliances. These collaborations promote economic growth, create job opportunities and improve living standards for citizens in political states.

Global Problem Solving: Diplomacy and politics are essential in addressing global challenges, such as climate change, terrorism, pandemics and poverty. Political states engage in diplomatic discussions and negotiations. Political leaders work together to develop international agreements, protocols and initiatives aimed at tackling these issues collectively through their various diplomatic channels.

Cultural Exchange and Understanding: Diplomatic interactions foster cultural exchange and understanding between political states. Through diplomatic visits, cultural events, educational programmes, and people-to-people exchanges, societies learn about one another's traditions, values and perspectives. This promotes mutual respect and appreciation for diverse cultures.

Challenges in the Relationship Between Diplomacy and Politics

The relationship between diplomacy and politics is complex and often faces various impediments. These impediments arise from both internal and external environments, affecting the effectiveness and efficiency of diplomatic efforts. This paper explores some of the key impediments to the relationship between diplomacy and politics.

Divergent National Interests: One of the primary impediments to the relationship between diplomacy and politics is the divergence of national interests. Each nation has its own set of priorities, objectives and values, which may not align with those of other nations. This divergence creates challenges for political states to find common ground and reach mutually beneficial agreements through diplomatic negotiations in international relations.

Power Asymmetry: Power asymmetry refers to an imbalance in power between different political states or politically appointed actors in international environments. However, when there is a significant political power disparity, effective diplomacy is hindered as the

stronger political state exerts undue influence on the weaker political state. This political power imbalance leads to unequal outcomes and hinder diplomatic cooperation amongst political states.

Lack of Trust: Trust is a crucial element in diplomatic relations. However, trust is easily eroded amongst political states due to historical conflicts, geopolitical rivalries or perceived breaches of agreements. This lack of trust has impeded open communication, compromise and diplomatic cooperation between political states, making it challenging to achieve diplomatic solutions amongst political states.

Domestic Politics: Domestic political considerations also pose impediments to diplomacy. Domestic political leaders face pressure from domestic constituencies or interest groups that prioritize their own agendas over diplomatic negotiations. These domestic pressures limit domestic political leaders' flexibility in making concessions or compromises necessary for successful diplomacy in the conduct of international relations.

Cultural Differences: Cultural differences of political state play a significant role in shaping diplomatic interactions amongst political states. Different political cultural norms, values and communication styles lead to misunderstandings, misinterpretations and even conflicts during diplomatic engagements. Bridging these cultural gaps requires understanding and sensitivity of political states to ensure effective communication and negotiation.

Prospects of Strengthening the Relationship Between Diplomacy and Politics

From the discussion above, it is obvious that sustaining the relationship between diplomacy and politics is an important element in the international environment. The understanding of the nature of both concepts and how they interact with each other helps political states and their diplomatic appointees to be efficient in their interactions in the international environment. The closely intertwined nature of diplomacy and politics provides the key tool for political actors to achieve their objectives on the international stage. However, dismantling the challenges confronting the relationship between diplomacy and politics in the international environment, as identified earlier, requires several factors, including the following:

Transparency and Accountability: Transparency and accountability are crucial in maintaining a healthy relationship between diplomacy and politics. Governments should be transparent in their diplomatic activities, ensuring that decisions are made in the best interest of their citizens. This includes providing accurate information about diplomatic negotiations, treaties and agreements to the public. In doing this, the political state would build trust with their citizens and avoid potential conflicts arising from secretive or opaque diplomatic practices.

Effective Communication: Effective communication is essential for sustaining the relationship between diplomacy and politics. Diplomatic efforts should be coordinated with political objectives, ensuring that both domestic and international stakeholders are informed about the positions and actions of a political state. This requires clear and concise messaging that aligns diplomatic efforts with political goals. Regular communication channels should be established between diplomats and political leaders to facilitate dialogue and exchange of information.

Promotion of Peace and Stability: Diplomacy is guided by a set of principles that reflect the values of the political state. These principles include respect for human rights, adherence to international law, promotion of peace and stability and commitment to multilateralism. Aligning diplomatic actions with these principles makes the political states demonstrate consistency in their approach to international relations and enhance their credibility on the global stage.

Account for the Interests of all Relevant Stakeholders: Diplomacy should be conducted in a manner that takes into account the interests of all relevant stakeholders. This includes engaging with civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations and other actors that may have a stake in diplomatic negotiations or outcomes. Involving a diverse range of perspectives enables the political state to ensure that diplomatic decisions are more inclusive and representative of the broader society.

Building Long-term Perspective: Diplomacy and politics should be approached with a long-term perspective. Building sustainable relationships requires patience, persistence and a willingness to engage in dialogue even during times of disagreement. Political states should prioritize diplomacy as a means of resolving conflicts and addressing global challenges, rather than resorting to unilateral actions or aggressive tactics. Investing in long-term diplomatic efforts enables political states to foster stability and cooperation in the international environment.

Transparency: Sustaining the relationship between diplomacy and politics requires transparency, effective communication, adherence to principles, inclusivity and a long-term perspective. By prioritizing these factors, political states strengthen their diplomatic efforts and ensure that they align with their political objectives.

Conclusion

From the discussion above, it is obvious that the relationship between diplomacy and politics is an important element in the conduct of international relations. Understanding this relationship provides a well-informed knowledge on the nature of how both elements interact as a valuable tool for political actors in international environment to achieve their objectives. The relationship between diplomacy and politics has numerous sustainable

benefits, such as conducting negotiations and maintaining relations between states, as well as controlling coercive power and decision-making of interacting political states. These contribute to the achievement of common goals, resolution of conflicts, promotion of peace and stability, fostering economic cooperation and addressing global challenges. Therefore, this study concludes that the interplay between diplomacy and politics is beneficial in the conduct of international relations despite several impediments emanating from divergent national interests, power asymmetry, lack of trust, domestic politics and cultural differences.

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48**GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ITS PILLARS: ACCOUNTABILITY AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN NIGERIA****By****Robert O. Dode**

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Abstract

This study conceives accountability and civil participation as major pillars of good governance due to their importance in promoting and sustaining the socio-economic well-being of citizens. Good governance has fundamental principles, like the rule of law, transparency, inclusiveness, equity and responsiveness. However, in Nigeria, these principles are, to a large extent, undermined by systemic challenges, such as weak institutions of governance, leadership deficits and corruption. Using the participatory government theoretical framework and the descriptive research approach, the study content-analysed secondary data. The findings showed that government institutions are weak, constraining accountability and promoting civil participation, consequently limiting good governance outcomes. Therefore, the study recommends the need to ensure, through legal means, non-interference by the political class in the appointment and selection of three principal institutions/bodies in Nigeria: the judiciary, the police and electoral commissions. Also, citizens should consciously mobilise themselves through social media to demand accountability from governmental institutions. These measures are considered paramount in achieving good governance and sustainable development.

Keywords: good governance, accountability, civil participation, sustainable development, government

Introduction

The existence of human beings and their continuous survival are determined by their ability to meet their basic needs. Since man is a social being, his existence is socially organised, and he lives in a community within the state. The improvement of the living conditions of the state's people will be highly shaped and influenced by the conduct of those who control the affairs of the state. Therefore, the people will judge the action and or inaction of those at the helm of affairs for the state to be good or bad based on the

manifestation of policies and decisions reached and how they impact people's lives. The manifestation or policy outcome of those running the state will then be judged as good or bad. If it represents what they said they would do and works in the interest of the people with noticeable results, the action is adjudged as good governance, as it meets the people's expectations and standards. If the reverse is the case, then good governance is absent. Therefore, good governance seeks to measure the performance of governments using some specific yardsticks to determine if the people's well-being is taken care of or if the people are lacking in the basic things. The expectation of the people to have their basic needs met by the government is based on the fact that those in power and their institutions are expected to manage the resources of the state fairly and transparently in such a way that the common interest, which centres on security and welfare of the people, is prioritised. The expectation means that such people should take actions that will produce results that will meet the people's expectations based on the available resources and on the rules laid down.

Good governance is of primary concern to people. However, good governance does not just happen, as people's greedy nature makes them act selfishly when not checked. This is why man's greedy nature must be kept in check. This is because people are more disposed to act selfishly when they realise there is no mechanism to check them when they deviate from the norm. It, therefore, means that certain pillars are instrumental in achieving good governance. In the context of this study, accountability and civil participation will be considered and analysed as vital pillars that facilitate the attainment of governance, especially in a developing country like Nigeria, where the menace of using the state power and institutions as private means of production is a common experience. In democracies across the globe, especially the developed ones, accountability has become a hallmark, requiring every official and governmental body to explain, in clear terms, their actions and justification based on established rules. The purpose is to ensure that people's private interests do not override the common purposes for which the institution was established. Accountability is not limited to public officers; it also extends to the private sector, as it also contributes much to the state's development and impact on people's lives (Gisselquist, 2012).

Similarly, civil participation aids governance, as the people cannot be idle in state affairs. The government must be participatory; the people must engage the government, participate in civil matters, such as exercising their franchise and engaging in peaceful demonstrations and protests to express their position on public issues or policy outcomes. The connection of good governance with its pillars, accountability and civil participation, becomes the factor of checks and balances between the government and the governed, as the people check and assess the government through civil participation.

Having noted the interconnectivity in these concepts, this research explores the impact of accountability and civil participation on attaining good governance in Nigeria. In order to achieve the above aim, the study rests on the following objectives: i. to assess the effects of accountability and civil participation on good governance; ii. to examine the impediments of good governance; and iii. to propose the pathways to achieving good governance in Nigeria. The study uses the descriptive research method, collected data from secondary sources and content-analysed them.

Conceptual Clarification

Good Governance

Good governance has continued to gain more public attention, as citizens of different countries try to compare what is happening in their home countries and those of other countries. The Internet has made this comparison much easier. The issue of good governance has become a top concern globally, as it is conceived to be a necessity for attaining sustainable development upon which citizens' well-being is determined (Jarosz, 2014). Good governance creates a bond between the government and the governed, creating a suitable environment for socio-economic development and protecting democratic principles and human rights in the state. Good governance is not created in a vacuum; the conscious action of the rulers and the ruled brings it into existence. The concept is broad and defies any one general definition. Countries differ, and how power and authority are exercised also differs.

Good governance gained the greatest attention in the 1990s as a way to reduce poverty and is considered central to achieving sustainable development. It was part of the outcome of the realisation that the approach adopted by the structural adjustment programmes did not bring the desired development, and it was also evident that poor quality of governance hindered the utilisation of the available resources in a country and the aid received. Good governance generally refers to a shift from a traditional governance method to an inclusive, participatory one wherein actors, like civil society groups, private-sector firms and individuals, engage collaboratively in decision-making processes. It fosters reciprocal engagement and collaboration between the government and the citizens, with the objective of collective decision-making and execution for the improvement of the well-being of the people and attainment of sustainable development for all (UNDP, 2002; World Bank 2007; United Nations, 2011, cited in Gisselquist, 2012).

According to UNDESA, UNDP and UNESCO (2012), certain key factors define good governance. These key factors are categorised and presented in the table below:

Table 1: Principles of Good Governance

SN	Principle	Objective
1	The Rule of Law	To ensure openness in the process of making decisions and information access
2	Transparency	To hold public institutions and public officials responsible in the discharge of their duties
3	Participatory	To be inclusive and ensure that citizens are meaningfully involved in decision-making
4	Equity	To ensure that all citizens are fairly treated without discrimination
5	Inclusiveness	To ensure the abidance by the legal provision, equality before the law and independence of the judiciary
6	Accountability	To be responsible to the citizens in the delivery of goods and services
7	Consistency/Responsiveness	To ensure that decisions of the state are coherent and not unstable
8	Subsidiarity/Consensus Orientation	To allow for local input and people to manage related issues locally in the spirit of fairness

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2024

Table 2: Institutional and Sectorial Application

SN	Goal	Objective
1	Strengthening Institutions	Governance seeks to boost the performance of lawmakers' public services and aid the justice system.
2	Combating Corruption	Governance seeks to foster transparency, accountable financial management and an appointment and recruitment process that is fair and based on merit.
3	Free and Pluralistic Media	Good governance is about boosting democratic tenets, like free and fair elections, free press, and allowing for diverse opinions and views.

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2024

Table 3: Governance in Development Goals

SN	Goal	Objective
1	Governance in Development	Good governance aids and fast-tracks the development of health, education, public services, and environmental sustainability.
2	Alignment with International Treaties	Good governance encourages holding on to international human rights laws and treaties.
3	Addressing Local Challenges	Good governance encourages inclusiveness as a way of fostering world peace and achievement of sustainable development.

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2024

Good governance has many applications and does not centre on governance only. Individuals and groups have contributed to the achievement and sustainability of good governance. According to Toksoz (2008), good governance has different application levels; these are grouped into the public sector, the private sector, the civil society bodies and the individual. The public sector can combat inefficiency and corruption only through good governance, participation and transparency in public administration. The private sector applies a governance approach when it implements the practice of corporate governance and carries out corporate social responsibility. In addition, civil bodies can adopt fairness and transparency in their advocacy to encourage merit and participatory decision-making. The ability of citizens to be active in participatory governance principles also aids and contributes to the growth and development of society.

The approach to measuring good governance has advanced in line with the development of composite indicators. The World Governance Indicators (WGIs) developed by Kaufmann et al. (2007) presents an extensive background for evaluation. Such include voice and accountability, government efficacy and corruption control measures. However, this position is criticised by Thomas (2010), as he contends that these metrics frequently embody Western-centric prejudices and neglect the intricacies of the peculiarities of regions. Good governance has evolved and continues progressing from the traditional conception to modern usages. The spread of globalisation has generally influenced it due to technology and cultural changes. The goal is to seek ways to acclimatise governance frameworks and policy actions to meet and address the problems and needs of society (Adila, 2024). Adila further examined the correlation between effective governance practices and economic growth, positing that sound governance is essential for sustainable development. The synthesis of evidence from the work

underscores the crucial role of governance in promoting economic stability and prosperity, emphasising accountability and transparency as essential components.

Accountability

Accountability entails giving account and justification of action and task performed by an individual, a group or an institution for clarity and justification. Accountability is an obligation required of a person, an organisation or an institution to offer explanations or justifications for actions taken to those with a legitimate interest or authority over such. In other words, it means to give an account of one's actions. The purpose is to encourage and achieve openness, accountability and responsiveness (Social et al., p. 4, cited in West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) (n.d.)).

Accountability is further categorised into variants. Social accountability refers to the act of the people seeking an account of service from those assigned the responsibility; this can be sought directly or indirectly in the form of participatory budgeting, strategic liberation and community oversight. There is also electoral accountability: this means the ability of voters to hold elected authorities responsible by voting or direct political participation. Public-sector accountability consists of institutional mechanisms, including public auditing, judicial scrutiny and legislative monitoring. Civic accountability addresses media, grassroots events, and civil society organisations with respect to monitoring and influencing government policy decisions.

Using a multi-disciplinary approach to explain the meaning and impact of accountability in governance, Huang and Zhao (2022) emphasises proper records and proof of action, which must be imbibed to achieve result-oriented accountability. In this regard, accountability should be part of central and local governance to achieve a sustainable system. Using the international perspective and relationship of donor agencies and recipient countries, Roberts and Tiwari (2016) note that the only way funds received from donor agencies can be put to judicious use and bring about improvement in the living conditions of the people is to ensure strong accountability, which will prioritise and ensure frequent independent audit and having a feedback mechanism that is open to all. This will require avoiding challenges of conflict of interest and compromised enforcement standards. Considering the importance of community engagement in accountability, there is a need to have community members actively involved and ensure they are not side-lined or denied equal access to participating in development policies and their welfare (bottom-top approach to public policy making). Technological advancement should also boost accountability, as digital tools are available and should be utilised to enhance accountability in both the public and private sectors, including on an individual scale. According to Lee and Chen (2020), technological features and channels, like e-governance platforms, social media and blockchain, are examples of technologies

that allow citizens to monitor and report on the actions of their government. These technologies also enable transparency and, to a large extent, bridge the disconnect between citizens and those in charge of policy-making in the state, therefore encouraging governance that is more accessible and accountable to the people.

Governance is centred on managing the state's resources to meet the people's needs. Therefore, accountability is necessary to avoid personal and group interests to the detriment of the large population. Accountability is a pillar that seeks to ensure that officials and institutions carry out their task of service to the public in an answering way by giving an account of their service delivery. This process further reinforces the people's trust and confidence in the government and its institutions. It is the need for accountability in Nigeria that led to the creation of a number of anti-graft institutions, like Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), in 2000 and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), in 2003 (Act of 2014), and the creation of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) in 2012, but which became operational in 2015 (Anyogu et al. 2024). These, among several others, are to ensure accountability in order to attain good governance in Nigeria.

Civil Participation

Civil participation has to do with the ordinary people as distinct from the military. Civil participation ensures that people are involved in decisions that affect them. Therefore, it means that individuals, groups and non-governmental bodies should be involved, directly or indirectly, in making decisions that concern their well-being and environment. Unlike civil engagement, which is broader (formal and informal), civil participation is specific and involves citizens' direct interactions with public institutions or government. Participation is not limited; thus, it can be direct or indirect. According to Pancer (2015), civil participation is specific and direct, as it is a subset of civil engagement. In this regard, the emphasis is on the citizens being actively involved in their communities' public and political activities, including voting for peaceful demonstrations, among others. Hoskins and Mascherini (2009) note that active citizenship includes participation in representative democracy, community engagement, advocacy for social change, and endorsement of democratic norms grounded in mutual respect, non-violence and human rights.

Citizens have a vital role in achieving good governance. When citizens engage officials and institutions, it is easier to achieve accountability and transparency and checkmate policymakers for the formulation of good policies. In other words, when citizens are actively involved in the decision-making process, the governance system becomes more inclusive and aids adherence to democratic values. However, citizens also need help in getting involved actively in decision-making process due to socio-economic and political disparities and other exposures and access factors.

Addink (2019) examines community-driven initiatives and direct legislation, demonstrating how public engagement can impact policy results. It also demonstrates how public participation in policy-making increases responsiveness in government, which, in turn, boosts confidence in and support for such initiatives. The review highlights the importance of citizens actively achieving long-term governance for better well-being and sustainable development. Similarly, he notes that free and fair elections and proportional representation electoral systems increase civil participation. Civil participation can be in the form of voting, activism, advocacy and using online media to engage in discussion, create awareness and mobilise with a clear purpose.

Civil participation constitutes a vital pillar for the achievement of good governance. Citizen's engagement in the electoral process is primary to the achievement of electing credible leadership. Citizen's mobilisation and engagement of the governmental institutions, like electoral bodies and judicial institutions, are also important in making them to adhere to the rule of law in the discharge of their constitutional roles in the conduct of free and fair elections and delivery of unbiased judgments, respectively (Ekman & Amna, 2012).

In Nigeria currently, social media has become an instrument in engaging the Nigerian youth in civil participation. At different times, citizens and civil society organisations (CSOs) have also engaged and called out government officials and institutions, demanding accountability and holding them accountable for their actions and or inaction. A good example is the issue of police brutality, which consequently led to the #EndSARS protest (Ecoma, 2023). Recently, a young man, Martins Vincent Otse, nicknamed VeryDarkMan (VDM), has decided to demand an account of service from public individuals and officials in their conduct, concerning the public good. He has actually become the hope for justice for the poor and oppressed, as many Nigerians no longer have hope and confidence on governmental institutions.

Theoretical Framework

Systems of governance continue to change and adapt into newer systems, to create better living conditions and for overall sustainable development. The theory of participatory governance emphasises having a state-institutionalised approach and procedures that will allow and encourage citizens to be part of the governance process. This is to enable them to have a voice and engage in the electoral process, thereby also playing a role that will improve their living conditions. The purpose of these procedures includes to facilitate continuous participation in the formulation of policies, supervision of activities and distribution of resources. Put differently, it is the act of engaging citizens (individuals and civil groups) in the policy-making of the state, so that they can directly or indirectly partake in making decisions that affect their lives (McNulty & Wampler, 2015).

The theory of participatory governance has developed over time, and different scholars have continued to enrich it. Earlier scholars that advocated participatory governance include Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Stuart Mill. Similarly, Pateman (1970, cited in McNulty & Wampler, 2015) acknowledges the great impact of Archon Fung and later Erik Olin Wright, as key proponents of the theory, advocating increased participation in democracy and the need for an empowered approach to participation (Fung, 2003, cited in Bussu et al., 2022).

The theory of participatory governance assumes that representative democracy alone will not be able to bring about the desired improvement in the living conditions of people. Therefore, people need to be actively involved in the governance process to improve the performance of government officials and institutions regarding the proper utilisation of public funds and resources. Citizens' active participation will boost functionality, uphold democratic tenets and increase social welfare. Also, the theory emphasises that, unlike direct democracy, where the people directly make decisions, representative democracy must be complemented by participation as a way of restructuring democratic government to solve the problem of democratic deficits. In essence, participatory governance will basically rely on a trust system, with common ideals, and presence of consensus among participants that are interested in promoting a collaborative atmosphere. This is because decision-making is participatory; therefore, there is need for the people's involvement (Cerro Coso Community College, 2013). No policy should not be made in isolation; it should involve the people. The theory emphasises empowering citizens (individual and civil organisations) in terms of their skills and capacities for meaningful engagement and participation (Bussu et al., 2022). This is intended to be accomplished through capacity building to achieve better-informed decision-making.

Participatory governance seeks the achievement of people-centred governance, where the people should be engaged to make decisions that affect them. Prior to this, the state must have an institutional framework to allow for citizens' participation. However, the realisation of such a purpose is highly influenced by institutional enablement, the political and leadership will to allow for citizens' free participation and the willingness of the citizens to take an active part as individuals and or civil society groups.

The theory has also been criticised by Bussu *et al.* (2022) on the grounds of rigidity. They remark that it is prone to institutional challenges; in such cases, its postulations can be a source of limitation for citizens' sincere public empowerment, which may obstruct genuine public empowerment by structuring participation within rigid structures. The theory has also been criticised on the grounds of cultural barriers and socio-economic issues. This implies that those with lower socio-economic status or lower cultural regard might not have equal participation opportunities. Also, online platforms can broaden

participation opportunities. There is also the bias of excluding some portion of the demographics, such as rural residents, elderly persons and those without enough access to technology or education.

Notwithstanding the shortcomings of the theory, it is useful in ensuring accountability among government officials and institutions in Nigeria. It also affords citizens the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process, and such inclusiveness brings about good governance.

Impact of Accountability and Civil Participation on Good Governance

This section assesses the impact of accountability and civil participation on good governance in Nigeria. The Nigerian state, like many other countries in the world, desires to achieve good governance and put measures in place to ensure its achievement. Some of the measures include legal means, like the 1999 Constitution, the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act of 2011 and electoral laws. There is also occasional budget consultation and town hall meetings. In terms of civil participation, the government has partnered such bodies as the Centre for Democratic Studies (CDS). There is also fight against corruption through agencies or policies like the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and the Treasury Single Account (TSA) and even the Public Complaints Commission (PCC). These are efforts to achieve good governance for the attainment of improved well-being and for sustainable development.

Table 4: A Review of Good Governance

S / N	Principle of Good Governance	Definition	Measure of Accountability	Measure of Civil Participation	Government Response	Institution in Charge
1	The Rule of Law	Respect for laws, equality and fundamental rights.	Using anti-corruption laws to prosecute violators	Promoting legal reforms, creating public awareness of legal abuse and rights.	Seeking to reform the judiciary, subsequent enactment of new laws, e.g. Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015	Federal Ministry of Justice, judiciary

2	Transparency	Openness in the process of making decisions and information access	Measurement and assessment of FOI Act, public access to budget and procurement breakdown.	Individuals and civil society demand transparency and monitoring of government expenditures.	Implementation of e-governance platforms partial compliance with FOI requests.	The Bureau of Public Procurement, Ministry of Finance, Auditor General's Office
3	Participation	To be inclusive and ensure that citizens are meaningfully involved in decision-making	Citizens are involved in public hearings and are consulted in policy making.	Level of engagement of citizens' grassroots mobilisation, town hall meetings, voter turnout in elections	Introduction of public feedback platforms, poor effectiveness in policy inclusivity	INEC, Local Governments, Ministry of Information
4	Effectiveness and Efficiency	Responsible to the citizens in the delivery of goods and services	The level of auditing of government schemes reviews the performance of public institution.	Citizens' monitoring of quality of service delivery	Approving budgetary allocations for results for key sectors like health and education.	National Assembly, Budget Office, SERVICOM.
5	Equity and Inclusiveness	Making sure no group or region is marginalised in governance or development.	The level of affirmative action policies and monitoring social inclusion indices	Promotion of rights for children, women, youth, and persons with special needs.	Adoption of the National Gender Policy	Federal and state Ministries of Women Affairs, NAPTIP, and the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities

6	Accountability	To hold public institutions and public officials responsible in the discharge of their duties	The level of regularity and transparency in the publication of audit reports and the establishment of anti-corruption agencies	The ability of citizens and groups to demand accountability through protests, petitions and media reports	Using government institutions to prosecute corruption cases.	EFCC, ICPC, Public Accounts Committee, Office of the Auditor General
7	Consensus Orientation	Reaching agreement on policies and priorities through consultation with the people	Efforts to achieve inclusivity and cross-party agreements during National Assembly debates.	Civil society groups advocating collective goals and public consultations	Support for national dialogue initiatives	National Assembly, Political parties, CSOs.
8	Responsiveness	Swift response to citizens' needs and feedback concerns	The level of consistency in feedback systems and transparent communication channels with public officials	Civil campaigns seeking government response on urgent problems, social media activism	Reactivation of phone lines and portals for public grievances.	Nigeria Police Force, SERVICOM, Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2024

As seen in Table 4 above, Item 1 shows that the government response and institutions in charge are weak, which has manifested in inconsistent judgment and compromised judgment in a number of high-profile cases of corruption. There is also the problem of political interference, which has stood as a hindrance for citizens to have a fair justice system (Sam-Duru, 2024, November 2; Lawyard, 2024, December 10). Such occurrences prevent the achievement of good governance.

Table 4 also indicates that the measurement of the impact of Item 2 on bringing about good governance in Nigeria shows challenges. Governmental response and efforts of the FOI Act are supposed to boost transparency. However, this is not the case, as the level of information made available is still poor, which has consequently created a budgeting process with opaque budget manifestation at all levels. This is also evidenced by the 2024 "Mo Ibrahim Index on African country's transparency and integrity" (Agi, 2024, October 31), where Nigeria ranked 33rd out of 53 countries in Africa, scoring less than 50% (45.7/100).

As shown in Item 3, inclusiveness ought to be used to guarantee accountability and civil engagement in electoral matters and other domains of the state. The citizens demonstrated increased participation, having been mostly sensitised through social media, but the opportunity for participation is still limited due to official and institutional crackdowns. The 2020 EndSARS movement is a good example, where the youth rose up against indiscriminate police harassment of young men mostly, and the government responded with violence, which resulted in casualties (Ecoma, 2023). However, the movement later brought about the scrapping of that police unit (Special Anti-robbery Squad). Also, during the 2023 general elections, there was increased participation by the youth, but logistic challenges and irregularities of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and INEC Result Viewing Portal (IREV) during the voting and uploading process raised issues of credibility and served to discourage many of the youth from getting involved in the future (Commonwealth Observer Group (COG), cited in Nwankwo & Dode, 2024).

As stated in Item 4, effective and efficient management is a prerequisite for the attainment of good governance and achievement of sustainable development. The Ministry of Finance and other budgetary bodies are seeking ways to augment resources and increase allocation. There is still a wide gap between what is needed and what is budgeted. Corrupt practices, coupled with poor management, have greatly affected the quality of service delivery, which has now become an impediment to the actualisation of good governance. Implementation also constitutes a problem. In Nigeria currently, most government schools and hospitals are in dilapidated condition. There are also poor attitudes towards work among workers, which is an impediment to the actualisation of the principle of good governance. On the issue of effectiveness and efficiency, the Nigerian state has consistently ranked low, especially in indicators such as the rule of law, corruption and political stability, as there is often political tension. There are also issues of governmental failures, security lapses, socio-economic disparity and poor response to emergencies (Okoi & Iwara, 2021).

Item 5 in Table 4 strongly indicates that equity and inclusiveness are instruments in the attainment of security and harmonious living in communities. However, critical

issues in Nigeria include the widening gap between the rich and the poor, as well as the under-representation of most groups and minorities in positions of power. There are also disparities in rural communities' access to resources, even when measures aimed at equity have been adopted. Inadequate enforcement mechanisms worsen the available resources for such groups. Furthermore, inclusive development is hindered by inadequate governance systems, which lead to unequal resource allocation and have a disproportionate impact on marginalised populations and often lead to crisis and violence, as is the case in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (UNDP, 2022).

As stated in Item 6, Table 4, a major malaise in Nigeria is lack of accountability. It is a major factor that has made corruption and misappropriation thrive. Projects are approved/awarded with funds released, but such are hardly accounted for, leaving room for abandonment and poor-quality projects. There are institutions like EFCC and ICPC that have the mandate to ensure accountability. These institutions have, however, not performed creditably owing to lack of political will, interference and personal interest of the ruling class, which hampers efforts put into prosecuting suspects by the agencies. In some cases, citizens have done what is needed by protesting and calling out government officials and institutions to account for their actions, but these often die away in a matter of days, as the political leadership and institutions often do not respond to such calls. Roelofs (2023) criticises the disconnection of governance from the people, arguing that accountability is encouraged when authority is "socially embedded." He notes that, despite the fact that social embeddedness can result in corruption, it also serves as a restraint on unbridled power because it encourages direct accountability to the citizens who are affected.

As indicated in Item 7, policies frequently favour particular groups. Little effort has been made to develop consensus among a wide range of people on important issues affecting the masses.

Finally, as evident in Item 8, there is the problem of poor response to the needs of the people. Most developing countries often opt for reactivity instead of being proactive. Response services rarely match the promptness required. In other words, governments frequently fail to address public demands in a timely manner, as evidenced by the delayed implementation of socio-economic reforms to improve the increasing hunger and poverty. Panels and committees are set up, but reports are either not implemented or implemented haphazardly.

Impediments to Good Governance in Nigeria and Remedies

Accountability and civil participation as pillars of good governance have underperformed not because most Nigerians have not put in the effort to hold officials accountable or have excluded themselves from policy and decision-making. Rather, there are militating factors

slowing down the process of achieving good governance in the polity. These obstacles examined below.

- **Weak institutions:** Most Nigerians and civil organisations have been putting in much effort to ensure accountability and have also ensured they take part in the electoral process and decision-making, but weak institutions have not allowed these efforts to be productive. For instance, the judiciary has recently been involved in many conflicting judgments, as is the case in Rivers State, among others (Musa, 2024, December 13). Whenever judgements seem to have been compromised, other institutions of government are negatively affected.

In Nigeria currently, anti-corruption bodies, like Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), have not been able to fully sanitise the system and ensure accountability even when the public draws their attention to such, simply because such bodies are largely weak and unable to prosecute suspects to a logical conclusion. Recently, the EFCC admitted that cases oftentimes are untreated based on logistics (Ayantoye, et al. 2023, October 22). This is a clear indication that the agencies lack the power to guarantee financial and economic accountability. Also, regulatory bodies, like Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) and Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON), have not shown the improved efficiency needed to facilitate good government.

Importantly, the manner in which the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) conducts its affairs has been a factor in discouraging citizens' participation in the electoral process. As seen in the 2023 general elections, logistics challenges and electoral fraud under the INEC have largely gone unpunished, as perpetrators end up being beneficiaries of the process (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2023, February 27). Some other institutions that have shown weakness include Nigeria Police Force and Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP). Despite the latter's mandate to ensure a transparent procurement process, it lags behind in ensuring that projects are not inflated (Ecoma, 2023).

- **Corruption:** The issue of corruption has almost become synonymous with doing business in Nigeria. Corruption has been a huge hindrance to governance, as resources are often misappropriated or diverted, hindering development. Corruption weakens institutions like the judiciary, the police and anti-corruption agencies while also reducing the efficacy of governance systems and transferring resources meant for public services into private hands. It recreates wastage and gives room for fraud and abuse of public funds. Consequently, foreign direct investment (FDI) is discouraged. Socially, corruption worsens social inequality because it drains funds from essential areas like healthcare, education and

infrastructure, which disproportionately impact the poor. Regarding civil participation, corruption reinforces mistrust in the political systems, which, in turn, causes discontent, voter apathy and the likelihood of confrontations. Some notable corruption cases include subsidy scams and embezzlement of funds meant for development (Human Rights Watch, 2019; Transparency International, 2023).

- **Leadership challenge:** A serious problem of good governance in Nigeria is lack of political will to have a functional system. Lack of visionary leadership has been a key factor allowing mismanagement to thrive. The electoral process and cost of electioneering in Nigeria are so high that people who are engaged in legitimate business can hardly afford election costs. Even if credible candidates are crowd-funded, the electoral body's leadership and process constitute a threat to the conduct of free and fair elections, thus discouraging civil participation in the electoral process. In Nigeria, the provision of public infrastructures has been significantly impeded by poor leadership capability, which has resulted in poor availability of needed infrastructures and slowdown of good governance and sustainable development.

Consequently, this led to increase in poverty and unemployment (Nweke, 2018). Nigerian government frequently demonstrates self-centred attitudes towards development and good governance, which results in low government performance and inadequate management of the economy. This also manifests in the absence of a comprehensive vision that enables effective resolution of systemic challenges. Visionary leadership is a critical component of promoting development and guaranteeing good governance. Nweke (2018) acknowledges the importance of a critical thinking leadership (CTL) approach for leaders to possess both trustworthiness and knowledge in order to facilitate sustainable development and governance.

- Another obstacle to achieving good governance is insecurity, which make the business environment insecure. Also, as a result of Nigeria's broad ethnic and religious mix, conflicts frequently arise, and the country's leaders occasionally take advantage of these differences in order to advance their own political or personal goals, thereby compromising the nation's unity.

Pathways to Achieving Good Governance in Nigeria

Accountability and civil participation remain strong pillars for the sustenance and achievement of good governance. However, accountability and institutional approval for civil participation are often difficult. Most countries that are lagging behind in good governance indicators, are also more repressive and, in such situations, accountability and civil participation become more difficult. In this regard, this study identifies factors that

will not only aid the achievement of good governance but also ensure that its pillars are effective and have the enablement needed to be functional.

- 1. Legal and institutional frameworks:** Legal and institutional frameworks have been used here because they are intertwined and complement each other. The Nigerian state has a legal framework upon which institutions operate; the problem lies in how these legal frameworks came about and how the institutions they created evolved and were structured to perform. According to Ijeomah (2023), transformation and development in the Nigerian state are dependent on the legal structure of three institutions, which also determine their efficiency. These are the judiciary, the Nigeria Police Force and the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC). He notes that nothing in particular is wrong with these intuitions other than their legal structures and appointment of their heads.

For instance, it is difficult for the judiciary not to continue to deliver compromised and conflicting judgments because, based on Section 231 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), it is the Nigerian president that appoints the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN) and other judges of the Supreme Court, as well as those of the Federal High Courts and National Industrial Courts. The President only needs the recommendation of the National Judicial Council (NJC), which is at the President's discretion to accept or dismiss, as it constitutes only a recommendation. The NJC possesses limited authority, as it was created under section 153 and is led by the Chief Justice of Nigeria, who is appointed by the President. At the state level, judges are nominated by the governors based on the recommendations of the National Judicial Council (NJC) (Nigeria, 1999, cited in Ijeomah, 2023). This hampers the judiciary's ability to operate independently, resulting in a weakened institution that cannot administer justice equitably and impartially, thereby allowing powerful individuals in politics and society to exert influence.

The inability of the Nigeria Police Force to operate at its best is closely associated with the institution's lack of independence, indiscipline and corruption. The Inspector General of Police (IGP) is appointed by the President of Nigeria, who serves as the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of the Armed Forces, in accordance with the Nigerian constitution. This is permissible under Section 215(1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). The provision stipulates that "Subject to Section 216(2) of this Constitution, the Inspector-General of Police shall be appointed by the President on the advice of the Nigeria Police Council from among the serving members of the Nigeria Police Force." The Nigeria Police Commission Chairman, who is also appointed by the President, is a member of the council, and the President serves as the chairman (Nigeria, 1999, cited in Ijeomah, 2023).

The inability of INEC to conduct credible elections is also based on the legal and institutional framework which has allowed corruption to thrive. This is obvious as the executive appoints the INEC chairman. Senate merely approves the President's preference, under section 154(1) of the 1999 Constitution, as amended. This proves that the body is not independent, since politicians with vested interests appoint its members. This has been the biggest obstacle to free and fair elections in Nigeria.

Consequently, legal and institutional frameworks constitute major impediments to achieving good governance. The remedy is to unbundle the frameworks. The National Assembly has the primary mandate in this regard as the law-making body. Canada, India and Germany have their electoral commissioners chosen based on a transparent process via nomination either from the public or with full input from the public, civil society organisations and religious groups; it is a stakeholder's affair to ensure independence (IIIDEM, 2017). In the United States of America, being in the judiciary is a lifetime appointment; so the Chief Justice can act independently without frequent political manipulation. In South Africa and India, it is also a stakeholder affair, which has brought progress to their legal systems. The Nigeria Police Force needs to learn from countries like Norway, Switzerland and Germany, where the police force is decentralised and, most importantly, stakeholders must be involved in the appointment process.

2. **Citizens' Conscious Participation/mobilisation:** Citizens' participation is the most active approach in achieving good governance, as the citizens bear the pain and know where it bites them most. The political class, who are to ensure the functionality of the system, are also the beneficiaries of the poorly performing state system. Therefore, they have little or no desire to improve the well-being of the people through good governance; instead, they accept the status quo to the detriment of the citizens. Therefore, the citizens need to consciously mobilise themselves to demand good governance through peaceful protest and mobilisation.

The political class does not yield to the people's demand easily; instead, it often acts when pressured into taking such action. The current Nigerian political class does not look like one that will initiate legal and institutional frameworks that will enthrone good governance. Therefore, the citizens must utilise social media to create more awareness, sensitising the people on their rights and what the political class owe them as their rights and how to demand such. The citizens must not back down but ensure they publicly participate in consultations and town hall meetings, and carry out advocacy campaigns. The citizens should carry out peaceful protests against governmental intuitions (without having to block roads) and demand

accountability and good governance in times of governance deficit. The citizens must also demand collaboration with the government, involving civil society organizations/groups and even the private sector. This is necessary because the achievement of good governance must involve all, as it requires collective efforts.

Conclusion

It has been established in this study that accountability and civil participation are vital pillars for the attainment of good governance in Nigeria. However, achieving good governance in the country has been proven to be most challenging. Ideally, accountability ensures that government officials and institutions, including the private sector, adhere to the rule of law, ensure transparency in the conduct state business, and imbibe equity, fairness, responsiveness and inclusiveness in such dealings.

Civil engagement enables citizens to engage in decision-making processes and ensures leaders' accountability. However, a number of internal factors in the Nigerian state, like lack of political will, weak institutions, and socio-economic inequality have limited the attainment of good governance. However, not all hope is lost. Measures like strengthening legal and institutional frameworks and conscious civil participation by citizens using social media will be instrumental in bridging the gaps in governance and will create a brighter opportunity for the attainment of good governance.

The Way Forward

To address the problems identified in this study, Nigeria requires a multifaceted, collective and inclusive approach. The National Assembly is the primary law-making body in the state. It is expected to live up to its responsibilities. There is an urgent need for legal and institutional frameworks to make government bodies independent for them to be effective and deliver their mandate to the populace and be accountable. There is a need for transparent nominations and decentralisation devoid of political class domination in the appointment of strategic public officers, and the public must be involved through civil bodies. Similarly, citizens' engagement must be improved upon through awareness campaigns, nonviolent mobilisation and active involvement in decision-making processes.

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49**CORRUPTION AND INSTITUTIONAL WEAKNESSES IN NIGERIA****By****Hycenth a. Ajie**

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Abstract

This paper explores the empirical relationship between corruption and institutional weakness. It further highlights the relationship between corruption levels and economic growth. The empirical literature reviewed showed that the linear relationship between corruption and institutional weaknesses, and economic growth has not differentiated between growth-enhancing and growth-reducing levels of corruption. The analysis shows that a decrease in corruption raises the economic growth of an economy and vice versa. The paper further posits that there is an inverse relationship between corruption and institutional weaknesses. This means that efficient institutions frown on corruption and are better placed to fight corrupt practices, while inefficient institutions enhance corruption to an unimaginable level. Corruption and institutional weaknesses are interdependent and interconnected such that they Granger-cause each other. The paper also states that corruption and institutional weaknesses can be remedied in society through strengthening institutions, enhancing transparency and accountability, establishing robust anti-corruption laws, leveraging technology and increasing access to justice, among others.

Keywords: Corruption, Institutional Weaknesses, Criminal Misconduct, Poor Governance, Transparency and Accountability.

1. Introduction

Corruption is a universal phenomenon; no society is free from it. According to Okotuak (1981), corruption by political office holders and bureaucrats in Nigeria has dented the image of the government, weakened its credibility and reduced the effectiveness of developmental processes. Corruption is a multifaceted concept that can be understood in several ways. *Oxford Dictionary* views it as the act of corrupting or a state of being corrupted, moral decay, bribery and dishonesty. It is the abuse of entrusted power for personal gain. The United Nations defined corruption as any abuse of power whether it be for personal gain or other reasons. It is any abuse of power for personal gain, often involving bribery, extortion or embezzlement.

Government machinery is the single most corrupting influence in society. It is synonymous with corrupting waste, inequality and dishonesty. Corruption, at the local, state or national level, is dangerous. Although corruption is difficult to define, it includes the following acts, which are punishable under law:

16. Criminal misconduct by a public servant in the discharge of official duty, which may include habitual acceptance of illegal gratification for himself/herself or for any other persons, misappropriation or conversion of property entrusted to him/her as a public servant, acts of obtaining pecuniary advantage for himself/herself or for any other person
17. Habitual taking of illegal gratification to influence a public servant
18. Possession of wealth disproportionate to the known source of income, and
19. Attempt to misappropriate property entrusted to him as a public servant.

Bayley asserts that corruption is a general term that covers misuse of authority as a result of considerations of personal gains, which need not be monetary. Ajie and Oyegun (2012) define corruption as behaviour that deviates from the normal duties of a public role as a result of pecuniary or private status gains.

The above definitions assume that behaviour is corrupt only when it violates a formal standard or rule. In modern day understanding, corruption means the betrayal of public trust for individual or group gain. This presupposes the existence of public officials with power to choose between two or more courses of action, and possession by the government of some power or wealth or sources of wealth which the public official can take or use to his private advantage (Sharma, Sadana and Harcourt, 2012).

Based on the above definitions, we conceptualise corruption thus:

- It is a deliberate and intentional exploitation of one's position, status or resources.
- It can be done directly or indirectly for personal gains, power or prestige.
- It violates legitimate norms of behaviour.
- It is done against the interest of society.

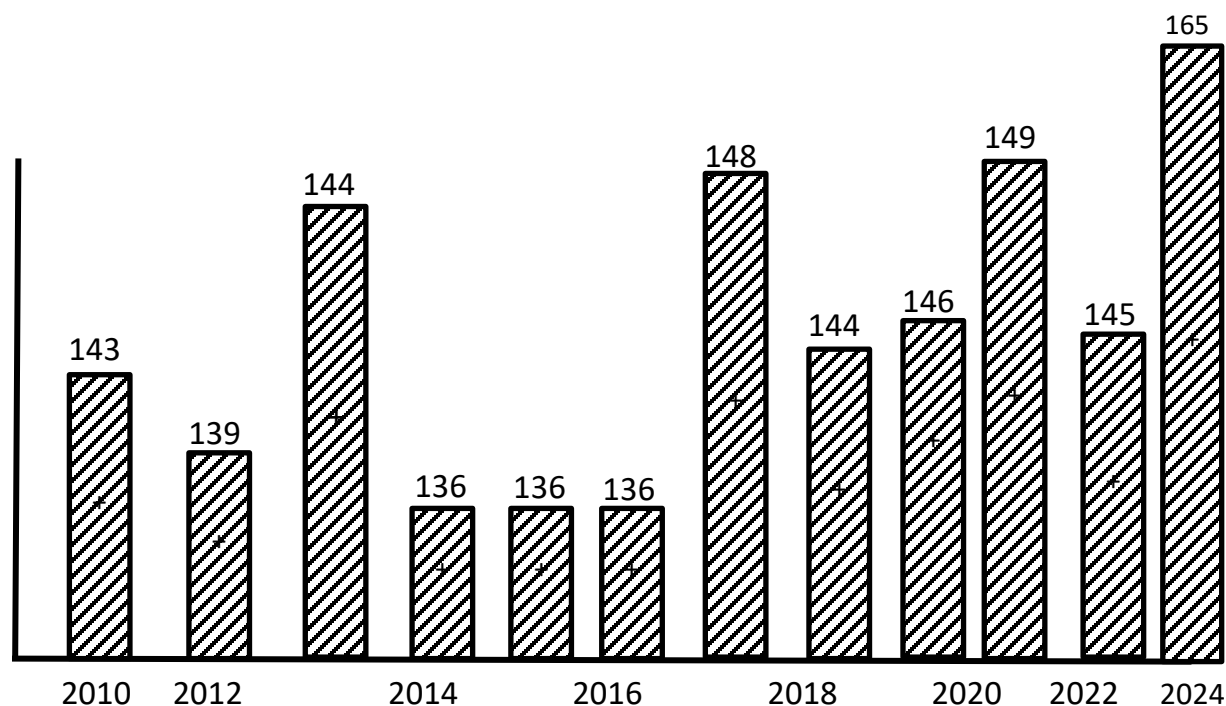
To this end, attitudes towards corruption and unethical conduct are situationally determined. Hence definitions of corruption vary by profession, setting and culture. Corruption is an evil that has eaten deep into the fabric of developing countries, including Nigeria, due to lack of good governance and good policies. This has led to stunted and unsustainable development. Corruption has thus become a developmental issue, giving birth to abject poverty in Nigeria.

The Nigerian government, in response to the urgent need to address the high level of corruption in the country, enacted the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) Act (2000). Corruption, according to Nkom (1982), is the perversion of public affairs for private advantage. It includes bribery or the use of unauthorized rewards to influence people in position of authority, either to act or refuse

to act in ways beneficial to the misappropriation of public funds and resources for private gains, Doig (1996) describes corruption as the use of official position, resource or facilities for personal advantage or possible conflict of interest between public position and private benefits. This involves misconduct by public officials and is usually covered by a variety of internal regulations. Thus, corruption includes bribery, kickback, misappropriation, misapplication or use of one's position to gain an undue advantage. The ICPC Act 2000 and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Act 2004 have broadened the definition of corruption. The EFCC Act empowers the commission to investigate, prevent and prosecute offenders who engage in money laundering, embezzlement, looting, bribery and any form of corrupt practices.

Corruption rank in Nigeria averaged 123:56 from 1996 to 2022 reaching an all-time high of 152 in 2002 and a low record of 52 in 1997. Nigeria's corruption rank was projected to be around 155:00 in 2023 and 165:00 by the end of 2024.

Figure 1: Nigeria Corruption Ranking



Source: Trending Economics.com/Transparency International.

Corruption has cost Nigeria over \$550 billion in the past 60 years. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) recovered at least \$760 million in local and foreign currencies linked to corruption and fraud in 2023. There have been many high-profile corruption cases in Nigeria, including those involving former government officials, politicians and business leaders. A case in point is the ongoing saga between EFCC and Yahaya Bello, former Governor of Kogi State, who is being prosecuted for allegedly

stealing ₦110 billion government money. There have been cases such as those of Babachir Lawal, who allegedly stole ₦170 billion government money, ₦36 billion allegedly swallowed by snake in JAMB (Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board) office in 2018, ₦70 million WAEC (The West African Examinations Council) money swallowed by monkey in 2018, ₦17 billion belonging to a government agency NSITF destroyed by termites in 2018 and ₦6.8 billion consumed by gorilla in Kano Zoological Garden in 2019.

There is also the issue of grand corruption, involving large-scale embezzlement and bribery. This is a significant problem in Nigeria with estimates suggesting that it costs the country billions of dollars each year. As of December 2023, Nigeria had 6194 court cases on corruption.

Corruption is said to have a significant impact on Nigeria's economy, including reducing economic growth, increasing poverty, insecurity and inequality, and undermining trust in governmental institutions.

2. Types of Corruption

Listed below are the various types of corruption that are prevalent in Nigeria.

- **Bribery:** This refers to offering, giving, receiving or soliciting something of value as a means of influencing the actions of an official or other person in charge of a public or legal duty.
- **Embezzlement:** This refers to the theft or misappropriation of funds placed in one's trust or belonging to one's employer.
- **Nepotism:** it is favouritism granted to relatives or friends regardless of merit.
- **Extortion:** This refers to obtaining something, especially money, through force or threat. This is common among police, army, taskforce officers, etc.
- **Cronyism:** This refers to favouritism granted to friends, relations or associations regardless of merit.

3. Classification of Corruption

Corruption can be classified into three:

- **Grand Corruption:** it is high-level or large-scale corruption mostly in government circles.
- **Petty corruption:** This refers to low level of everyday stealing in an organization.
- **Political Corruption:** This involves political offices holders and government officials.

4. Causes of Corruption

- The World Development Report 1997 issued by the World Bank identified some causes of corruption and their remedies. This was based on economic analysis of

69 countries included in a survey. The survey report revealed that: the greater the policy distortion through controls, the greater the corruption,

- The more predictable the judiciary, the less the corruption,
- The better civil servants are paid, the less the corruption, and
- The more the recruitment of public servants is based on merit the less the corruption

Corruption is seen to be equal to monopoly, windfalls plus discretion in decision-making minus accountability, i.e. $C = MD - A$, where C stands for Corruption, M stands for Monopoly, D stands for Windfall plus discretion in decision-making, and A stands for Accountability.

The solution lies in reducing monopoly and the discretionary power of politicians and bureaucrats and increasing their accountability (Sharma, Sadana & Harpreet 2012). Other major causes of corruption include the following:

- **Poor Governance:** A government without sound economic policy will lead to poor performance in every sphere of human endeavour and this will create loopholes for pilfering government funds. redtapism and bureaucracy, and files moving endlessly from one desk to another because no one wants to take responsibility of taking a task. Prominent issues under poor governance are inefficient judicial system clumsy handling of political cases, and inadequate laws to handle corruption cases.
- **Lack of Accountability and Transparency:** Under this sub-heading, there are three different levels, namely:
- **International Level:** The competitiveness of the international market gives multinational companies the incentive to offer bribes to gain advantage over other competitors in the system. The Siemens scandal, the National Identity Card saga and the Halliburton case are some of the corruption cases involving international companies in Nigeria.
- **The National Level:** The development strategy of the government may increase opportunities and incentives for corruption. Three types of relationship exist at this level –the relationship between government officials and the civil service, between government and judiciary, and between government and civil society/private organization or individuals. What comes to mind here is connivance and privileges. Judges are busy giving conflicting orders on the same subject matter. This is judicial corruption, as seen in the case of Rivers State of late, where the political battle has shifted from Port Harcourt to Abuja and judges of courts of co-ordinate jurisdiction are busy issuing conflicting orders /judgments on matters that have the same foundation.

- **Individual level:** This deals with business regulation management, outright diversion of public resources, collection of mobilization fees without execution of the project or abandonment of projects when the amount of the project has been paid or poor execution of the project, a culture of affluence and get-rich-quickly syndrome. This explains why politicians spend a lot of money during election. Many reasons could be adduced for corruption in Nigeria. They include weak institutions of government, lukewarm attitude of the enforcers of the law (police, judges and legislators), as evidenced by Senator Oshiomole's statement, "Join APC (All Progressives Congress), your sins will be forgiven." Some cultural and institutional factors could also lead to corruption. For example, nepotism and strength of family values/ties are linked to the feeling of obligation. As noted by Nye (1967), corruption is sometimes caused by motivational behaviour, which is a response to social pressure but which violates the set goals and objectives of a social system. In Nigeria for instance, individual rights are often subordinated to groups, interest and allegiance to ethnic interest is considered more important than public accountability or national interest.

Sometimes, poor reward system, low remuneration for public servants and greed account for corruption-related behaviour or actions. The reward system in Nigeria is perhaps the poorest in the world. Some states in the federation owe workers two to eight months' salaries as of June 2020. Yet these members of society are expected to be honest, productive and train their children in a most honourable manner without getting their salaries. Corrupt acts became the alternative means to achieve their objectives and make ends meet because they cannot depend solely on their meagre salaries for a decent living (Obuah 2010).

Minor causes of corruption include greed, poor youth empowerment, poverty, and economic inequality and cultural norms.

- **Greed:** Greed has caused a lot of crisis in the world, including Nigeria. It is because of greed that political leaders embezzle the funds they are supposed to use for national development for their own selfish needs.
- **Poor Youth Empowerment:** Poor youth empowerment is a contributor to corruption, Internet fraud and sexual harassment by male chief executive officers. Other bad acts occur because Nigerians lack understanding of the importance of youth empowerment. When parents and government empower youth both financially and morally, the level of corruption will diminish.
- **Poverty:** According to International Standards of Poverty (ISP), a person is said to be poor when he lives under \$1.20 (₦1760) per day. There are many within the bracket; so they are prone to grab what belongs to others when such opportunities offer themselves.

- **Economic Inequality and Cultural Norms:** Nowadays, parents no longer bother to know the source of their children's wealth. This attitude encourages the children to immerse themselves in corrupt practices.

Consequences of Corruption

The consequences of corruption can be classified into four, namely: economic, social, political and environmental consequences.

- **Economic Consequences:** Corruption reduces economic growth and discourages investment, reduces economic efficiency and undermines economic growth. It increases poverty. It also breeds inequality by favouring those with wealth and power. Corruption can also lead to inflation by creating artificial shortages and manipulating prices.
- **Social Consequences:** Corruption erodes trust in institutions, leaders and the rule of law. It also leads to social unrest, protest and even violence. It facilitates human rights abuse, such as forced labour, human trafficking and child abuse. Corruption can also compromise the quality of healthcare and education, thus putting the lives of the vulnerable population at risk.
- **Political Consequence:** Corruption undermines democratic institutions, processes and values. It breeds abuse of power, leading to authoritarianism and repression. It can influence election outcomes and undermine the integrity of the electoral process. It also contributes to global instability by facilitating national organized crime and terrorism.
- **Environmental Consequence:** Corruption leads to environmental degradation by facilitating the exploitation of natural resources. It exacerbates climate change by promoting the misuse of climate funds and undermining climate change mitigation efforts. It leads to deforestation by facilitating illegal logging and timber trade. It can lead to pollution by allowing dumping of toxic waste and emission of pollutants. An example is Koko waste dumps by foreign vessels in Delta State in June 1988; this incident prompted a massive outcry and led to significant changes in Nigeria's Environmental Protection Law and Policies. The incident remains a notorious environmental disaster in Nigeria's history. Corruption erodes social cohesion. It also distorts markets and economies.

According to Ahmed, Ulleh, Arfeen (2012) weaknesses in public institutions and distortions in economic policies gave rise to rent-seeking behaviour by public officials and incubation of corrupt practices. Concerns about the negative social and economic impact of corruption have grown rapidly and major international organizations have consistently claimed that corruption hinders economic growth. There are still some divergent views about the theoretical standpoint of corruption.

Some economists suggest that corruption may counteract government failure and promote economic growth in the short run, given exogenously determined suboptimal bureaucratic rules and regulations. Others argue that government failure is itself a function of corruption. However, in the long run, corruption have detrimental effects. Generally, corruption can affect resource allocation in two ways, namely, it can change private investor's assessment of the relative merits of various instruments. This, in the view of Ahmed et al. (2012), follows from corruption-induced changes in the relative prices of goods and services as well as of production, including entrepreneurial talents. Secondly, corruption can result in resource misallocation when decisions of how public funds will be invested or which private investment will be permitted are made by a corrupt government agency. This misallocation follows from the possibility that a corrupt decision-maker will consider potential "corruption payment" as one of the decision criteria. In such situations, ranking of projects will be based on corruption rather than on social value.

The empirical literature on corruption is awash with negative correlations between economic growth and the level of corruption. Evidence on positive or beneficial effects are very scarce. Corruption therefore is negatively associated with investment and economic growth.

Cartier-Bresson (1999), as quoted in Ahmed et al. (2012), gives five economic conditions that encourage corruption to flourish in a society. The first is the existence of an exploitable natural resources (e. g. oil) that provides the opportunity for state authorities, both administrative and political, to obtain payments. The second is the general scarcity of public assets relative to demand accompanied by policies of fixed official prices that create opportunities for informal rationing through bribery. The third condition is the low wages in the public sector which are likely to be associated with extensive low-level corruption payments. The fourth is the high levels of state intervention/planning (i.e. protectionism, state-owned enterprises, price controls, exchange controls, import licenses, etc.) which have characterized many developing countries, thus creating opportunities for corruption. Finally, economics in transition are likely to experience particular problems that cause corruption as they undertake privatization and establish the relevant legal frameworks of corporate and contract law.

Corruption, according to Boris Begovit (2005), violates the rule of law, and the rule of law is a prerequisite for the protection of private property rights and no contract of enforcement. There is poor exchange between agents' protection of property rights and inadequate support of contract of enforcement.

Countries with widespread corruption cannot expect high growth rates that is directly related to entrepreneurship and innovation. According to Baumo (2002), entrepreneurship is a resource that can be alternatively allocated to productive activities

or to unproductive and destructive activities. It will go to the activity that enables the entrepreneur the highest possible returns on his activity. Corruption is unproductive and destructive; so it will diminish wealth-creating activities.

Institutional Weaknesses

Institutional weaknesses mean inadequate or ineffective institutions, laws and policies. They also refer to the flaws or deficiencies in the organizational structures, processes and cultures of institutions, which can hinder their ability to function effectively and efficiently. There are various types of institutional weaknesses: weak rule of law, ineffective regulatory framework, inadequate public financial management and limited access to justice.

- **Inadequate Laws and Regulations:** These refer to weak or poorly enforced laws and regulations creating an environment conducive to corruption and abuse of power.
- **Lack of Transparency and Accountability:** Insufficient transparency and accountability mechanism can make it difficult to track the use of resources and hold officials accountable for their actions.
- **Inefficient Bureaucracy:** A slow and inefficient bureaucracy can hinder the delivery of public services and create opportunities for corruption.
- **Corruption and Nepotism:** This can undermine the integrity of institutions and create an unfair and unjust environment that will hinder economic growth.
- **Lack of Meritocracy:** The absence of merit-based hiring and promotion practices can also lead to incompetent and unqualified personnel, which can weaken institutional capacity.
- **Inadequate Resources:** Insufficient resources, including funding, personnel and infrastructure, can limit the ability of institutions to deliver services and achieve their goals.
- **Poor Governance:** Weak governance structures and processes can lead to a lack of direction, co-ordination and oversight, which can undermine institutional effectiveness.
- **Lack of Stakeholders' Engagement:** Insufficient engagement with stakeholders, including citizens, civil society and the private sector can lead to a lack of trust and ownership, which can also weaken institutional legitimacy.

Causes of Institutional Weaknesses

There are several causes of institutional weaknesses, such as historical legacies (e.g. colonialism and conflict) political instability, lack of capacity, corruption and patronage.

- **Lack of Capacity:** Institutions may lack the capacity, including skills, knowledge and resources, to perform their functions effectively.

- **Corruption and Patronage:** These can undermine institutional integrity and create environment conducive to abuse of power.

Consequences of Institutional Weaknesses

Institutional weaknesses result in the following challenges:

- Institutional weaknesses lead to inefficient service delivery, including poor healthcare, education and infrastructure.
- They also result in corruption and abuse of power by creating environment conducive to corruption and abuse of power.
- They can lead to lack of trust and legitimacy, which can undermine the stability and effectiveness of the institutions.
- They bring about poor economic performance, which may include low economic growth, high inflation and high level of unemployment.
- They lead to inequitable distribution of resources, vulnerability to corruption, social unrest and instability.

Nexus of Corruption and Institutional Weaknesses

Corruption and institutional weaknesses are interconnected and interdependent in the following ways:

- Corruption exploits institutional weaknesses in various ways, such as lack of clear policies and procedures. Corruption thrives in environments with unclear or poorly communicated policies and procedures. It also exploits institutional weakness, allowing weak institutions to lack effective oversight mechanisms, which permit corrupt activities to go undetected. Institutions with limited resources and capacity are more vulnerable to corruption.
- Institutional weaknesses enable corruption. Bribery and extortion may be encouraged by corrupt individuals in order to gain favours or avoid penalties. Corrupt officials may exploit institutional weaknesses to embezzle funds or steal resources. Corrupt individuals may use their positions to favour friends, families or allies, undermining institutional integrity. Special interest groups may exploit institutional weaknesses to influence policy and regulatory decisions for their own benefits.
- Corruption undermines institutional effectiveness, by eroding trust and legitimacy through loss of public trust. It can lead to a decline in public trust in institutions, making it challenging for them to function effectively. It can erode the legitimacy of institutions, making it difficult for them to enforce laws and regulations.
- Corruption disrupts institutional processes by distorting decision-making processes leading to unfair or unbiased outcomes. It also undermines accountability by weakening the relevant mechanisms, thus making it difficult to

hold individuals or institutions responsible for their actions. It can also lead to inefficiencies in institutional processes, resulting in wasted resources and poor outcomes.

- **Compromising institutional capacity:** Corruption can weaken the capacity of institutions to deliver services, enforce laws and regulate activities. It can also undermine human resources by resulting in the appointment of unqualified or incompetent personnel, thus undermining the effectiveness of institutions. It can equally result in diversion of resources away from essential institutional function, thus compromising to their effectiveness. (vi) It creates opportunities for organized crime. It can also exaggerate social and economic problems, such as poverty, inequality and environmental degradation. It can equally undermine national security by creating vulnerabilities that can be explained by external actors.
- **Strengthening institutions can reduce corruption.** A well-structured and functional institution is essential for preventing and reducing corruption. This can be done through institutional reforms which will establish clear policies and procedures that can help prevent corruption by reducing discretion and increasing transparency. Implementing strong internal controls, such as audits and financial reporting, can help detect and prevent corrupt activities. Establishing effective oversight mechanism, such as parliamentary committees or independent regulatory and monitory bodies, can help hold institutions accountable.
- **Human resources management can also be very helpful.** By implementing merit-based recruitment processes (such as the one recently conducted by Ignatius Ajuru University of Education) can help ensure that institutions are staffed with competent and honest personnel. Providing regular training and capacity-building programmes can help institutional staff develop the skills and knowledge required to prevent and detect corruption.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Freedom of information laws, whistle-blowing and protection laws can help ensure that individuals who report corrupt activities are protected from retaliation.

Tackling Corruption and Institutional Weaknesses

Corruption cannot be totally eliminated but can be brought down to a minimum level. However, reducing corruption and institutional weaknesses requires a multifaceted and coordinated approach that involves stakeholders and strategies. Presented below are some of the ways to address the issue.

- **Strengthening Institutions:** Institutions can be strengthened by establishing clear policies and procedures to guide institutional decision-making, merit-based recruitment and promotion process, rather than personal connections or bribes.

Institutions can be strengthened by fostering a culture of transparency and accountability where employees feel free to report corrupt practices.

- **Enhancing Transparency and Accountability:** This can be done through implementation of freedom of information laws that provide citizens with access to institutional information, promoting transparency and accountability, creation of independent bodies to oversee institutional activities, investigate corrupt allocations and hold institutions accountable, promoting citizens' engagement and participation in institutional decision-making processes, and promoting transparency and accountability.
- **Addressing corruption by establishing robust anti-corruption laws and regulations** that prevent and punish corrupt activities, creation of anti-corruption agencies for investigating and prosecuting corruption cases and promoting whistle-blowers' protection.
- **Building capacity and promoting cultural change** by providing training and capacity-building programmes aimed at preventing and combating corruption, promoting a culture of integrity within ethical behaviour and empowering people to report corrupt activities, engaging civil society and the private sector to promote anti-corruption efforts, and building a culture of integrity.
- **Leveraging technology:** This can be executed through implementation of digital platforms for transparency and accountability, such as online portals for reporting corruption activities and assessing institutional information, promoting and using data analytics to detect corruption, educating people on how to use digital tools to access information and report corruption, and engaging with institutions.
- **International corporation:** This can be through collaboration with international organizations, like the United Nations to access expertise, resources and best practices guidelines in preventing and combating corruption, participating in international anti-corruption initiatives and sharing best practice and guidelines and lessons learned.
- **Increasing access to justice** is crucial for promoting fairness, equality and the rule of law. This can be achieved through the establishment of legal aid and assistance, judicial reforms, mediation and arbitration, public education and awareness, technology and innovation, as well as collaboration and partnership.

Efforts at Combating Corruption and Institutional Weaknesses

Combating corruption and institutional weaknesses require some complex approaches, such as adopting international efforts, like United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), Organization for Economic Corporation and Development (OECD) Anti-Bribery Convention (ABC), World Bank Governance and Anti-Corruption (WBGAC) Strategy and Transparency Internationals (STT), and Corruption Perception Index (CPI).

In addition to the international efforts, the following national and local strategies or efforts exist:

1. Establishment of independent anti-occupation agencies, such as ICPC and commission EFCC.
2. Implementation of asset declaration laws –Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act, chapter C15, laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004.
3. Promoting citizen participation in budgeting and decision-making –Bureau of Public Services Reforms (BPSR), through National Planning Commission (NPC), Ministry of Budget and National Planning. Additionally, there are non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) that promote citizen participation in budgeting and decision-making processes in Nigeria, such as Budget Transparency and Accountability Network (BTAN), Civil Monitor and Partnership to Engage (CMPE), and Reform and Learn.
4. Supporting investigative journalism, such as the one that led to the discovery of 753 duplexes in Abuja purportedly belonging to Mr. Emefiele –former Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria who is under prosecution by EFCC.

Concluding Remarks

The ideas generated in this write-up shows that corruption has negative impact on the economic growth of any economy. The relationship between corruption and economic development does not show any correlation between growth-enhancing and growth-reducing levels of corruption. The paper posits that there is a dump relationship between level of corruption and economic growth.

There are multifaceted relationships between corruption and institutional weaknesses; the two concepts Granger-cause each other. Poor and weak governmental institutions enhance occurrence of corruption, as there is no framework to challenge the perpetrators of corrupt practices. Corrupt practices hamper institutional strength, making them weak to fight corruption.

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SECTION F

ENVIRONMENT PERSPECTIVES

50

**THE SHALE GAS REVOLUTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL LIQUEFIED
NATURAL GAS TRADE**

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Abstract

The shale gas revolution has transformed the energy landscape, particularly in the United States, by unlocking vast reserves of natural gas previously inaccessible through traditional extraction methods. This paper examines the implications of the shale gas revolution for the global liquefied natural gas (LNG) trade. Through an analysis of market dynamics, infrastructure development and geopolitical considerations, the paper explores how the increased production of shale gas impacts LNG trade patterns, market competitiveness, and energy security on a global scale.

Background

Shale gas development has reshaped the global energy landscape, particularly impacting the dynamics of the liquefied natural gas (LNG) market. Emerging as a game-changer in the early 2000s, advancements in hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling techniques unlocked vast reserves of natural gas trapped in shale formations, notably in the United States. This technological breakthrough transformed the US from a net importer to a major producer and exporter of natural gas, including LNG. The shale gas boom not only bolstered US energy independence but also had profound implications for global LNG market dynamics.

Historically, LNG trade was dominated by long-term contracts indexed to oil prices, with major suppliers like Qatar, Australia, and Russia playing pivotal roles. However, the surge in US LNG exports introduced greater market flexibility. Unlike traditional LNG contracts, which were rigid and tied to oil, US LNG contracts often adopt pricing mechanisms linked to the Henry Hub natural gas benchmark, reflecting market dynamics more closely and providing buyers with pricing transparency and flexibility (IEA, 2019).

The increase in global LNG supply from shale gas has diversified energy sources for importing countries, reducing reliance on specific suppliers and enhancing energy

security. European nations, for example, have increasingly turned to US LNG as an alternative to Russian pipeline gas, mitigating geopolitical risks and enhancing their negotiating position (Henderson & Mitrova, 2016). This diversification has been pivotal in reshaping geopolitical relationships, offering importing countries strategic leverage and reducing the dominance of traditional LNG exporters.

Infrastructure development has been another significant consequence of shale gas development on the LNG market. The US has invested heavily in expanding LNG liquefaction capacity, leading to the construction of new export terminals, such as Sabine Pass and Cove Point. Similarly, importing nations have expanded their LNG infrastructure with new regasification terminals and storage facilities to accommodate increased LNG imports. This infrastructure expansion has not only boosted global LNG capacity but has also enhanced market integration and accessibility (IGU, 2020).

Despite these benefits, shale gas development has introduced challenges for the LNG market. The rapid increase in LNG supply has at times led to market oversupply, exerting downward pressure on prices and squeezing profit margins for producers. This volatility can impact investment decisions in new LNG projects, potentially slowing down future capacity expansions (Shell, 2020). Additionally, environmental concerns associated with shale gas extraction, such as methane emissions and water contamination risks, have prompted stricter regulatory oversight in many regions, adding compliance costs and operational challenges for industry stakeholders (Howarth, 2014).

The influence of shale gas on the global LNG market is poised to continue evolving. Technological advancements, regulatory developments and geopolitical shifts will shape the future landscape. Countries and industry players must navigate these complexities strategically, leveraging opportunities such as market flexibility and infrastructure expansion while mitigating challenges like market volatility and regulatory compliance. Accordingly, this paper provides an in-depth analysis of the implications of the shale gas revolution for global LNG trade, examining both opportunities and challenges that arise as a result of this transformative phenomenon.

The Shale Gas Revolution: A Brief Overview

The shale gas revolution has been one of the most significant energy developments of the 21st century, transforming the global energy landscape and influencing economic and geopolitical dynamics. This revolution is primarily driven by advancements in hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and horizontal drilling technologies, which have made it possible to extract natural gas from shale formations that were previously considered uneconomical.

The technological breakthrough that catalyzed the shale gas revolution involved the combination of hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling. Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, involves injecting high-pressure fluid into shale rock formations to create fractures, allowing gas to flow more freely. Horizontal drilling complements this by

enabling wells to extend horizontally through the shale layers, significantly increasing the surface area from which gas can be extracted (EIA, 2020). These advancements have unlocked vast reserves of natural gas, transforming previously unproductive shale formations into prolific sources of energy.

The economic implications of the shale gas revolution have been profound. In the United States, it has led to a dramatic increase in natural gas production, turning the country from a net importer to a potential exporter of natural gas. According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), the US natural gas production increased by 70% from 2005 to 2019, largely due to shale gas (EIA, 2020). This surge in production has led to lower natural gas prices, benefitting consumers and industries dependent on natural gas as a feedstock or energy source. The availability of cheap natural gas has also spurred investment in industries such as petrochemicals, manufacturing, and energy-intensive sectors, further boosting economic growth.

The shale gas revolution has also had far-reaching geopolitical implications. The increase in the US natural gas production has altered global energy markets and reduced the influence of traditional gas exporters, such as Russia and the Middle East. The US has become a significant player in the LNG market, offering an alternative source of gas for countries in Europe and Asia (Yergin, 2018). This shift has weakened the strategic leverage of countries that previously dominated the global natural gas supply. For instance, European countries have sought to diversify their gas sources to reduce dependence on Russian gas, enhancing their energy security (Henderson & Mitrova, 2016). The availability of US LNG has provided them with a viable alternative, thereby reshaping global energy politics.

The economic and geopolitical benefits of the shale gas revolution have not come without challenges. Market dynamics, including fluctuating natural gas prices, can impact the profitability of shale gas operations. The industry is capital-intensive and requires continuous drilling to maintain production levels, which can be financially demanding during periods of low prices. Additionally, regulatory developments play a crucial role in shaping the future of the shale gas industry.

Implications for Global LNG Trade

- **Market Dynamics**

The development of shale gas has had profound implications for the global LNG market, reshaping supply dynamics, influencing pricing structures and altering geopolitical relationships. The advent of advanced hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling technologies has unlocked vast reserves of natural gas in shale formations, particularly in the United States, transforming the country into a major player in the global LNG market.

One of the most significant impacts of shale gas development on the global LNG market has been the dramatic increase in the supply of natural gas. The United States, which once was a net importer of natural gas, has emerged as a leading exporter of LNG. According to the US Energy Information Administration (EIA), US LNG exports grew from virtually nothing in 2015 to over 7 billion cubic feet per day (Bcf/d) by 2020 (EIA, 2021). This surge in supply has contributed to a global oversupply of LNG, putting downward pressure on prices and increasing market competition.

The increased supply of LNG from the United States has also led to significant changes in global pricing structures. Traditionally, LNG contracts were often linked to oil prices through long-term agreements, particularly in markets such as Japan and South Korea. However, the influx of US LNG, which is priced based on the Henry Hub natural gas benchmark rather than oil, has introduced more flexibility and transparency into the market. This shift has encouraged the adoption of hub-based pricing mechanisms and spot market transactions, contributing to a more competitive and dynamic global LNG market (IEA, 2019).

Moreover, the rise of US LNG exports has enhanced the energy security of importing countries by providing a more diversified and reliable supply. European countries, in particular, have benefited from this diversification. Historically dependent on Russian pipeline gas, Europe has now turned to US LNG to reduce its reliance on Russian energy supplies and enhance its geopolitical leverage. The availability of US LNG has provided European countries with an alternative source of natural gas, reducing the risk of supply disruptions and weakening Russia's influence over the region's energy security (Henderson & Mitrova, 2016).

The geopolitical implications of shale gas development extend beyond Europe. In Asia, countries like Japan, South Korea and China have also increased their LNG imports from the United States, seeking to diversify their energy sources and reduce their dependence on Middle Eastern suppliers. This diversification has not only improved their energy security but has also fostered stronger energy ties with the United States, potentially influencing broader geopolitical relations (Stern, 2019).

Additionally, the US shale gas boom has stimulated infrastructure development globally. The construction of LNG export terminals in the United States, such as those at Sabine Pass and Cove Point, has been mirrored by investments in import terminals and regasification facilities in importing countries. This infrastructure expansion has facilitated the growth of the LNG market, enabling more countries to participate as importers and enhancing the overall resilience and flexibility of the global gas supply chain (IGU, 2020).

However, the rapid increase in LNG supply and the resultant competitive market dynamics have also posed challenges. The global LNG market has experienced periods of oversupply, leading to lower prices and squeezed profit margins for producers. This

volatility can impact investment decisions, potentially leading to delays or cancellations of new LNG projects. For example, during periods of low prices, companies may find it economically unviable to invest in new extraction or liquefaction facilities, potentially constraining future supply growth (Shell, 2020).

The future of the global LNG market will be shaped by many factors, including technological advancements, regulatory changes and shifts in demand patterns. Technological innovations in LNG production, transportation and storage could further reduce costs and enhance the competitiveness of LNG. Regulatory changes, particularly those related to environmental standards and emissions reductions, will also play a critical role in shaping the market. Countries and companies will need to navigate these changes to ensure compliance while maintaining competitiveness (IEA, 2021).

In essence, it is pertinent to posit that the development of shale gas has had transformative effects on the global LNG market, in terms of increasing supply, altering pricing mechanisms, and enhancing energy security for many countries. While these changes have brought numerous benefits, including greater market flexibility and diversification, they have also introduced challenges, such as market volatility and competitive pressures.

Infrastructure Development

The development of shale gas has significantly impacted LNG infrastructure development, trade routes, shipping capacity and market integration, thus revolutionizing the global energy landscape. The surge in shale gas production, particularly in the United States, has necessitated substantial investments in LNG infrastructure, leading to new trade routes and enhanced shipping capacity, while also promoting greater market integration.

The most direct impact of shale gas development on LNG infrastructure is the construction of export terminals. In the United States, facilities like Sabine Pass, Cove Point and Corpus Christi have been developed to liquefy natural gas and prepare it for export (EIA, 2021). These terminals are critical in converting the abundant shale gas into LNG, making it transportable over long distances. The US has invested billions of dollars in these facilities, transforming the country into one of the world's leading LNG exporters. This infrastructure development has not only increased the capacity for LNG exports but has also encouraged the development of similar infrastructure in importing countries, facilitating the global flow of LNG.

The expansion of LNG infrastructure has also influenced global trade routes. Traditionally, LNG trade was dominated by routes from the Middle East and North Africa to Europe and Asia. However, the rise of US shale gas has introduced new trade routes, with significant volumes of LNG now flowing from the US Gulf Coast to markets in Europe and Asia (IEA, 2019). This diversification of trade routes has enhanced the flexibility and security of global gas supplies, which has reduced the risk of supply disruptions and

increased market resilience. For example, European countries can now source LNG from the US as an alternative to Russian pipeline gas; this enhances their energy security (Henderson & Mitrova, 2016).

Moreover, the increased availability of LNG has driven growth in shipping capacity. The demand for LNG carriers has surged, prompting shipbuilders to construct more specialized vessels to transport LNG across oceans. The global LNG fleet has expanded rapidly, with new ships featuring advanced technologies to improve efficiency and safety (IGU, 2020). This expansion in shipping capacity is crucial for meeting the growing demand for LNG transport, ensuring that the gas can be delivered to markets around the world. Additionally, the development of LNG bunkering infrastructure in ports has supported the use of LNG as a marine fuel, further integrating LNG into global shipping networks and reducing emissions from the maritime industry.

Market integration has been another significant outcome of shale gas development. The increase in LNG supply has led to creation of more liquid and competitive markets. Traditional LNG markets, characterized by long-term contracts linked to oil prices, are increasingly giving way to more flexible, spot-market-based trading (IEA, 2019). This shift has been facilitated by the advent of US LNG, which is often sold on a spot basis or through shorter-term contracts tied to the Henry Hub natural gas price benchmark. This evolution towards more dynamic and transparent markets enhances market integration, allowing for better price discovery and more efficient allocation of resources.

Furthermore, the infrastructure development spurred by shale gas has encouraged the establishment of LNG hubs in strategic locations, fostering regional market integration. For instance, the Netherlands' Gate Terminal and the UK's Isle of Grain Terminal have become important hubs for LNG distribution in Europe (Stern, 2019). These hubs play a pivotal role in aggregating LNG supplies and redistributing them within the region, enhancing the overall efficiency and integration of the European gas market. Similar developments are occurring in Asia, where countries like Japan and South Korea are investing in LNG infrastructure to strengthen regional market ties and ensure reliable supply chains.

The impact of shale gas on LNG infrastructure, trade routes, shipping capacity and market integration also underscores the importance of regulatory frameworks and international cooperation. Ensuring safe and efficient operation of LNG infrastructure requires robust regulatory standards and coordination among stakeholders. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) and other regulatory bodies play crucial roles in setting standards for LNG shipping and bunkering, promoting best practices and ensuring the safety and environmental sustainability of LNG operations (IMO, 2020).

The continued growth of shale gas and LNG infrastructure development will likely drive further integration of global gas markets. Technological advancements in LNG production, transportation and storage will enhance efficiency and reduce costs, making LNG a more competitive and attractive energy source. Additionally, the ongoing efforts to decarbonize the energy sector and reduce greenhouse gas emissions will create new opportunities for LNG, particularly as a cleaner alternative to coal and oil in power generation and transportation (IEA, 2021).

Geopolitical Ramifications of Shale Gas Development for the Global LNG Market

The development of shale gas has had significant geopolitical ramifications for the global LNG market, altering the balance of energy power and influencing international relations. This transformation is largely driven by the substantial increase in US LNG exports, which have reshaped global energy dynamics and affected the strategic calculations of both energy-producing and energy-consuming nations.

One of the most notable geopolitical impacts of shale gas development is the enhanced energy security for many countries, particularly in Europe and Asia. Traditionally, European countries have been heavily dependent on Russian natural gas, which has given Russia considerable leverage over Europe. The advent of US LNG has provided European countries with an alternative source of gas, reducing their dependence on Russian supplies and enhancing their energy security. For instance, countries such as Poland and Lithuania have invested in LNG import terminals to receive US gas, thereby diversifying their energy sources and mitigating the risks associated with reliance on a single supplier (Henderson & Mitrova, 2016). This shift has weakened Russia's geopolitical influence in the region, as European nations now have more bargaining power and energy options.

In Asia, the increase in US LNG exports has also influenced energy security and geopolitical relations. Major energy importers, such as Japan, South Korea and China, have sought to diversify their LNG sources to reduce dependence on Middle Eastern suppliers. US LNG offers a reliable and flexible alternative, helping these countries to secure stable energy supplies and enhance their geopolitical leverage. This diversification has fostered closer energy ties between the US and these Asian nations, potentially influencing broader strategic and economic relationships (Stern, 2019).

The rise of US LNG has also contributed to a more competitive and transparent global LNG market. Traditionally, LNG trade was dominated by long-term contracts linked to oil prices, particularly from suppliers in the Middle East. The influx of US LNG, which is often sold on a spot basis or through shorter-term contracts tied to the Henry Hub natural gas price, has introduced more flexibility into the market. This shift has encouraged the adoption of market-based pricing mechanisms, leading to greater price transparency and competition (IEA, 2019). The resulting market dynamics have challenged the traditional

dominance of major LNG exporters, like Qatar, compelling them to adapt to the changing market environment.

Opportunities and Challenges of Shale Gas Development on the Global LNG Market

One of the primary opportunities arising from shale gas development is the increase in global LNG supply. The United States, leveraging its abundant shale gas resources, has rapidly expanded its LNG export capacity, making it a leading LNG exporter. This has enhanced global energy security by providing a reliable and diverse source of natural gas. Countries that were once heavily dependent on a limited number of suppliers now have access to US LNG, reducing geopolitical risks and improving supply stability.

Another significant opportunity is the shift towards more flexible and competitive market dynamics. The influx of US LNG has introduced new pricing models based on the Henry Hub natural gas benchmark, moving away from traditional oil-linked pricing. This shift encourages the adoption of market-based pricing mechanisms, leading to greater price transparency and competition. For consumers, this translates into more favourable pricing and contract terms, as well as increased liquidity in the LNG market.

Technological advancements in LNG infrastructure are also a major opportunity. The growth in shale gas production has driven innovations in liquefaction, transportation and regasification technologies. These advancements have reduced costs and improved the efficiency of the LNG supply chain, making LNG a more attractive energy source. Furthermore, the development of LNG bunkering facilities is promoting LNG as a cleaner alternative for maritime fuel, aligning with global efforts to reduce emissions from the shipping industry.

Despite these opportunities, shale gas development also presents many challenges for the LNG market, such as market volatility, which is a significant concern. The rapid increase in LNG supply can lead to periods of oversupply, resulting in price fluctuations and squeezed profit margins for producers. Such volatility can impact investment decisions, potentially leading to delays or cancellations of new LNG projects.

Also, environmental and regulatory challenges are prominent. The extraction and processing of shale gas involve significant environmental risks, including groundwater contamination and methane emissions. These concerns have led to stringent regulatory scrutiny, which can increase operational costs and complicate project approvals. Balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability remains a critical challenge for the industry (Howarth, 2014).

Lastly, geopolitical tensions further complicate the landscape. While US LNG exports have enhanced energy security for many countries, they have also intensified competition and geopolitical rivalry among major energy producers. For instance, traditional LNG suppliers, like Russia and Qatar, are adapting their strategies to maintain market share in a more competitive environment.

Conclusion

The development of shale gas has revolutionized the global LNG market, presenting both opportunities and challenges for traditional LNG exporters like Nigeria. The advent of shale gas, particularly in the United States, has significantly increased the global supply of LNG, leading to more competitive and dynamic market conditions. This increased supply has diversified energy sources for many importing countries, enhancing their energy security and reducing their reliance on traditional suppliers. However, it has also introduced market volatility, price competition and heightened regulatory scrutiny, complicating the landscape for existing and potential LNG exporters.

For countries like Nigeria, which rely heavily on LNG exports for economic stability and growth, the shale gas revolution presents a mixed bag of prospects. On the one hand, the expanded global LNG market provides new opportunities for Nigeria to find alternative buyers and enter new markets. On the other hand, increased competition from US LNG and other new entrant's pressures Nigeria to remain competitive in terms of pricing, contract flexibility and supply reliability. Besides, environmental concerns and regulatory challenges associated with natural gas extraction and transportation require adherence to stringent standards, potentially increasing operational costs.

Recommendations

To navigate the implications of shale gas development effectively, Nigeria should consider the following recommendations:

- **Diversification of Markets:** Nigeria should strategically diversify its LNG export markets to reduce dependence on any single region or country. This can be achieved by exploring and establishing trade relations with emerging LNG markets in Asia, Latin America and Europe. Diversification will help mitigate the risks associated with market volatility and geopolitical tensions.
- **Investment in Infrastructure:** To remain competitive, Nigeria must invest in modernizing and expanding its LNG infrastructure. This includes enhancing liquefaction facilities, improving storage capacities and developing efficient transportation networks. Upgraded infrastructure will ensure reliable and timely deliveries, which are crucial for maintaining market share in a competitive environment.
- **Environmental Compliance and Sustainability:** Nigeria must prioritize environmental sustainability by adopting best practices in natural gas extraction and processing. Compliance with international environmental standards will not only reduce the environmental impact but will also enhance Nigeria's reputation as a responsible energy producer, making its LNG more attractive to environmentally-conscious buyers.

- **Innovation and Technology:** Embracing technological advancements in LNG production and transportation can help Nigeria reduce costs and improve efficiency. Investments in research and development, as well as partnerships with technology providers, can drive innovation and ensure that Nigeria remains at the forefront of the LNG industry.
- **Geopolitical Strategy:** Nigeria should leverage its LNG exports to strengthen geopolitical ties and enhance its influence in global energy politics. Engaging in energy diplomacy and forming strategic alliances with key importing countries can help secure long-term contracts and stable market access.

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NUTRITIONAL, TOXICOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE OF NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENT

By
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Introduction

The development of Nigeria as a country cannot be discussed without considering nutritional biochemical studies involve many areas, including nutrition and toxicology, environmental biochemistry, protein and enzyme biochemistry, medical biochemistry, biochemical engineering, forensic biochemistry agriculture and biochemistry and entrepreneurship and biochemistry.

Food plays an important role in all these areas, either in providing energy to be used to study them or providing precursors/substrates or even the tools to work with to achieve the desired areas of specialization, without which there is nothing like development. Biochemistry involves every area of virtually all disciplines. Food is eaten by every living organism, be it plant, micro-organisms, animals and man. Every living creature is interested in and, in fact, eats food.

Man cannot survive or contribute to development without food. This is because good health, work performance/entrepreneurship, productivity and economic attainment cannot be achieved without good nutrition. Nutrition and good nutritional status relate to when a living organism provides itself or is provided with edible substances (containing all nutrients) in their required daily amounts as well as how the intake relates to health. All nutrients have various nutritional diseases associated with them called malnutrition, either by their deficiencies or excessive intake, and which will affect development of individuals and the nation.

Social Perspective

The impact of food inadequacy/insecurity in any society cannot be ignored. Nigeria has been known for her agricultural prowess over the years, with exportation of various agricultural products, which did not affect the nutritional status of individuals, families, groups, schools and the general populace. Our ancestors, with non-sophisticated equipment, worked tirelessly to make sure food was available; they ate fresh foodstuffs and slept in their farms without any embarrassment. They were, in fact, very happy, healthy and wealthy.

The vast acres of land are still available in every local government areas in all the states of Nigeria. But why has farming become a thing of the past in Nigeria? How can

people not eating enough food or nutrients have enough strength and good health to farm? People from all parts of Nigeria used to live together in their various towns and communities without fear of the antecedents of one another. The people shared the abundance of our different kinds of food stuff. Now a good tuber of yam is between six and ten thousand naira. An average Nigerian cannot eat what he/she wants; nobody can get enough food from farms. People are suffering one disease or the other of nutritional origin, with their various complications leading to untimely death. There seems to be no more time nor energy for recreational activities.

Nigerian villages were known for various cultural dance groups at different periods. Is it not a healthy, well fed, happy individual that will come out to dance to various cultural groups or even watch and admire others dance? Hitherto, women were empowered with various skills like trading, kneading and sewing. Where is the money to establish these now? Some of the leaders trying to do certain programmes in their local government areas are now overwhelmed with the outrageous number of women and unemployed youth.

Insecurity has become a terrible menace. Nigerians cannot sleep again with their two eyes closed. Farmers are no longer safe again on their farm lands. Citizens cannot sit outside to get fresh air when there is no electricity. Religious leaders and the laity need to pray to God for mercy. Governments at all levels should intensify their strategies to make Nigerians at all levels live long in happiness and good health. The nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary institutions must come back to what they used to be, with more facilities, better funding, better welfare of teachers at all levels. The markets all over must be flooded with food, household items, building materials, etc. The pharmacies and hospitals should be well equipped and doctors well paid. Prices of all goods and services will come down if the local companies produce what the people need. Various production companies should be opened at all local governments. This will also stop youth restlessness and improve unemployment. Social life will definitely improve if hunger, sickness, unemployment, stress and death of loved ones are drastically reduced.

Cultural Perspectives

Cultural heritage and tradition are two major aspects of Nigeria should be handled with care. Nigeria has very rich cultural heritage Lord Macaulay, in his address to the British Parliament on Feb. 28 1835, said:

I have travelled across the length and breadth of Africa and I have not one person who is a beggar, who is a thief, such wealth I have seen in this Country, such high moral values, people of such calibre, that I do not think we would ever conquer this Country, unless we break the backbone of this nation, which is spiritual and cultural heritage, and therefore, I propose we replace her old and ancient education system, her culture,

for if the Africans think that all that is foreign and English is good greater than their own, they will lose their self-esteem, their native culture and they will become what we want them, a truly dominated nation.

Now people are playing with their cultural heritage. Newspapers and social media present all sorts of tussles because of titles in various parts of the country; truth is not told anymore. Men have become covetous because of property, especially that which belong to widows and orphans. The juggernauts who have amassed wealth will not allow the poor to breathe. People now speak English instead of their indigenous languages; many Nigerian children cannot speak their mother tongues. There is no more respect for elders; people play politics in everything they do, humiliating the less privileged. People need to preserve their cultural heritage by all means. They should shun cultural and religious tension. People should be their brother's keepers, with love, irrespective of culture or religion. The arts and creative industries should be boosted with beautiful centres in all states of the Federation for tourism in order to improve the nation's economy.

Environmental, Technological and International Relations Perspectives

Our environments generally need to be sanitized. Nigerians must appreciate the good environment God has bestowed on them. Although there are some environmental challenges, such as flood, fire incidents and motor accidents, frantic efforts are being made to make the environment safe. Hence, everybody must be involved, not leaving everything for the government, although governments at all levels need to improve on governance. The security situation is improving, but the different security agencies need to synergize for better security reforms and success.

The aquatic and land environments must be sanitized to eliminate toxic substances that affect and destroy lives through substances ingested, especially when these environments are polluted. Bioremediation has played useful roles in achieving high levels of safety. Biochemical research has addressed many environmental issues. Technology has also played major roles in achieving good environment. Food industries are also very relevant in ensuring food security through reducing monotony in availability of nutritious meals to the populace by using the required standards as stipulated by NAFDAC, WHO and standard organizations. Adherence to these ensures that the required daily allowance (RDA) of each nutrient is met. There are universally accepted values.

International relationship via exportation and importation of food products (raw and processed) will definitely solve food insecurity. Having more food industries (local and foreign) across all the local government areas in Nigeria will not only stop hunger and nutritional diseases but also reduce unemployment. Using technology and exchange of programmes in local and foreign universities will definitely make a lot of difference. The government should embark on subsidizing cost of farming, food, drugs, etc. and introduce

grants to individuals and the three tiers of education for research and mechanized farming, besides provision of soft loans for traders to market their goods. Banks should also reduce interest rates on loans and re-strategize modes of repayment. It does not make any sense if, for instance, a poor fish farmer obtains a loan to start his or her fish farm and will be asked to start paying back the loan the following month. Where will the person get the money to pay back when it takes roughly five to six months to establish, stock, feed and sell mature products. T Repayment schedules must be customer-friendly with the various processes involved.

The tables below will throw some light on the points made so far.

Table 1: Heavy Metal Concentrations in Studied Pumpkin Leaves from Artisanal Crude Oil Refinery Communities in Rivers State State (n=3)

Heavy Metal (mg/kg)	Elele-Alimini	Rumuekpe	Ndele	Okporo (Control)	Permissible Limit for Plants (FAO/WHO, 2007)
Pb	2.52±0.01 ^a	2.37±0.01 ^a	2.31±0.02 ^a	0.12±0.01 ^a	0.3
Cd	0.02±0.01 ^a	0.02±0.01 ^a	0.01±0.01 ^a	0.01±0.01 ^a	0.02
Cr	3.03±0.01 ^a	3.19±0.03 ^a	1.52±0.01 ^b	0.03±0.01 ^c	1.5
Fe	3.19±0.02 ^a	4.84±0.02 ^b	5.01±0.01 ^c	2.98±0.01 ^d	150
Cu	2.71±0.01 ^a	4.41±0.02 ^b	3.21±0.04 ^c	0.02±0.01 ^d	40
Ni	0.67±0.03 ^a	0.47±0.02 ^b	0.50±0.02 ^a	0.19±0.01 ^d	1.12

Values are expressed as means ± standard error of mean (SEM) of three replicates. Values with different superscripts in the same row are significantly different, while values with the same superscript within a row are not significantly different (p<0.05).

Table 2: Heavy Metal Concentrations in Studied Cassava Tubers from Selected Artisanal Crude Oil Refinery Sites in Rivers State (n=3)

Heavy Metal (mg/kg)	Elele-Alimini	Rumuekpe	Ndele	Okporo (Control)	Permissible Limit for Plants (FAO/WHO, 2007)
Pb	1.89±0.02 ^a	3.00±0.01 ^b	2.36±0.02 ^c	BDL	0.3
Cd	0.02±0.01 ^a	0.02±0.01 ^a	0.01±0.01 ^a	BDL	0.02
Cr	0.22±0.01 ^a	1.76±0.02 ^b	0.18±0.01 ^c	BDL	1.5
Fe	3.19±0.04 ^a	1.37±0.01 ^b	3.32±0.02 ^b	2.12±0.01 ^d	150
Cu	2.71±0.02 ^a	6.82±0.02 ^b	3.89±0.02 ^c	0.02±0.01 ^d	40
Ni	0.19±0.01 ^a	1.56±0.01 ^b	0.12±0.01 ^a	0.11±0.01 ^a	1.12

Values are expressed as means ± standard error of mean (SEM) of three replicates. Values with different superscripts in the same row are significantly different while values with the same superscript within a row are not significantly different (p<0.05).

Table 3: Heavy Metal Concentrations in Studied Okra Fruits from Selected Artisanal Crude Oil Refinery Sites in Rivers State (n=3)

Heavy Metal (mg/kg)	Elele- Alimini	Rumuekpe	Ndele	Okporo (Control)	Permissible Limit For Plants (FAO/WHO, 2007)
Pb	1.44±0.01 ^a	2.01±0.01 ^b	1.78±0.02 ^c	0.02±0.01 ^d	0.3
Cd	0.02±0.01 ^a	0.02±0.01 ^a	0.01±0.01 ^a	BDL	0.02
Cr	0.74±0.01 ^a	0.68±0.01 ^b	0.62±0.01 ^c	0.10±0.01 ^d	1.5
Fe	1.63±0.01 ^a	3.12±0.02 ^b	3.02±0.02 ^b	1.02±0.01 ^c	150
Cu	0.92±0.01 ^a	1.02±0.01 ^b	0.62±0.01 ^c	0.02±0.01 ^a	40
Ni	0.04±0.01 ^a	0.04±0.02 ^a	0.03±0.01 ^a	BDL	1.12

Values are expressed as means ± standard error of mean (SEM) of three replicates. Values with different superscripts in the same row are significantly different while values with the same superscript within a row are not significantly different ($p < 0.05$).

Table 4: Heavy Metal Concentrations in Palm Oil from Selected Artisanal Crude Oil Refinery Sites in Rivers State (n=3)

Heavy Metal (mg/l)	Alimini	Rumuekpe	Ndele	Oporo (Control 1)	FAO/WHO Standard (2003)
Pb	0.31±0.01 ^a	0.43±0.01 ^b	0.61±0.02 ^c	BDL	0.2
Cd	0.01±0.01 ^a	0.01±0.01 ^a	0.01±0.01 ^a	BDL	9.0
Cr	0.40±0.01 ^a	0.31±0.01 ^a	0.35±0.01 ^a	BDL	0.10
Fe	4.01±0.02 ^a	4.24±0.02 ^a	3.54±0.04 ^a	2.87±0.02 ^a	48
Cu	0.52±0.03 ^a	1.16±0.02 ^b	0.71±0.02 ^a	0.08±0.01 ^a	30.0
Ni	0.02±0.01 ^a	0.03±0.01 ^a	0.02±0.01 ^a	0.01±0.01 ^a	300

Values are expressed as means ± standard error of mean (SEM) of three replicates. Values with different superscripts in the same row are significantly different while values with the same superscript within a row are not significantly different ($p < 0.05$).

The mean Pb, Cd, Fe, Cu, and Ni levels noticed in the studied fluted pumpkin leaf harvested from Elele-Alimini, Rumuekpe and Ndele was significantly higher than the permissible limit for plants, as reported by FAO/WHO (2007) (Table 1). In this study, the mean Pb levels noticed in the studied fluted pumpkin leaf were significantly higher than the permissible limit for plants (FAO/WHO, 2007) (Table 1). The Cd levels were also significantly higher than the permissible limit for plants (FAO/WHO, 2007) (Table 1). The significantly high Pb and Cd levels observed in fluted pumpkin leaf harvested from Alimini, Rumuekpe, and Ndele communities when compared to the level in the control (the Okporo community), which also exceed the permissible limits in plants, suggests that consumption of fluted pumpkin leaf as vegetable over a period of time might result in Pb and Cd-induced poisoning or toxicities. This result is in line with the report of Ogunka-Nnoka *et al.* (2018) on the heavy metal levels in fluted pumpkin leaf.

High levels of heavy metals in tuber crops in a community can have several serious implications, affecting public health, the environment, agriculture, and the local economy (De La Torre-Roche *et al.*, 2019). Tuber crops, such as yams, cassava and sweet potatoes, are often staple foods in many communities. So their being contaminated with heavy metals can pose significant risks. High level of heavy metals in tuber crops pose a significant cancer risk due to their carcinogenic properties. Consuming tuber crops contaminated with heavy metals over a long period can increase the likelihood of developing lung, skin, liver and stomach cancers (Fismes *et al.*, 2022).

In this study, the mean Pb, Cd, Cr, Fe, Cu and Ni levels characterized in the studied cassava samples harvested from Elele-Alimini, Rumuekpe and Ndele were significantly higher than the level in the Okporo community (control) (Table 2). Also, the mean Pb, Cd, Cu, and Ni levels in the studied cassava samples harvested from Elele-Alimini, Rumuekpe, and Ndele were significantly higher than the permissible limits (FAO/WHO, 2007) (Table 2). The significantly high Pb, Cd, Cr, Fe, Cu and Ni observed in the studied cassava sample harvested from Elele-Alimini, Rumuekpe and Ndele, when compared to what obtained in the control (Okporo community) as well as the permissible limits recommended by FAO/WHO (2007) implies increase in illegal crude oil exploration and environmental contamination in those communities. This finding is similar to the report of Nwaichi *et al.* (2017) on heavy metals and some trace metals in yam, cassava, orange and papaya from two communities in southern Nigeria affected by oil and gas flaring.

In this study, the mean Pb, Cd, Cr, Fe, Cu and Ni levels in studied okra (Table 3) from Elele-Alimini, Rumuekpe and Ndele were significantly higher than what obtained in the control community (Okporo). The significantly high mean Pb, Cd, Cr, Fe, Cu and Ni level in the studied okra from Elele-Alimini, Rumuekpe and Ndele is reflective of increase in illegal crude oil activities in those communities. Also, the mean Pb, Cd, Cr, Fe, Cu, and Ni in the studied okra harvested from Elele-Alimini, Rumuekpe and Ndele were statistically less than the permissible limit recommended by FAO/WHO (2007). This result

is in agreement with the report of Silva *et al.* (2018) on the heavy metal profile in coconut and tomato.

Some heavy metals, such as Cd, Cr, Pb and Ni, are known to cause toxicity and are carcinogenic. Regular consumption of palm oil contaminated with high levels of heavy metals can increase the risk of cancers, particularly in organs exposed to dietary intake, such as the liver, skin and the digestive tract (Silva *et al.*, 2018). In this study, the mean Pb, Cd, Cr and Ni levels in the studied palm oil samples purchased from Elele-Alimini, Rumuekpe and Ndele found to be significantly higher than the level in the control (Okporo).

The mean Pb levels in the studied palm oil samples (Table 4) in Elele-Alimini, Rumuekpe and Ndele were significantly above the standard recommended by FAO/WHO (2003). The mean Cr levels in studied palm oil samples were significantly above the standard recommended by FAO/WHO (2003). The significantly high Pb and Cr observed, when compared to the control (Okporo) as well as the standard recommended by FAO/WHO (2003) implies that Pb and Cr contamination arises from increase in bunkering activities in those communities. Consumption of palm oil purchased from those communities over a long period of time could pose health risk.

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52**ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVES: CLIMATE CHANGE****By****L. E. Didia****&****O. A. Ekpete****Introduction**

Climate change refers to long-term changes in the usual weather patterns experienced in a region, or over the Earth as a whole. These changes can include how much rain typically falls in a year or changes in the usual monthly or seasonal temperatures in any specific location. While the weather can change in a few hours, climate generally takes hundreds or even millions of years to change (Lorimer, 2022). In a nutshell, climate change can be defined as an all-encompassing term that applies to noticeable transformations in the Earth's climates, be it at the local, regional or global scales, and stretches to the impacts it leaves on the environment.

Undoubtedly, people have always been aware of climatic variation at the relatively short timescales of seasons, years and decades. The Bible scripture and other early documents refer to droughts, floods, periods of severe cold, and other climatic events. Nevertheless, a full appreciation of the nature and magnitude of climatic change did not come about until the late 18th and early 19th centuries, a time when the widespread recognition of the deep antiquity of the Earth occurred. Earth scientists and atmospheric scientists are still seeking a full understanding of the complex feedback and interactions among the various components of the Earth system. This effort is being facilitated by the introduction of an interdisciplinary science called Earth system science. This is composed of a wide range of disciplines, including geology, oceanography, climatology, ecology, glaciology and social sciences, that involve the study of human behaviour in its social and cultural aspects (Luo, 2020).

The first alerts about considerable alterations in the planet's climate emerged around the mid-20th century (Lorimer, 2022). Initially, the phrase "climate change" was primarily used to describe variations in the Earth's climate, mainly caused by human activities since the pre-industrial era. These activities encompass, but are not limited to, the combustion of fossil fuels (such as coal, oil and gas) and deforestation. As a result, there has been a relatively swift rise in carbon dioxide levels in the Earth's atmosphere, leading to global warming (Pachauri et al., 2014). This assertion is bolstered by a substantial agreement among researchers, with 97% indicating that human activities have

been the main driver of the warming trends observed since the 20th century (Skeptical Science, 2017). However, there are generally two primary factors contributing to climate change—natural phenomena and human activities. Natural phenomena include variations in solar radiation, the Earth's orbit around the sun, fluctuations in volcanic activity, oceanic currents and the movement of continents. Human activities involve the greenhouse effect, the conversion of forests to agricultural land, deforestation, mining operations and the combustion of fossil fuels like oil, gas and coal that emit carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, as well as urban development aimed at economic growth that increases CO₂ production.

Global warming is a term often used interchangeably with climate change, as it is one of the most important measures of global changes. However, global warming is limited in scope. This is because it refers to the rise in average global temperatures, which has significant impacts on humans, wildlife, and ecosystems around the world. Since there are more factors and impacts than only rising surface temperatures, the term climate change is used to include these additional impacts (Skeptical Science, 2017).

Causes of Climate Change

There are several identifiable causative agents of climate change as a result of daily activities of humans. The major factors leading to climatic change are examined below.

1. Greenhouse gases

To grasp climate change, it is essential to comprehend greenhouse gases and their functions or impacts. The greenhouse effect is a natural phenomenon in which gases in the Earth's atmosphere retain some of the sun's heat, warming the planet and making it habitable. Throughout the day, the sun heats the Earth's surface. A portion of this heat is emitted back into space, yet the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere hold onto some of this warmth, ensuring a stable temperature on Earth (Lorimer, 2022). Since the onset of the Industrial Revolution, human activities have altered the Earth's natural greenhouse effect by emitting significantly greater amounts of these greenhouse gases. Large volumes of carbon that were previously safely stored in the earth's crust and soil have been released as a result of the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation and land cultivation. Carbon dioxide is the product of this carbon's release into the atmosphere. Climate change is being caused by this process, intensifying the greenhouse effect and warming the planet much more quickly than would happen naturally. Methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), and carbon dioxide (CO₂) are the main greenhouse gases that are causing climate change. Some man-made fluorinated gases, such as sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), and perfluorocarbons (PFCs), are less common but still very potent greenhouse gases.

The Global Warming Potential (GWP) of greenhouse gases is determined by their length of time in the atmosphere and their ability to absorb energy. The carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂) of each greenhouse gas is calculated to make comparisons easier; this is done by comparing it to carbon dioxide, the most prevalent greenhouse gas (Lorimer, 2022). According to reports, as of early 2020, the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide has increased from approximately 280 parts per million (ppm) in pre-industrial times to 413 ppm (Yale Environment 360, 2017). There has never been a carbon dioxide concentration this high in history. Some scientists argue that in order to stabilize global warming, it is imperative return to a “safe” concentration of 350 parts per million by the year 2100 (Hansen et al., 2013).

2. Agriculture

One of the main causes of climate change in recent years has been human agricultural activities to produce food and raise animals for a variety of purposes. Rice production, agricultural soils, and livestock like cows are the main sources of greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture. According to Jones et al. (2023), there are many climate pollutants that contribute to anthropogenic climate change, but the three main ones are CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O. All of these gases are linked to agriculture and food production, but direct agricultural emissions are unique in that they are primarily composed of CH₄ and N₂O greenhouse gases (Chukwuemeka et al., 2024).

3. Deforestation

Humans' removal of trees for a variety of reasons without any intention of replanting them poses a severe threat to environmental sustainability. In addition to providing comfort for certain animal species, trees also help to maintain the equilibrium of the atmosphere. Trees absorb CO₂; a tree absorbs 10-40 kg of CO₂ annually on average. Thus, the impact of their absence in the environment is huge (Gatti et al., 2021).

4. Vehicles and Transportation

The bicycle is the most environmentally-friendly and energy-efficient form of transportation. Human travel had little to no effect on the Earth's climate prior to the industrial age. Approximately one-fourth of the world's carbon dioxide emissions today come from transportation. Smog, soot and other dangerous air pollutants are also produced by transportation emissions powered by fossil fuels. In addition to automobiles, a significant amount of global greenhouse gas emissions is produced by ships, trains and airplanes. In addition to emitting nearly 3% of global CO₂, ships are a major source of nitrous oxide and black carbon or soot. According to Center for Biological Diversity (2023), emissions from ships and boats could rise by as much as 25% by 2050 as a result of increased international trade (Chukwuemeka et al., 2024).

5. Landfills and Dumps

Approximately 1.3 billion tonnes of food, or one-third of all food produced, are lost or wasted annually, costing the world economy nearly \$940 billion (Sethi et al., 2021). Bread, vegetables, and fruits are the three foods that consumers waste the most. The bulk of methane emissions are produced by the solid waste from landfills and dumps, which is created when this massive amount of food is thrown away. As the organic matter slowly decomposes over decades, carbon dioxide and methane, an even more potent greenhouse gas, combine to form landfill gas (LFG). Global food waste has a bigger greenhouse emissions footprint than the entire airline industry, global plastic production and global oil extraction. Food waste is responsible for up to 11.8% of all global greenhouse gas emissions (Kannan et al., 2013).

6. Power Plants

Air pollutants are released into the atmosphere when power plants that burn coal, oil or natural gas are operating. Lead (Pb), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxide (NO), carbon monoxide (CO), ozone (O₃) and particulate matter (PM₁₀, PM₂₅) are some of these air pollutants. Acid rain, has been caused by SO₂ and can harm plants and make lakes more acidic. Ozone, which is one of the ingredients of smog, can have negative effects on respiratory health as well as other aspects of the environment. Dust and smaller particles with a maximum diameter of 10 microns (PM₁₀) are classified as part of particulate matter (PM). Because they can enter the lungs more deeply than larger particulates, small particles have been demonstrated to cause respiratory issues. The main source of mercury emissions into the atmosphere is power plants. Mercury is a strong neurotoxin that has major negative health effects on the nervous system and brain functions, especially in young children and babies (Tobin et al., 2016).

Impacts of Climate Change

Climate changes affect human lives in various ways – psychologically, physically and emotionally. These are discussed in detail below.

1. Some of the Impacts of Climate Change on Nature

- i) *Impacts on Forests*: The effects of climate change differ depending on the kind of forest. As temperatures rise, tree lines in the semi-polar northern forests are especially vulnerable, progressively shifting northward. Even extreme climate change can result in high levels of extinction in tropical forests with abundant biodiversity, like the Amazon (EPA, 2016).
- ii) *Impacts on Wildlife*: The primary reason why many organism species are going extinct this century is climate change. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2012), at 1.5 degrees Celsius, the average increase in threatened species is between 20 and 30 percent. Most ecosystems will struggle if

global warming exceeds 2 degrees Celsius. As climate change effects are happening very quickly, many species are also having problems to adapt and so they are disappearing and migrating elsewhere. This further leads to permanent habitat loss (EPA, 2016).

- iii) *Impacts on Oceans*: Oceans are also impacted by climate change. Oceans are essential “carbon pools” because they absorb vast amounts of CO₂ and keep it from rising to the upper atmosphere. However, oceans become more acidic due to rising water temperatures and abnormally high CO₂ concentrations. Ocean temperatures are changing significantly due to the effects of climate change, with a critical threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius and above. At 1.5 degrees Celsius, coral reefs are predicted to decline by 70-90% and the majority of coral reefs will disappear when the temperature rises by 2 degrees Celsius. Approximately half a billion people rely on coral reef fish as their primary source of nutrition; so it is not just a tragedy for wildlife.
- iv) *Impact on the Arctic Ice Crisis*: As greenhouse gas concentrations rise, temperatures rise as well, which can have negative environmental effects. The Arctic ice decreases as environmental temperatures rise.
- v) *Impacts on Precipitation Pattern Changes*: Precipitation, droughts, hurricanes and floods have increased in frequency during the last 20 years. Due to climate change, some regions experience drought all year round, even though other regions experience heavy rainfall.
- vi) *Impact on Extreme Weather*: The National Climate Assessment predicts that, as climate change continues, the frequency and severity of extreme weather events will continue to rise. Stronger storms and hurricanes, heat waves, wildfires, increased flooding, and more severe droughts are all examples of extreme weather brought on by climate change (Luo, 2020).

2. Some of the Climate Change Effects in History

In many historical dynasties, the influence of climate is often hidden and unobvious while in some areas it is quite noticeable. Some areas that have the effects of climate change are examined below.

- i) *The Rise and Fall of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*: The Neo-Assyrian Empire was the largest and most powerful empire of its time, with its political and economic centre located in northern Iraq, which is now part of northern Mesopotamia, in the floodplain of the Tigris River. After dominating the region for more than two centuries, the Neo-Assyrian state fell from high esteem (around 670 BCE) to total political collapse (around 615 to 609 BCE). Prior analyses of the Assyrian collapse emphasized the roles of military defeat, territorial overextension and internal political-economic conflicts. Here, we present a high-resolution, precisely dated

speleothem record of climate change from the Kuna Ba cave in northern Iraq. This suggests that the empire rose during a period of anomalously wet climate for two centuries. Mega-droughts in the early to mid-seventh century BCE, which lasted for decades and were as severe as recent droughts in the region, made Assyria's agrarian productivity to decline, which ultimately led to the country's political and economic collapse (Ashish et al., 2019). An underlying causative factor that had an impact on the Assyrian imperial economy for centuries prior to the fall of the empire was climate change. When the climate changed to mega-drought conditions in the seventh century BCE, high-density urbanization and imperial expansion were unsustainable due to nearly two centuries of high precipitation and high agricultural outputs. Mega-droughts that lasted for several decades and were as severe as the region's current droughts probably crippled and sparked the collapse of the Assyrian economy. Additionally, the recent multiyear droughts are among the worst drought episodes in the region's hydro-climate variability over the last four millennia, superimposed over a century-long drying trend (Luo, 2020).

- ii) Ancient Indian Civilization's Ascent and Decline: The Indus Valley Civilization (2600-1900 BC) is one of the four ancient civilizations and is regarded as the start of Indian history. It got its name from the Indus Valley Domain. The Vedic civilization was established by the Aryans after the civilization collapsed. Today's northwest India, Pakistan, and northeastern Afghanistan are home to the Indus Valley civilization. The subtropical dry and semi-arid climate, which is influenced by the subtropical high pressure, is hot and dry, with little precipitation. Rainfall averages less than 250 mm per year. The erratic monsoon in the southwest Indian Ocean has a significant impact on the annual rainfall variability. It frequently results in drought or Indus River flooding.

The best Holocene climate period in the Indus River Basin produced a high level of agricultural civilization, as is still known when comparing climate data and the trajectory of civilization development during the same period. The ancient Indian civilization had a solid and stable basis for growth from the start due to its warm climate and plentiful food supply, which allowed it to produce high-quality urban infrastructure technology. However, the world's climate was extremely dry and frigid 2,200 years ago. The inhabitants of the Indus Valley were forced to relocate to areas with higher rainfall and populated areas after two to three hundred years of drought and land desertification brought on by the climate. However, food shortages, famines, and epidemics have led to a large decrease in the population due to death of the Indus Valley civilization (Luo, 2020).

- iii) The Rise and Fall of Roman Civilization: Given the role that nature played in Rome's demise, we should re-evaluate how much the biological and physical environment

can influence the course of human societies. From the Atlantic to Mesopotamia, from northern Britain to the borders of the Sahara, the Romans ruled over a vast and geographically varied portion of the world in the middle of the second century. The population peaked at 75 million and was generally prosperous. The rights of Roman citizenship eventually extended to all free residents of the empire.

Although it is not surprising that Edward Gibbon, an English historian from the 18th century, considered this period to be the “happiest” in human history, people now tend to view the rise of Roman civilization as inadvertently sowing the seeds for its own downfall. Rome’s downfall was caused by a combination of the inherent unpredictability of nature and the paradoxes of social development. The exhaust fumes of industrialization did not cause climate change; rather, it has always been a part of human life. The amount and distribution of energy received from the Sun are changed by solar cycles and orbital mechanism (i.e. the minor changes in the tilt, spin and eccentricity of the Earth’s orbit) (Harper, 2017).

Additionally, reflective sulphates are released into the atmosphere by volcanic eruptions, sometimes with far-reaching consequences. A growing awareness of the significance of the physical environment and new data are driving efforts to bring climate change to the forefront of Roman history. The rise and fall of Roman civilization were significantly influenced by the climate. The empire-builders benefited from perfect timing: in an agrarian society, the typical warm, humid and stable weather encouraged economic productivity. The political and social agreements that allowed the Roman Empire to maintain control over its enormous territory were bolstered by the advantages of economic expansion.

In subtle and profound ways, the favourable climate was ingrained in the very fabric of the empire. According to research by ice-core experts and dendrochronologists, the 530s and 540s CE saw a massive surge of volcanic activity unlike anything else in the previous few thousand years, and climate instability peaked in the sixth century. Much colder temperatures persisted for at least 150 years during what is now known as the “Late Antique Little Ice Age.” which was brought on by this series of violent eruptions. The disintegration of Rome was significantly impacted by this period of climate degradation. Additionally, it was closely associated with a catastrophe of even greater magnitude: the first bubonic plague pandemic. Even more crucial to Rome’s fate were disturbances in the biological environment. Life expectancy was in the mid-20s despite the empire’s early advancements, and infectious diseases were the main cause of death. The Roman Empire’s highly urbanized and interconnected population benefited from it. In densely populated cities, common gastro-enteritis, like Shigellosis and paratyphoid fevers, thrived due to food and water contamination (Harper, 2017).

- iv) The Rise and Fall of Neolithic Cultures on the Yangtze Delta: The emergence, persistence, and demise of the water body civilization that lasted for roughly 800 years were all significantly influenced by changes in the Yangtze Delta's climate. Following this incident, the civilization moved to the area and started to retake the plain. Water bodies rapidly expanded in the latter stages of the Liangzhu cultures. Human settlement moved to the higher landscapes of the western Yangtze Delta as a result of the civilization's disappearance due to climate change that caused high lake levels and water tables (Luo, 2020).

3. Some of the Climate Change Effects in Economy

Globalization has accelerated the growth of economies, countries and industries all over the world. Countries are now so dependent on one another for manufacturing, trade and procurement. This indicates that problems that begin in one country can have a significant economic impact on a large number of countries across the globe. Natural disasters can have long-lasting effects on both small- and large-scale economies, often occurring randomly, and without warning. Major natural disasters have been few and far between. However, as a result of climate change, certain types of disasters are becoming more destructive and frequent and are threatening to impact the global economy (OECD, 2015; Vincent, 2020).

- i) Community Damage: As climate change increases the frequency of severe storms and large-scale unfavourable weather occurrences, the expenses of repairing the resulting physical damage and economic loss start to soar. The economic and human costs of environmental disasters have increased over the past few decades as a result of the worsening effects of climate change. This emphasizes the necessity of implementing comprehensive policies that reduce carbon emissions and lessen the effects of climate change (Ximenes, 2024).
- ii) Agricultural Insecurity: Degraded habitats are decreasing the efficacy of agricultural practices, shifting weather patterns have changed farming cycles, and climate change is impacting the Earth's biota. Local research on agricultural adaptation is required since the effects of climate change will differ in different parts of the world. There is general agreement that the consequences of climate change will have a significant impact on food security, even though the problems affecting particular places will be as varied as the local surroundings themselves. Inequality brought about by climate change is exemplified by how it affects agriculture. Larger, wealthier countries will be able to adjust to shifting weather patterns and decreased food yields, whereas poorer countries will be left behind due to their weaker agricultural industries, limited access to adaptive solutions, and inability to improve their infrastructure. In regions that are already water insecure, rising

temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns are predicted to make matters worse, promoting drought conditions and upending local economies (Renée, 2019).

- iii) **Environmental Migrants:** Although climate change will affect many facets of human existence, mass population relocation could lead to a humanitarian crisis. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) recognizes that environmental degradation will have a direct impact on public health in addition to mass migrations, and it views the effects of climate change as “extremely serious.” A growing shortage of food and water security, along with harsher weather and more powerful storms, will push migration to areas with better farming conditions. These circumstances already exist, as seen by the numerous displacements that have been documented worldwide in reaction to significant environmental disasters; however, additional assistance is required to effectively handle these circumstances (Allen, 2023).
- iv) **Other Economic Impacts:** Climate change has an impact on national security, food prices, immigration, GDP, employment, insurance and many others. According to a report published in 2014 by the U.S. Department of Defense, climate change is a serious and imminent danger to national security. “The challenges of global instability, hunger, poverty, and conflict will be intensified by rising global temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, rising sea levels, and more extreme weather events,” according to the former Secretary of Defense, Chuck Hagel. Furthermore, in many regions of the world, climate change is probably going to lead to economic difficulties. Future expenses are expected to be significantly greater as a result of climate change brought on by humans. However, once the enormous expenses of losing natural resources, like clean air and water, is considered, it becomes challenging to pinpoint the precise costs of climate change. Climate change has the potential to have catastrophic long-term effects on the planet and everyone and everything living on it. Humans will probably continue to witness growing impacts on daily life if the globe keeps moving in the same direction (Luo, 2020).

4. Some of the Effects of Climate Change in Disease and Health

Along with other natural and man-made health stressors, climate change has a variety of effects on human health and disease. For instance, changes in temperature and precipitation are increasing the health risks associated with wildfire and ground-level ozone pollution; rising air and water temperatures and more intense extreme events are expected to shift exposure to water-borne and food-borne diseases, affecting food and water safety; and ongoing warming is expected to reduce cold-related deaths while increasing heat-related deaths.

The geographic range and distribution of insects and pests are also expected to shift due to climate change, which might expose more people to ticks and mosquitoes that carry the agents that cause diseases including dengue, Lyme disease, Zika and West Nile.

Finally, populations that are impacted by extreme weather and climate-related events may experience long-term mental health effects, especially if these occurrences lead to a decline in livelihoods or a relocation of the community. Because there are different levels of climate exposure and variations in individual and societal characteristics that can either protect or make one more vulnerable to the effects of climate change, the effects of climate change on health are both place-specific and path-dependent, meaning that they depend on where one is and who one is.

As noted by Center for Disease Control's (CDC's) Climate and Health Program (2020), rising temperatures, more extreme weather, rising sea levels, and increases in carbon dioxide levels can cause the following environmental conditions and subsequent health impacts:

- Extreme heat, which can cause heat-related illness and death and cardiovascular failure;
- Severe weather, which can cause injuries, fatalities, and have mental health impacts;
- Changes in vector ecology, which can cause malaria, dengue, encephalitis, hantavirus, Rift Valley fever, Lyme disease, chikungunya, and West Nile virus;
- Air pollution, which can cause asthma and cardiovascular disease;
- Increasing allergies, which can cause respiratory allergies and asthma;
- Water Quality Impacts, which can cause cholera, cryptosporidiosis, campylobacteria, leptospirosis, and harmful algal blooms;
- Water and food supply impacts, which can cause malnutrition and diarrhoeal disease; and
- Environmental degradation, which can cause forced migration, civil conflict, and mental health (Luo, 2020).

Adaptation to Climate Change

As climate change is already happening, nations and communities must prepare for it and adopt a number of doable actions to safeguard themselves against the disruption and harm to natural and human systems. In order for society to prosper, susceptibility to the negative consequences of climate change must be lessened. The best course of action will differ depending on the location. Planning and carrying out these measures are difficult due to the lack of resources and the uncertainties around climate impacts (Lorimer, 2022). Therefore, knowing local risk factors and creating locally relevant plans to address them

are essential steps in the adaptation planning process. For instance, local farmers might need to change their agricultural practices and diversify the kinds of crops they cultivate in order to adapt to a region's predicted warmer and drier climate. In order to address effects like sea level rise or more severe extreme occurrences like floods, infrastructure modifications may occasionally be required. Early warning systems may also need to be put in place.

Climate change is probably just one of many stresses that communities deal with; they also have diverse levels of access to resources to aid the adaptation process and differing degrees of sensitivity to the effects of climate change. Building the resilience of ecosystems and people to resist a variety of shocks and changes is a crucial component of this approach. A wide range of stakeholders, including local communities, the private sector and the civil society, must be involved in coordinated efforts across all sectors and at all governmental levels for adaptation to be effective. Although climate change is a global issue, the impacts will be felt at a local level, and local-level action on adaptation will be crucial. If we all take responsibility for their actions in this regard, there will be a difference (Lorimer, 2022; Chukwuemeka et al., 2024).

Conclusion

In conclusion, climate change caused by both natural and anthropogenic factors, as elaborated above, has become a serious threat to the collective survival of humans on the God-given planet. So deliberate steps to guarantee that all human elements contributing to the current environmental problem are checked can help prevent climate change and its repercussions. Enactment and enforcement of laws prohibiting all human activities leading to the pollution of the environment should be encouraged. Improved transportation options other than cars powered by fossil fuels, sustainable ways to produce higher-quality food without using dangerous pesticides and fertilizers, and regulations that limit the use of power plants where they cannot be totally eliminated in order to track the rate of hazardous emissions by such plants are all examples of mitigation processes of climate change. To help with the cost of buying solar components, governments should invest in and support geothermal and solar energy. This will reduce the need for generators and, consequently, the quantity of pollutants that generators emit.

Because trees absorb carbon from the atmosphere, afforestation and reforestation should be a nationwide practice to slow down the process of desertification and enhance air quality. Mangroves, sea grass beds, marshes and swamps are examples of wetlands that are very good at absorbing and storing carbon dioxide, which helps to lower greenhouse gas emissions. Because the ocean produces half of the oxygen humans require, absorbs 25% of carbon dioxide emissions and absorbs 90% of the excess heat produced by these emissions, humans must protect it. In addition to being "the lungs of the planet," the ocean is also the biggest "carbon sink," which serves as an essential

defence against climate change. Up to four times as much carbon dioxide can be removed from the atmosphere by ocean habitats, like mangroves and sea grasses, as well as the food webs that support them, as compared to terrestrial forests. Mangroves are extremely helpful in the fight against climate change because of their capacity to absorb and store carbon. The use of green shipping, which refers to switching from conventional fossil fuels to energy sources with zero emissions, like methanol, ammonia and hydrogen, should be employed.

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**HARNESSING ARTISANAL CRUDE OIL REFINING IN NIGERIA: PANACEA
FOR HER ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT**

By

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Abstract

Nigeria is the third largest producer of crude oil in Africa, yet she is a net importer of refined crude oil which the government has been subsidizing for decades until recently. The Niger Delta region, where all the oil production activities take place, has over the years been grappling with the menace of environmental pollution resulting from oil activities, compromised oil installations and sabotage. This study explored the historical dimension of oil production and refining in Nigeria. It equally examined the advent of artisanal refining in Nigeria as well as the possibility of harnessing the potential of this indigenous technology to address the economic and environmental challenges confronting the nation.

1. Introduction

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in mid-2023 declared Nigeria the third largest oil-producing country in Africa (The Cable, 2023). This represents a sharp decline from Nigeria's original position as Africa's largest petroleum producer. This development is not unconnected with high-level attacks on oil production and installations in the Niger Delta region (Adebayo, 2023). The bulk of the products siphoned through these attacks find their way to a host of artisanal oil refining camps which litter the creeks of the Niger Delta and beyond (Mezie-Okoye, 2022). The activities of these artisanal refineries result in the proliferation of adulterated refined petroleum products also known as "kpoo fire." which has resulted in a lot of mishaps for the end users (Obi, 2023). Also, the environment of the region has been highly compromised, resulting in the emergence of "black soots" in most parts of the region in addition to the contamination of its soil and water (Adunbi, 2011; Allen, 2013; Adunbi, 2015; Obi, 2023).

Amidst these realities came the pronouncement of the removal of subsidy from petrol by the President of Nigeria (President Bola Tinubu) on May 29, 2023 as part of his maiden speech. This the President said was intended to salvage the badly battered Nigerian economy by re-channelling foreign exchange earnings which were previously used to subsidize imported refined petroleum products (Price Water Cooperation, PWC,

2023). It is estimated that Nigeria spends as much as \$28 billion per annum in subsidizing the importation of refined petroleum products (PWC, 2023).

The culmination of the scenarios above left both the Nigerian economy and her environment in a deplorable state. The removal of subsidies on petroleum products, especially the Petroleum Motor Spirit (PMS) has seen an astronomical increase in prices of goods and services (PWC, 2023). This has resulted in a very high cost of living, pushing the majority of the population down the poverty line. There is a sharp decline in all economic growth indices and a rise in crime rates (Ozili & Obiora, 2023). Some schools of thought, however, believed that the removal of subsidy would provide an incentive for the nation's refineries to begin production at full capacity, which would reduce the current dependence on importation of refined products, thereby reducing the pressure on foreign exchange as well as expand the downstream economic value-chain (Ozili & Obiora, 2023). Aligning with this thought line, the country issued licenses to private refineries to complement the production capacity of government-owned refineries, most of which are either grounded as a result of turnaround maintenance or are producing below their installed capacities. Apart from Dangote Refinery, which commenced production recently, the remaining private refinery licenses remained an illusion, as the reality is that the country still depends on importation of refined petroleum products due to the inability of the existing recognized refineries to adequately service the downstream petroleum market. Artisanal refineries are, however, in regular production, but their output remains unaccounted for due primarily to the fact that their products and production are "illegal."

As illegal as their activities are, it does not remove the implication of these activities for both the economy and environment of Nigeria. Following the realization of this fact, the Federal Government, in February 2017, expressed willingness to convert these artisan refineries to modular refineries to address fuel importation and integrate those currently engaged in artisanal refining into the formal petroleum downstream sector (*The Guardian*, 2017). This again has remained on the pages of the newspaper, as there are no corresponding actions by the government towards the actualization of this ambition. This has resulted in the present dual jeopardy of a bleeding economy and a bleeding environment. Stakeholders in the petroleum sector in Nigeria have continued to clamour for conversion of these artisanal refineries to modular refineries. Godwin (2021) makes a case for the integration of artisanal refineries into mainstream refining because that singular action will address oil theft, illegal refining and environmental pollution. Similarly, Umuokoro (2018) asserts that harnessing the potential of the artisanal refineries in the Niger Delta will boost economic outcomes by enhancing government revenue through improved accountability in crude oil production and reduced cost of refined petroleum products. It will also afford various arms of government ample

opportunity to adequately regulate the activities of the artisanal refiners to ensure that they do not further worsen the environmental state of the oil-bearing regions (Ottih et al., 2023).

This essay will add to the ongoing discussion by providing an economy-based dimension to justify the integration of artisanal refining into the mainstream petroleum industry and incorporating its workforce into the downstream sector of the Nigerian petroleum industry.

2. Oil and the Nigerian Economy

Arising from the discovery of oil in the 1950s and its subsequent exploration, exploitation and exportation from the creeks of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, oil has remained the major contributor to economic indices in Nigeria. At independence in 1960, the new Nigerian state continued with the exploration and exploitation for export policy on oil, which she inherited from the British. Following the military takeover of power, the Petroleum Decree of 1969 was promulgated, which gave ownership of the entire petroleum products found in the Nigerian land, territorial waters and continental shelf to the state. Decree 6 increased the stake for the Federal Government to 80% share in the oil sector and a 20% stake for the state. This was followed by the Land Use Act of 1978, which bestowed the ownership of all lands to the military administrators appointed for various states of the federation. This eventually culminated in Section 40(3) of the 1979 Nigerian Constitution, which declares that all natural resources within the geographical boundaries of Nigeria are exclusively owned by the Federal Government. This meant that all natural resources, crude oil and natural gas inclusive, belong to the Federal Government, irrespective of the specific location housing them.

By this constitutional provision, the Federal Government receives all proceeds of petroleum export, which it eventually shares with the other arms of government using various sharing formulas. Pre-independence, the colonial masters had tried to solve the problem of revenue sharing with the setting up of the Philipson Commission of 1948, which centred its revenue-sharing structure around derivation, needs and national interest. Laden with agitations, the Hicks -Philipson Commission was set up in 1952 and it made a slight shift in its formula to include derivation, needs and national interest. Still faced with unsettled interests, the government set up the Raisman Commission of 1958. This commission discarded the derivation principle and centred its sharing principle on population. This saw the Northern Region with the highest population getting 40%, the Western Region 37%, the Eastern Region 18%, and Southern Cameroon 5%.

With Nigerian independence and the realignment of national boundaries, Southern Cameroon left Nigeria, and the Mid-western Region was created. The Binn Commission was set up to review the sharing of the Distributable Pool Account. It recommended 42% to the Northern Region, 30% to the Eastern Region, 20% to the

Western Region and 8% to the Mid-western Region. With the creation of 12 states in 1968, the Dina Commission on revenue allocation was created. The commission retained the principles of even development, derivation and needs while proposing permanent revenue planning and fiscal commission. These recommendations were never implemented. The Okigbo Commission was set up in 1981 by the Shagari-led civilian administration, which recommended the horizontal sharing formula: Federal Government 55%, state governments 30.5%, local governments 10%, and special funds 4.5%. This horizontal sharing formula remained in force, with changes in the percentage accruable to various levels of government and the special fund account, until 1995, when a constitutional conference saddled with fashioning out a new constitution for the country recommended the 13% derivation formula, which became functional in the year 2000. This prolonged period of exploitation and deprivation resulted in what Ugwukah and Ohaja (2016) term the enrichment of city centres and the impoverishment of the creeks.

Besides revenue generation, petroleum in Nigeria has improved the lot of job seekers by creating direct employment for them in the oil industry and its subsidiaries as well as providing various employment windows via its enhanced revenue generation. It has tremendously enhanced the transportation sector of the economy by providing the oil for the wheels. Most of the oil giants in Nigeria have equally contributed to the development of transport infrastructures through corporate social responsibilities, by building roads and bridges in their host communities. Oil has equally placed Nigeria on the world map as one of the producers of the best oil often referred to as sweet oil. This oil is preferred due to its low sulfur content, making them more environmentally-friendly. Petroleum has equally made millionaires in dollars of most Nigerians who enjoy the Federal Government privatization of oil wells which saw individual ownership of oil wells across the Niger Delta. On the flip side, this policy, like most policies of the Nigerian government, has enriched very few Nigerians to the detriment of the majority. Overall, petroleum in the Nigerian economic space has been a source of great relief, despite the prevalent high-level abuse.

3. Historical Perspective of Oil Refining in Nigeria

After the discovery of oil in commercial quantity at Oloibiri in Bayelsa State in 1956 and subsequent exportation of same using oil tanker ship *Hermisfusus* by Shell D'arch in 1958, the company decided to build a refinery in Nigeria to cater for the anticipated rise in the demand for petroleum products. This decision produced the 38,000 barrel per day (bpd) capacity refinery situated in Port Harcourt, which was commissioned in 1965 (Ogbugwe, 2018). This simple hydro-skimming plant was operated as a joint venture, with the Nigerian government owning a 50% stake, while Shell D'arch, now Shell British Petroleum had 50%. By 1972, the Nigerian government increased its stake in the venture from 50%

to 60 % through its agency, Nigerian Petroleum Refining Company (NPRC). In the same year, the production capacity of the refinery was increased to 60,000bpd with added capacity to produce Naphtha Catalytic Refining Unit. By 1978, the Federal Government of Nigeria, through its newly formed agency, Nigerian National Petroleum Cooperation (NNPC), acquired 100% ownership of the refinery, making it a subsidiary of NNPC.

Increased economic expansion propelled the need for a second refinery to service the increasing demand for petroleum products. By 1977, the Warri Refinery, with a production capacity of 100,000bpd, was commissioned. It provided an improvement to the existing Port Harcourt Refinery supplying all the by-products of refined crude oil. With surging economic activities in the northern and southern parts of Nigeria, NNPC felt there was a need to take a refinery close to the business hub to optimize haulage costs. Kaduna Refinery, a modern refinery fitted with dual capacity – 50,000bpsd fuels plant with CRU and FCCU and 50,000bpsd lubes plant for the production of lubricating oil blendstocks, waxes and bitumen –was commissioned in 1980. Economic projections by NNPC indicated that there will be a deficit supply of petroleum products in Nigeria by 1989 arising from the pace of economic activities in the country. To forestall this, NNPC proposed two refineries with 100,000bpsd capacity to be sited in Port Harcourt and Calabar. The Calabar refinery was intended solely for export. Eventually, the government settled for another refinery in Port Harcourt with a capacity of 150,000bpd. This refinery was completed and commissioned in 1988. The modern refineries – Warri, Kaduna, and the new Port Harcourt refineries –operated optimally, and Nigeria even exported refined petroleum products.

Things, however, took a downturn in 1990, when the military government ordered NNPC to close all its accounts with commercial banks and move proceeds to the Central Bank of Nigeria. This meant that NNPC lost its financial autonomy, implying that certain important professional decisions, such as routine turnaround maintenance and the contractor to undertake the maintenance, were left to the political class rather than professionals. This marked the beginning of the end of efficiency in the refineries in Nigeria. Worthy of note is the fact that petroleum products in Nigeria were largely subsidized following the enactment of the Price Control Act of 1977. With the inefficiencies of the nation's refineries, the growing economy and demand for petroleum products, Nigeria, which once exported refined petroleum products, became a net importer of the same products, which get to the end users at a subsidized rate.

Successive governments, both military and civilian, attempted to tackle this anomaly with the licensing of private refineries to complement the efforts of the government-owned refineries. These attempts culminated in the emergence of the following companies: Walter Smith Refining and Petrochemical Company, which began operation in 2020; Dangote Refinery, which was inaugurated in May 2023 but

commenced production in September 2024; Azikel Refinery, which was licensed in 2015, but is still under construction; Edo Refinery and Petrochemical, which was licensed to operate in August 2024; and Ogbele Refinery, which began operation in 2012. Others are Duport Midstream, which was completed in 2022 and started production in 2023; OPAC Refinery, which was completed and began operation in 2021; Niger Delta Petroleum Refinery (Aradel), which was commissioned in 2010 and currently produces automotive gas oil, dual-purpose kerosene, and marine diesel oil among other products; Alexis Refinery Limited, established in 2017, with license to establish and license to operate issued in 2022, and expected to commence operation upon receipt of further licenses; and Atlantic International Refineries and Petrochemical Limited, established in 2021 by the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board.

Additionally, the Nigerian Midstream Downstream Regulatory Agency (NMDPRA) in October 2024 issued 9 establishment licenses, 7 construction licenses and 4 operation licenses. For the sake of clarity, for any refinery to produce refined petroleum products, NMDPRA must issue it with the following licenses:

(1) License to Establish, (2) License to Construct, and (3) Approval to introduce hydrocarbon (4) Pre-commissioning and Commissioning (5) License to Operate.

4. Artisanal Oil Refining and the Niger Delta Environment

The Niger Delta region is the oil hub of Nigeria. Until recently, all the oil activities that placed Nigeria where it currently is among the League of Nations in matters of crude oil all happened on the soil and waters of the Niger Delta area. Unfortunately, the area that placed Nigeria as the third highest producer of crude oil is starved of any semblance of wealth or decent living. Villages and creeks of the Niger Delta have one story in common: the story of abject poverty amid natural wealth. According to Samuel A. Stouffer's Relative Deprivation theory, if people perceive any obstruction on their way towards maximally benefitting from the collective gains, especially the ones that abound around them, relative deprivation is assumed, and the natural response to relative deprivation is to destroy the obstruction. This is the summary of the emergence of artisanal refineries in the Niger Delta. The people viewed their inability to access petrol dollars as relative deprivation, and their natural response was to attack oil installations and production processes and subsequently channel crude oil to their local refineries in a bid to earn petrol dollars by any means possible.

Some historians attributed the advent of artisanal refining to the days of the Biafran War, when soldiers who fought on the side of Biafra had to develop local technologies around getting petrol to power their operations following the stoppage of supply as a result of the war. Others believed that artisanal refining was an offshoot of the native technology used in distilling local dry gin (*ogogoro*) from palm wine. Since the creeks were being destroyed due to oil pollution from the activities of the international

oil companies, forcing palm wine tappers and others engaged in the business of palm wine to go out of business, survival tendencies simply required them to switch to viable alternatives. In this case, distilling crude oil is readily available to them and will not require any technology other than what they already had for their former business. This saw most of them switch businesses from palm wine distilling to crude oil distilling. Other accounts believe that some unholy fraternity between oil companies' greedy engineers and some unemployed youths of Niger Delta extraction gave birth to artisanal refineries (Umuokoro, 2018). The fight for resource control, even before independence, has given rise to agitation. This agitation assumed its peak around the late 1990s through the mid-2000s. The agitators also known as militants siphoned crude oil to exchange or sell for weapons and other supplies. They equally set up various artisanal refinery camps to ensure a steady supply of fuel for their gunboats as well as sales to willing buyers to keep them financially afloat.

Whatever the storylines, the common denominator remains that the people of the region embraced artisanal refining as a means to cushion their deprivation and a survival strategy, given that their means of livelihood, which were fishing and farming, had been truncated as a result of multiple oil pollution. Additionally, the inability of the country's refineries to adequately cater for the local demand, which has remained on a steady increase, the failure of the independent marketers to set up functional petrol stations in the creeks, and the epileptic power situation in the country make this business very lucrative. As lucrative as this venture is, what the operators as well as those that patronize them have failed to realize is that the environment of the region is bleeding. The haemorrhage is assuming a life-threatening stage with the damaging environmental events currently being witnessed in the region. These include black soots, deforestation, loss of creeks and mangroves, extinction of species of plants and animals (both water and land animals), increased respiratory challenges, birth defects, acid rains, and rapid dilapidation of infrastructures as a result of acid rains together, with the global challenge of climate change and global warming. The continuous combustion of fossil fuels for crude distilling has escalated the release of greenhouse gases. Even though the effects of heightened greenhouse gas emissions are global, the region emitting the gas collects a greater portion of the effects (Obi, 2023).

The Nigerian government, in its usual responsive actions, has unleashed mayhem on the operators of this trade. The picture below is a site along the East-West Road, where authorities burn confiscated petroleum products suspected to be from these artisanal refineries. Thousands of Nigerians have lost their lives through explosions from some poorly refined products, direct involvement in the refining process, or being killed by security operatives in a bid to stop them from engaging in these ventures. The media is full of tales of shootouts between uniformed men and the operators of these refineries, which are usually climaxed by setting the camps ablaze. Again, this adds to the release of

CO₂ to the already saturated air of the region. UNEP's (2011) report estimated 30 years of clean-up for the water and the soil of the region. If it reassesses the situation now, one can only imagine how many years the clean-up will take.



Source: Author's Compilation (2024)

5. Integrating Artisanal Refineries into the Downstream Petroleum Industry in Nigeria

Artisanal refining of crude oil involves the use of fossil fuels which include firewood, wastes from refined petroleum activities and even cooking gas to heat crude oil at a temperature that engineers' separation of crude into various products that emerge at varying temperatures as heating continues. It has been found that these refineries are largely labour-intensive, with little or no automation. Their end products include petrol, diesel, kerosene, bitumen and crude oil waste (Umukoro, 2018). These products and their production process are illegal in Nigeria, and the law enforcement agencies have largely fought the operators to a standstill. However, indigenization, or optimization of locally available technology to help the ailing economy, will mean legalizing the operations of the artisanal refineries, obtaining proper documentation for their processes and operators, converting them into mini-modular refineries since they already have means of getting their primary raw material, which is crude oil. The site of their operations are already heavily polluted; so rather than seek another location for the mini-modular refineries, the present locations they occupy should be used for the upgraded mini-modular refineries. If this is done, as naïve as it sounds, it will save Nigeria from an eminent economic crisis and set the petroleum market in a good position for the operation of the invisible hand since efficiency and competition will naturally emerge.

The documentation process will put a face to the currently faceless operators of these artisanal refineries. This will engender proper profiling for further investment in the business of crude oil refining. It will also form a solid base for proper taxing of the process, which will enhance revenue generation for the government. Also, the documentation process will enable NMDPRA and other regulatory agencies in the petroleum industry to professionally allocate the proper production capacity for each approved mini-modular refinery based on its current production capacity and activities. Also, the fight for stealing of crude oil by these artisanal outfits will be put to a permanent end, as they will be required to take account of their crude consumption and equally pay for them. Since they already have markets for their products, legalizing their operations will enhance their trade as their customers can confidently buy their products without fear of harassment by law enforcement agencies. This will in no small measure liberate the downstream petroleum market from the suffocating grip of the oil cabal and engender proper competition, which is vital for the optimal performance of the industry. A good example is what Dangote Refinery is currently doing in the downstream petroleum sector of Nigeria. Reducing the pump price of petrol from about N1200 to N899. This will marginally reduce the effect of high cost of petroleum products on Nigerians and equally reduce the pressure on the naira due to the country's dependence on importation of refined petroleum products.

Furthermore, integrating artisanal refineries into the downstream petroleum sector in Nigeria will create employment for the Nigeria youth, especially those from the Niger Delta region. A legalized artisanal refining process will expand its value chain; the sourcing of raw materials, to setting up of the modular refineries, production, distribution, and even the accounting and documentation process will all be manned by individuals. This will create meaningful and largely sustainable livelihoods for these individuals. If at least half of the artisanal refineries in the Niger Delta region are converted to mini-modular refineries, their output, coupled with those of existing refineries, will make Nigeria exit the refined petroleum importation market. This is because, at present, it is estimated that these artisanal refineries have a production capacity of over 10,000bpd. Their conversion most likely will increase this output level. All these put together will set the Nigerian economy on a healthy pedestal.

On the side of the environment, conversion to mini-modular refineries will benefit the environment first by reducing the level of greenhouse gases and other dangerous gases that are emitted during the crude refining process. Using modular refineries will result in a cleaner and more environmentally-friendly refining process. Land and water pollution due to oil spillage will be largely reduced if not completely abated, because there will be no need to attack oil installations to siphon crude oil. The oil coming to the modular refineries will be "legal" and well accounted for. Again, there will be no need for

security agencies to set refining camps and their products on fire. This practice has been a major contributor to the black soot, acid rain and other environmentally-harmful events being witnessed in the Niger Delta region.

6. Conclusion

Integrating artisanal refineries into the downstream of the petroleum industry in Nigeria is a pragmatic way of solving the dual challenge bedevilling Nigeria –her bleeding economy and environment. The economy will benefit through enhanced revenue generation, improved and expanded employment window for the youth, reduction of the pressure on the naira as a result of high import bills, self-sufficiency in the production of refined petroleum products, enhanced healthy competition within the downstream petroleum sector, and combating the activities of the “oil cabals.” ultimately making the petroleum sector a blessing, not a curse. On the side of the environment, converting artisanal refineries into modular refineries will reduce oil spills, fossil fuel combustion, and air and water pollution, and aid the rejuvenation of the mangrove forests and creeks of the Niger Delta region.

Therefore, stakeholders in the Niger Delta region, the petroleum industry, environmental rights activists, regular and social media practitioners, the academia and indeed the general public should join the campaign for the integration of artisanal refineries into the downstream petroleum sector in Nigeria. This can be done by converting existing artisanal refineries to modular refineries.

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54**SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: AN IMPERATIVE
FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA**

By
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Climate Change and Desertification

Global warming, otherwise known as climate change, has been increasingly recognized as the greatest threat of the century (Bowen, Mattia & Stren, 2010; Bloem, Semba, Kraemer, 2010; Perkins, 2010; Graciano, 2010). Of all the holocausts that have afflicted mankind, such as plagues, earthquakes, tsunami, smallpox and HIV/AIDS, none has the greatest threat to wipe out lives on Earth through either continuous flooding or permanent drought than climate change. It has been projected that about 9 billion people will inhabit the earth by 2050, most of whom live in developing countries (Crowley, 2000; McMichael, 2001; Perkins, 2010). Consequently, the world faces the most pronounced question over how our planet can sustain and feed this population due to climate change, with its implications for food security, access to clean water and sanitation, population migration and the threat of an increased number of both natural and man-made disasters (Crowley, 2000; Paehler, 2007).

Scientists have tried to divide the causes into two broad categories: natural and human causes (Crowley, 2000; Paehler, 2007). The natural causes are many, including earth's orbital changes, solar variations, volcanic eruptions and ocean currents. The human causes include burning of fossil fuels, land-use and deforestation (Paehler, 2007). The effects of these causes can be seen on rising sea levels, melting of ice caps, heat waves, violent downpours, animal metabolism, et cetera. The efforts by researchers, scientists as well as the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to identify these factors are noteworthy. The impacts of these various factors, their interplay, synergy and tension on climate change, and the potential mitigation and adaptation strategies are hereunder highlighted.

Causes of Climate Change

The natural variability and climate change fluctuations of the climate system have been part of the Earth's history. However, there have been changes in concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere, growing at an unprecedented rate and magnitudes in recent years (Crowley, 2000; Paehler, 2007).

- **Natural causes**

The earth's climate is grossly influenced and changed through natural causes, such as ocean current, volcanic eruptions, the earth's orbital changes and solar variations

- i) **Ocean current:** The oceans have been shown to be the major component of the climate system. Ocean currents move vast amounts of heat across the world. Wind push horizontally against the sea surface and drive ocean current patterns. Interactions between the ocean and atmosphere can also produce phenomena called El- Nino, which occurs every 2 to 6 years. It has been shown that deep ocean circulation of cold water moves from the poles towards the equator and warm water from the equator back towards the poles. Without this movement the poles would be colder and the equator warmer. The oceans play an important role in determining the atmospheric concentration of CO₂. Changes in ocean circulation may affect the climate through the movement of CO₂ into or out of the atmosphere (Brown, 2010; Hoffman, et al., 2010; Shanta Barley, 2010).
- ii) **Volcanic activities:** Volcanic eruptions are known to throw out large volumes of sulphur dioxide (SO₂), water vapour, dust and ash into the atmosphere. It is known that large volumes of gases and ash can influence climate patterns for years by increasing planetary reflectivity, causing atmospheric cooling. Tiny particles called aerosols are produced by volcanoes. Because these reflect solar energy back into space, they have a cooling effect on the earth's surface (Ammann, Washington, Meehl, Buja, & Teng, 2010; Bowen, 2010; Paehler, 2007).
- iii) **Earth's orbital changes:** The earth makes one revolution around the sun once a year, tilted at an angle of 23.50 to the perpendicular plane of its orbital path. Changes in the tilt of the earth can lead to small but climatically important changes in the strength of the seasons. More tilt means warmer summers and colder winters; less tilt means cooler summers and milder winters. Slow changes in the earth's orbit lead to small but climatically important changes in strength of the seasons over tens of thousands of years. Climate feedbacks have been shown to amplify these small changes, thereby producing ice ages (Crowley, 2000; Paehler, 2007; Perkins, 2010).
- iv) **Solar variation:** The sun is known to be the source of energy for the planet's climate system. Although the sun's energy output appears constant from an everyday point of view, small changes over an extended period of time can lead to climate changes. It has been speculated that a portion of the warming in the first half of the 20th Century was due to an increase in the output of solar energy. As the sun is the fundamental source of energy that is instrumental in our climate system, it would be reasonable to assume that changes in the sun's energy output would cause climate to change. But studies by Crowley (2000) and Paehler (2007) have shown that, if this were so, it would be expected to see warmer temperatures in all layers

of the atmosphere. On the contrary, the cooling was observed in the upper atmosphere, a warming at the surface and in the lower parts of the atmosphere. This was shown to be due to greenhouse gases capturing heat in the lower atmosphere. Furthermore, climate models that included solar irradiance changes could not reproduce the last century's observed temperature trend without including a rise in greenhouse gases suggesting that GHGs are the main cause of climate change (Paehler, 2007).

- v) **Cloud's Contribution:** Perkins (2010) reported that global satellite analysis supported by climate models revealed that cloud cover accentuates warming because, as earth's average temperature rises, clouds will accelerate global warming by trapping more heat. Dessler (2010) analyzed satellite data gathered between 2000 and 2010 to estimate the short-term variations in the amount of visible and infrared radiation emitted to space. He made an allowance by subtracting influences such as earth's surface reflectivity and the heat-trapping effect of atmospheric water vapour as well as how clouds affected the planet's radiation balance as a function of temperature over the decade. The result showed that clouds enhance warming by trapping, on average, an extra 0.54 watts per square metre for every 1°C rise in global average temperature. Dessler (2010) however, posits that uncertainty in the estimate indicates that clouds could actually exert a small cooling effect as temperature rises, although the slight negative feedback would not be nearly enough to cancel out larger, well constrained positive climatic feedback, such as water vapour. In the tropics, for example Nigeria, the North East Trade wind brings cloudless atmosphere called harmattan with dry air and a cooling effect to the atmosphere. A model that can mimic this will have positive impact on climate change mitigation, provided it does not have negative feedback that could cause permanent drought.

b) Human Causes

It has been shown (Paehler, 2007) that climate is changing due to man-made greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels for electricity, cars, trains, aircrafts, homes, flaring of gas at the oil fields, like in Nigeria. Furthermore, land-use and deforestation add pressure to greenhouse gases.

Effects of Climate Change

In its report, IPCC (2007) has succinctly identified the most relevant impacts of climate change on human health:

Changes in conditions, temperature, rainfall, humidity, and wind likely to alter the intensity and geographical distribution of extreme weather events, raise water levels in coastal regions, alter the distribution of vector insects and mammals, exacerbate health

relevant air pollution, intensify the existing burden of malnutrition, and increase human exposure to toxic substances due to the deterioration of natural and manmade environment (Graciano, 2010).

Climate Change Mitigation

Perhaps, the most critical step taken, in terms of action, was the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992, which then went into force in 1994. Since then, the UNFCCC has been the main driving force and facilitator of climate action globally. The main objective of the convention is stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere to prevent severe impacts on the climate system. The convention set out the commitments to all parties involved, putting major responsibilities on developed countries to implement national policies to limit anthropogenic emissions and enhance greenhouse gas sinks. The target was to reduce emissions by the year 2000 to the levels achieved in the previous decade. Moreover, developed country parties were expected to assist vulnerable developing country parties financially and technologically in taking climate action. The convention established the structure, reporting requirements and mechanism for financial resources, fundamentally setting the scene for global climate policy (UN 1992). The convention is currently ratified by 197 countries (UNCCS 2019).

There are 3 main climate change mitigation strategies. First, conventional mitigation efforts employ decarbonization technologies and techniques that reduce CO₂ emissions, such as renewable energy, fuel switching, efficiency gains, nuclear power, and carbon capture storage and utilization. Most of these technologies are well established and carry an acceptable level of managed risk (Shinnar and Citro, 2008; Ricke et al. 2017; Victor et al. 2018; Bataille et al. 2018; Mathy et al. 2018; Bustreo et al, 2019).

The second route constitutes a new set of technologies and methods that have been recently proposed. These techniques are potentially deployed to capture and sequester CO₂ from the atmosphere and are termed negative emissions technologies, also referred to as carbon dioxide removal methods (Ricke et al. 2017). The main negative emissions techniques widely discussed in the literature include bioenergy carbon capture and storage, biochar, enhanced weathering, direct air carbon capture and storage, ocean fertilization, ocean alkalinity enhancement, soil carbon sequestration, afforestation and reforestation, wetland construction and restoration, as well as alternative negative emissions utilization and storage Methods, such as mineral carbonation and using biomass in construction (McLaren, 2012; McGlashan et al. 2012; Lawrence et al. 2018; Royal Society, 2018; Lenzi, 2018; Palmer, 2019; Yan et al. 2019; Lin 2019; Pires, 2019; Goglio et al. 2020).

The third route revolves around the principle of altering the earth's radiation balance through the management of solar and terrestrial radiation. Such techniques are termed radiative forcing geoengineering technologies, and the main objective is temperature stabilization or reduction. Unlike negative emissions technologies, this is achieved without altering greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. The main radiative forcing geoengineering techniques that are discussed in the literature include stratospheric aerosol injection, marine sky brightening, cirrus cloud thinning, space-based mirrors, surface-based brightening and various radiation management techniques. All these techniques are still theoretical or at very early trial stages and carry a lot of uncertainty and risk in terms of practical large-scale deployment. At the moment, radiative forcing geoengineering techniques are not included within policy frameworks (Lawrence et al. 2018; Lockley et al. 2019).

Desertification

United Nations Organization (UNO, 1977) defined desertification as a reduction or destruction of soil's biologic potential, finally resulting in the appearance of desert conditions. According to Hentyy (1986), the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) estimated that over 27million hectares of land are removed from agricultural production every year by desertification annually and that a third of the earth's land mass of about 45 million km² holding a population of more than 850million is threatened.

In Nigeria, the semi-arid regions of northern Nigeria are mostly affected by desertification (Sagua et al., 1987). These areas cover 240,900km² and 20,700km² (Kowal and Knabe (1972). The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD, 1999) observes that, out of the 36 states of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory, 11 states are severely affected by various forms of land degradation. These states lose large expanse of land to desertification. Desertification has been one of the major environmental challenges of northern Nigeria.

Causes of Desertification

Oladipo (1993) identifies 2 main factors responsible for desertification in Nigeria. The first is extreme climate variability manifesting as frequent droughts, poor physical conditions of soil, topography and vegetation. The second is poor land use and increase in utilization of available land resources by expanding population and socio-economic development. Overgrazing by cattle, limited rainfall, deforestation by communities who use woods as alternative source of fuel for cooking due to high cost of kerosene, gas and electricity, have exacerbated the problem of desertification, especially in the North (Omijeh, 2005). Scrambling of these scarce land resources is one of the main reasons for farmer-herder clash in the North.

Mitigating of Desertification

- a) **Sustainable agricultural practices:** Agroforestry is a system of farming that plays pivotal role in land management, especially in arid and semi-arid regions. Agroforestry usually involves planting of trees or shrubs around crops or amongst pastureland (Sultana, 2008).
- b) **Stoppage of illegal logging/felling of trees:** Government must strictly enforce illegal logging of trees for furniture making and stop felling of trees for household fuels by communities. Governments must make kerosene, gas and electricity not only available and accessible but also affordable.
- c) **Deliberate planting of trees:** There should be deliberate and continuous planting of trees and protection of planted trees. Planting of trees that can survive under harsh environmental conditions should be considered.
- d) **Enlightenment campaigns against desertification:** There should be massive enlightenment campaigns, especially in communities that are at risk of desertification. With proper information and education, community dwellers will cooperate with government and development partners to combat desertification.

Managing Natural Resources Sustainably

Natural resources can be simply described as substances present in nature that are required by humans for their survival. In elaborating managing natural resources sustainably, it will be good to understand sustainable development defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development's 1987 Brundtland report "as the development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs." Barsch and Burger (1996) define natural resources as materials created by nature such as soil, water, land, minerals, vegetation and wildlife, as well as power resources, like coal, gas, wind and sunlight that fulfil human needs and desires. Barsch and Burger (1996) and Mitchell (2002) explain that these materials are considered "natural matter" until humans recognize their presence, attach value to them and find ways to utilize them. When humans utilize these resources, they give them a new purpose and turn them into a source of subsistence or an herbal resource. As a result, these natural materials fulfil a new function in human society. In other words, refining or modifying these natural resources make them more valuable for human comfort and survival.

Natural resources provide benefits that are essential for meeting basic human needs, such as air, shelter, food and clothing. They are considered a part of humanity's natural heritage and are often protected in nature reserves. Barsch and Burger (1996) posit that natural resources can be classified into major categories: exhaustible (non-renewable) and inexhaustible (renewable). Examples of exhaustible natural resources are

crude oil, natural gas and coal, while the inexhaustible natural resources are air, sunlight, land, water, etc. These renewable resources, although inexhaustible, can be depleted when over exploited. Non-renewable resources, on the contrary, are present in nature at a constant in any particular location; therefore, if exploitation is not managed in an equitable manner, they may get exhausted in a way that the economic survival of future generations may be seriously threatened.

According to McMillan (2014), the management of natural resources such as land, water, soil, plants and animals, must be done with a specific focus on how management influences the quality of life for both present and future generations. Natural resources management involves managing the interaction of various fields, such as natural heritage management, land use planning, water management, biodiversity conservation and sustainability of industries, like agriculture, mining, tourism, fisheries and forestry. This approach recognizes that human livelihoods depend on the health and productivity of human landscape and that humans have a responsibility to act as stewards of the land to maintain its health and productivity. What is critical in management of natural resources is that the present generation should recognize the obligation it owes to the next generation, which is to bequeath to it an environment that is safe, viable and guarantees their survival.

According to Environmental Law, sustainable management of natural resources involves utilizing these resources in a way that maintains and improves the resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide. This approach aims to meet the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, while also supporting the achievement of the welfare goals outlined in the Act on the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Natural Resources of Wales, 2020).

Promoting Renewal Energy and Green Economy

Promoting renewal energy simply implies the implementation of policies that are aimed at advancing pollution-free energy sources that can be used to drive socioeconomic growth of every human society. Renewal energy sources include sunlight, wind and hydroelectric dams.

Liao et al. (2018) note that, at about the mid-18th century, the Industrial revolution stimulated worldwide economic growth. This rapid growth in global economic had a negative impact on the environment. This was due to over-exploitation of natural resources worsened by global population explosion. These negative consequences on the environment have raised global concerns due to massive ecological damage, which is manifesting as climate change and pollution (Merko et al., 2019). Wada, Faizulayev and Victor (2021) note that ecological damage has markedly slowed down global economy and has mainstreamed sustainable development in the international agenda.

It is for the reason above, as noted by Delbeke et al. (2019), that the United Nations (UN), in 2015, launched the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development and included 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to combat and halt extreme hunger and poverty all over the world. Also, in 2015, 196 nations of the world signed the Paris Agreement, an international treaty on climate change to achieve zero carbon emission by 2050 and reduce global temperature to 2°C above the pre-industrial level.

Leal et al. (2020) observe that the implementation of the SDGs has been slow, terms of the Paris Agreement are yet to be fully implemented, and most nations of the world still face the challenges of extreme poverty, ecological damage and inequalities. The main reasons for these include lack of political will, path dependency and inability of nations to cooperate to achieve these goals.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2011) posits that green growth is a realistic strategy that aims to stimulate economic growth and development while also ensuring that the environment and its natural resources are utilized sustainability. Fernandes et al. (2021) and Ahmed et al. (2022) aver that the green growth strategy includes integration of environmental concerns into economic decision-making process and mandating industries to prioritize environmental protection and conservation in all the operations and processes. This include investing in clean, technological innovations, renewal energy and resource efficiency. While innovations in greener technologies will enhance efficiency gains, renewal energy solutions and adopting cleaner technologies help to markedly reduce ecological damage.

According to Gorji and Martek (2023), supplementing renewal energy sources is also essential in green growth. Investing in solar, wind and hydropower will help to reduce the dependence on fossil fuel in electricity generation to meet demand and ensure energy security for nations of the world.

Institutional-based factors, such as democracy, the rule of law, stability of political processes and bureaucratic quality can lead to economic growth and ensure environmental protection (Azam & Emirullah, 2014; Salman et al., 2019; Joshua, Miriam-Kamah & Oji-Okoro, 2022).

Africa is the second fastest-growing continent of the world. In the period 2000-2021, the average annual growth rate of Africa was 4.1% (compared to the average global growth rate of 3.06%). This annual growth is projected to reach 5-6% by 2030 (African Development Bank, 2014). This rapid growth of Africa's economy is not without consequences. There has been increased exploitation of Africa's resources, pollution and environmental degradation (Acheampong et al., 2021). This has worsened poverty in Africa and underscores the importance of green growth in Africa.

Even though Africa has contributed the lowest share (0.7-1.3 billion metric tons annually in 2000-2021) to global carbon emission, it bears the greatest burden of the

impact of climate change. This disparity becomes even more obvious when compared to major emitters such as Asia Pacific (7.7–17.7 billion), North America (6.6–5.7 billion) and Europe (4.8–3.8 billion). This unequal distribution of emission causes marked hardship for Africa, with over 250 million Africans experiencing water shortages and more than 80% of African nations expected to lack capacity for water management by 2030 (World Meteorological Organization, 2021).

In implementing the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and achieving the terms of the Paris Agreement by 2050, Sperling, Granoff and Vygass (2012) argue that Africa must prioritize sustainable resource management that mainstreams conservation, biodiversity protection and renewable energy consumption.

In fighting climate change and its impact and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, it is imperative that the transition to renewable energy sources is expedited. Solar, wind, hydropower and geothermal power are renewal energy alternatives that are safe and clean, unlike fossil fuels that emit greenhouse gases which contribute to global warming and climate change. Apart from the fact that renewal energy protects the environment, it also has the capacity to stimulate economic growth, ensure energy security and help alleviate poverty by extending electricity to remote areas due to its decentralized nature and thus improve socioeconomic activities there (Mahjabeen et al., 2020).

According to International Energy Agency (IEA, 2021) renewal energy has the propensity to stimulate economic growth by providing over 28 million jobs globally by 2050. Bhuiyan et al. (2022) reviewed studies on renewal energy and economic growth and found a significant and positive relationship between the two variables in developing nations. Tawiah, Zakari and Adedoyin (2021) found a positive relationship between renewal energy consumption and resource efficiency in 123 developed and developing nations across the world.

Effects of Quality Institutions on Green Growth

Strong and independent institutions are needed for the establishment of comprehensive environmental regulations and policies that can stimulate and spread the inclusion of cleaner technologies, reduce pollution emissions and protect natural resources (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2010; Shabhaz, Balsalobre & Shabhaz, 2019). Asoni (2008) and Mustapha, Malah & Daluma (2018) note that quality institutions promote sustainable resource management by delineating property rights and instituting governance frameworks that discourage overexploitation. In addition, institutions initiate innovation in green technologies by providing financial support, formulating supportive policies and fostering collaboration between research institutions and businesses (Li and Li, 2021). Tawiah, Zakari and Adedoyin (2021) assert that government effectiveness and the rule of

law can significantly affect institutions in enhancing environmental protection and green growth in developing countries. Ahmad (2022) found that institutional quality and human capital were instrumental in reducing the ecological footprint in emerging countries between 1984 and 2017. Similarly, Shabhaz, Balsalobre & Shabhaz (2019) claim that the quality of institutions plays a vital role in enhancing environmental quality through the effective implementation of economic and environmental policies, including the provision of supportive financial mechanisms. Li and Li (2021) investigated the role of environmental regulation on green total factor productivity (GTFP) in China's manufacturing industry from 2003 to 2016 and found that environmental regulation positively affected GTFP.

Whilst there is overwhelming evidence that institutional quality can enhance green growth, some studies have observed otherwise. For example, Obobisa, Chen and Mensah (2022) studied the impact of institutional quality on carbon emissions in 25 African nations and found a positive effect on carbon emissions. However, the researchers observed that the lack of strict environmental regulations or inability to enforce these regulations could negatively affect carbon emissions.

Protecting Biodiversity and Wildlife Conservation

Biodiversity simply refers to all living organisms found in a particular geographical area interconnected in an intricate web, all playing different roles in sustaining and maintaining the ecosystem. They include animals, plants and microorganisms. According to Juan Antonio Herera Izaguirre (1992), the concept of biodiversity was first defined in 1992 at the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity as "the variability among all living organisms from all sources including inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part: this includes diversity within species, between species and ecosystems." These diverse species that make up the ecosystem are currently on a decrease mainly due to over-exploitation by humans, rapid socio-economic development and environmental pollution, which causes habitat loss and climate change. Because of the socio-economic importance of biodiversity, many countries of the world, including Nigeria, are now focused on deliberately putting policies in place to protect biodiversity.

Climate change remains the major global threat to wildlife conservation. It has caused extinction of animals and disappearance of certain plants and fruits. Over the years, the Nigerian government has been planning to diversify the economy to non-oil sources. Biodiversity is one of the major areas which can help Nigeria gain foreign exchange due to its high tourism potential. Apart from that, biodiversity is crucial for life and positive business performance.

In 1994, Nigeria became a signatory to the Convention on Biodiversity thus committing itself to three objectives:

- Conservation of biodiversity,
- Sustainable use of its components and
- Fair and equitable sharing of resources arising from the effective use of genetic resources

The rich and blessed Nigerian environment is at risk of decline in quality and quantity due to over-exploitation, misuse, massive socio-economic development and unimaginable environmental pollution.

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP, 2002) note that the possible causes of environmental degradation and biodiversity loss are rapid population growth, over-exploitation of natural resources, poverty, poor economic performance, lack of proper institutional and legal framework, poor agricultural practices and high dependence on biomass fuel, amongst others. It states further that the world has a species abundance ranging between 3 million to 100 million located mainly in the tropical and subtropical regions of the world.

Factors Endangering Biodiversity in Nigeria

UNEP (2002) observes that loss of natural habitat is occurring at an alarming rate in Africa mainly due to anthropogenic activities, such as over-harvesting of resources, like timbre, and that more than 21 million hectares of forest have been lost since 1970. Nwaehukwu (2000) observes that desertification is one of the major threats to biodiversity in northern Nigeria and states like Bornu, Jigawa, Katsina, Kebbi, Yobe and Sokoto are mostly affected. Sokoto State has already lost 11.43% of its total land area. Desertification is moving southwards at a speed of 0.6km per annum.

Agede and Diutiah (2004) opine that all 36 states of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory are all affected by soil erosion, but the severity and type differ from region to region. While wind erosion is commoner in the northern part of the nation, coastal erosion is prevalent in states around the Atlantic Ocean in the south, such as Lagos, Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, Edo, Akwa-Ibom, Ondo and Cross River.

Nigeria is the 6th largest producer of crude oil in the world and one of the largest crude oil reserves in the world. Most of these natural resources are situated in the Niger Delta region. Nwaehukwu (2000) opines that exploration and exploitation of crude oil in the region has resulted in soil degradation, water resource pollution, deforestation and loss of biodiversity, ultimately leading to loss of human life, natural resource and infrastructure.

Human activities have also been strongly implicated in destruction of biodiversity. These include clearing and burning of forests in preparing for agriculture, unregulated

hunting of animals, indiscriminate use of persistent pesticides, over-harvesting of plants (including illegal logging), illegal fishing practices, draining and filling of wetlands, air pollution and use of protected areas for building and developmental purposes. Nigeria has huge forest reserves, especially in Ondo, Edo and Cross River States. These areas have abundant resources which are over-exploited for economic reasons, leading to loss of biodiversity.

In Nigeria, savannas, which are the second largest ecosystem, is also over-exploited for fuel, food, wood and other resources. The effect of this is loss of vegetation cover, fertile topsoil and fauna species. The Nigerian Environmental Study Team (1991) observes that increase in population and the pressure of humans on the ecosystem is the primary reason for an imbalance in the ecology, which results in habitat and species losses, genetic traits and associated ecological changes in wildlife population.

One important factor affecting biodiversity adversely in Nigeria is lack of institutional regulatory framework. Nigeria is not bereft of laws and regulations to protect biodiversity. The major challenge has always been implementation. In certain cases, either the relevant biodiversity agencies are not properly equipped to carry out their official responsibilities or they are corrupt.

Wildlife

Wildlife simply means animals living in their natural environment without interference. The contribution of wildlife to human development cannot be overstated. Wildlife affords researchers the opportunity to study animals in their habitat. Millions of people travel to visit parks and game reserves just to see animals in the wild, and this is a major source of revenue for many countries, especially in Africa. Animals are used for agriculture, clothing, medicine, sports and entertainment.

Federal Department Forestry (1988) observes that, despite the huge contributions of wildlife to human development, humans have continued without restriction to be cruel to these animals. Human activities, such as bush burning, building of dams, building drainages, environmental pollution, indiscriminate hunting and poaching, have endangered wildlife. Due to these human activities, many animals are at risk of extinction.

Recently, legislators and policy-makers have come to the understanding that implementing environmental policy and regulations require enactment of laws. These laws give guidelines on the development of cities and their infrastructure, environmental impact assessment and pollution control. Lindenmayer et al. (2003) opine that these laws have been mainly focused on national parks and wildlife conservation. In most nations of the world, the planning strategies have been basically haphazard.

In the opinion of Bonye and Millar (2004), many animals at the verge of extinction now require human protection for survival. Nigeria, having realised that development has

had negative impact on the environment, has instituted legal, policy and institutional frameworks to protect flora and fauna species from extinction. These laws have been enacted to protect the environment, wild animals, fisheries, national parks and game reserves and environmental impact assessment agencies.

Strategies for Conservation of Biodiversity and Wildlife

The strategies for biodiversity conservation in Nigeria are hydra-headed and involve participation of local communities, environmental education and agricultural biodiversity conservation.

Use of Technologies in Conservation

In developed countries, remote sensing, geographic information systems and drone surveillance are used in biodiversity and wildlife conservation. These technologies are deployed to monitor protected areas, monitor wildlife movements and fight poaching. Nigeria is yet to fully incorporate these technological innovations in her biodiversity and wildlife conservation efforts.

Protected Areas and Wildlife Management

Protected areas, like Oban Hills and Akampa and Okomu National Parks, are examples of national parks in Nigeria. These areas are protected by government, in collaboration with local communities. Usman and Adefalu (2010) assert that, despite the efforts by the Nigerian government in biodiversity and wildlife conservation, not much has been achieved over the years. The implementation of biodiversity policies has been inadequate and has led to threats to various plants and animal species. Isiugo and Obioha (2015) opine that the youth and community leaders play pivotal roles in protected areas (wildlife conservation) with respect to protecting the forests from poachers and they also help in educating people on the need to conserve wildlife and biodiversity. However, they also note that community members do not benefit from the resources of the protected areas and often feel neglected, thus having incessant rift with park rangers. They advise that communities around protected areas must be seen as partners if the fight against biodiversity loss and wildlife conservation is to be won.

Legal and Policy Frameworks

Gogaladze et al. (2022) emphasize the need for detailed legal documents and frameworks that address specific habitat requirements and the importance of integrating various governance levels from national to subnationals, for a robust and efficient conservation. This is crucial in Nigeria because ecosystems traverse different geographic and political domains. In Nigeria, these legal documents are available but lack of political will for implementation is the major hindrance to effective conservation efforts.

Roles of Non-Governmental Organizations in Biodiversity Conservation

The roles of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in biodiversity and wildlife conservation cannot be overemphasized. Over the years, they have played crucial roles in assisting governments in the important task of conserving biodiversity by raising the alarm during man-made environmental disasters, monitoring implementation of government policies and programmes and mobilizing and educating communities to take action in safeguarding their ecosystems. Adeyemi and Lameed (2015) posit that non-governmental organizations can contribute to ecosystem conservation by promoting eco-tourism. They can do so by raising awareness about the need for conservation of biodiversity and wildlife while also promoting and enhancing local economy.

Educational and Awareness Programs

There is need to increase enlightenment campaigns on biodiversity and wildlife conservation in Nigeria. As Akindele et al. (2021) note, there is a huge disparity in knowledge and engagements on issues surrounding conservation in the general populace. This disparity underscores the need to carry out awareness and educational campaigns all over the country with a view to increasing knowledge and practice of conservation of biodiversity and wildlife among the general population.

Borokini et al. (2010) studied the impact of climate change of forest biodiversity in Nigeria and strongly recommended massive public enlightenment campaigns as part of larger strategy in combating climate change in Nigeria. The researchers note that a well-informed populace is more likely to support and collaborate in efforts aimed at conserving biodiversity and wildlife.

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55**POPULATION GROWTH, POVERTY AND SOIL DEGRADATION IN NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined the effect of population growth and poverty on soil degradation. Soil degradation was proxied by agriculture nitrous oxide, while poverty was proxied by \$1.99 dollar per day. The variables for the study were sourced from *Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin* and World Bank data bank. The variables were subjected to unit root testing using Augmented Dickey Fuller test. The result showed that they were integrated of mixed order (first difference and level). This justified the adoption of autoregressive distributed lag technique in analyzing the data. The findings showed that population growth had positive significant effect on soil degradation, implying that an increase in population growth will result in increase in soil degradation. In the same vein, poverty had a positive effect on soil degradation, which implies that an increase in the rate of poverty worsens the quality of the soil by leading to high rate of soil degradation in Nigeria. The paper, thus, concluded that population growth and poverty are major determinants of soil degradation in Nigeria. The study recommended that one man should not have more than two children so as to regulate the population growth, and skill acquisition training should be embarked upon to reduce the rate of poverty.

Introduction

Nigeria is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa, with approximately 223.8 million people in an area of 1923,768 km² as of 2023. It is also the country with the largest population in Africa and the seventh largest population in the world (Hart, 2024). Most of the population is young, with 42.5% between the ages of 0 and 14 (Fisher, 2023). There is also a very high dependency ratio in the country, at 88.2 dependents per 100 non-dependents. In 2018, Nigeria's living standard survey estimated that 39.1% of the population lived below the international poverty line of \$1.90 per day, leading to 4 in 10 Nigerians living in extreme poverty (World Bank, 2018). Also, 80 million Nigerians were living in extreme poverty before the COVID-19 pandemic (World Bank, 2018). Poverty often causes people to put relatively more pressure on the environment, which results in larger families (due to high death rates and insecurity), improper human waste disposal, leading to unhealthy living conditions, more pressure on fragile land to meet their needs, overexploitation of natural resources and more deforestation.

However, a complex and dynamic relationship has been observed between population growth and poverty in relation to environmental factors. These two concepts are closely intertwined, because population growth has led to increased farming, which leads to greater greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation. The relationship between population growth, poverty and environment is mediated by a number of socio-economic, cultural, political and developmental variables whose relative significance varies from one context to another (Ogidi, 2018). Over the past three to four decades, economists, biologists and environmentalists have been debating the role of population growth and poverty in environmental degradation.

Amidst the likely danger of environmental depletion and escalating poverty as the population growth rate of Nigeria exceeds the world growth rate, the Nigerian state has responded through agencies, policies and programmes aimed at environmental sustainability through environmental protection and management to ensure sustainable development, which will eradicate poverty and bring about birth control (population normality). Some of these intentions are clearly stated in a plethora of gazettes, laws and establishments that traverse the entire Nigerian administrative system. The government and people in authority always strive to ensure that adequate structural programmes are enshrined to see that poverty, if not eradicated, is reduced to the barest minimum. These programmes and policies include Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) (1978), Green Revolution (1982), Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI), National Directorate for Employment (NDE), Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and 7-Point Agenda.

On September 25, 2015, 193 countries in the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Official figures from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) show that, in 2022 alone, over 140 million Nigerians were poor. This represented a 40% increase in the unemployment figures of the previous years and a 31% increase in the entire population (*Vanguard*, 2022). Such high unemployment figures imply a high poverty level among the population. Currently, according to Action Aid, poverty levels have so worsened since 2016 that, from a range of 54-60% in 2022, about 140.3 million Nigerians now live below the poverty line of 1.9 dollars a day.

Although there has been some empirical evidence on the aforementioned relationship, there are inconsistent views. For example, Alvarado (2017), Teledo (2017) and Chanem (2018) contend that population dynamics have a negative impact on the environment, whereas Jadhav and Ranveer (2016), Baus (2017), Reza (2018), Weber and Suba (2019) and Khan and Ullah (2019) argue that population dynamics have a positive impact on the environment. Furthermore, empirical works by Theophile and Ngugen (2001), Hamam et al. (2014), Petting (2019) and Jain et al. (2020) validated the well-

known environmental Kuznets hypothesis, which models the relationship between economic growth and the environment. The majority of the reviewed studies used aggregate population series to measure population, which cannot give the specific effect of rural and urban populations.

Also, the views of scholars on population and environmental relationships are similar to Malthusian's views, whereas there are inconsistencies on poverty and environmental degradation. The explanations for the ongoing discussion are not implausible. The 21st century poverty trend, which affects both the rich and the poor worldwide, is one of the main reasons why the dispute has continued. Besides being prominent at academic forums, like conferences, seminars, workshops and symposia, these issues are also at the forefront of national and international development strategies and initiatives.

The dispute is fuelled by the apparent differences of opinion and lack of consensus over the roles that developed and developing countries (the so-called North-South dichotomy) have in contributing to environmental degradation. These factors will also obstruct the creation of efficient corrective measures. The dispute over poverty, environmental degradation and population growth will be resolved once the risk factors are eliminated. The role that the rich and the poor play in any attempt to address the negative elements will actually lead to distortions in the policies and programmes that support development. Both the wealthy and the poor share a variety of latent and overt signs of poverty, which invariably have a negative impact on the environment. In reality, a comprehensive examination of the causes of poverty and environmental deterioration will highlight several explanatory variables and obstructive elements in Nigeria.

So many works have been done on the impact of poverty on environmental degradation and on population and its effect on environmental degradation, but none has been done on the relationship between population, poverty, and soil degradation in Nigeria. This is the gap that motivated this research, because it can be deduced that an increase in the number of persons in Nigeria will lead to increase in poverty and that both will have an adverse effect on the soil in both the long run and the short run. Thus, the research examined the effect of population growth and poverty on soil degradation in Nigeria.

The rest of the paper is divided into six sections. Immediately after the introduction is the conceptual clarifications in section two. This is followed by the theoretical literature in section three, while section four dwells on the empirical literature. Section five is the methodology, while section six is analysis and interpretation of results of the analysis. Section seven is conclusion and recommendations.

2.1 Conceptual Clarifications

2.1.1 Poverty

Poverty is the state of being unable to provide for the basic necessities of life. It can also be described as a social condition characterized by inadequate access to basic human needs (food and non-food) for the sustenance of a socially acceptable minimum standard of living or well-being in a given society. Some of these basic determinants of well-being are adequate food, shelter, potable water, healthcare, education and employment opportunities (Akintla & Yusuf, 2001).

According to *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (2001), poverty is the state of being extremely poor. Also, the poverty line is the presence of enough income to purchase the basic needs of the household alone. Sheha (2018) defines poverty as a multidimensional concept that is difficult to define. Paul et al. (2009) view poverty as a situation with an extremely low level of income. Oggs (2005) defines poverty as inadequate income to purchase the least amount of a basket of goods and services. United Nations (2001) integrates the term into the human rights approach as the non-fulfilment of any form of human right. As noted by Costa (2008), poverty is the state of denial of all forms of human rights. In the view of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2010), poverty is a person's or nation's inability to meet their social, economic and standard of living needs. World Bank (2000) defines poverty as an unacceptable deprivation of human well-being that comprises both psychological and socio-economic deprivations. Riddell (2004) contends that poverty is the lack of opportunities to participate in the socio-economic spheres of community life.

Chen and Ravallion (2007), citing the World Bank Group, divide poverty into absolute poverty, moderate poverty and relative poverty. Absolute poverty refers to the state of being below the minimum level of income required for physical survival. World Bank (2010) defines absolute poverty as people living below US\$1 per day, as measured in 1993 international purchasing power parity (PPP). Moderate poverty is defined by the World Bank (2000) as the inability to spend a minimum of US\$2 per day. At this level, the basic need is met but survival is threatened (Chen & Ravellun, 2007). However, poverty in this context is perceived in terms of consumption of below 1.9 dollars per day.

2.1.2 Soil Degradation

Soil degradation denotes the degradation of land owing to the occurrence of chemicals or other man-made materials in the soil. These materials alter the natural configuration of soil and affect it harmfully. It drastically influences life, either directly or indirectly. The major causes of land pollution include improper industrial waste disposal, oil spills, acid rain, mining activities, intensive farming, agrochemicals (like fertilizers and pesticides),

and industrial accidents. However, in this paper, soil degradation is defined in terms of agricultural nitrous oxide.

2.1.3 Population Growth

The population of a country is not a problem, but its growth rate is the problem. Population growth is the increase in the number of people living in an area. Like any growth rate calculation, a population growth rate can be calculated by taking the current population size and subtracting the previous population size, dividing that amount by the previous size, and multiplying it by 100 to get the percentage.

2.2 Theoretical Literature

2.2.1 The Environmental Daly Hypothesis

Daly (1973) put forward the environmental Daly hypothesis. It states that a relationship exists between economic growth and environmental damage in a steady-state economy. Also, the incentive for green production is insufficient to lower the level of pollution generated by economic growth. The hypothesis argues that, even though the incentive for a better, higher-quality environment might occur when a country attains a particular status, the attempts to create green production and sustainable consumption will not be sufficient to decrease the level of damage done to the environment. Environmental damage will increase as economic growth increases in society, irrespective of the position of social planners (Daly & Farly, 2011). The environmental Daly hypothesis posits that an increase in per capita income will lead to higher environmental damage at all times. The Daly curve does not indicate a turning point at any point, unlike the EKC and Brundtland hypotheses (Bratt, 2012; Cedarburg & Snobohm, 2016).

Ray (1998) and Dinda (2004) criticize Daly's (1973) hypothesis by stating that the theory is based on or supported by cross-sectional studies instead of time series data and will not be applicable in all economies. Therefore, this study does not align with the theory given the nature of the Nigerian economy, where everything seems to move from bad to worse.

2.2.2 Malthus Population Theory

Malthus' (1798) proposition, known as the Population Trap Theory, was made famous in his essay on the principle of population in the year 1798. This theory states that, given a normal situation, humans can breed at a prodigious rate (Weil, 2013). Todaro and Smith (2015) assert that the Malthusian Population Theory is a low-level equilibrium theory. Thomas Malthus observed a geometric growth rate in population vis-à-vis arithmetic growth in food production, hence predicting a future doom (misery) if nothing is done to check the level of population growth. On the contrary, the present trend in the world

population prognosis contradicts the intuition behind such exposition. This is because the presence of education and information technology has changed the Malthusian trap projection. Maternal mortality and fertility have fallen due to health improvements.

However, the Malthusian Population Theory has been subjected to great controversies. It is argued that the mathematical proposition is not supported by facts; Malthus gave undue emphasis to the relationship between population and food supply rather than the total wealth of the nation; the theory is only pessimistic, making it seem like a prophet of doom; and Malthus never thought of the importance of technological innovation as a factor that will in the long run influence both population and food supply; and finally, the theory cannot be operational in most developed countries of the world, and the application of moral restraints is not sufficient given the recent developments.

Given the above position, it is the opinion of this study that Malthus' theory, though inefficient in more developed countries of the world, may apply to poor countries, like Nigeria. Recent developments in Nigeria have prompted the recognition of the Malthusian Population Theory to evaluate the influence of population growth on the economy. The decline in food production due to increasing pressure on the available land has prompted an increase in food importation amidst an increasing population.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

Oyinkepreye (2021) investigated the effect of environmental degradation on poverty in Nigeria from 2011 to 2021 using time series data. The study adopted econometric techniques for data analysis. The data were subjected to unit root testing using the Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) test, and the result established that the variables were stationary at level. This informed the use of the multiple regression analysis technique, and the result established that a direct relationship existed between environmental degradation and poverty in Nigeria. A direct relationship also existed between total greenhouse gas emissions and poverty levels in Nigeria, while an inverse relationship existed between population growth and poverty. The study therefore concluded that environmental degradation in Nigeria can be prevented by strictly following the following policy recommendations: carbon dioxide emissions should be regulated, environmental laws should be religiously implemented, and the defaulting company's license should be withdrawn.

Weber and Scubba (2019) examined the effect of population on the environment. The study used time series data from 1990 to 2006 to estimate the effect of population (p), per capita GDP (a) and its lagged value on carbon dioxide emissions. Employing panel data regression analysis on a data set covering 1062 regions within 22 European countries, the study revealed that population growth increased carbon dioxide emissions in Western European countries. However, the empirical evidence suggests that future

population growth as a result of immigration will make it harder for the European Union to achieve its climate goals.

Using a time-series data set spanning from 1950 to 2010 and variables such as pollution, CO₂ emissions, mortality rate, morbidity rate and GDP, Ghanem (2018) examined the relationship between population growth and the environment. The study applied a multi-equation model based on the recursive equation system to reveal that population growth in Egypt negatively affected the environment. Also, environmental degradation led to adverse effects on the population, particularly regard to public health.

Reza (2018) examined the effect of population growth on environmental degradation in Bangladesh. Employing multiple regression analysis on time series data spanning 2009 to 2018. The selected variables—poverty, inequality, population, CO₂, population density and GDP—were subjected to a stationarity test, after which the appropriate method of analysis was decided. The study revealed that population growth in Bangladesh threatened environmental management through expansion and intensification of agriculture, uncontrolled growth of urbanization and industrialization, and holistic destruction of the ecological settlement. Also, the outcome of high population growth rates increased population density in different cities and the number of people below the poverty line in Bangladesh. Thus, it was recommended that the population policy implementation framework be articulated to cut the rising effect of the population, especially in urban metropolises.

Badesso et al. (2018) investigated the interplay between environmental change and rapid population growth in developing countries. The study used cross-sectional time series data from Malawi, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Haiti, Nepal and Bangladesh to estimate the effect of population, population growth and population density on carbon dioxide emissions. It was revealed that population growth had a positive impact on environmental restoration and improvements, while other evidence showed an insignificant effect of population on the environment. Thus, the study concluded that man, through his non-sustainable production and consumption patterns, is placed at the heart of environmental changes. The study recommended the adoption of another factor that acts beyond population pressure to justify the impact of population on environmental changes.

Moreover, Shanty et al. (2018) analysed the relationship between poverty and the environment by developing two panel econometric models for 31 provinces in Indonesia during 2010-2015. The first model examined how environmental quality, economic growth, poverty rate, population density and global trade affected the human development index as a representation of human quality. The second model analyzed the effect of economic growth, human quality, population density, poverty, and global trade on environmental quality. The study found that economic growth, environmental

quality and globalization affected human quality in Indonesia positively, while poverty and population density affected it negatively. Human quality had a positive effect on environmental quality in Indonesia, while economic growth, global trade, poverty, and population density variables had a negative effect.

Etongo et al. (2016) examined the effect of poverty on the environment using participatory poverty assessment (PPA) methods with two hundred farm households categorized by wealth status in southern Burkina Faso. Six indicators of environmental degradation and a set of land management practices were examined to answer the following questions: (i) Which households (non-poor, fairly poor or poorest) are responsible for environmental degradation? (ii) Does poverty constrain the adoption of land management practices considered to improve the land? The results indicated that deforestation was highest for non-poor farmers, and non-poor and fairly-poor farmers had higher rates of overgrazing. In addition, the entire non-poor group, mainly recent migrants to the area, occupied borrowed lands with tenure perceived as insecure, considered by farmers to be a disincentive for assisted, natural regeneration of vegetation. Thus, non-poor and fairly-poor farmers participated most in activities locally identified as environmentally degrading, and the former contributed more than the latter. On the contrary, adoption of land management practices considered to improve the land was relatively low among the poorest farmers.

3.1 Methodological Framework

This research was on population growth, poverty and environment degradation. The data for the study were time series data set spanning 1981 to 2022. The eclectic approach was adopted, because no single theory could capture the dynamic nature of the study.

The Malthusian Population theory and the environmental Kuznets curve (1955) hypothesis, formed the methodological framework on which the model specification was built. The use of population growth in this research was limited to the growth rate of the population. Agriculture nitrous oxide was the proxy for soil degradation and \$1.9 dollar was the proxy for poverty, while gross domestic product entered the equation as a control variable in the model. The research was estimated with three equation models. It was both descriptive and analytical in nature. It was descriptive because the researchers presented the trend or graphic exposition of the series in question, descriptive statistics and correlation matrix of the series under consideration, while the econometric approach followed a three-stage procedure bordering on pretest, estimation and post-estimation test. The post-estimation test was to validate the basic ordinary least squares assumption.

3.2 Model Specification

The model specification of this research was based on the work of Oyinkepreye (2021), with slight modifications. Oyinkepreye (2021) carried out an empirical investigation of the effect of environmental degradation on poverty in Nigeria. This work employed descriptive statistics for the analysis. The functional model is

$$POV = f(POPG, CO_2, TGE, IDE)$$

Where:

POV	=	Poverty rate
POPG	=	Population Growth
CO ₂	=	Carbon Dioxide Emission
TGE	=	Total Green-House Emission
IDE	=	Industrial Sector Emission

However, the present study deviated from the work of Oyinkepreye (2021) by empirically examining the effect of population growth and poverty on environmental degradation in Nigeria. Environmental degradation was decomposed into carbon dioxide, oil spill and agriculture nitrous oxide and these variables served as the dependent variables in each of the models. Population growth was decomposed into rural population growth and urban population growth, while poverty was proxied by US\$1.9 per person per day (PPP 2011) and Real GDP was used as the control variable or explanatory variable in the models.

3.2.1 Soil Degradation and Poverty Model

$$ANO = f(POPGR, POV, RGDP)$$

where:

ANO	=	Agriculture Nitrous Oxide proxy for soil degradation
POPGR	=	Population Growth Rate
POV	=	Poverty proxied by US\$1.9
RGDP	=	Real Gross Domestic Product

The linear econometric form of the model becomes: $ANO = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 POPGR + \alpha_2 POV + \alpha_3 RGDP + e$,

where:

$\alpha_1 - \alpha_3$	=	Coefficients of explanatory variables
α_0	=	Constant or intercept
e	=	error term or stochastic variable

3.3 Descriptions of Variables

3.3.1 Dependent Variables

- (i) **Agriculture Nitrous Oxide (ANO):** This is a chemical compound that destroys the soil as a result of fertilizer application.

3.3.2 Independent Variables

- (i) **Population Growth:** This refers to the increase in the number of people living in an area in Nigeria. An increase in the population of a country will increase the population density in an area. This will assert pressure on existing social and economic amenities. Thus, a direct relationship exists between population growth and environment degradation.
- (ii) **Poverty:** It is about not having enough money to meet basic needs, including food, clothing and shelter. There are different types of poverty, namely absolute poverty and relative poverty. Poverty could also be categorized into rural poverty and urban poverty. These are some of the forms of types of poverty around the world: inadequate access to clean water and nutritious food, little or no access to livelihoods or jobs, conflict, inequality, poor education, climate change, lack of infrastructure and limited capacity of the government. A positive or direct relationship exists between poverty and environment degradation.
- (iii) **Gross Domestic Product:** Gross domestic product is a measurement that seeks to capture a country's economic output. Gross domestic product is a monetary measure of the market value of all the final goods and services produced in a specific time period by a country or countries. It is most often used by the government of a single country to measure its economic health. In this study, GDP served as a control variable and its increase was expected to increase environmental degradation but reduce poverty. Thus, a direct relationship exists between GDP and environmental degradation.

4.1 Data Analysis

Table 1: Stationarity Test Result

S/N	Variables	Level		1 st Difference		Order
		T.Stat	Crit.Val	T.Stat	Crit.Val	I(1)
	POPGR	0.301031	-1.953381	-3.133488	-1.953381	I(1)
	POV	-2.988314	-3.529758	-6.421006	-3.536601	I(1)
	LOG(RGDP)	-6.127838	-3.526609	-	-	I(0)
	LOG(ANO)	-2.095936	-3.526609	-6.869330	-3.529758	I(1)

Source: Authors' Compilation from EViews 10

The summary table for the stationarity test conducted by a unit root approach proposed by Philip and Perron (1988) is shown above. All the series or data used in the empirical study on the influence of population growth and poverty on agriculture nitrous oxide (proxy for environmental degradation) in Nigeria were stationary at first difference except Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP), that was stationary at level. Non-stationary time series data were subjected to first differencing to make them stationary, according to Box and Jenkins (1987), as cited in Hagan and Behr (1987). As a result, we can conclude that there was a mixed order of integration in the studies $I(0)$ and $I(1)$, and this justified the adoption of the autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) approach to dynamic time series regression, which was proposed by Pesaran Shin and Smith in 2001. Below is the display of the bounds test cointegration statistic.

Table 2: Bounds Test for Cointegration

Null Hypothesis: No long-run relationships exist

Test Statistic	Value	k
F-statistic	5.943998	2
Critical Value Bounds		
Significance	I0 Bound	I1 Bound
10%	3.17	4.14
5%	3.79	4.85
2.5%	4.41	5.52
1%	5.15	6.36

Drawing from ARDL (1, 3, 3, 3, 3), we assert that a long-run cointegrating relationship existed among the variables in the equation. The presence of a long-run relationship was due to the fact that the f-statistic value of 5.943998 was greater than the upper bound critical value of 4.85 at 5 percent critical value. In the event of the above, we proceeded to estimate the long-run and short-run causation of the cointegrating

relationship as well as the speed at which the disequilibrium would be corrected. The presence of the long-run relationship among the variables in the equation validated the estimation of ARDL, provided that the lag length was selected on the advice of the Akaike information criterion.

Table 3: Long-run Result

Long-run Coefficients

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
POPGR	2.501187	0.718181	3.482667	0.0003
POV	0.002982	0.009193	0.324412	0.7482
LOG(RGDP)	0.272415	0.079269	3.436594	0.0028
C	4.040687	3.919920	1.030809	0.3121

In the long run, the coefficient of population growth (POPGR) had a positive coefficient 2.5011, and it was statistically significant at 5 percent since the probability value of 0.0003 was less than the 0.05 threshold. By implication, population growth is a driver of soil degradation proxied by agriculture nitrous oxide emissions in Nigeria. The possible reason that we can give in this scenario is that the increase in population growth in Nigeria generates more agricultural nitrous oxide because of the application of fertilizers to the soil to boost agricultural yield.

Secondly, the coefficient of poverty rate had positive coefficient (0.002), but its effect on the dependent variable was insignificant since its probability of 0.7482 was greater than the threshold of 0.05. This meaning that poverty did not stimulate significant agriculture nitrous oxide emissions in Nigeria or that the increase in poverty did not significantly expand agriculture nitrous oxide emission in the country. Despite its insignificant disposition, its positive sign calls for critical thinking and policy actions.

Finally, the parameter of RGDP, the proxy for economic growth, had a positive effect on the dependent variable and was statistically significant at 5 percent. Therefore, a percentage increase in economic growth will, all things being equal, amount to a 0.272415 (27%) percentage increase in agriculture nitrous oxide emissions in Nigeria. This output is consistent with what was expected a priori, because, according to the

Kuznet hypothesis, an increase in economic activities that increase environmental damage will continue to increase output in the long run.

Table 4: Short-run Result/ Error Correction Result

Included observations: 35

Cointegrating Form				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
D(POPGR)	4.718206	2.707976	2.002173	0.0255
D(POPGR(-1))	-20.483200	10.718432	-1.911026	0.0671
D(POPGR(-2))	7.909451	3.809446	2.076273	0.0479
D(POV)	0.000903	0.002701	0.334256	0.7409
DLOG(RGDP)	0.054732	0.048046	1.139173	0.2650
CointEq(-1)	-0.302749	0.098830	-3.063341	0.0050
R-squared	0.879297	Mean dependent var	2.549212	
Adjusted R-squared	0.842158	S.D. dependent var	0.322210	
S.E. of regression	0.128012	Akaike info criterion	-1.056351	
Sum squared resid	0.426064	Schwarz criterion	-0.656405	
Log likelihood	27.48615	Hannan-Quinn criter.	-0.918290	
F-statistic	23.67559	Durbin-Watson stat	2.102315	
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

*Note: p-values and any subsequent tests do not account for model selection.

In the short run, the R-squared value was 0.870297, while the R-squared adjusted value was 0.842158. This means that about 84 percent of the variation in agriculture nitrous oxide emissions in Nigeria was associated with the interplay between the variables in the model (population growth and poverty), while the remaining 16 percent were captured in the error term. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.102315 showed the absence of first-

order autocorrelation of the error term. The F- statistic of 23.67559 and its probability value of 0.000000 showed that the model had a good fit. The low value of the Akaike information criterion made it the best for the study. The error correction term appeared with the normal sign (-), and it was statistically significant at 5 percent, meaning that the previous disequilibrium will herald a long-run equilibrium at a speed of 0.302749 (30%) annually.

In the short run, the coefficient of population growth had a positive influence on the dependent variable soil degradation, proxied by agriculture nitrous oxide, and it was statistically significant to cause variations in the dependent variable. The implication is that a percentage increase in population growth will lead to 4.7 percent soil degradation in Nigeria, all things being equal. The above findings support that of Reza (2018) and is in line with theoretical expectation. As the population grows, there are more mouths to feed and this will put pressure on available and introduction of fertilizer, which aid the degrading of the soil.

Population growth at lag one had a negative coefficient (-20.48) but was not significant at five percent level of significance, while its second-year lag value was statistically significant at 5 percent. Therefore, a percentage increase in the second-year lag value of population growth will, all things being equal, amount to a 7.9009451 percentage increase in agriculture nitrous oxide emission into the soil annually. By implication, the previous values of population growth (increase in the number of people in a geographical location) will stimulate or generate more toxic items to the level of 7.909451. This assertion is consistent with economic expectation and explains the possible reason behind the poor farm yield in major cities in Nigeria, especially in areas with higher energy consumption and oil exploration. The increase in urban population in Nigeria due to the increase in rural-urban migration and fertility rate is said to have amounted to environmental degradation in the short run.

In the short run, the coefficient of poverty had a positive effect on the dependent variable, but it was not statistically significant since the probability value of 0.7409 of the coefficients was greater than the 0.05 threshold. Also, the coefficient of RGDP had an insignificant positive effect on the dependent variable. This implies that economic growth does not stimulate significant agriculture nitrous oxide emissions in the short run. This causation is not consistent with economic theories. According to the Demographic Transition Theory, as countries try to increase their output level, they will increase the severity of environmental damage, causing massive loss of biodiversity in the soil. The insignificant disposition of the series, as shown above, could mean that the increase in economic activities in Nigeria generates less agriculture nitrous oxide, as compared to carbon dioxide emissions. This affirmed the postulation of the Inter-Governmental Committee on Climate Change (1990), which states that carbon dioxide emissions

account for about 90 percent of the total greenhouse gases that are sent into the atmosphere. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) created the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 1988 with the sole aim of providing governments at all levels with the scientific information that they can use to develop climate policy.

Post-estimation Test

Table 5: Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test

F-statistic	2.055548	Prob. F(2,26)	0.1483
Obs*R-squared	4.778582	Prob. Chi-Square(2)	0.0917

Table 5 depicts the post-estimation test of the effect of population growth and poverty on economic growth in Nigeria for the period of the study. The test statistic showed that the probability values of both F-statistic 2.055548 (0.1483) and Obs*R-squared 4.778582 (0.0917) were greater than the 0.05 threshold. Hence, we concluded that there was no evidence of serial correlation in the residual, and this validated the basic assumption of the classical least squares.

Table 6: Heteroskedasticity Test: Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey

F-statistic	18.20327	Prob. F(6,28)	0.0833
Obs*R-squared	22.30893	Prob. Chi-Square(6)	0.0811
Scaled explained SS	54.95593	Prob. Chi-Square(6)	0.0976

Table 6 illustrates the post-estimation test for the study of the effect of population growth and poverty on economic growth in Nigeria for the period under investigation. Given that the F- statistic (18.20327), Obs*R-squared (22.30893), and scaled explained SS (54.95593) had probability values of 0.0833, 0.0811 and 0.0976, which were greater than the threshold of 0.05, we concluded that there was no presence of heteroskedasticity in the residual and affirmed the homoscedasticity assumptions of the classical least square.

5.1 Conclusion

The paper concluded that population growth is major determinant of soil degradation because of the more mouths to feed, which put pressure on the available land, and the use of inorganic fertilizers to boost agricultural yield. Economic growth, proxied by real gross domestic product, also results in soil degradation in the long run. Thus, population and economic growth are drivers of soil degradation.

5.2 Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

- i. Efforts should be made to control population growth in the country through legislation that no man should have more than two children.
- ii. The level of poverty should be reduced through skills acquisition, so as to reduce the rate of soil degradation.

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56**CLIMATE CHANGE, FOOD INSECURITY RISK AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA:
ASSESSING THE ROLE OF INCOME****By****^{1, 2}Amaka G. Metu, ¹Jacob Edeh, ¹Uju R. Ezenekwe, ¹Uchenna N.
Anyanwu & ¹Alex Orji**¹Department of Economics, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria²Centre for Economic Policy and Development Research (CEPDeR) Covenant University,
Ota*corresponding email: agmetu@gmail.com +2348035180515**Abstract**

This study examined the moderating role of income in the food insecurity-human development nexus in Nigeria from 1990 to 2023. This is necessary because previous studies on climate change and food insecurity paid little attention to the moderating role of income and how it affects human development, particularly in Nigeria. Based on the results of the autoregressive distributed lag technique, it was found that climate change had a positive and significant impact on food insecurity in Nigeria. Another important finding of the study is the outcome of the interaction term (income and food insecurity). The interaction term showed that the income level can help a country achieve human development in the midst of food insecurity. Based on the findings, recommendations were proffered.

Keywords: Agriculture, climate change, food insecurity, global warming, human development.

1. Introduction

Food is very important for human existence and well-being. Lack of food constitutes a major threat to the global economy, with both short- and long-term effects on human health and welfare. Absence of food security is food insecurity (Metu *et al.*, 2016). According to Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations International Children and Emergency Fund (UNICEF), food insecurity is a situation when people lack access to sufficient amount of food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life (FAO, IFAD, WFP & UNICEF, 2021). Previous studies have shown that millions of people are food-insecure, which is one of the risks to human health. As noted by Beyene (2023), about one in four people are food-insecure and around 820 million global populations are undernourished in 2018. In Nigeria, as of 2023, 25 million people are at high risk of food insecurity (UNICEF, 2023). Presently, food insecurity has continued

to increase in Nigeria and this is a huge challenge to achieving the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of zero hunger through food security and improved nutrition. The achievement of this goal may be hindered by climate change (El Bilali, 2021). Climate change refers to changes in the mean variability properties of the climate, which persist for a long period of time (Ani *et al.*, 2022). It involves human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere (Obada *et al.*, 2024); it will not be ideal to ignore the impact of climate change to development. According to Abbass *et al.* (2022), extreme weather condition, such as heat, flooding and droughts are responsible for reduction in the quantity and quality of agro-products, with dire consequences for world food security. It is estimated that, by 2100, the global mean surface temperature may increase to between 1.8 and 4.0 °C; with this rise in temperature, about 20-30% of animals and plants are expected to be at risk of extinction (FAO, 2007). Moreover, by 2050, rainfall in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is expected to reduce by 10% on average, while mean temperatures are expected to increase by 1.6 degrees Celsius, (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2014). This climatic condition is expected to lower agricultural productivity in many parts of the continent, with detrimental effects on food security, nutrition and poverty (Serdeczny *et al.*, 2017). The growing reduction in agricultural output led to hike in the prices of food products, which in turn has resulted in poverty.

Nigeria, with its vast human and material resources, has the potential to be in the league of developed regions, but it still remains underdeveloped. One of the areas where it has failed to live up to expectations is feeding the growing population. Many people cannot meet their food requirements and are food-insecure despite having one-third of income in Nigeria being generated by agriculture, with crop production and livestock husbandry accounting for half or more of household income (Mahofa, 2022). Agricultural activities in Nigeria are mainly rain-fed, making the country vulnerable to the impacts of global warming and climate change. Climate change could increase water stress and reduce yields from rain-fed agriculture; about 25-40% of species habitats could be lost and maize yields could fall by 30% by 2030. Developing countries, in addition to being affected by volatility in global food prices, face natural disasters and adverse climate conditions, which exacerbate the problems of production and availability of food (FAO, 2015).

Previous studies in this area concentrated mostly on the effect of climate change on food security and not much effort has been made to examine the role of income in the link between food insecurity and human development in Nigeria. Hence, this study, apart from examining the impact of climate change on food insecurity in Nigeria, also examined the moderating role of income in the food insecurity-human capital development nexus in Nigeria from 1990 to 2023. Understanding this link is very vital in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of zero hunger in 2030. Therefore, the income

effect is accounted for by the interaction of food insecurity and human capital development. The results and recommendations from the study will assist policymakers in strategizing on how to channel tax revenues from pollutants to protecting the environment. It will also help those in the agricultural sector understand the need for farm-level adaptation strategy so as to improve the level of food production and reduce food insecurity in Nigeria.

The paper is discussed under five sections: Section One is the introduction. Section Two discusses the literature review. Section Three contains the data and methodology, while the empirical results and discussions are presented in Section Four. Section Five is conclusion and recommendations.

2. Literature Review

This section of the study discusses the conceptual, theoretical and empirical review on climate change, food insecurity and human development.

2.1 Conceptual and Theoretical Review

The most common indicator for estimating the size of an economy is gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate; its changes shows economic performance or growth. Hence, a country with higher GDP growth rate is considered wealthy and more advanced than others with lower GDP. However, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2013) argues that using GDP to measure national productivity is an exaggeration of economic situation because it captures only a part of economic welfare and does not include other dimensions of human well-being. Consequently, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed the human development index (HDI) in 2012 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018). The HDI as a reference for social and economic development has a score that ranges from 0 (low level of human development) to 1 (high level of human development). However, the HDI does not cover all aspects of human development, such as political freedom, degree of self-respect, environmental sustainability; the HDI statistic is widely accepted as a broader measure of economic performance because it considers three outcomes of development, namely level of real income, state of health and level of knowledge.

Climate change refers to changes in the mean variability properties of the climate, which persists over an extended period of time, typically within decades or longer (Ani *et al.*, 2022). It is the significant alteration in the natural elements of the atmospheric environment, leading to adverse effects, such as shifts in weather variations or patterns. These changes may include unusual rainfall or precipitation, temperature fluctuations and cloud density. According to IPCC (2014), the main cause of the climate change experienced in the present time is the human expansion of greenhouse effect. Climate change has had a wide range of effects on the global ecological system, especially

affecting agricultural processes (production), causing food insecurity. Food insecurity is defined as “a situation that exists when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life” (FAO, WFP, & IFAD, 2013; p50). It is the opposite of food security (Metu *et al.*, 2016; Ani *et al.*, 2022). In this study, food insecurity is measured using prevalence of food insecurity.

2.2 Theoretical Perspectives

Most developing economies, including sub-Saharan African countries, embarked on agricultural sector policy reforms and environmental maintenance to attain sustainable economic growth as well as poverty and unemployment reduction. One of the theoretical underpinnings often used by environmental economists to understand the environment, economic growth and income linkage is the popular Kuznets' Inverted-U hypothesis. According to Kuznets (1966), cited in Metu *et al.* (2018), at the early stage of growth and development, income inequality rises sharply, but declines as the economy matures and becomes industrialized.

The theoretical link is that industrial and agricultural activities led to the emissions of greenhouse gas effects as well as destruction of the ozone layer, thereby contributing to global warming. The high concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide affects agricultural yields, either positively or negatively. Similarly, climatic conditions, such as extreme temperature, cessation of rainfall and floods have led to crop losses, thereby posing a challenge to the food system, including shortfall in food supply, rising prices and limited access to food, especially in developing countries. Climate change can also generate and heighten food insecurity risks, with dire impacts on human health. This situation can result in the vicious cycle of adverse effects from change in climate, food insecurity and health problems on the vulnerable population (Buhaug & von Uexküll, 2021).

Also, some scholars have used the endogenous growth models to show the relationship between climate change and development. These authors have demonstrated how a clean environment can propel human development, as it affects longevity, an indicator of human capital development.

2.3 Empirical Review

Climate Change, Food (In)security and Human Development Nexus

In this sub-section, previous studies on the climate change, food (in)security and human development link are reviewed so as to identify the gap in the literature. For instance, Brenya *et al.* (2024) studied food security in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) from 2001 to 2020. The study concentrated on the effects of nutrition, innovation, circular economy and

climate change on household food security using fixed and random effect modelling techniques. They found that nutrition and circular economy had positive effects on household food security in SSA, while climate change impeded household quest to achieve food security within the same period.

In the same vein, Sambo and Sule (2024) investigated the impact of climate change on food security in northern Nigeria. They adopted the thematic analytical technique and found that climate change worsened food security crisis in northern Nigeria. They concluded that the situation resulted in socioeconomic problems such as violence, insurgency, forced migration, famine, diseases and malnourishment.

Applying the generalized method of moments (GMM) model, Adesete *et al.* (2023) investigated the relationship between climate change and food security in selected sub-Saharan African countries from 2000 to 2019. They found that increase in greenhouse gas emissions led to an increase in prevalence of malnourishment rate, resulting in food insecurity in SSA. They also found that climate change and food prices had negative and significant effects on food security, while income and food supply had positive and significant impact on food security in SSA within the period.

Anyika (2023) examined how climate change affects food security in sub-Saharan Africa and found that climate change was a significant threat to food security. They recommended adoption of different mitigation and adaptation techniques in sub-Saharan Africa in order to curb food insecurity. Kralovec (2020) carried out an investigation on the impacts of climate change, economic development and conflict on food security in Nigeria using qualitative and quantitative approaches. Their findings showed that climate change, level of economic development and conflict were significant drivers of food insecurity in Nigeria. Osuafor and Nnorom (2014) investigated the impact of climate change on food security in Nigeria and concluded that climate change affected agricultural production in sub-Saharan Africa, in general, and Nigeria, in particular.

Beyene (2023) examined the impact of food insecurity on health outcomes in 31 sampled SSA countries from 2001 to 2018 and concluded that health status was affected by food insecurity. The researcher used panel data which was analyzed using the generalized method of momentum (GMM), fixed effects and the Granger causality test. The results confirmed that the prevalence of undernourishment had a significant positive impact on infant mortality. However, average dietary energy supply increased life expectancy but reduced infant mortality.

Moreover, Echendu (2022) investigated the flooding, food security and sustainable development in Nigeria link and found that, despite the negative impact of flooding on food security, it was not recognized as a threat by policymakers. The idea of not mentioning issues of disasters in the current Nigeria Agriculture Promotion Policy (APP) will have a significant effect in achieving sustainable development goals in Nigeria.

Ayinde *et al.* (2020) also studied food security as an impetus for growth and development in Nigeria using a qualitative analysis. Their study discussed food insecurity issues and how it increased the level of poverty in Nigeria. They suggested measures to tackle food insecurity in Nigeria. Conceição *et al.* (2016) confirmed that food security is necessary for achieving sustainable human development in sub-Saharan Africa. This study emphasised that agriculture is central to improving food security and reducing poverty in Africa. It suggested that realizing the potential of agriculture in Africa requires rapid increase in land productivity and agricultural yields.

2.4 Research Gap

Previous studies on climate change and food security paid little attention to how food insecurity is affected by climate change and the role of income in aiding human development in the presence of food insecurity, especially in Nigeria. This is captured by interacting income and prevalence of food insecurity to examine the moderating role of income. Moreover, previous studies on food insecurity are mostly cross-country studies; hence, there is the need for country-specific research for proper policy recommendations. In addition, unlike previous studies that utilized food availability as a measure of food security, the present study utilized the prevalence of food insecurity to capture the different aspects of food security, such as food availability, accessibility, stability and utilization. The present study filled these identified gaps by examining the climate change, food insecurity and human development in Nigeria link using times series data from 1990 to 2023.

3.0 Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This study explored the impact of climate change and food insecurity on human development in Nigeria using time series data from 1990 to 2023. The data choice was based on availability of aggregate data on specific food insecurity risks measured using prevalence of food insecurity. The framework on which this study was developed began with the traditional Cobb-Douglas production function. We specified an aggregate Cobb-Douglas production function using the standard Solow growth model

$$Y = f(K, L) = AK_t^\alpha L_t^{1-\alpha} \quad (1),$$

where $0 < \alpha < 1$;

Labour (L) and capital (K) play significant role as inputs in generating a given level of output, which also influences the equilibrium growth rates of output. The output factor Y in Equation (1) stands for human development. The factor A captures the technological progress and is assumed equal across all economic units in the economy. The Cobb-Douglas production function is modified by incorporating climate change and food insecurity as inputs in the process of generating output, in this case human development.

We specified two models for this study. The first model was to estimate the impact of climate change on food insecurity, while the second model was to assess the role of income in facilitating human development in the midst of food insecurity risk. We started with a simple empirical model as follows:

$$FI = f(CMC, Z) \quad (2),$$

Where FI represents food insecurity risk, CMC represents climate change, while Z represents vector of additional control variables that affect food insecurity, as found in the literature. The mathematical form of Equation (2) is

$$FIS = \varphi_0 + \varphi_1 CMC + \varphi_2 Z_k + \varepsilon \quad (3)$$

The symbol ε represents the error component. The explicit specification of the estimating equations are given as:

$$FIS = \theta_0 + \theta_1 CMC + \theta_2 AGL + \theta_3 OPN + \theta_4 GNI + \theta_5 POP + \theta_6 INS + \mu \quad (4)$$

Furthermore, the model with interaction intends to weigh if income level of the country matters to food insecurity. This is expressed as:

$$HDI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 FIS_{t-1} + \beta_2 CMC + \beta_3 AGL + \beta_4 GNI + \beta_5 (FIS_GNI) + \beta_6 OPN + \beta_7 INS + \beta_8 TEE + \beta_9 GHE + \mu \quad (5)$$

The dependent variables are food insecurity risk (FIS), which was measured using the prevalence of food insecurity and human development index (HDI), in line with previous studies (see Anand & Sen, 2000; Neumayer, 2012; Szabo, 2016). The main explanatory variables are climate change (CMC) (measured using the level of greenhouse gas emissions) and the interaction of income and food insecurity (FIS_GNI). The control variables added to the model in line with the literature are trade openness (OPN). Due to empirical evidence on the impact of globalisation on development, trade openness was added to the model to measure the volume of international trade (OECD, 2015). Other variables are population (POP), percentage of agriculture land use (AGL) to capture geographical habitat, level of insecurity in the country (INS), income (GNI), government expenditure on health (GHE), and total expenditure of education (TEE).

The study was a quantitative study involving descriptive statistics and regression analysis. To estimate Equations (3) and (4), the study adopted the autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) technique developed by Pesaran *et al.* (2001). The ARDL technique is applicable when the variables have a mixed order of integration. Secondly, as the sample size was 33 years, the ARDL technique was robust for short time period.

Table 1: Data Sources and Measurement

Variable	Description and Measurement	Sources (s)
Food insecurity	Proxied using prevalence of severe food insecurity (% of total population)	Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
Human Development	Proxied by human development index which is measured as an index between 0 and 1	World Development Indicator
Climate Change	Greenhouse gas emissions (metric tons per capita)	World Development Indicator
Population	Total population	United Nations World Development Indicator.
Openness to trade	Trade openness (% of GDP)	World Development Indicator
Gross national income	Gross national income	World Development Indicator
Insecurity	Terrorism index is a composite score on a scale from 0-10 (0 represents no impact, while 10 is the highest impact of terrorism)	Institute for Economics and Peace (2024)
Agricultural land	Agricultural land (km ²)`	World Development Indicator
Government health expenditure	Percentage of total health expenditure	Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Statistical Bulletin
Total education expenditure	Percentage of the nation's GDP	Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Statistical Bulletin

Source: Author's compilation (2024)

4.0 Results Presentation and Discussion of Findings

The study employed E-views 13 package for data analysis. The estimation started with the descriptive statistics, unit root test and then the autoregressive distributed lag technique.

4.1 Summary of descriptive statistics:

The descriptive statistics described the features of the data set using frequencies and standard deviation. The summary results are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Summary of Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Max	Min	Std. Dev.	Prob	Obs
HDI	0.49	0.50	0.55	0.42	0.03	0.59	33
FIS	29.56	26.30	69.80	10.40	0.12	0.04	33
CMC	0.68	0.64	0.92	0.49	0.12	0.27	33
AGL	657223	663970	686440	587140	26561	0.01	33
OPN	19.078	18.020	40.960	0.582	13.993	0.206	33
POP	1.49E+08	1.44E+08	2.19E+08	95214257	37690365	0.319	33
GNI	2.84E+10	2.03E+10	7.71E+10	4.84E+10	2.51E+10	0.139	33
INS	5.396	5.71	9.12	1	2.659	0.180	33
GHE	32.761	19.91	78.69	13.02	23.520	0.058	33
TEE	7.510	10.52	11.96	0.62	4.848	0.066	33
FIS_GNI	1.21E+12	5.34E+11	5.37E+12	6.01E+10	1.53E+12	0.001	33

Source: Author's Computation (2024)

Table 4.1 shows that average Human Development Index was about 0.49 for the period under study; this is unstable due to the low standard deviation 0.03. The values of human development, climate change, trade openness, population size, gross national income, insecurity, government health expenditure and total education expenditure were normally distributed with probability values higher than 0.05. On the contrary, food insecurity, agricultural land use and interaction of food insecurity and gross national income were not normally distributed, as their probability values were below 0.05.

4.2. Unit Root test

Before the application of the co-integration test, it is important to confirm that no variable is integrated of a higher order than 1 using the stationarity test. Here, we employed the Augmented Dickey Fuller and Philip Perron unit root tests to check for the stationarity of the variables. The results are presented in Table 4.2

Table 4.2: The Unit Root Test Results

Variable	ADF Critical value @ 5%	ADF Statistic	PP Critical value @ 5%	PP Stat.	Order of Integration
HDI	-2.95402	-3.16224	-2.95402	-3.16224	I (0)
FIS	-2.957	-6.503	-2.95711	-6.49153	I (1)
CMC	-2.95711	-5.78586	-2.95711	-10.1318	I (1)
AGL	-2.95402	-5.2647	-2.95402	-6.37705	I (0)
OPN	-2.95711	-7.36465	-2.9571	-7.3646	I (1)
GNI	-2.95402	5.234121	-2.9571	-6.2228	I (1)
POP	-2.98104	4.986042	-2.9540	3.3274	I (0)
INS	-2.9571	-5.9810	-2.9571	-6.0571	I (1)
GHE	-2.95711	-5.61288	2.9571	-5.6141	I (1)
TEE	-2.95711	-5.74576	-2.9571	-5.7796	I (1)
FIS_GNI	-3.5629	-4.5130	-2.9604	-3.4414	I (1)

Source: Author's Computation (2024)

As seen in Table 4.2, the variables of interest had a mixed order of integration. For instance, food insecurity (FIS), climate change (CMC), gross national income (GNI), trade openness (OPN), government health expenditure (GHE), total education expenditure (TEE) and interaction of food insecurity and income levels (FIS_GNI) were stationary at first difference I(1); while human development (HDI), agricultural land use (AGL) and population (POP) were stationary at their levels I(0).

4.3 Bound Test to Co-Integration Result

The co-integration test was used to ascertain the long-run relationship between variables. Given the mixed order of integration, this study made use of the F-bound test within the autoregressive distributed lag model to investigate the long-run relationship in the two models. This is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Co-integration Test Results

MODEL 1				
F-Bounds Test		Null Hypothesis: No levels relationship		
Test Statistic	Value	Signif.	I(0)	I(1)
			Asymptotic: n=1000	
F-statistic	4.4342	10%	2.12	3.23
K	5	5%	2.45	3.61
		1%	3.15	4.43
MODEL 2				
F-Bounds Test		Null Hypothesis: No levels relationship		
Test Statistic	Value	Signif.	I(0)	I(1)
			Asymptotic: n=1000	
F-statistic	10.823	10%	2.03	3.13
K	7	5%	2.32	3.5
		1%	2.96	4.26

Source: Author's Computation (2024)

Evidence from Table 4.3 shows that the F- statistic was greater than the F- tabulated at 5% level of significant levels for both Models 1 and 2. Thus, it was concluded that there was a long-run relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables (food insecurity and human development, respectively). After establishing co-integration, the Akaike Information Criteria (AIC) was used to select the optimal lag length.

4.4. ARDL Estimation Results

Long-run estimates

Since it was having established that there is a long-run relationship between the variables under study, the ARDL model long-run form was used to determine the coefficients of the regression model. The estimated long-run coefficients for Models 1 and 2 are summarized in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Summary of ARDL Long-run Estimates

MODEL 1				
Variable *	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
LnCMC(-1)	50.4191	24.2071	2.0828	0.0477
OPN	-1.0723	0.5052	-2.1225	0.0439
LnPOP(-1)	171.7837	32.4269	5.2976	0.0000
LnGNI(-1)	-8.3276	6.0628	-1.3735	0.1818
LnAGL(-1)	-198.0765	92.0600	-2.1516	0.0413
LnINS	9.3219	5.0118	1.8600	0.0747
MODEL 2				
FIS(-1)	-0.0091	0.0037	-2.4384	0.0225
LnCMC(-1)	-0.2171	0.1590	-1.3652	0.1849
LnAGL(-1)	-0.0991	0.3951	-0.2508	0.8041
LnGNI	0.0092	0.0172	0.5344	0.5980
FIS_GNI(-1)	0.0000	0.0000	2.8676	0.0085
TEE	0.0113142	0.004443	2.54665	0.017709
GHE(-1)	0.0031829	0.001458	2.182685	0.039076

Source: Author's Computation (2024)

As seen in Table 4.4, Model 1, which was used to examine the impact of climate change on prevalence of food insecurity in Nigeria, showed that lags of climate change (CMC) and population (POP) had positive and significant impact on food insecurity in Nigeria. Also, present insecurity had a positive and significant impact on food insecurity (FI) in Nigeria within the study period. Thus, a 1% increase in previous change in climate, proxied by carbon emission, would increase present food insecurity by 50.42% on average. Climate change has great impact through destruction of crops caused by drought, flooding and extreme weather events. Hence, not only food availability is endangered but also economic accessibility will be at risk with rising prices (Buhaug & Von Uexküll, 2021). Also, an increase in population increased food insecurity by 171.78%. The more the population, especially in poor countries, the fewer the resources needed to meet basic needs, including food. In some poor countries, the attempt to improve food production is undermined by rapid population growth in such economy (FAO, n. d.). Similarly, a percentage increase in insecurity increases food insecurity by 9.32% on average. Insecurity as a result of conflicts has a detrimental effect on food production due to attack on farmworkers, displacement and confiscation of land (Delgado *et al.*, 2023)

Trade openness (OPN) and agricultural land use (AGL) had negative and significant impacts on food insecurity (FI) in Nigeria. Thus, a percentage increase in trade and agricultural land use decreased food insecurity by 1.07% and 198.07%, respectively.

However, gross national income had a negative and insignificant impact on food insecurity in Nigeria. A percentage increase in gross national income decreased food insecurity by 8.32% on average, in line with economic expectation, in the long run.

Table 4.4 also shows the long run result for Model 2, which considers the interaction effect of income levels and food insecurity and how it affects human development, proxied by human development index. From the results, food security (FIS) had a negative and significant impact on human development index, while climate change (CMC) and agricultural land use (AGL) had negative and insignificant impact on human development index in Nigeria. A percentage increase in the prevalence of food insecurity decreased human development by 0.0091%. Also, an increase in agricultural land use by 1% reduced the level of human development by 0.0991%, while an increase in climate change by 1% reduced the level of human development by 0.2171% within the period. Rodríguez (2016) avers that food security is necessary for achieving sustainable human development in sub-Saharan Africa.

Similarly, government health expenditure (GHE) and total education expenditure (TEE) had positive and significant impacts on human development. Therefore, a 1% increase in gross national income increased human development by 0.0092% on average, while 1% increase in government health expenditure as well as total education expenditure increased human development by 0.0031% and 0.0113%, respectively. Gross national income had a positive and insignificant impact on human development, but the interaction of food insecurity and gross national income per capita (FIS_GNIP) had positive and significant impact on human development in Nigeria. This positive interaction ($\beta_i > 0$) indicates that food insecurity complemented by positive income will enhance human development in Nigeria. Therefore, in the presence of food insecurity, high-income levels are highly necessary to boost the welfare of the people in the long run. From the estimate of Model 2, all variables conform to theory, except agricultural land use. This may be attributed to loss of native habitat due to increased dust and wind erosion that may expose humans to particulate matter (US Environmental Agency, 2022).

Short-run estimates

The aim of error correction modelling is to reconcile the long-run behaviour of co-integrated variables with their short-run responses. Thus, the error correction term is expected to have a negative sign, assume values between 0 and 1 and also be significant at 5% to show a strong convergence process to the long-run equilibrium. The result of ECM specification is reported in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Summary of Model 1 Short-run ARDL Result

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
COINTEQ*	-0.5601	0.0850	-6.5901	0.0000
D(LnCMC)	2.9852	4.7078	0.6341	0.5329
D(LnCMC(-1))	20.8139	5.3445	3.8945	0.0008
D(LnCMC(-2))	14.7299	4.8860	3.0147	0.0066
D(LnPOP)	-19.4675	20.8648	-0.9330	0.3614
D(LnPOP(-1))	-3859.0352	516.4825	-7.4718	0.0000
D(LnGNI)	0.4150	2.0627	0.2012	0.8425
D(LnGNI(-1))	17.5485	2.4300	7.2215	0.0000
D(LnAGL)	159.0752	60.5472	2.6273	0.0157
C	-84.9667	21.3865	-3.9729	0.0007
R-squared	0.7901	F-statistic		8.7850
Adjusted R-squared	0.7002	Prob(F-statistic)		0.0000

Source: Authors' Computation

Table 4.5 shows the short-run estimate for Model 1. Climate change, gross national income and agricultural land use had positive impacts on food insecurity, while population had negative impact on food insecurity in Nigeria, in the short run. Specifically, 1% increase in climate change increased food insecurity by 2.985%, supported by its first and second lag values of climate change, indicating an increase in food insecurity by 20.81% and 14.73%, respectively. Also 1% increase in agricultural land use was found to increase food insecurity by 159.06%, while 1% increase in gross national income increased food insecurity by 0.42%. On the contrary, population and its first lag value had decreasing effects on food insecurity by 19.46% and 3859.03%, respectively.

Moreover, the short-run regression line shows a negative intercept of approximately (-0.85) as presented by the constant term. This means that, if all the variables are held constant or fixed (zero), food insecurity in Nigeria, increases at a rate of 85% on the average. Thus, the a priori expectation is that the intercept could be positive or negative; so it conforms to the theoretical expectation. The speed of adjustment, which is -0.56, indicates that there is a long-run relationship in this model, given that it is negatively signed and significant. Hence, any deviation in the short run will take an average of 56% to return to equilibrium.

Table 4.6: Summary of Model 2 Short-run ARDL Result

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
COINTEQ*	-0.8673	0.0761	-11.3966	0.0000
D(FI)	0.0001	0.0013	0.0650	0.9488
D(FI(-1))	0.0037	0.0014	2.7279	0.0126
D(CMC)	0.0215	0.0504	0.4262	0.6743
D(LNAGL)	-0.8435	0.4185	-2.0155	0.0568
D(LNAGL(-1))	-2.6543	0.4175	-6.3577	0.0000
D(GHE)	0.0018	0.0004	4.0689	0.0006
C	1.5146	0.1310	11.5578	0.0000
R-squared	0.8993	F-stat.		20.8264
Adjusted R-squared	0.8561	Prob(F-stat.)		0.0000

Source: Author's Computation from EViews 13

For the short-run estimate for Model 2, food insecurity, climate change and government health expenditure had positive impacts on human development index, while agricultural land use had negative impact on human development index. Therefore, in the short run, a percentage increase in food insecurity and climate change increased human development by 0.001% and 0.022%, respectively. Also, a percentage increase in government health expenditure increased human development by 0.002%. On the contrary, agricultural land use and its first lag value both had negative impacts on human development by reducing it by 0.8% and 2.7%. However, the short-run regression line shows a positive intercept value of 1.51. This means that, if all the variables are held constant or fixed (zero), human development in Nigeria improves by about approximately 1.5%. Thus, the a priori expectation is that the intercept could be positive or negative; so it conforms to the theoretical expectation. The speed of adjustment, which is 0.87, indicates that there is a long-run relationship in this model, given that it is negatively signed and significant. Hence, any deviation in the short run will take about 87% to return to equilibrium in the long run.

The statistical criterion was tested using the R^2 , adjusted R^2 and F- statistics, which can be seen in Tables 4.5 and 4.6 for Models 1 and 2, respectively. The R^2 of 0.79 for Model 1 showed that the independent variables accounted for about 79% variations in the dependent variable (food insecurity), while other possible variables not captured in Model 1 accounted for 21% only. In the same vain, Model 2 had an R^2 of 0.89, showing that the independent variables accounted for 89% for the variations in the dependent variable (human development), while other possible variables not captured in Model 2 accounted for only 11% of the variation in human development. This assertion is

supported by the adjusted R^2 values of 0.70 and 0.86, respectively. The F-statistics, with the probability values of 0.00 and 0.000, respectively, indicated that the independent variable had significant impacts on the dependent variable which were food insecurity and human development, in that order.

4.5. Diagnostic Test Results

The robustness of the two models were confirmed using some econometric criteria, which include testing for autocorrelation, heteroscedasticity and ramsey RESET test. The results are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Summary of Autocorrelation and Heteroscedasticity

Breusch-Godfrey Test:	F-stat.	Prob. F-stat.
Model 1	1.2787	0.2771
Model 2	0.8363	0.3771
Heteroscedasticity Test		
Model 1	1.1562	0.3868
Model 2	0.5241	0.8921
Ramsey RESET		
Model 1	2.4988	0.1363
Model 2	1.0077	0.3338

Source: Author's Computation (2024)

Table 4.7 reveals that LM test for serial correlation confirmed that the two models had no problem of serial correlation. The Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey test confirmed no problem of heteroskedasticity of the residual while the Ramsey RESET test showed that both models do not have missing variables. Therefore, with each test statistic having insignificant probability values, we conclude that both the two models are well-specified, consistent and reliable.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

The major objective of this study is to investigate the impact of climate change on food insecurity and to examine how income levels moderate the role of food insecurity on human development in Nigeria from 1990 to 2023. Based on the result of the ARDL technique, it was found that climate change had a positive significant impact on food insecurity in Nigeria. This is not surprising, as Nigeria has become prone to climate variability, with sea level rises causing flooding (Aliyu *et al.*, 2023), temperature changes and extreme heat; all these distorts agricultural activities. Serdeczny *et al.* (2017) state that increase in temperature in sub-Saharan African countries, including Nigeria, has been found to be associated with 2.66 % lower growth in agricultural output, which increased

food insecurity by reducing food availability in the region. This result aligns with the previous empirical findings of Brenya *et al.* (2024) and Sambo and Sule (2024), which all indicated the positive significant impact of climate change on food insecurity in Nigeria. Similarly, Adesete *et al.* (2023), Anyika (2023) and Bedasa and Bedemo (2023) showed that climate change had positive and significant impact on food insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole.

The results also showed that food insecurity had a negative and significant impact on human development in Nigeria; as food insecurity increased, human development reduced. This implies that food insecurity is a great impediment to human development in Nigeria. Conceição *et al.* (2016) argue that the presence of food insecurity contributes to undernourishment and malnutrition of the populace in SSA countries, making them prone to disease and low life span. Hence, food security is necessary for improved living (human development), which conform to economic expectation. The findings of this study aligns with previous research that found a positive relationship between food security and health outcomes, leading to improvement in human development in SSA countries (Beyene, 2023).

Another important finding of the study is the outcome of the interaction term (income and food insecurity). The result showed that the interaction effect of food insecurity and income on human development was positive and significant. This means that income strongly complements food insecurity to boost human development in Nigeria. Therefore, in the presence of food insecurity, high-income levels are highly necessary to boost the quality of life in developing countries, particularly in Nigeria.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The sustainable development agenda of 2030 draws closer, but Nigeria is yet to achieve most of the stated goals, including food security and human development. Previous studies have examined how climate change affects food security or insecurity, with little attention paid to how a country's income can moderate the relationship between food insecurity and human development in developing countries. This necessitated an examination of the inter link between climate change and food insecurity and human development as well as the role of income in the food insecurity-human development nexus in Nigeria using time series data from 1990 to 2023.

This study found that climate change is a significant contributor to food insecurity in Nigeria and food insecurity is an impediment to human development in Nigeria. Furthermore, the study found that income will play a significant role in countering the negative influence of food insecurity in the country. This study concluded that climate change harms Nigeria's ecosystem by contributing to food insecurity, and food insecurity impedes the achievement of human development in Nigeria. Therefore, to achieve

human development in Nigeria, reducing food insecurity while improving income level is very important. Based on the findings of the study, the recommendations made include that the Federal Government of Nigeria should enforce payment of environment taxes. This will help to generate more income for the economy. The income should be channelled into agricultural productivity so as to improve human development in the country. Also, food insecurity can be reduced by improving the quality of available food through investments in indigenous agricultural research and monitoring of agrochemicals used for food production. The government should consider improving the real value of income in the country to enhance access to available food, which is crucial for human development.

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57**ENERGY DEMAND AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN NIGERIA****By****Ijeoma Emele Kalu****&****Okorie Stanley**

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Abstract

This paper examined the nexus between climate change (proxied by temperature) and electricity demand (aggregate electricity sector's demand) in Nigeria. The $I(0)$ and $I(1)$ time series data between 1980 and 2021 sourced from WDI and CBN were analyzed using ARDL framework. The study found a statistically insignificant, mixed and long-run relationship between aggregate electricity demand (AGGD) and temperature (decomposed into average mean precipitation (AMP) and average mean temperature (AMT)) in Nigeria. There was an increasing relationship between AMT and AGGD and a decreasing relationship between AMP and AGGD in Nigeria. Thus, a 1% increase in temperature (proxied by AMP) caused over 2,000% decline in aggregate electricity sector's demand. Conversely, a 1% increase in temperature (proxied by AMT) caused over 2,000 increases in aggregate electricity sector demand. The finding obtained from AMT was consistent with the extant literature indicating that higher temperature leads to higher electricity demand. Access to electricity had negative and statistically insignificant effect on temperature. Thus, it was concluded that temperature possessed a dual impact on electricity demand in Nigeria due to the nature of economy and lack of access to electricity at homes. The paper recommended fiscal and monetary policies to stimulate productivity in the country and access to electricity that would enable the net-zero emission target of the country.

Keywords: Temperature, Climate change, Electricity demand, ARDL

1. Introduction

The long-run physical risks of climate change are ubiquitous. Energy economists are periodically concerned about the impact of physical and transitory risks often associated with climate change on the long-run behaviour of the electricity demand-supply mix. Issues of climate change are one of the biggest challenges currently faced by policymakers due to its super wicked nature. Therefore, amongst other core effects, changes in temperature, humidity, wind, solar radiation and rainfall affect electricity markets both on the demand and the supply sides (Mideksa & Kallbekken, 2010; Silver et al., 2020). The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate

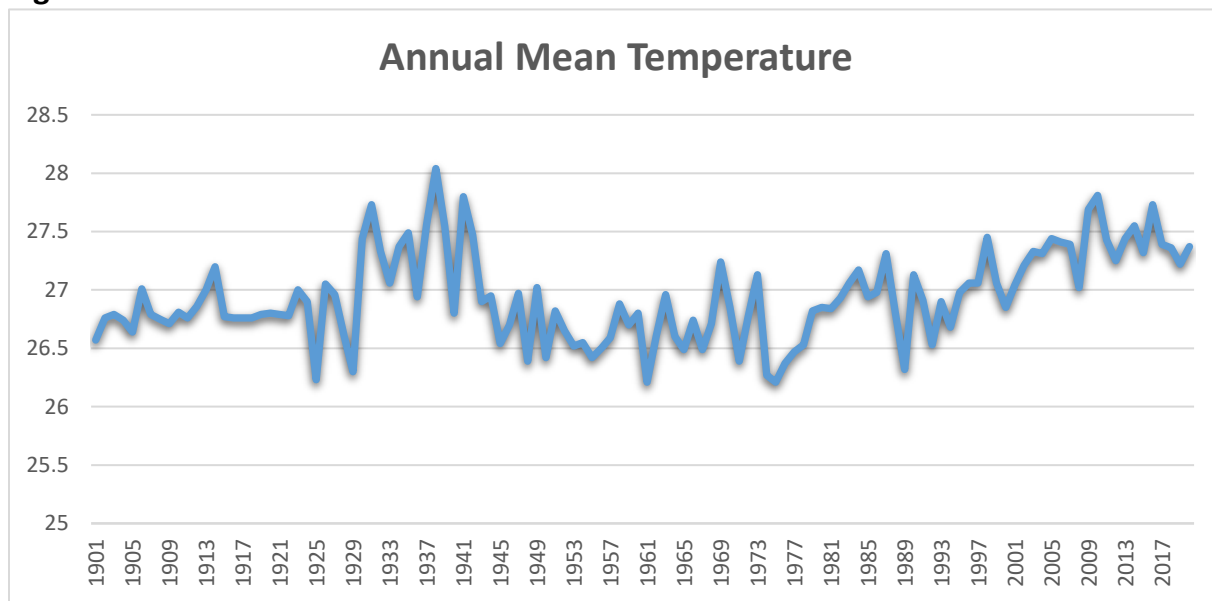
change as a change which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere over comparable time periods (UNFCCC, 1992). Climate change is already beginning to transform life on earth.

In the global world today, seasons are beginning to change, temperatures are increasing and sea levels are rising. Climate change affects the whole world, though the poorest people who contribute least to the change are the ones who suffer the most. Scientific research showed that the net climate resulting from the change will largely be driven by atmospheric greenhouse gases (Nkmedirim, 2013). The change in climatic condition is fundamentally caused by two factors, namely natural factors and human activities (anthropogenic) which have generated so much attention in recent times considering recent environmental impacts, such as the 2012 flooding in Nigeria.

The earth's climate can be affected by natural factors that are external to the climate system, such as changes in volcanic activity, solar output and the earth's orbit around the sun. These factors and their effects have relatively short-term effects on climate (See facts on climatic change in Canada). The anthropogenic factor is the human activities that emit large amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere that depletes the ozone layer or activities that reduce the amount of carbon absorbed from the atmosphere. Human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, gas flaring, urbanization, agriculture and changes in land use, like deforestation, release greenhouse gases (GHGs) into the atmosphere which increases the already existing concentration of these gases. The human factors have been proven to be responsible for the ongoing unequivocal climate change or global warming (IPCC, 2017).

The weather conditions in Nigeria have been changing with increases in temperature, variable rainfall, rise in sea level and flooding, drought and desertification, land degradation, more frequent extreme weather events, all of which affect freshwater resources and loss of biodiversity (Olaniyi et al., 2013; Ebele & Emodi, 2016; Elisha et al., 2017). The durations and intensities of rainfall have increased, producing large run-offs and flooding in many places in Nigeria (Enete, 2014). Rainfall variation is projected to continue to increase. Precipitation in southern areas is expected to rise and rising sea levels are expected to exacerbate flooding and submersion of coastal lands (Ebele & Emodi, 2016; Akande et al., 2017). Droughts have also become a constant in Nigeria, and are expected to continue in northern Nigeria, arising from a decline in precipitation and rise in temperature (Olapido, 2010; Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Lake Chad and other lakes in the country are drying up and at risk of disappearing (Elisha et al., 2017; Dioha & Emodi, 2018).

The temperature has risen significantly since the 1980s (Enete, 2014; Federal Ministry of Environment, 2014). Climate projections for the coming decades reveal a significant increase in temperature over all the ecological zones (Akande et al., 2017).

Figure 1

Source: Authors' Computation

The effects of temperature on electricity consumption may differ significantly, depending on the location, topology, local climatic conditions and the economic sector under consideration (Miragedis et al., 2007). According to Bigano et al. (2006) and Rios et al. (2017), the three main sectors consuming electricity (residential, commercial and industrial) respond differently to temperature changes. While cooling recurs almost exclusively to electricity through air conditioning (AC) in all of them, heating equipment may differ. The commercial and industrial sectors rely more heavily on electricity for heating (due to AC use), while the residential sector can have a stronger dependence on natural gas and oil, among other sources (Silva et al., 2017). Temperature increases lead to mitigation and adaptation measures. This paper focuses primarily on the effects of climatic conditions, such as temperature and precipitation, on electricity consumption in Nigeria spanning 1980 to 2021.

While climate change may increase electricity consumption during the dry season due to additional cooling needs, it can reduce heating needs during the rainy season (see Climate Change Knowledge, World Bank, 2019). However, heating systems may require more energy to operate, due to lower efficiency, while cooling systems tend to be more sensitive to outdoor temperatures (Rios et al., 2017). Hence, the net effect is not straightforward. Several studies point to a likely non-linear relationship between the two variables and some authors refer to the existence of a U-shape relationship, i.e., energy consumption initially declines as temperature rises, and then increases (e.g. Moral-Carcedo & Vicéns-Otero, 2005). Extreme cold or hot events would significantly influence energy consumption while intermediate temperatures would not. The curve is often non-

symmetrical, and its actual shape is affected by numerous factors, such as regional climate, characteristics of insulation features of buildings, appliance and equipment stocks, efficiency and use (Rios et al., 2017) and access to AC (Li et al., 2018b). In fact, demand for AC is relatively high-income elastic (De Cian et al., 2007). Miragedis et al. (2007) indicate that among the climatic conditions, temperature is the most important one affecting electricity consumption. This result was confirmed by other authors, e.g. and Mideksa and Kallbekken (2010) and Thornton et al. (2016), who showed that rainfall was also important.

Despite the importance of other climatic conditions, such as relative humidity and wind speed, a large part of the literature cannot include them due to data limitations (Sailor, 2001). Several studies used the concept of Heating Degree Days (HDD) and Cooling Degree Days (CDD). These represent a deviation from a certain (ad-hoc) threshold temperature associated with thermic comfort. This threshold value is fixated according to the country under analysis. While HDD represent temperatures below the threshold, where heating is needed to maintain temperature comfort, CDD represents temperatures above the threshold, where cooling is needed to maintain temperature comfort (Fan et al., 2015). This approach has some drawbacks, such as the choice of the temperature threshold level, and the consideration that the shift from cooling to heating is drastic instead of gradual. The threshold temperature used to calculate HDD and CDD depends on country-specific conditions (Giannakopoulos et al., 2015), being higher in warmer countries. For these reasons, some authors use temperature levels directly (e.g., Henley & Peirson, 1998; Mansur et al., 2004; Moral-Carcedo & Vicéns-Otero, 2005; De Cian et al., 2007; Asadoorian et al., 2008). To avoid these problems, we compare estimations with both temperatures and HDD/CDD.

Firstly, this study examined the long-run impact of climate change (proxied by temperature) on aggregate electricity sector's demand in Nigeria. Secondly, the study examined the impact of access to (interruption of) electricity on climate change in Nigeria. These led to the following questions: Does climate change (proxied by temperature) affect aggregate electricity sector's demand in the long-run? Does aggregate electricity demand stimulate climate change (i.e. increase temperature) in Nigeria? These two questions form the research focus for this paper. A rising temperature would imply increasing electricity demand, making it more challenging for those countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Understanding how temperature shapes aggregated electricity sector's demand in Nigeria is thus of great importance.

This paper is divided into five sections: I: introduction, II: literature review, III: methodology, IV: results and discussion, and V: summary, conclusion and recommendations.

2. Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC) Theory was popularized in the economic literature by Grossman and Krueger (1995) and extensively developed by World Bank. It depicts a quadratic and non-linear relationship between income per capita and pollution (environmental quality). The functional relationship between income per capita and pollution can be mathematically expressed as pollution dependent on GDP per capita. The EKC is derived from Simon Kuznets (1955) model that connects inequality and development.

The EKC is a hypothesized relationship between various indicators of environmental degradation and per capita income. It explains the afterward outcome of the economic growth process over time. In the early stages of economic growth, pollution emissions increase and environmental quality declines, but at a later stage of economic growth beyond some level of per capita income, the trend reverses, so that high-income levels of economic growth lead to environmental quality (less pollution). This implies environmental impacts or emissions per capita income (Stern, 2018).

The Kuznets curve, when used to analyze the environment (pollution) and economic growth (income per capita) relationship, is referred to as the Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC). For a society to attain a higher level of progress, that n-polluting country must then employ natural resources which will inadvertently have some residual effects on the environment, thereby achieving prolonged and sustainable development in the process. Pollution grows at a faster rate since priority and attention are given to rising and increasing material productivity cum output. This leads to the insensitivity of public, which translates to them becoming more interested in financial gains other than the environment in which they live. The rapid growth leads to higher use of natural resources and, subsequently, higher level of pollutants, which degrades and reduces environmental quality.

There are many critical surveys of the EKC. Arrow (1992) asserts that EKC failed to estimate and integrate the existence of feedback emanating from the impact of environmental damage or shocks on the economy. The super wicked problems show that feedback exists in the economic growth and environmental degradation debate. The recent literature has provided enough evidence that physical risk and transition risk constitute shock in the economy, which damages the price and output stabilization of the monetary transmission process. It is sufficiently adequate to refute the assumptions of one-dimensional nexus between increasing income per capita and the dual nature of pollution; increasing and decreasing phase of pollution.

The importance of this theory to this study is based on the connections between economic growth and electricity demand, as well as the linkage between climate change

and GHG emissions (pollution leads to GHG emission, which causes climate change). The theory captures the relationship between climate change (proxied by temperature) and electricity demand (which is squarely utilized by manufacturers in expanding utility frontiers of the consumption space).

Empirical Literature

Climate change as a global concern has received increased attention in the literature of late due partly to the environmental impact ravaging the world. The same goes for the climate change impact on energy demand. Some of the early studies (Bhartendu and Cohen, 1987, Pardo and Valor, 2002, Sailor and Pavlova, 2003) examined the impact of climate change on electricity demand for heating and cooling, using a regression model for estimation. Their studies showed that heating demand will decrease while cooling demand will gradually increase by mid-century because of rising temperatures. These trends will decrease natural gas and oil use but increase electricity consumption. Applying socio-economic parameters as independent variables showed that a slight change in the price of energy may alter a demand response. Such an alteration may be useful for reversing a climate-induced increase in energy demand (Amato et al., 2005; Ruth & Lin, 2006, Emordi et al., 2018).

Asadorian et al. (2008) used regression models to estimate climatic feedback regarding electricity demand. Their results showed that income and price parameters were significant determinants of temperature-induced electricity demand in urban areas within China. However, the variability of weather conditions in the context of changing energy prices may lead to increased economic expenditure in the form of electricity consumption.

Moreover, van Ruijven et al (2019) combined econometrically estimated responses of energy use to income, hot and cold days with future projections of spatial population and national income under five socioeconomic scenarios and temperature increases around 2050 for two emission scenarios simulated by 21 Earth System Models (ESMs). Across 210 realizations of socioeconomic and climate scenarios, vigorous (moderate) warming increased global climate-exposed energy demand before adaptation around 2050 by 25-58% (11-27%), on top of a factor 1.7-2.8 increase above present-day due to socioeconomic developments. There was broad agreement among ESMs that energy demand rises by more than 25% in the tropics and southern regions of the USA, Europe and China. Socioeconomic scenarios vary widely in the number of people in low-income countries exposed to increases in energy demand.

Cronin, Anandarajah, and Dessens (2018) studied climate change impacts on the energy system. They observed that energy demand patterns and supply systems are themselves subject to climate change impacts. These impacts will variously help and hinder mitigation and adaptation efforts. So it is vital they are well-understood and

incorporated into models used to study energy system decarbonization pathways. Basically, the paper critically reviewed the literature on the impacts of climate change on the energy supply system, summarising the regional coverage of studies, trends in their results and sources of disagreement. The paper also examined the ways in which these impacts have been represented in integrated assessment models of the electricity or energy system. The study found impacts for wind, solar and thermal power stations. Projections for impacts on hydropower and bioenergy resources were more varied. In conclusion, the paper asserted that key uncertainties and gaps remained due to the variation between climate projections, modelling limitations and the regional bias of research interests. Priorities for future research include the following: further regional impact studies for developing countries; studies examining impacts of the changing variability of renewable resources, extreme weather events and combined hazards; inclusion of multiple climate feedback mechanisms in IAMs (Integrated Assessment Models), accounting for adaptation options and climate model uncertainty.

Garrett et al. (2020) describe the importance of inertia to continued growth in energy consumption. Drawing from thermodynamic arguments, and using 38 years of available statistics between 1980 to 2017, they found a persistent time-independent scaling between the historical time integral W of world inflation-adjusted economic production Y , or $W(t) = \int_0^t Y(t') dt'$, and current rates of world primary energy consumption E , such that $\lambda = E/W = 5.9 \pm 0.1$ Gigawatts per trillion 2010 US dollars. This empirical result implies that population expansion is a symptom rather than a cause of the current exponential rise in E and carbon dioxide emissions C , and that it is past innovation of economic production efficiency Y/E , that has been the primary driver of growth, at predicted rates that agree well with data. Options for stabilizing C were then limited to rapid decarbonization of E through sustained implementation of over one Gigawatt of renewable or nuclear power capacity per day. Alternatively, assuming continued reliance on fossil fuels, civilization could shift to a steady-state economy that devotes economic production exclusively to maintenance rather than expansion. In conclusion the paper asserted that, if this were instituted immediately, continual energy consumption would still be required. So atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations would not balance natural sinks until concentrations exceeded 500 ppmv, and double pre-industrial levels if the steady-state was attained by 2030.

Similarly, Roberts, Zhang, Yuan, Jones and Fripp (2021) used temperature sensitivity to estimate shiftable electricity demand and considered the implications for power system investments and climate change. They note that, given that growth of intermittent renewable energy and climate change make it increasingly difficult to manage electricity demand variability, centralized storage can help but is costly. An alternative is to shift demand. Cooling and heating demands are substantial and can be

economically shifted using thermal storage. To estimate what thermal storage, employed at scale, might do to reshape electricity loads, the paper paired fine-scale weather data with hourly electricity use to estimate the share of temperature-sensitive demand across 31 regions that spanned the continental United States. The study showed how much variability can be reduced by shifting temperature-sensitive loads, with and without improved transmission between regions. The study found that approximately three quarters of within-day, within-region demand variability can be eliminated by shifting just half of temperature-sensitive demand. The variability-reducing benefits of shifting temperature-sensitive demand complemented those gained from improved interregional transmission, and greatly mitigate the challenge of serving higher peaks under climate change.

Harang et al. (2024) claim that the demand-supply balance of electricity systems is fundamentally linked to climate conditions. Specifically, the study modelled the effect of climate change on the European electricity system, specifically on its long-term reliability. A resource adequate power system – a system where electricity supply covers demand – is sensitive to generation capacity, demand patterns and network structure and capacity. Climate change is foreseen to affect each of these components. The paper focused on two drivers of power system adequacy: the impact of temperature variations on electricity demand and of water inflow changes on hydro generation. Using a post-processing approach, based on results found in the literature, the inputs of a large-scale electricity market model covering the European region were modified. The results showed that climate change might decrease total LOLE (Loss of Load Expectation) hours in Europe by more than 50%, as demand will largely decrease because of a higher temperature during winter. The climate change impact on demand tended to decrease LOLE values, while the climate change effects on hydrological conditions tended to increase LOLE values. The study was built on a limited amount of open-source data and could flexibly incorporate various sets of assumptions. There were difficulties in reliably modelling the effects of climate change on power system adequacy.

In the same vein, Smith and Liu. (2021) employed panel data from 80 countries (40 developed and 40 developing) between 1990 and 2018. Based on Hausman Test, the paper further used fixed-effects and random-effects models, Granger causality tests, and Generalized Method of Moments (GMM). The dependent variable was energy consumption per capita and the independent variables are temperature changes, GDP per capita and urbanization. The control variables were trade openness and population density. The paper found that there was a positive correlation between temperature changes and increased energy demand in developing countries (cooling needs). In developed countries, heating demand decreased as temperatures rose, slightly offsetting total energy demand. Urbanization significantly increased energy demand in all regions.

The paper concluded that climate change had asymmetric effects on energy demand, with developing countries more vulnerable to rising temperatures. It recommended that policy measures should focus on energy efficiency in developing regions.

Brown and Green (2020) *employed* time-series data from 1995 to 2019 for G7 countries. It utilised ARDL bounds testing and Vector Error Correction Model (VECM). The variables were CO₂ emissions (dependent) and renewable energy consumption, fossil fuel consumption and GDP (independent). The findings showed long-run relationship between renewable energy consumption and CO₂ emissions. A 1% increase in renewable energy use reduced CO₂ emissions by 0.4% over the long term. Economic growth had a positive but diminishing impact on CO₂ emissions. The study then recommended that promoting renewable energy sources is crucial for mitigating climate change while addressing growing energy demands in developed economies.

Further, Jones and Wang (2019) *used* national energy intensity indicators from BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) from 2000 to 2018. The paper adopted panel cointegration and causality tests. The dependent variable was energy intensity (energy consumption per GDP), while the independent variable were carbon pricing, energy policy index, and climate adaptation measures. The study found that carbon pricing reduced energy intensity by 0.7% annually in the participating countries. Countries with higher adaptation investments showed a 1.2% annual improvement in energy efficiency and policy lag was evident in Russia and South Africa. Hence, carbon pricing and targeted climate adaptation measures can significantly improve energy efficiency, but policy implementation gaps remain a challenge in certain emerging economies.

Martin and Rahman (2022) *assessed the impact of energy transition on global warming and energy security*. It adopted Integrated Assessment Models (IAMs) using scenarios from IPCC reports (2010-2050) and scenario analysis with sensitivity testing. It found that rapid adoption of renewable energy reduced global temperature increases by 0.3°C under the 1.5°C scenario. Delayed energy transition raised energy insecurity risks by 20% in developing nations. Thus, accelerating energy transitions is imperative to achieving climate targets and ensuring energy security and international cooperation is essential to support vulnerable nations.

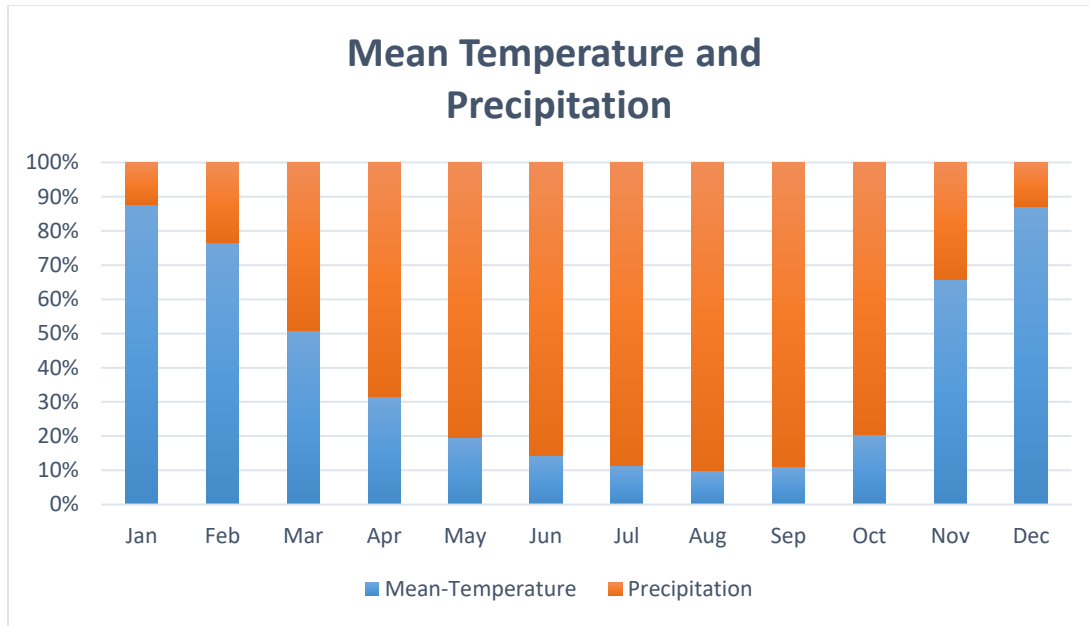
Li et al. (2018a) studied the impacts of climate change on electricity consumption in the residential sector in a Chinese city. Fan et al. (2015) studied the effects of climate factors such as HDD, CDD, wind speed, precipitation, and sunshine duration, on electricity consumption in four sectors in China using monthly data from March 2006 to August 2013. The authors used other control variables, such as real price, time trend, lag dependent variable, holidays and industrial activities. Their results showed that the household and the tertiary sectors were more sensitive to extreme temperature events

than the primary and the secondary sectors. Additionally, hot events had a stronger effect than cold ones. The results for the precipitation, wind speed and sunshine duration were not significant at 10% level. Also, for China, Li et al. (2018b) used daily data on residential electricity consumption in Shanghai. They found an asymmetric U-shape relationship between temperature changes and electricity consumption. While for colder days, a 1 °C increase in daily temperature reduced electricity consumption by 2.8%, on warmer days, the effect was an increase of 14.5%. The authors also analyzed how responses changed with income levels. They showed that as income increased, households' responses to temperature changes remained the same for warmer days but increased in colder times.

Miragedis et al. (2007) modelled the effect of climate change on electricity consumption in Greece. Their study showed that climate change (Temperature per se) alone contributed about 3.6-5.5% increase in electricity consumption annually. This demonstrates that, in the long run, economic development will play a stronger effect on future electricity demand through the demand for electricity for the purpose of cooling and heating.

Apadula et al. (2012) estimated the relationship between meteorological variables and monthly electricity demand in Italy between 1994 and 2009 using a multiple regression model. The result showed that temperature was considered the primary variable in the study. Giannakopoulos et al. (2015) studied the relationship between temperature (HDD and CDD) and electricity consumption in Cyprus. The relationship was estimated for past and present dates and projected to the future using a simulation model. Daily temperatures were also projected. As the base data, the authors used hourly electricity consumption and average daily air temperatures from January 1999 to December 2009. The study found a decreasing trend in electricity consumption during the "cold period" and an increasing trend during the "hot season." which is consistent with other studies (e.g. Eskeland & Mideksa, 2009).

Wangpattarapong et al. (2008) studied the relationship between monthly ambient temperature and other climate variables, such as rainfall, relative humidity and wind speed, residential electricity consumption and economic factors. The authors focused on the largest city in Thailand and covered the period 2002 to 2006. The study found that an increase in 1°C of the temperature would result in an increase of 6.79% in electricity consumption.



Source: Authors' computation from EViews

3. Methodology

The *ex-post facto* research design was adopted in this paper. This research design deals with after-the-fact research. It is a category of research design in which the investigation starts after the fact has occurred without interference from the researcher. This paper adopted time series study from 1980 to 2021. The model used in this study followed Pesaran, Shin and Smith (2001). The test equation for the Bounds cointegration test, following Pesaran et al. (1999; 2001) is an ARDL (p,q) given as:

$$\Delta y_t = \tau + \Phi Trend + \gamma_t y_t + \gamma_2 x_{t=1} + \sum_{i=1}^{p-1} \delta_i \Delta y_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{q-1} \lambda_i \Delta x_{t-i} + \hat{\varepsilon}_t \quad (1),$$

where p and q denote the lag lengths for the dependent and independent variables, respectively

The following models were augmented to accommodate the policy objective of this paper. Hence, aggregated electricity sector's demands were employed to fill the existing in the literature on climate change (proxy by temperature) and electricity demand nexus.

Thus, following the ARDL model in (1), this paper augments the model thus:

Aggregate Electricity Demand (AGGD) and Climate Change (Model)

Model 1

$$\Delta \log(AGGD_t) = \phi + \beta_1 \log(AGGD_{t-1}) + \beta_2 \log(AMTP_{t-1}) + \beta_3 \log(ACELET_{t-1}) + \beta_4 \log(INFL_{t-1}) + \beta_5 \log(POP_{t-1}) + \beta_6 \log(PMS_{t-1}) + \beta_7 \log(AMP_{t-1}) + \beta_8 \log(AMT_{t-1}) + \sum_{i=1}^p \beta_9 \Delta \log(AGGD_{t-1}) +$$

$$\begin{aligned} & \sum_{i=1}^q \beta_{10} \Delta \log(AMTP_{t-1}) + \sum_{i=1}^q \beta_{11} \Delta \log(ACELET_{t-1}) + \sum_{i=1}^q \beta_{12} \Delta \log(INFL_{t-1}) + \\ & \sum_{i=1}^q \beta_{13} \Delta \log(POP_{t-1}) + \sum_{i=1}^q \beta_{14} \Delta \log(AMP_{t-1}) + \sum_{i=1}^q \beta_{15} \Delta \log(AMT_{t-1}) + \\ & \beta_{16} CEQ + \varepsilon_t \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

Climate Change and Aggregate Electricity Sector's Demand Model

Model 2

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \log(AMTPi_t) = & \phi + \beta_1 \log(AMTPi_{t-1}) + \beta_2 \log(ACCELECT_t - 1) + \\ & \beta_3 \log(INF_{t-1}) + \beta_4 \log(Intrphr_{t-1}) + \beta_5 \log(POP_{t-1}) + \beta_6 \log(PMS_{t-1}) + \\ & \sum_{i=1}^p \beta_7 \Delta \log(AMTPi_{t-1}) + \sum_{i=1}^q \beta_8 \Delta \log(ACCELECT_t - 1) + \\ & \sum_{i=1}^q \beta_9 \Delta \log(INF_{t-1}) + \sum_{i=1}^q \beta_{10} \Delta \log(Intrphr_{t-1}) + \sum_{i=1}^q \beta_{11} \Delta \log(POP_{t-1}) + \\ & \sum_{i=1}^q \beta_{12} \Delta \log(PMS_{t-1}) + \beta_{13} CEQ + \varepsilon_t \end{aligned} \quad (3),$$

where β_1 to β_{17} are the short-run and long-run dynamic coefficients of the model's convergence to equilibrium, while β_7 represents the speed of adjustment (CEQ). Also, AMTP=average mean temperature and precipitation, Acelect= access to electricity, INF= inflation, AMP=average mean precipitation, AMT= Average mean temperature, intrphr= interruptions, POP= population, PMS= Petrol Motor Spirit, AGGD= Aggregate electricity sector's demand, ε_t =disturbance term.

4. Results and Discussions

The first hypothesis is that there is no statistically significant relationship between aggregate electricity sector's demand and climate change (temperature).

There is long-run relationship between climate change and aggregate electricity sector's demand. The F-statistic (15.7) was more than the critical values at 5% (lower values 2.17 and upper value 3.21). This result implies that there is an equilibrium relationship between climate change and aggregate electricity sector's demand in Nigeria. Thus, the speed of adjustment in this system was infinitesimally low, at 1.4%. This implies that the short-run and long-run adjustments were unarguably low within the system. The result indicated that, in the long-run a 1% change in AMTP and AMP caused over a 10,000% decrease and 2,800% decline, and 1% change in AMT increases over 1000% the electricity sector demand in Nigeria, respectively. These impacts were not significant at 5%.

The result showed that population and PMS were positive determinant of aggregate electricity demand but inflation (proxy for electricity price tariff) was a negative determinant of aggregate electricity demand in Nigeria. The study showed that climate change (temperature) had a mixed impact on aggregate electricity demand. The empirical explanation to this could imply that climate change (AMT, AMP, and AMTP) disrupts industrial production and dampens residential demand by causing physical risks which affect the demand structure of the sector's demand for electricity.

Also, the decline in electricity demand due to AMP-temperature-climate change may result from the associated shock which physical risk sends on output and raw material supply. This may lead to fall in production and hence declines in electricity demand. The results from AMT are consistent but those of AMP are not consistent with Wangpattarapong et al. (2008) and Miragedis et al. (2007). The result aligns with Apadula et al. (2012). The second order condition (SOC) is well behaved.

The second hypothesis states that there is no statistically significant relationship between access to electricity and climate change (temperature). The study found a cointegration relationship between access to electricity and climate change (temperature), which is consistent with previous results. Also, the speed of adjustment was 96% from short run to long run. Thus, access to electricity negatively affected temperature. Accesses to electricity did not worsen temperature changes. The result showed that as access to electricity in undeveloped economies grew it tended to negatively affect the temperature and decelerate climate change. A 1% increase in access to electricity led to a 1.6% fall in temperature. The country's hydro power and solar infrastructures, which is a clean energy, could have influenced the results. Access to electricity did not overheat the environment and thus did not contribute significantly to changes in the average mean temperature at least within the period of this study.

The result is expected because, for example, developed economies utilized coal and nuclear power, whereas in developing economies there is low utilization space for nuclear power and carbon-intensive electricity infrastructure. Unlike in Nigeria, the growing demand for gas, hydro, and solar energy infrastructure could be a strong explanation for why access to electricity negatively impacted temperature. Thus, the current energy-to-electricity mix, although underutilized in Nigeria, tends to negatively affect temperature. So, any deliberate plan to invest in infrastructure that will stimulate access to electricity should be prioritized since it does not worsen temperature.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study found a statistically insignificant and mixed relationship between long-run aggregate electricity demand and temperature in Nigeria. The study found that AMP and AMT was both a positive and negative determinant of electricity demand in Nigeria. Hence, the study recommends adequate fiscal policy and monetary to increase productivity, which will translate to higher energy demand, since temperature reduced electricity demand within the period considered in the study.

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APPENDIX

Model 1**Dependent Variable: LOGTOTALDD**

Method: ARDL

Date: 06/02/23 Time: 03:05

Sample (adjusted): 1982 2020

Included observations: 39 after adjustments

Maximum dependent lags: 2 (Automatic selection)

Model selection method: Akaike info criterion (AIC)

Dynamic regressors (2 lags, automatic): LOGAMTP LOGACCELET INFLAT

LOGPOP LOGPMS LOGAMP LOGAMT

Fixed regressors: C

Number of models evaluated: 4374

Selected Model: ARDL(2, 1, 0, 0, 2, 2, 0, 1)

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.*
LOGTOTALDD(-1)	0.700004	0.107237	6.527660	0.0000
LOGTOTALDD(-2)	0.285171	0.085889	3.320220	0.0030
LOGAMTP	-3.512338	5.428018	-0.647076	0.5240
LOGAMTP(-1)	-10.78665	4.729403	-2.280764	0.0321
LOGACCELET	-0.001264	0.217088	-0.005821	0.9954
INFLAT	-0.000761	0.000494	-1.541066	0.1369
LOGPOP	79.39526	22.96011	3.457966	0.0021
LOGPOP(-1)	-12.09874	40.26683	-0.300464	0.7665
LOGPOP(-2)	-67.04388	20.11405	-3.333187	0.0029
LOGPMS	-0.039193	0.054122	-0.724159	0.4763
LOGPMS(-1)	0.139532	0.064627	2.159043	0.0415
LOGPMS(-2)	-0.091978	0.046301	-1.986519	0.0590
LOGAMP	-0.427532	0.328737	-1.300528	0.2063
LOGAMT	-0.767434	5.067672	-0.151437	0.8810
LOGAMT(-1)	7.956094	4.132898	1.925064	0.0667
C	9.139258	6.372016	1.434280	0.1649
R-squared	0.997868	Mean dependent var		3.488838
Adjusted R-squared	0.996477	S.D. dependent var		0.553469
S.E. of regression	0.032852	Akaike info criterion		-3.701154
Sum squared resid	0.024823	Schwarz criterion		-3.018667
Log likelihood	88.17251	Hannan-Quinn criter.		-3.456284
F-statistic	717.5040	Durbin-Watson stat		1.747926
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

***Note: p-values and any subsequent tests do not account for model selection**

ARDL Long Run Form and Bounds Test

Dependent Variable: D(LOGTOTALDD)

Selected Model: ARDL(2, 1, 0, 0, 2, 2, 0, 1)

Case 2: Restricted Constant and No Trend

Date: 06/02/23 Time: 03:06

Sample: 1980 2021

Included observations: 39

Conditional Error Correction Regression				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	9.139256	6.372016	1.434280	0.1649
LOGTOTALDD(-1)*	-0.014825	0.070047	-0.211640	0.8343
LOGAMTP(-1)	-14.29899	8.061616	-1.773713	0.0894
LOGACCELET**	-0.001264	0.217088	-0.005821	0.9954
INFLAT**	-0.000761	0.000494	-1.541066	0.1369
LOGPOP(-1)	0.252636	0.543236	0.465059	0.6463
LOGPMS(-1)	0.008361	0.042323	0.197553	0.8451
LOGAMP**	-0.427532	0.328737	-1.300527	0.2063
LOGAMT(-1)	7.188660	7.226978	0.994698	0.3302
D(LOGTOTALDD(-1))	-0.285171	0.085889	-3.320220	0.0030
D(LOGAMTP)	-3.512338	5.428018	-0.647076	0.5240
D(LOGPOP)	79.39524	22.96011	3.457964	0.0021
D(LOGPOP(-1))	67.04390	20.11405	3.333187	0.0029
D(LOGPMS)	-0.039193	0.054122	-0.724159	0.4763
D(LOGPMS(-1))	0.091978	0.046301	1.986519	0.0590
D(LOGAMT)	-0.767434	5.067672	-0.151437	0.8810

* p-value incompatible with t-Bounds distribution.

** Variable interpreted as $Z = Z(-1) + D(Z)$.

Levels Equation
Case 2: Restricted Constant and No Trend

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
LOGAMTP	-964.5375	4445.978	-0.216946	0.8302
LOGACCELET	-0.085245	14.58313	-0.005845	0.9954
INFLAT	-0.051323	0.260576	-0.196958	0.8456
LOGPOP	17.04156	50.17126	0.339668	0.7372
LOGPMS	0.563992	4.865102	0.115926	0.9087
LOGAMP	-28.83914	132.1952	-0.218156	0.8292
LOGAMT	484.9106	2185.766	0.221849	0.8264
C	616.4879	3162.581	0.194932	0.8472

EC = LOGTOTALDD - (-964.5375*LOGAMTP -0.0852*LOGACCELET -0.0513
 *INFLAT + 17.0416*LOGPOP + 0.5640*LOGPMS -28.8391*LOGAMP +
 484.9106*LOGAMT + 616.4879)

F-Bounds Test		Null Hypothesis: No levels relationship		
Test Statistic	Value	Signif.	I(0)	I(1)
Asymptotic: n=1000				
F-statistic	15.71850	10%	1.92	2.89
k	7	5%	2.17	3.21
		2.5%	2.43	3.51
		1%	2.73	3.9
Finite Sample: n=40				
Actual Sample Size	39	10%	2.152	3.296
		5%	2.523	3.829
		1%	3.402	5.031
Finite Sample: n=35				
		10%	2.196	3.37
		5%	2.597	3.907
		1%	3.599	5.23

ARDL Error Correction Regression

Dependent Variable: D(LOGTOTALDD)

Selected Model: ARDL(2, 1, 0, 0, 2, 2, 0, 1)

Case 2: Restricted Constant and No Trend

Date: 06/02/23 Time: 03:06

Sample: 1980 2021

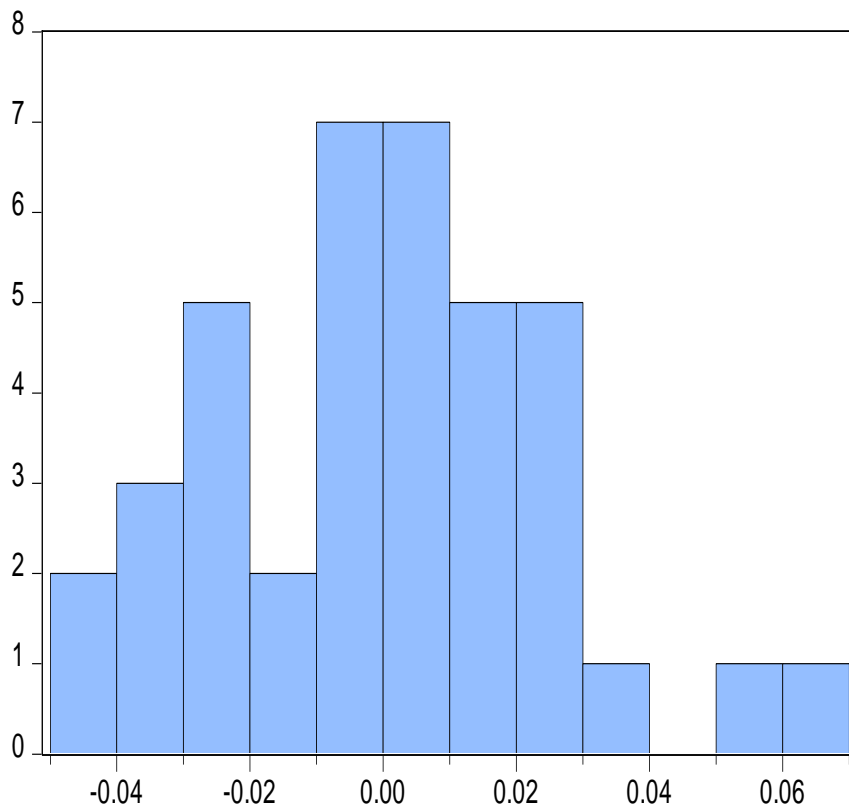
Included observations: 39

ECM Regression				
Case 2: Restricted Constant and No Trend				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
			-	
D(LOGTOTALDD(-1))	-0.285171	0.062245	4.581430	0.0001
			-	
D(LOGAMTP)	-3.512338	2.218917	1.582907	0.1271
D(LOGPOP)	79.39525	16.20686	4.898867	0.0001
D(LOGPOP(-1))	67.04389	14.93696	4.488455	0.0002
			-	
D(LOGPMS)	-0.039193	0.032657	1.200125	0.2423
D(LOGPMS(-1))	0.091978	0.033044	2.783498	0.0106
			-	
D(LOGAMT)	-0.767433	2.042180	0.375791	0.7105
			-	
CointEq(-1)*	-0.014825	0.001074	13.80841	0.0000
R-squared	0.876777	Mean dependent var		0.047667
Adjusted R-squared	0.848952	S.D. dependent var		0.072810
				-
S.E. of regression	0.028297	Akaike info criterion		4.111411
				-
Sum squared resid	0.024823	Schwarz criterion		3.770167
				-
Log likelihood	88.17251	Hannan-Quinn criter.		3.988975
Durbin-Watson stat	1.747926			

* p-value incompatible with t-Bounds distribution.

F-Bounds Test**Null Hypothesis: No levels relationship**

Test Statistic	Value	Signif.	I(0)	I(1)
F-statistic	15.71850	10%	1.92	2.89
k	7	5%	2.17	3.21
		2.5%	2.43	3.51
		1%	2.73	3.9



Series: Residuals

Sample 1982 2020

Observations 39

Mean 5.12e-14

Median 0.000526

Maximum 0.060645

Minimum -0.048932

Std. Dev. 0.025559

Skewness 0.192101

Kurtosis 2.877181

Jarque-Bera 0.264380

Probability 0.876175

Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test:

F-statistic	1.851207	Prob. F(2,21)	0.1818
Obs*R-squared	5.845345	Prob. Chi-Square(2)	0.0538

Test Equation:

Dependent Variable: RESID

Method: ARDL

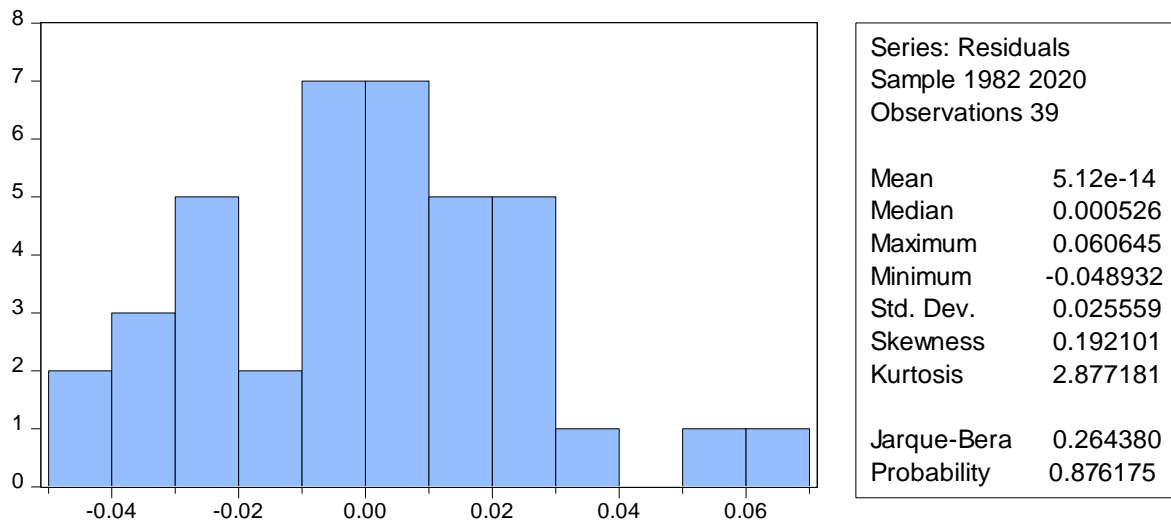
Date: 06/02/23 Time: 03:07

Sample: 1982 2020

Included observations: 39

Pre-sample missing value lagged residuals set to zero

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
LOGTOTALDD(-1)	-0.022907	0.119330	-0.191967	0.8496
LOGTOTALDD(-2)	0.040973	0.090171	0.454392	0.6542
LOGAMTP	3.210555	5.943895	0.540143	0.5948
LOGAMTP(-1)	-1.414869	4.886338	-0.289556	0.7750
LOGACCELET	0.089837	0.215435	0.417004	0.6809
INFLAT	7.35E-05	0.000591	0.124424	0.9022
LOGPOP	-7.621067	23.20089	-0.328482	0.7458
LOGPOP(-1)	18.34224	42.04969	0.436204	0.6671
LOGPOP(-2)	-10.81777	21.37748	-0.506036	0.6181
LOGPMS	-0.010219	0.052575	-0.194367	0.8478
LOGPMS(-1)	-0.004430	0.063994	-0.069224	0.9455
LOGPMS(-2)	-0.000161	0.045910	-0.003507	0.9972
LOGAMP	0.218495	0.349321	0.625485	0.5384
LOGAMT	-0.854303	5.011414	-0.170471	0.8663
LOGAMT(-1)	0.628941	4.107852	0.153107	0.8798
C	-2.519316	8.633097	-0.291821	0.7733
RESID(-1)	0.378818	0.332789	1.138314	0.2678
RESID(-2)	-0.419440	0.252786	-1.659268	0.1119
R-squared	0.149881	Mean dependent var		5.12E-14
Adjusted R-squared	-0.538311	S.D. dependent var		0.025559
S.E. of regression	0.031700	Akaike info criterion		-3.760969
Sum squared resid	0.021103	Schwarz criterion		-2.993171
Log likelihood	91.33889	Hannan-Quinn criter.		-3.485489
F-statistic	0.217789	Durbin-Watson stat		2.002437
Prob(F-statistic)	0.998797			

**Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test:**

F-statistic	1.851207	Prob. F(2,21)	0.1818
Obs*R-squared	5.845345	Prob. Chi-Square(2)	0.0538

Test Equation:

Dependent Variable: RESID

Method: ARDL

Date: 06/02/23 Time: 03:08

Sample: 1982 2020

Included observations: 39

Pre-sample missing value lagged residuals set to zero

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
LOGTOTALDD(-1)	-0.022907	0.119330	-0.191967	0.8496
LOGTOTALDD(-2)	0.040973	0.090171	0.454392	0.6542
LOGAMTP	3.210555	5.943895	0.540143	0.5948
LOGAMTP(-1)	-1.414869	4.886338	-0.289556	0.7750
LOGACCELET	0.089837	0.215435	0.417004	0.6809
INFLAT	7.35E-05	0.000591	0.124424	0.9022
LOGPOP	-7.621067	23.20089	-0.328482	0.7458
LOGPOP(-1)	18.34224	42.04969	0.436204	0.6671
LOGPOP(-2)	-10.81777	21.37748	-0.506036	0.6181
LOGPMS	-0.010219	0.052575	-0.194367	0.8478

LOGPMS(-1)	-0.004430	0.063994	-0.069224	0.9455
LOGPMS(-2)	-0.000161	0.045910	-0.003507	0.9972
LOGAMP	0.218495	0.349321	0.625485	0.5384
LOGAMT	-0.854303	5.011414	-0.170471	0.8663
LOGAMT(-1)	0.628941	4.107852	0.153107	0.8798
C	-2.519316	8.633097	-0.291821	0.7733
RESID(-1)	0.378818	0.332789	1.138314	0.2678
RESID(-2)	-0.419440	0.252786	-1.659268	0.1119
<hr/>				
R-squared	0.149881	Mean dependent var	5.12E-14	
Adjusted R-squared	-0.538311	S.D. dependent var	0.025559	
S.E. of regression	0.031700	Akaike info criterion	-3.760969	
Sum squared resid	0.021103	Schwarz criterion	-2.993171	
Log likelihood	91.33889	Hannan-Quinn criter.	-3.485489	
F-statistic	0.217789	Durbin-Watson stat	2.002437	
Prob(F-statistic)	0.998797			

Heteroskedasticity Test: Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey

F-statistic	1.254704	Prob. F(15,23)	0.3038
		Prob. Chi-	
Obs*R-squared	17.55122	Square(15)	0.2870
Scaled explained		Prob. Chi-	
SS	5.729409	Square(15)	0.9839

Test Equation:

Dependent Variable: RESID^2

Method: Least Squares

Date: 06/02/23 Time: 03:08

Sample: 1982 2020

Included observations: 39

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	0.306915	0.163341	1.878987	0.0730
LOGTOTALDD(-1)	0.006309	0.002749	2.295010	0.0312
LOGTOTALDD(-2)	-0.001998	0.002202	-0.907365	0.3736
LOGAMTP	0.118514	0.139142	0.851749	0.4031
LOGAMTP(-1)	-0.045213	0.121234	-0.372938	0.7126
LOGACCELET	0.006819	0.005565	1.225387	0.2328

INFLAT	-1.47E-05	1.27E-05	-1.164167	0.2563
LOGPOP	1.146201	0.588561	1.947464	0.0638
LOGPOP(-1)	-1.497446	1.032202	-1.450729	0.1604
LOGPOP(-2)	0.323432	0.515605	0.627287	0.5366
LOGPMS	-0.001387	0.001387	-0.999800	0.3278
LOGPMS(-1)	0.002036	0.001657	1.229174	0.2314
LOGPMS(-2)	0.000292	0.001187	0.246081	0.8078
LOGAMP	-0.001415	0.008427	-0.167935	0.8681
LOGAMT	-0.133918	0.129905	-1.030888	0.3133
LOGAMT(-1)	-0.022292	0.105943	-0.210417	0.8352
<hr/>				
R-squared	0.450031	Mean dependent var	0.000636	
Adjusted R-squared	0.091356	S.D. dependent var	0.000883	
S.E. of regression	0.000842	Akaike info criterion	-11.02882	
Sum squared resid	1.63E-05	Schwarz criterion	-10.34633	
		Hannan-Quinn		
Log likelihood	231.0620	criter.	-10.78395	
F-statistic	1.254704	Durbin-Watson stat	2.110995	
Prob(F-statistic)	0.303805			

Ramsey RESET Test

Equation: UNTITLED

Specification: LOGTOTALDD LOGTOTALDD(-1) LOGTOTALDD(-2)

LOGAMTP LOGAMTP(-1) LOGACCELET INFLAT LOGPOP LOGPOP

(-1) LOGPOP(-2) LOGPMS LOGPMS(-1) LOGPMS(-2) LOGAMP

LOGAMT LOGAMT(-1) C

Omitted Variables: Squares of fitted values

	Value	df	Probability
t-statistic	1.597697	22	0.1244
F-statistic	2.552637	(1, 22)	0.1244

F-test summary:

	Sum of Sq.	df	Mean Squares
Test SSR	0.002581	1	0.002581
Restricted SSR	0.024823	23	0.001079
Unrestricted SSR	0.022242	22	0.001011

Unrestricted Test Equation:

Dependent Variable: LOGTOTALDD

Method: ARDL

Date: 06/02/23 Time: 03:08

Sample: 1982 2020

Included observations: 39

Maximum dependent lags: 2 (Automatic selection)

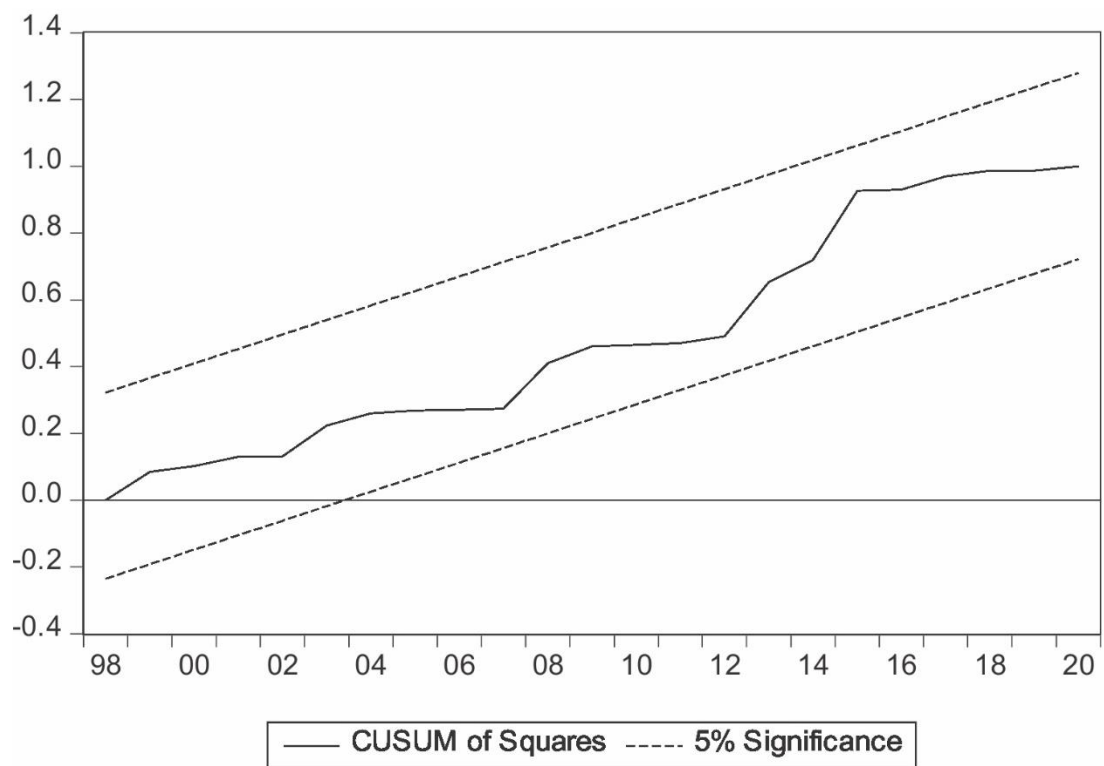
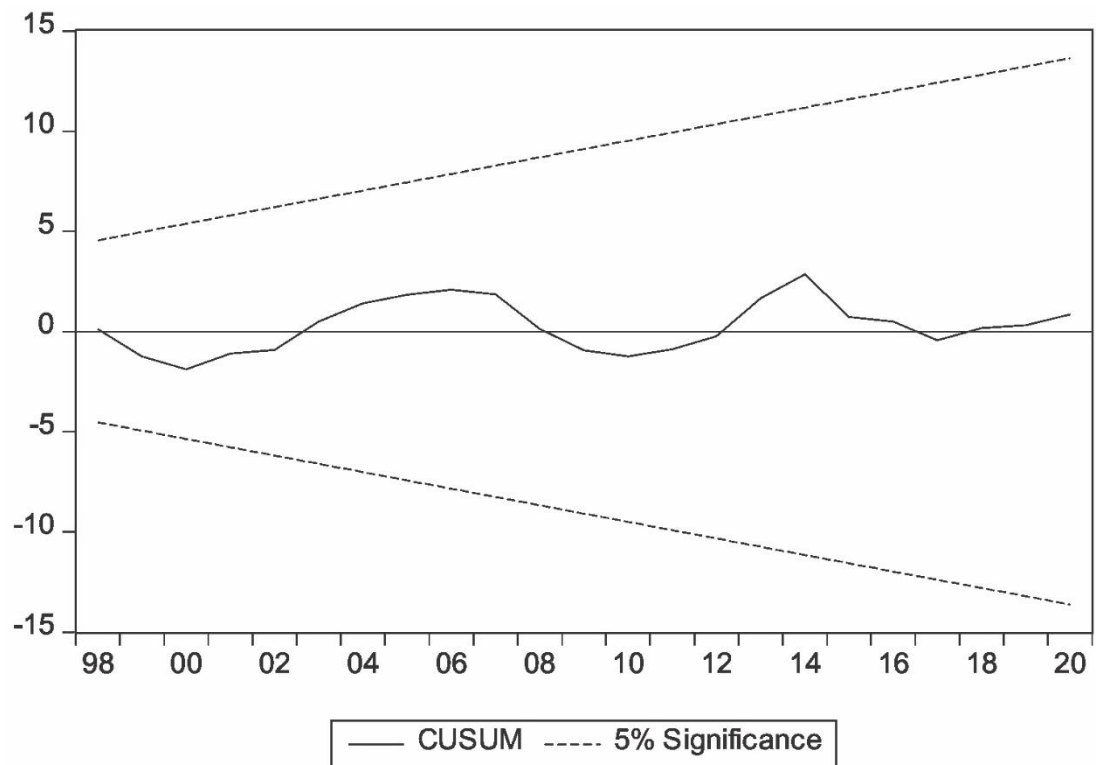
Model selection method: Akaike info criterion (AIC)

Dynamic regressors (2 lags, automatic):

Fixed regressors: C

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.*
LOGTOTALDD(-1)	0.156107	0.355896	0.438631	0.6652
LOGTOTALDD(-2)	-0.122945	0.268626	-0.457681	0.6517
LOGAMTP	2.703320	6.537223	0.413527	0.6832
LOGAMTP(-1)	-3.365915	6.521161	-0.516153	0.6109
LOGACCELET	0.082778	0.216596	0.382175	0.7060
INFLAT	0.000179	0.000758	0.236408	0.8153
LOGPOP	41.69818	32.41198	1.286505	0.2116
LOGPOP(-1)	-40.81246	42.91707	-0.950961	0.3520
LOGPOP(-2)	-0.828430	45.78886	-0.018092	0.9857
LOGPMS	-0.002779	0.057126	-0.048648	0.9616
LOGPMS(-1)	0.021065	0.097008	0.217146	0.8301
LOGPMS(-2)	-0.022356	0.062507	-0.357653	0.7240
LOGAMP	0.262332	0.536352	0.489103	0.6296
LOGAMT	-1.509268	4.926751	-0.306341	0.7622
LOGAMT(-1)	2.972653	5.072448	0.586039	0.5638
C	-1.184112	8.932230	-0.132566	0.8957
FITTED^2	0.126860	0.079402	1.597698	0.1244
R-squared	0.998089	Mean dependent var		3.488838
Adjusted R-squared	0.996700	S.D. dependent var		0.553469
S.E. of regression	0.031796	Akaike info criterion		-3.759649
Sum squared resid	0.022242	Schwarz criterion		-3.034507
Log likelihood	90.31315	Hannan-Quinn criter.		-3.499474
F-statistic	718.2281	Durbin-Watson stat		1.774519
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

***Note: p-values and any subsequent tests do not account for model selection.**



Model 2

Dependent Variable: LOGAMTP

Method: ARDL

Date: 06/02/23 Time: 03:12

Sample (adjusted): 1981 2020

Included observations: 40 after adjustments

Maximum dependent lags: 1 (Automatic selection)

Model selection method: Akaike info criterion (AIC)

Dynamic regressors (0 lag, automatic): LOGACCELET INFLAT

LOGINTRPHR LOGPOP LOGPMS

Fixed regressors: C

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.*
LOGAMTP(-1)	0.032007	0.160659	0.199222	0.8433
LOGACCELET	-0.016444	0.018162	-0.905397	0.3718
INFLAT	-0.000106	3.68E-05	-2.871365	0.0071
LOGINTRPHR	0.000452	0.003277	0.137891	0.8912
LOGPOP	-0.007711	0.014960	-0.515423	0.6097
LOGPMS	0.005461	0.003163	1.726441	0.0936
C	1.554707	0.255667	6.080988	0.0000
R-squared	0.514875	Mean dependent var		1.520200
Adjusted R-squared	0.426671	S.D. dependent var		0.004410
S.E. of regression	0.003339	Akaike info criterion		-8.408687
Sum squared resid	0.000368	Schwarz criterion		-8.113133
Log likelihood	175.1737	Hannan-Quinn criter.		-8.301824
F-statistic	5.837291	Durbin-Watson stat		2.162072
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000313			

***Note: p-values and any subsequent tests do not account for model selection**

ARDL Long Run Form and Bounds Test

Dependent Variable: D(LOGAMTP)

Selected Model: ARDL(1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0)

Case 2: Restricted Constant and No Trend

Date: 06/02/23 Time: 03:14

Sample: 1980 2021

Included observations: 40

Conditional Error Correction Regression

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	1.554707	0.255667	6.080988	0.0000
LOGAMTP(-1)*	-0.967993	0.160659	-6.025141	0.0000
LOGACCELET**	-0.016444	0.018162	-0.905397	0.3718
INFLAT**	-0.000106	3.68E-05	-2.871365	0.0071
LOGINTRPHR**	0.000452	0.003277	0.137891	0.8912
LOGPOP**	-0.007711	0.014960	-0.515423	0.6097
LOGPMS**	0.005461	0.003163	1.726441	0.0936

* p-value incompatible with t-Bounds distribution.

** Variable interpreted as $Z = Z(-1) + D(Z)$.

Levels Equation
Case 2: Restricted Constant and No Trend

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
LOGACCELET	-0.016987	0.019168	-0.886250	0.3819
INFLAT	-0.000109	3.65E-05	-2.988677	0.0053
LOGINTRPHR	0.000467	0.003373	0.138399	0.8908
LOGPOP	-0.007966	0.015722	-0.506649	0.6158
LOGPMS	0.005642	0.003421	1.648980	0.1086
C	1.606113	0.138722	11.57792	0.0000

EC = LOGAMTP - (-0.0170*LOGACCELET -0.0001*INFLAT + 0.0005

*LOGINTRPHR -0.0080*LOGPOP + 0.0056*LOGPMS + 1.6061)

F-Bounds Test
Null Hypothesis: No levels relationship

Test Statistic	Value	Signif.	I(0)	I(1)
Asymptotic:				
n=1000				
F-statistic	5.794769	10%	2.08	3
k	5	5%	2.39	3.38
		2.5%	2.7	3.73
		1%	3.06	4.15
Finite				
Sample:				
n=40				
Actual Sample Size	40	10%	2.306	3.353
		5%	2.734	3.92
		1%	3.657	5.256

ARDL Error Correction Regression

Dependent Variable: D(LOGAMTP)

Selected Model: ARDL(1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0)

Case 2: Restricted Constant and No Trend

Date: 06/02/23 Time: 03:14

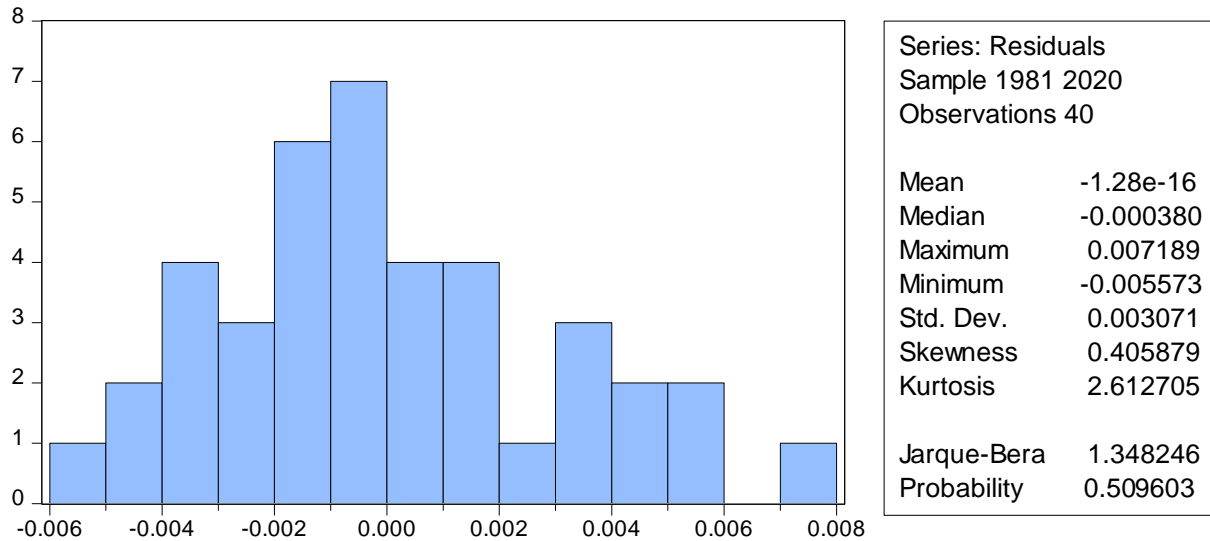
Sample: 1980 2021

Included observations: 40

ECM Regression				
Case 2: Restricted Constant and No Trend				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
CointEq(-1)*	-0.967993	0.139807	-6.923767	0.0000
R-squared	0.550766	Mean dependent var		0.000171
Adjusted R-squared	0.550766	S.D. dependent var		0.004582
S.E. of regression	0.003071	Akaike info criterion		-8.708687
Sum squared resid	0.000368	Schwarz criterion		-8.666465
Log likelihood	175.1737	Hannan-Quinn criter.		-8.693421
Durbin-Watson stat	2.162072			

* p-value incompatible with t-Bounds distribution.

F-Bounds Test		Null Hypothesis: No levels relationship		
Test Statistic	Value	Signif.	I(0)	I(1)
F-statistic	5.794769	10%	2.08	3
k	5	5%	2.39	3.38
		2.5%	2.7	3.73
		1%	3.06	4.15

**Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test:**

F-statistic	1.410337	Prob. F(2,31)	0.2593
Obs*R-squared	3.336036	Prob. Chi-Square(2)	0.1886

Test Equation:

Dependent Variable: RESID

Method: ARDL

Date: 06/02/23 Time: 03:15

Sample: 1981 2020

Included observations: 40

Pre-sample missing value lagged residuals set to zero

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
LOGAMTP(-1)	0.365007	0.357071	1.022223	0.3146
LOGACCELET	0.006305	0.018428	0.342117	0.7346
INFLAT	2.30E-05	4.20E-05	0.547053	0.5883
LOGINTRPHR	0.000408	0.003248	0.125685	0.9008
LOGPOP	0.003129	0.015002	0.208586	0.8361
LOGPMS	-0.002102	0.003421	-0.614418	0.5434
C	-0.589980	0.553589	-1.065737	0.2948
RESID(-1)	-0.482708	0.399834	-1.207269	0.2365
RESID(-2)	-0.234771	0.186145	-1.261225	0.2166
R-squared	0.083401	Mean dependent var	-1.28E-16	
Adjusted R-squared	-0.153141	S.D. dependent var	0.003071	

S.E. of regression	0.003298	Akaike info criterion	-8.395772
Sum squared resid	0.000337	Schwarz criterion	-8.015774
Log likelihood	176.9154	Hannan-Quinn criter.	-8.258377
F-statistic	0.352584	Durbin-Watson stat	1.991105
Prob(F-statistic)	0.937298		

Heteroskedasticity Test: Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey

F-statistic	0.429352	Prob. F(6,33)	0.8540
Obs*R-squared	2.896452	Prob. Chi-Square(6)	0.8217
Scaled explained SS	1.589642	Prob. Chi-Square(6)	0.9533

Test Equation:

Dependent Variable: RESID^2

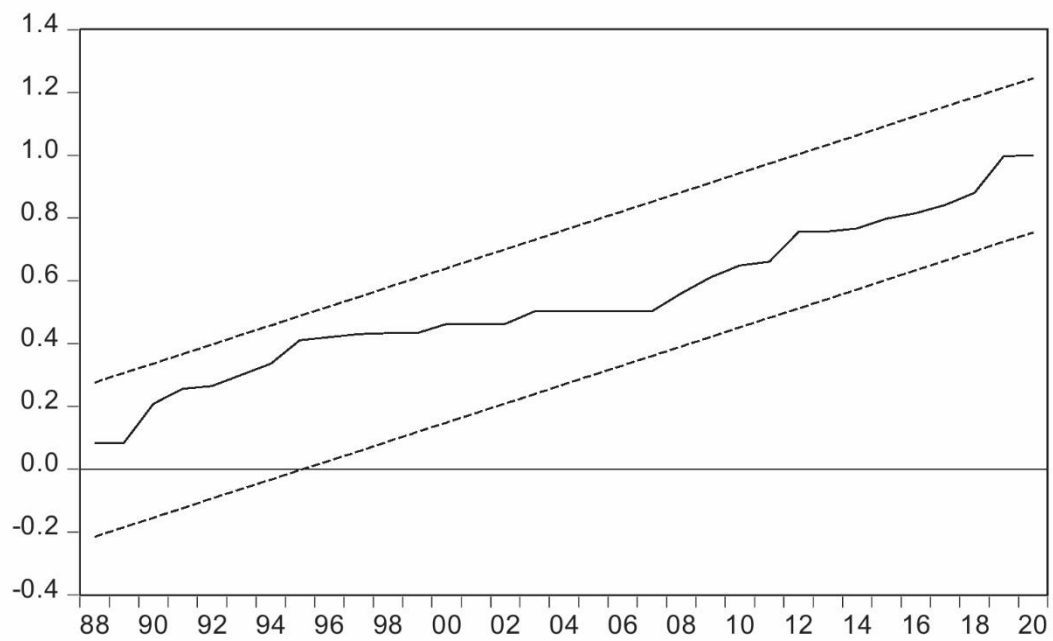
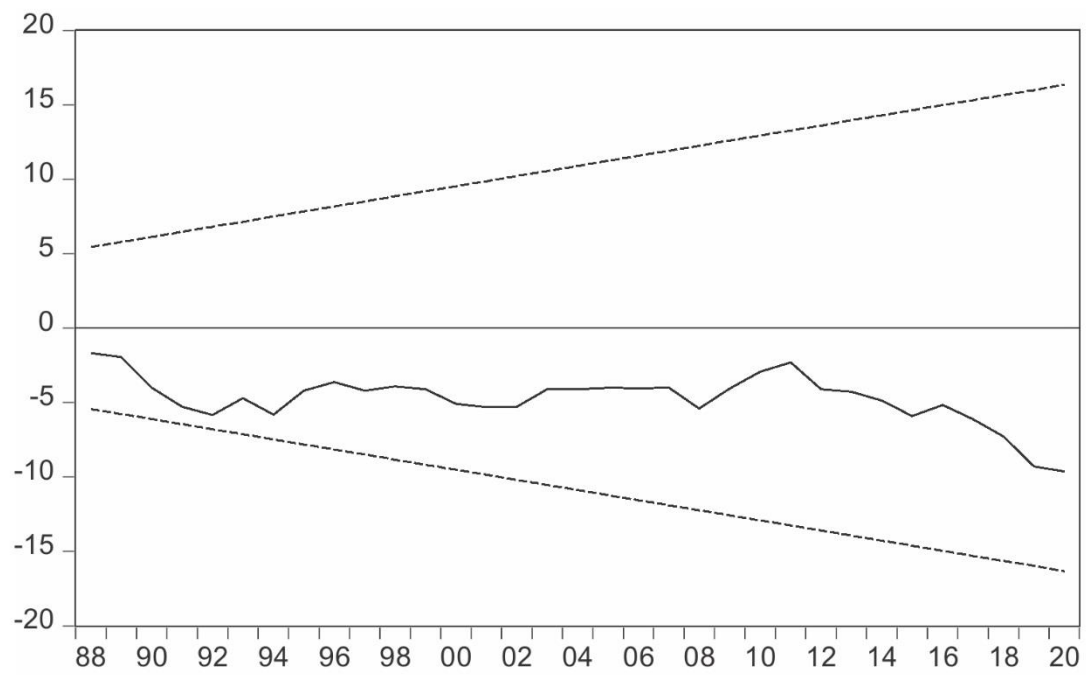
Method: Least Squares

Date: 06/02/23 Time: 03:15

Sample: 1981 2020

Included observations: 40

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	-2.19E-05	0.000948	-0.023101	0.9817
LOGAMTP(-1)	0.000135	0.000596	0.227006	0.8218
LOGACCELET	-3.92E-05	6.74E-05	-0.582261	0.5643
INFLAT	9.67E-08	1.36E-07	0.708482	0.4836
LOGINTRPHR	-1.63E-05	1.22E-05	-1.341568	0.1889
LOGPOP	-6.88E-06	5.55E-05	-0.124023	0.9020
LOGPMS	5.08E-06	1.17E-05	0.432849	0.6679
R-squared	0.072411	Mean dependent var		9.20E-06
Adjusted R-squared	-0.096241	S.D. dependent var		1.18E-05
S.E. of regression	1.24E-05	Akaike info criterion		-19.60250
Sum squared resid	5.06E-09	Schwarz criterion		-19.30695
Log likelihood	399.0501	Hannan-Quinn criter.		-19.49564
F-statistic	0.429352	Durbin-Watson stat		2.115792
Prob(F-statistic)	0.853989			



— CUSUM of Squares ---- 5% Significance

58**ENERGY POVERTY AND INDUSTRIAL SECTOR PERFORMANCE
IN NIGERIA****By****Boma Tubotamuno¹ & Isaac Olubiyi Oladosu²**^{1,2}Department of Economics, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria

*tubotamunoboma@gmail.com; oluisaac19@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study empirically examined the impact of energy poverty on industrial sector performance in Nigeria from 1990 to 2023. The study made use of access to electricity, electricity tariff, access to clean fuels and technologies as well as renewable energy consumption as the proxies of energy poverty while industrial output was used as the indicator of industrial sector performance. In order to achieve the objectives of study, annual time series data were used and extracted from Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), statistical bulletin, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reports and World Bank Development indicators. The major data analysis techniques adopted are: Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) statistic, bounds cointegration approach and Autoregressive Distributed Lag Model (ARDL) technique. The major findings revealed that access to electricity as well as access to clean fuels and technologies have positive and significant impact on industrial output in Nigeria in both short run and long run while renewable energy consumption has a positive but non-significant impact on industrial output in Nigeria in both short run and long run. On the other hand, electricity tariff has a significant negative impact on industrial output in Nigeria in both short run and long run. Based on the findings, the study concluded that energy poverty has a significant impact on industrial sector performance in Nigeria. The study recommended that among other things that Nigerian Government should invest in modernizing the national grid, reducing transmission losses, and expanding decentralized power solutions such as mini-grids and embedded generation to improve electricity access for industries

1.0 INTRODUCTION

One of the impelling forces that boost industrial production and economic growth is energy. Energy is a fundamental resource in the economy. Every facet to economic activities in this planet earth requires energy in one form or the other to function effectively. Energy is an integral element in human civilization while its importance has increased geometrically during the last decade. Energy is undoubtedly a fulcrum for sustainable business, economic and financial growth in the world, especially in emerging economies like Nigeria. Nations with a higher per capita energy consumption and distributions are considered economically robust and industrialized (Enu & Havi, 2014; Umeh, Ochuba & Ugwo, 2019). Therefore, industrial sector performance is directly

related to energy consumption. Sufficient amount of energy supply as well as its efficient utilization is needed for an industry to completely experience growth and development. Though the presence of energy is not by itself an answer to the social and economic problems facing developing economies like Nigeria, the very lack of access to affordable and reliable energy services is recognized as a major problem to the development of the country (Nkoro, Ikue-Johnb & Joshua, 2019). Nigeria, Africa's largest economy, has a vast array of natural energy resources, yet energy poverty remains a major impediment to industrialization. Energy poverty is broadly defined as a lack of access to sufficient, affordable, and reliable energy for productive and domestic use. It is particularly prevalent in developing regions such as Nigeria, where limited electricity infrastructure, high energy costs, and frequent supply disruptions constrain industrial operations. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA, 2022), over 85 million Nigerians lack access to electricity, making it the country with the largest energy access deficit in the world. The unreliable power supply forces industries to rely on expensive alternatives, reducing cost-effectiveness and limiting productivity. Çelik and Polat (2024) noted that the industrial sector, which is meant to be a catalyst for economic growth and job creation, faces serious challenges due to energy poverty, thereby restricting its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Energy poverty, characterized by frequent power outages and limited energy access, disrupts production cycles and reduces output while the lack of reliable energy forces many businesses to operate below capacity, resulting in decreased productivity and lower revenue generation. In addition, energy poverty discourages industrial expansion and foreign direct investment (FDI). Investors prioritize regions with stable infrastructure, including reliable energy supply. Inadequate energy access is a key factor deterring investment in manufacturing and heavy industries in Nigeria. Without sufficient energy infrastructure, industries struggle to scale operations, limiting employment opportunities and economic diversification.

Statement of the Problem

Energy is a fundamental driver of industrial development and economic progress in any nation. It powers industries, facilitates production processes, enhances efficiency, and contributes to economic growth. However, in Nigeria, energy poverty remains a significant challenge, undermining the performance of the industrial sector and slowing down economic development. Despite various government interventions, industrialists continue to face unreliable power supply, high energy costs, and frequent disruptions in production activities. The inability of the energy sector to meet industrial demand has forced many businesses to either close operations or operate at reduced capacity, leading to job losses and reduced economic output. One of the major concerns is the high cost of self-generated power. Studies have shown that Nigerian industries spend an estimated 40% of their production costs on alternative energy sources, particularly diesel-powered

generators. This increases the cost of production and reduces profit margins, making Nigerian products less competitive in both domestic and international markets. Furthermore, the dependence on fossil fuels contributes to environmental degradation and climate change, further compounding the energy crisis. Another critical issue is the infrastructural deficit in the energy sector. Nigeria's electricity generation capacity, estimated at about 13,000 MW, is grossly inadequate for a country with a population exceeding 200 million people. However, actual power supply is often below 4,000 MW due to transmission losses, poor maintenance, and grid collapse (IEA, 2022). This energy gap has negatively impacted industrial expansion, technological advancement, and job creation. Interestingly, some empirical studies have emerged on the link between energy poverty and economic growth (Obafemi & Ifere, 2014; Oshio, Owenvbiugie & Chukwuemeka, 2024; Çelik & Polat, 2024; Temitope, Bosede, Mathew & Olawale, 2024; Atoyebi, Ajibare, Usman, Afolabi, Oduola & Nicodemus, 2023; Afaha & Ifarajimi, 2021; Aigheyisi & Oligbi, 2020; Singh & Inglesi-Lotz, 2020). However, none of these studies examined how industrial sector performance in Nigeria is affected by energy poverty. It is against this backdrop that this study empirically examined the effect of energy poverty on industrial sector performance in Nigeria from 1990 to 2023. Specifically, the study empirically ascertained the effect of access to electricity, electricity tariff, access to clean fuels and technologies as well as renewable energy consumption on industrial output in Nigeria.

2.0 Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Energy Poverty

Energy poverty is a multidimensional concept encompassing insufficient access to energy for basic human activities such as lighting, cooking, heating, and productive economic activities (Nussbaumer, Bazilian & Modi, 2012). Li, Pan and Wei (2014) defined energy poverty as the deprivation of access to modern energy services, affecting social and economic well-being, particularly in rural and underdeveloped regions. According to Barnes and Floor (2016), energy poverty refers to a situation where households are unable to access sufficient energy to meet their basic needs, including lighting, heating, and cooking, at an affordable cost. Energy poverty is described as the absence of adequate, affordable, and reliable access to energy necessary for essential services, such as lighting, heating, and productive uses (Modi, McDade, Lallement & Saghir, 2015). According to Day, Walker, and Simcock (2016), energy poverty is defined as a condition in which individuals or households are unable to obtain adequate energy services to support a decent standard of living and participation in society.

Determinants of Energy Poverty

Energy poverty is influenced by a variety of economic, social, geographical, and political factors. One of the determinants of energy poverty is income levels and affordability: Low-income households often cannot afford the upfront costs of connecting to electricity grids or purchasing modern energy appliances. They also struggle with the recurring costs of energy consumption. In developing countries like Nigeria, many families, especially in the rural areas, rely on biomass (e.g., firewood and charcoal) because it is cheaper, despite being inefficient and environmentally harmful. Another determinant of energy poverty is energy prices and market conditions. High energy prices, driven by market dynamics or subsidies on fossil fuels, can make modern energy services unaffordable for vulnerable populations. Fluctuations in global oil and gas prices also affect energy affordability. In Nigeria, the high cost of diesel and petrol for generator use has exacerbated energy poverty among both urban and rural populations (International Energy Agency, 2015). In addition, lack of investment in energy infrastructure, such as power plants, transmission lines, and distribution networks, limits access to reliable and modern energy services. Nigeria's power sector struggles with outdated infrastructure, leading to frequent blackouts and an inability to meet the country's energy demands. Also, rural and remote areas are often more affected by energy poverty due to the higher costs and logistical challenges of extending energy services to these locations. Rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, rely heavily on traditional biomass for cooking due to a lack of grid-connected electricity (Barnes & Floor, 2016). In furtherance, a lack of education about the benefits of modern energy and how to access it can perpetuate reliance on inefficient and traditional energy sources. In some regions, communities are unaware of alternative energy solutions such as solar power, which can provide sustainable and affordable energy. More importantly, rapid population growth and urbanization increase energy demand, often outpacing the capacity of existing energy infrastructure. Lastly, a reliance on biomass, such as wood and charcoal, is a major determinant of energy poverty, as it reflects limited access to cleaner and more efficient energy sources. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), over 60% of Nigeria's population relies on biomass for cooking, contributing to deforestation and health issues (Aigheyisi & Oligbi, 2020).

Industrial Sector

The industrial sector comprises firms and companies operating in manufacturing capital goods and machinery that are used for producing other goods. The industrial sector comprises of different sector of the economy which involves manufacturing sector, agricultural sector, mining sector, oil and gas, banking sector and services among others. Industrial policy is a set of programme initiated by the government aimed at fast tracking the development of a particular sector. The industrial sector is one of the major sectors

in the economy because of the role it plays in development and growth process of a nation. The industrial sector has the capacity to lead the economy in terms of employment creation, foreign earnings, export promotion and growth enhancement (Aza & Dodo, 2014). The industrial sector, according to the Central Bank of Nigeria (2012) consists of crude petroleum and natural gas; solid minerals (including coal mining, metal ores, quarrying and other mining activities) and manufacturing (including oil refining, cement production, food beverages and tobacco; textiles, apparel and footwear; wood and wood products; pulp, paper and publishing; non-metallic products; domestic/industrial plastic and rubber; electrical and electronics; basic metal, iron and steel; motor vehicle and miscellaneous assembly). The manufacturing sub-sector consists of large, medium, small and micro enterprises. Inability of large-scale industrialization policy to propel the growth of the industrial sector in Nigeria informed the policy shift to small-scale industrialization policy.

Challenges of Industrial Sector in Nigeria

The first major challenge of industrial sector in Nigeria is Infrastructure. The state of infrastructure in Nigeria has been one which is grossly inadequate and declines over the years. There is poor and epileptic power supply made production to be very expensive and almost comatose in some cases. Availability of potable water is also a problem facing the Nigerian economy in which a sizeable number of individuals are not able to get adequate access to clean water. Transportation especially road networks has equally depreciated making transportation to be a herculean task for the industry. Security is another major challenge to industry. Internal security particularly religious and ethnic disturbance, kidnapping and theft have had negative and debilitating effects on the economic environment and businesses in general. Security challenges drive businesses away and affects the citizenry negatively. Another major problem of the Nigerian industrial sector is the inadequacy or unavailability of raw materials for its production. This poses a huge challenge to the sector and hampers production. Again, the importation of raw materials is very cost-effective and oftentimes, industries run at a loss because sales may not match up with expenditure. Lastly, most of the government policies and laws are not favorable for industries to easily thrive. This poses a setback to the industry because most terms cannot be met as a result of unfavorable conditions. This hampers the smooth running of the industry.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Energy Transition Theory. Hosier and Dowd (1987) and Leach (1992) as the proponents of this theory linked the nature of energy consumed to income. Energy Transition Theory explains the process of shifting from one dominant energy source to another over time. Historically, societies have moved from biomass to coal, then

to oil and natural gas, and more recently to renewable energy sources. Energy is argued to be one of the main drivers of modern economy especially across countries that have witnessed rapid growth in recent years. The theory explains that the type of energy consumed by a nation strongly depends on the level of per capita income. Drawing from consumer theory, the theory posits that as income increases, energy consumers tend to transit from traditional or inferior energy to modern energy due to ease of use and comfort. The theory holds that there is a direct link between level of income and energy consumption; high income countries tend to consume more quality energy than poor countries. Furthermore, Energy Transition theory maintains that poor access to modern energy limits a nation's potentials to reduce poverty and ensure sustainable growth. This is because access to energy is central to any poverty reduction drive (Pachauri & Spreng, 2004) as energy deprivation inhibits production and limits level of economic activities (Kaygusuz, 2011; Sovacool, 2012). Nigeria faces energy poverty, characterized by limited access to affordable, reliable electricity and clean energy sources. According to Energy Transition Theory, energy access plays a crucial role in industrialization, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. The theory helps explain the impact of energy poverty on Nigeria's industrial sector in different ways. First, energy shortages and unreliable electricity supply force industries to rely on expensive alternatives like diesel generators, increasing production costs and reducing competitiveness. The lack of stable electricity discourages investment in manufacturing and limits industrial expansion. Also, Nigeria still heavily depends on oil and gas, with slow adoption of renewable energy sources in the industrial sector. Transitioning to cleaner and more efficient energy sources could reduce energy costs, improve environmental performance, and enhance industrial efficiency.

Empirical Review

Oshio, Owenvbiogie and Chukwuemeka (2024) examined the effects of energy poverty on daily operations of small businesses in select quarters in Benn City, Edo State. A total of ten (10) small businesses were randomly sampled using questionnaire method across ten (10) quarters in the study area. The study found that majority of business owners (49.2%) rely on electricity grid supply for their daily operations. On whether electricity grid supply is reliable, 49.3% reported that supply is inconsistent (on and off), while 35.4% reported that supply is inadequate for their businesses. A total of 38.6% of the sampled respondents reported that electricity grid supply is only available for a period of 4-5hr/day in their quarters, 28.5% reported 6-10hr/day in other quarters, while 22.9% reported that supply is only available for less than 3hrs/day in their quarters. In terms of the effect of poor electricity grid supply on business operations, declining income level ranked highest (35.3%), followed by extra expenses incurred by business owners on alternative electricity

supply especially power generating set popularly known as gen set (24.8%) and low patronage of clients especially soft drink and beer parlour businesses (17.5%).

Çelik and Polat (2024) investigated the linkage between energy access and economic growth in D-8 nations. The data set covered the period from 1990 to 2021 and is annual in frequency. The methodology employed includes PANIC and CIPS unit root and Durbin-Hausman co-integration tests. A co-integration relationship was found in the model, and AMG (Augmented Mean Group) was used to perform long-run coefficient estimates. After the coefficient estimation results, the study found no statistically significant relationship between energy poverty and economic growth. The energy factor should be used more effectively in poverty reduction. In particular, expanding renewable energy sources will also contribute positively to sustainable growth.

Temitope, Bosede, Mathew and Olawale (2024) examined the effects of traditional energy consumption and poverty on the health status of rural dwellers in Nigeria. The study employed a primary survey and collects data from 1044 respondents in three (3) senatorial districts in Osun State, Nigeria. Initial findings revealed that the socio-economic conditions of households in rural areas in Osun state are significant in explaining traditional energy consumption. Additional findings further revealed that income as a proxy for poverty and energy consumption for cooking and lighting is significant in explaining the health status of rural dwellers in Nigeria.

Atoyebi, Ajibare, Usman, Afolabi, Oduola and Nicodemus (2023) empirically investigated the relationship between energy poverty and economic growth in Nigeria from 1990 to 2021. Quantitative methodology was employed and secondary data obtained from the Central Bank of Nigeria, the National Bureau of Statistics. The study used descriptive statistics and ordinary least squares (OLS). The OLS regression results showed a statistically significant positive relationship between access to electricity and economic growth, with a coefficient estimate of 0.83 and a p-value of 0.000.

Afaha and Ifarajimi (2021) determined the short and long-run effects of energy poverty and climate change on economic growth and to theoretically described the driving factors of household energy poverty status using the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) dataset, 2018. The Autoregressive Distributed Lagged (ARDL) model was used to estimate variables based on data from 1980 to 2018. The results indicate that energy poverty has a negative or inverse relationship with the GDP growth; energy imports contribute an average of ten percent to the value of the GDP growth. Traditional and dangerous forms of energy use are predominant in Nigerian households. Aigheyisi and Oligbi (2020) examined the development effect of energy poverty in the country. The S-estimation method of the robust least squares estimator was employed for analysis of annual time series data spanning the period from 1990 to 2017. The study

found that energy poverty adversely affects the nation's economic development, implying that improved access to electricity is development-enhancing.

Singh and Inglesi-Lotz (2020) examined empirically the role of energy poverty in economic growth in the sub-Saharan region. The empirical analysis was based on fixed effects panel data estimation as well as a Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) estimation from 1990 to 2016. The empirical investigation found that access to electricity is a positive contributor to this group of countries' economic growth, with relatively low impact on a direct basis.

Ekone and Amaghionyeodiwe (2020) assessed the effect of renewable energy consumption on economic growth in Nigeria for the period 1990 to 2016. Data collected were analysed using both descriptive analysis and econometric technique, which included unit root, correlation, co-integration, regression, and granger causality tests. The result showed that although renewable energy consumption and economic growth increased between 1990 and 2016 in Nigeria, renewable energy consumption had no significant positive impact on economic growth in Nigeria. Furthermore, there was no causality between renewable energy consumption and economic growth in Nigeria during the period of study.

Khan and Rehan (2020) structure the relationship between energy consumption, economic growth and carbon dioxide emissions in Pakistan using annual time series data from 1965 to 2015. The estimated results of ARDL indicated that energy consumption and economic growth increase the CO₂ emissions in Pakistan both in short run and long run. Obafemi and Ifere (2014) examined incidence of energy poverty in Nigeria and considered an apt remediation for this state of affairs. Using random sampling, households were surveyed in six states of Nigeria and Abuja Federal Capital Territory across the six geopolitical zones. Electricity tariffs, energy gaps between the high and low income earners, energy spending needs and incomes against a fixed threshold were investigated. A comparison from the income earned showed that above 10 percent of income earned are spent on energy; that both the high and low income earners are energy poor, but the low are more severely hit. The results also showed that the energy poverty from high energy cost and inefficiency fuels income inequality.

3.0 Methodology

Considering the nature of this study, an ex-post facto design research was adopted. Also, secondary data which were annual time series in nature were used in our analysis. The data covered a period of thirty-four (34) years ranging from 1990 to 2023. These data were sourced from Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), statistical bulletin, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reports and World Bank Development indicators.

Model Specification

Theoretically, the model for this study was based on the Energy Transition theory. Empirically, the model for this study was adapted from the work of Aigheyisi and Oligbi (2020). This model was adapted in line with the broad aim and specific objectives of this study with slight modifications in order to capture the effect of energy poverty on industrial sector performance in Nigeria.

Functionally, the model is specified as:

$$IDO = f(AEP_t, ETR_t, ACFT_t, REC_t) \quad (1)$$

The functional relationship in equation 1 is stated in mathematical form as follows:

$$IDO_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 AEP_t + \beta_2 ETR_t + \beta_3 ACFT_t + \beta_4 REC_t \quad (2)$$

Equation 2 is stated in explicit form to enhance its estimation as follows:

$$IDO_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 AEP_t + \beta_2 ETR_t + \beta_3 ACFT_t + \beta_4 REC_t + \varepsilon_{1t} \quad (3)$$

Equation 3 is stated in log linear form to enhance its estimation as follows:

$$IDO_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \ln AEP_t + \beta_2 \ln ETR_t + \beta_3 \ln ACFT_t + \beta_4 \ln REC_t + \varepsilon_{1t} \quad (4)$$

A Priori Expectation: $\beta_1 > 0$; $\beta_2 < 0$; $\beta_3 > 0$; $\beta_4 > 0$

The long run Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model specifications of the above model is stated as;

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \ln(AEP_t) = & \delta_0 + \beta_{1i} \Delta \ln(AEP_{t-1}) + \beta_{2i} \Delta \ln(ETR_{t-1}) + \beta_{3i} \Delta \ln(ACFT_{t-1}) \\ & + \beta_{4i} \Delta \ln(REC_{t-1}) \\ & + \sum_{t=1}^p \alpha_{1i} \Delta \ln(AEP_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{2i} \Delta \ln(ETR_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{3i} \Delta \ln(ACFT_{t-1}) \\ & + \sum_{t=1}^p \alpha_{4i} \Delta \ln(REC_{t-1}) + \varepsilon_{1i} \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

The short run Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model specifications is stated as;

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \ln(AEP_t) = & \beta_0 + \sum_{t=1}^p \alpha_{1i} \Delta \ln(AEP_{t-1}) + \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{2i} \Delta \ln(ETR_{t-1}) \\ & + \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{3i} \Delta \ln(ACFT_{t-1}) + \\ & \sum_{t=1}^q \alpha_{4i} \Delta \ln(REC_{t-1}) + \varphi ECT_{t-1} \\ & + \varepsilon_{1i} \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

Where: IDO = Industrial Output, AEP = Access to electricity (% of the Population), ETR = Electricity tariff, ACFT = Access to clean fuels and technologies (% of population), REC = Renewable energy consumption (% of total final energy consumption), β_0 = Constant variable, Δ = Difference operator and indicates the optimum lag, t = Time lag, δ_0

= Constant variable, $\beta_1 - \beta_4$ = Long-run dynamic coefficients of the model, $\alpha_1 - \alpha_4$ = Short-run dynamic coefficients of the model, φ = Speed of adjustment which is expected to be negative, ECT = Lagged error correction term obtained from the estimated cointegration model, ε_{1i} = Error term.

Description and Operational Measures of Variables

The variables of this study are classified as dependent variable and independent variable. Industrial sector performance is the dependent variable and it is measured by industrial output. On the other hand, energy poverty is the independent variables and its proxies include: access to electricity, electricity tariff, access to clean fuels and technologies as well as renewable energy consumption. These variables are briefly explained as follow:

Dependent Variable

Industrial Output: This is the total value of goods and services produced by industrial sector in Nigeria within a given period. This includes manufacturing, mining, construction, and utilities. It is often measured using industrial production indices, gross value added, or as a percentage contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Independent Variable

Access to Electricity (% of the Population): This is the percentage of Nigeria's population that has reliable and stable electricity supply for domestic, industrial, and commercial use. Access to electricity is crucial for improving quality of life, supporting businesses, and driving industrialization.

Electricity Tariff: This is the price per unit of electricity consumed by residential, commercial, and industrial users in Nigeria. It is usually expressed in kilowatt-hours (kWh) and is determined by various factors such as fuel costs, power generation, transmission, distribution, government subsidies, and market regulations.

Access to Clean Fuels and Technologies (% of Population): This indicator measures the percentage of the population that has access to and uses clean cooking fuels (such as liquefied petroleum gas, natural gas, biogas, and electricity) and clean technologies for household and industrial energy consumption.

Renewable Energy Consumption (% of Total Final Energy Consumption): This refers to the proportion of a country's total energy consumption derived from renewable sources, such as solar, wind, hydro, biomass, and geothermal energy. It is an important measure in energy transition and sustainability goals, indicating the extent to which a country is shifting away from fossil fuels toward cleaner and more sustainable energy sources.

Data Analysis Technique

This study adopted the Autoregressive Distributive Lag (ARDL) technique estimate the short run and long run dynamic relationship between energy poverty and industrial sector performance in Nigeria. Mixed stationarity of order zero $I(0)$ and order one $I(1)$ from the unit root test results is the justification for the adoption of Autoregressive Distributive Lag (ARDL) approach in this study.

4.0 Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The section presents the result of the descriptive statistical analysis as follows:

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Industrial Output (IDO), Access to Electricity (AEP), Electricity Tariff (ETR), Access to Clean Fuels and Technologies (ACFT) and renewable energy consumption (REC)

	IDO	AEP	ETR	ACFT	REC
Mean	13115.06	47.81853	28.65588	2.823529	86.71529
Median	13246.85	49.06500	19.42000	1.840000	86.81500
Maximum	16742.15	59.30000	98.56000	8.190000	89.22000
Minimum	9845.970	27.30000	11.40000	0.220000	82.96000
Std. Dev.	2083.595	8.257616	22.33109	2.455255	1.533626
Skewness	-0.017064	-0.501193	2.002658	0.764915	-0.545265
Kurtosis	1.677652	2.388098	6.176617	2.225810	2.818230
Jarque-Bera	2.478840	1.953868	37.02238	4.164647	1.731583
Probability	0.289552	0.376464	0.000000	0.124640	0.420718
Sum	445912.0	1625.830	974.3000	96.00000	2948.320
Sum Sq. Dev.	1.43E+08	2250.211	16456.36	198.9332	77.61625
Observations	34	34	34	34	34

Source: Author's Computation (2025)

The results of the descriptive statistics as presented in table 1 showed that industrial output (IDO) recorded an average value of ₦13115.06 billion with a maximum of ₦16742.15 billion and minimum of ₦9845.97billion during the period 1990 – 2023. The industrial output (IDO) has a Jarque-Bera value of 2.478 with a probability value of 0.289 which shows that it is normally distributed. In addition, access to electricity stood at 47.82% an average with minimum rate of 27.3% and maximum rate of 59.3%. The access to electricity (AEP) has a Jarque-Bera value of 1.953 with a probability value of 0.376 which shows that it is normally distributed. Also, electricity tariff (ETR) recorded an average value of 28.66 with a minimum of 11.4 and a maximum of 98.56. The electricity tariff (ETR) has a Jarque-Bera value of 37.02 with a probability value of 0.000 which shows that it is not normally distributed. During the period under review, access to clean fuels

and technologies (ACFT) on an average stood at 2.82% with a minimum value of 1.84% and a maximum of 8.19%. The access to clean fuels and technologies (ACFT) has a Jarque-Bera value of 4.165 with a probability value of 0.125 which shows that it is normally distributed. Lastly, renewable energy consumption (REC) during the period under review averaged 86.71% with a minimum of 82.96%, a maximum of 89.22%. The renewable energy consumption (REC) has a Jarque-Bera value of 1.732 with a probability value of 0.421 which shows that it is not normally distributed.

Unit Root Test

The variables in the model are tested to ascertain the presence or absence of unit root using Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) approach. The results are summarized in Table 2:

Table 2: Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) Test Results

Variables	ADF	Mackinnon Critical Value @ 5%	P-value (Prob.*)	Decision	Order of Integration
At Levels					
LOG(IDO)	-0.968685	-2.954021	0.7527	Non-stationary	
LOG(AEP)	-3.315922	-2.967767	0.0233	Stationary	
LOG(ETR)	1.002204	-2.954021	0.9956	Non-stationary	
LOG(ACFT)	-4.474642	-2.954021	0.0012	Stationary	
LOG(REC)	-2.274499	-2.954021	0.1857	Non-stationary	
At First Difference					
LOG(IDO)	4.742636	-2.957110	0.0006	Stationary	I(1)
LOG(AEP)	-	-	-	-	I(0)
LOG(ETR)	6.225624	-2.957110	0.0000	Stationary	I(1)
LOG(ACFT)	-	-	-	-	I(0)
LOG(REC)	-5.953973	-2.957110	0.0000	Stationary	I(1)

Source: Author's Computation (2025)

From Table 2 above, the Mackinnon critical value for rejection of unit root hypotheses indicates that access to electricity (AEP) and access to clean fuels and technologies (ACFT) are stationary at levels and as such integrated of order zero, I(0). Furthermore, industrial output (IDO), electricity tariff (ETR) and renewable energy consumption (REC) are stationary after first differencing and as such, they are integrated of order one, I(1). Given that variables are integrated at order 1(0) and order 1(1), the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) estimation technique becomes the most appropriate method.

Table 3: VAR Lag Order Selection Criteria

Lag	LogL	LR	FPE	AIC	SC	HQ
0	-1100.407	NA	2.00e+19	61.46714	61.73104	61.55924
1	-954.9233	234.3924	4.69e+16	55.38465	57.23206*	56.02945
2	-891.6062	80.90541*	1.23e+16	53.86721	57.29797	55.06451
3	-870.3426	66.04723	1.01e+16	53.31554	56.31538	55.99216
4	-856.6711	32.99424	2.16e+16*	53.92616*	58.94066	55.67635*

Source: Author's Computation (2025)

The results of the lag selection order criteria as reported in Table 3 indicates that the optimal lag length of one, that is, $p^* = 4$ is selected. As a result, all subsequent analyses were carried out using the optimal lag length of four.

ARDL Bounds Cointegration Test

The result of ARDL cointegration test is presented in Table 4:

Table 4: ARDL Bound Cointegration Test Result

Test Statistic	Value	K
F-statistic	5.875673	4
Significance	Lower Bound [I(0)]	Upper Bound [I(1)]
10%	2.2	3.09
5%	2.56	3.49
2.5%	2.88	3.87
1%	3.29	4.37

Source: Author's Computation (2025).

The ARDL bound cointegration test result as presented in Table 4 shows that the value of F-statistics which is 5.875673 is greater than the upper bound critical value and the lower bound critical value both at 5%, indicating that there is cointegration among the variables in the model, that is, there is a cointegration among industrial output (IDO), access to electricity (AEP), electricity tariff (ETR), access to clean fuels and technologies (ACFT) and renewable energy consumption (REC). This means that access to electricity (AEP), electricity tariff (ETR), access to clean fuels and technologies (ACFT) and renewable energy consumption (REC) are good determinants of industrial output (IDO) in the long run.

Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) Model Estimation

Short Run ARDL Model Estimation

The short run ARDL model is estimated in this section and the results obtained are hereby presented in Table 5:

Table 5: ARDL Error Correction Result

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.*
Dependent Variable = LOG(IDO)				
DLOG(IDO(-1))	0.304018	0.203137	1.496614	0.1509
DLOG(AEP)	0.614470	0.173226	3.547218	0.0022
DLOG(ETR)	-0.683094	0.187340	-3.646283	0.0017
DLOG(ETR(-1))	0.374313	0.166012	2.254739	0.0361
DLOG(ACFT)	2.664936	0.406262	6.559643	0.0000
DLOG(REC)	0.118094	0.150243	0.786021	0.4415
CointEq(-1)*	-0.380648	0.081883	-4.648685	0.0002
$R^2 = 0.748535$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.696147$; Durbin-Watson stat = 2.538902				

Source: Authors' Computation (2025)

Interpretation of the Parameters

The coefficient of access to electricity (0.614470) indicates that there is a positive relationship between access to electricity and industrial output. This means that industrial output will increase by 0.614470 given a unit increase in access to electricity in the short run. On the other hand, the coefficient of electricity tariff (-0.683094) indicates that electricity tariff has a negative relationship with industrial output in the short run. This means that industrial output will decrease by 0.683094 given a unit increase in electricity tariff in the short run. Moreover, the coefficient of access to clean fuels and technologies (2.664936) indicates that access to clean fuels and technologies has a positive effect on industrial output. This means that industrial output will increase by 2.664936 given a unit increase in access to clean fuels and technologies in the short run. Lastly, the coefficient of renewable energy consumption (0.118094) indicates that renewable energy consumption positively influenced industrial output. This means that industrial output will increase by 0.118094 given a unit increase in renewable energy consumption in the short run.

Significance of Individual Parameters [T-statistics (Prob. values)]

This tests statistical significance of the individual parameter in the model at 5% level of significance. From short run ARDL result, since the p-value for access to electricity of 0.0022 is less than the alpha value of 0.05, we therefore conclude that access to electricity is statistically significant. Also, since the p-value for electricity tariff of 0.0017 is less than the alpha value of 0.05, we therefore conclude that electricity tariff is statistically significant. Moreover, since the p-value for access to clean fuels and technologies of 0.0000 is less than the alpha value of 0.05, we therefore conclude that access to clean fuels and technologies is statistically significant. Lastly, since the p-value for renewable

energy consumption of 0.4415 is greater than the alpha value of 0.05, we therefore conclude that renewable energy consumption is not statistically significant.

Interpretation of Adjusted R-Squared

From the estimated ARDL short-run results, the adjusted R-squared value is 0.696147. This shows that if the coefficient of determination is adjusted, approximately seventy percent (70%) of the changes in industrial output are attributable to changes access to electricity, electricity tariff, access to clean fuels and technologies, and renewable energy consumption while the remaining thirty percent (30%) of the variation in the model is captured by the error term (unknown factors outside the model).

Interpretation of CointEq(-1) Values

Lastly, the result of the CointEq(-1) in Table 5 above, shows that the coefficient of the error correction term is significant and negative. In other words, the negative sign justifies its significance. This implies that the CointEq(-1)* will be effective to correct any deviations from the long-run equilibrium. The coefficient of the CointEq(-1)* at 0.380648 also indicates that the speed of adjustment to long run equilibrium is 38% when any past deviation will be corrected in the present period. This means that the present value of industrial output adjusts rather rapidly to changes in access to electricity, electricity tariff, access to clean fuels and technologies, and renewable energy consumption.

Long Run ARDL Model Estimation

The long run ARDL model is estimated in this section and the results obtained are hereby presented in Table 6:

Table 6: Result of Error Correction Model

Dependent Variable: LOG(IDO)				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.*
LOG(AEP)	0.281846	0.019286	14.61373	0.0000
LOG(ETR)	-0.089491	0.024526	-3.648833	0.0017
LOG(ACFT)	3.108392	0.400658	7.758208	0.0000
LOG(REC)	0.087441	0.108511	0.805828	0.4303
C	23.63788	1.909343	12.38011	0.0000

Source: Authors' Computation (2025).

Interpretation of the Parameters

The coefficient of access to electricity (0.281846) indicates that industrial output is positively improved by access to electricity. This means that industrial output will increase by 0.281846 given a unit increase in access to electricity in the long run. On the other

hand, the coefficient of electricity tariff (-0.089491) indicates that there is a negative relationship between electricity tariff and industrial output in the long run. This means that industrial output will decrease by 0.089491 given a unit increase in electricity tariff in the long run. Moreover, the coefficient of access to clean fuels and technologies (3.108392) indicates access to clean fuels and technologies has a positive impact on industrial output. This means that industrial output will increase by 3.108392 given a unit increase in access to clean fuels and technologies in the long run. Lastly, the coefficient of renewable energy consumption (0.087441) indicates that there is a positive relationship between renewable energy consumption and industrial output. This means that industrial output will increase by 0.087441 given a unit increase in renewable energy consumption in the long run.

Significance of Individual Parameters [T-statistics (Prob. values)]

This tests statistical significance of the individual parameter in the model at 5% level of significance. From the long run ARDL result, since the p-value for access to electricity of 0.0000 is less than the alpha value of 0.05, we therefore conclude that access to electricity is statistically significant. Also, since the p-value for electricity tariff of 0.0017 is less than the alpha value of 0.05, we therefore conclude that electricity tariff is statistically significant. Moreover, from the ARDL result, since the p-value for access to clean fuels and technologies of 0.0000 is less than the alpha value of 0.05, we therefore conclude that access to clean fuels and technologies is statistically significant. Lastly, since the p-value for renewable energy consumption of 0.4303 is greater than the alpha value of 0.05, we therefore conclude that renewable energy consumption is not statistically significant.

Diagnostic Tests

The results of diagnostic tests are presented below:

Table 7: Diagnostic Tests Results

Test	F-Statistic	Probabilit y	Null Hypothesis	Decision
Normality Test	2.570742	0.276548	H₀ : Normally distributed	Retain H ₀
Serial Correlation LM Test	3.060957	0.0732	H₀ : No serial correlation	Retain H ₀
Heteroskedasticity Test	0.281282	0.9778	H₀ : Homoscedasticity	Retain H ₀
Ramsey RESET test	0.728663	0.4045	H₀ : Correctly specified	Retain H ₀

Source: Authors' Computation (2025)

The Jarque Bera (Normality) test result in Table 7 shows that the model is normally distributed. Also, the Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM test result indicates that the model has no serial correlation problem. Additionally, the Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey heteroskedasticity test result reveals that the model has homoscedasticity. This implies

that relevant variables were not omitted. Lastly, the Ramsey RESET test result shows that the model is correctly specified. This implies that the functional form of the model is correct. In conclusion, diagnostic test results provided evidence that all the variables (industrial output, access to electricity, electricity tariff, access to clean fuels and technologies, and renewable energy consumption) in our model conform to the basic assumptions of ordinary least squares estimation.

Discussion of Findings

The study determined the effect of energy poverty on industrial sector performance in Nigeria. The findings of the study showed that access to electricity has a significant positive impact on industrial output in Nigeria. This result is also in agreement with the finding of Singh and Inglesi-Lotz (2020) who found that access to electricity is a positive contributor to economic growth in the sub-Saharan region. Also, Atoyebi, Ajibare, Usman, Afolabi, Oduola and Nicodemus (2023) established that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between access to electricity and economic growth in Nigeria. Furthermore, findings from this study showed that there is a negative and significant effect of electricity tariff on industrial output in Nigeria. This result is also related to the finding of Afaha and Ifarajimi (2021) who found that energy poverty as proxied by electricity tariff has a negative or inverse relationship with the GDP growth. In addition, the findings from this study showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between access to clean fuels and technologies and industrial output in Nigeria. The finding is also related to the finding of Çelik and Polat (2024) who affirmed that access to clean fuels and technologies (% of population) has a significant positive effect on economic growth in D-8 nations. Lastly, findings from this study showed that there is a positive and non-significant relationship between renewable energy consumption and industrial output in Nigeria. This result is also supported by the result of Ekone and Amaghionyeodiwe (2020) who found that renewable energy consumption had no significant impact on economic growth in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study has empirically determined the impact of energy poverty on industrial sector performance in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study therefore concludes that energy poverty is having a significant impact on industrial sector performance in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proffered based on the findings of this study:

- i. Nigerian Government should invest in modernizing the national grid, reducing transmission losses, and expanding decentralized power solutions such as mini-grids and embedded generation to improve electricity access for industries.

- ii. The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) should adopt a cost-reflective yet competitive tariff structure that balances affordability for industries with sustainability for electricity providers.
- iii. Policies should support tax incentives and subsidies for industries adopting clean energy technologies such as natural gas, biofuels, and energy-efficient machinery.
- iv. The government should implement policies that encourage industrial players to integrate renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydropower into their operations through feed-in tariffs, tax exemptions, and low-interest loans.

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SECTION G

TECHNICAL/TECHNOLOGY PERSPECTIVES

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TECHNOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENT

By

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&

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Abstract

This essay explored the technological perspective on development of Nigeria. As Africa's most populous country, Nigeria possesses a unique opportunity to leverage its young, tech-savvy population and growing digital ecosystem to drive innovation, create jobs and foster sustainable economic development. The study examined key sectors within Nigeria's tech landscape, including fintech, e-commerce, agritech and healthtech, which have seen significant growth in recent years. Despite these advancements, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited access to capital, regulatory hurdles and a shortage of skilled talent continue to impede the full potential of the sector. This paper highlighted the importance of strategic investments in infrastructure, human capital, and regulatory reforms to create a supportive environment for tech entrepreneurship. It also discussed the role of government and private-sector collaboration in addressing these challenges and promoting innovation. The findings revealed that, by prioritizing digital infrastructure, improving access to funding and fostering a more inclusive and skilled workforce, Nigeria can position itself as a leading hub for tech innovation in Africa and globally. Ultimately, the paper underscored the importance of developing Nigeria's tech industries as a vital component of its broader economic transformation strategy.

Keywords: Nigeria, tech industries, economic growth, fintech, e-commerce, agritech, healthtech, innovation, infrastructure, entrepreneurship, digital economy.

Introduction

Nigeria, often referred to as the "giant of Africa," stands at a critical juncture in its pursuit of sustainable development. With a rapidly growing population, dynamic youth demography and abundant natural resources, the country has immense potential to accelerate its development. However, Nigeria's progress has been hampered by various challenges, including political instability, infrastructural deficits and economic inequality.

In recent years, technology has emerged as a key driver of development, offering innovative solutions to these persistent issues.

From digital financial services and e-commerce platforms to technological advancements in agriculture and healthcare, the adoption of cutting-edge technologies is reshaping Nigeria's developmental trajectory. The proliferation of mobile phones and the expansion of Internet access have played pivotal roles in connecting previously underserved communities, enabling new opportunities for education, business and governance. The rise of tech hubs in cities like Lagos and Abuja signals a growing recognition of the potential of technology to solve complex socio-economic challenges.

In this context, this essay examines the technological dimensions of Nigeria's development, focusing on how innovations in sectors like fintech, agritech, edtech and health tech are influencing the country's growth prospects. By analyzing the interplay between technology and socio-economic factors, the discussion seeks to highlight both the opportunities and challenges that come with leveraging technology for national development.

Recent studies underscore the importance of technology in Nigeria's development. According to a 2023 report by the World Bank, the country's digital economy has the potential to contribute up to 10% of GDP by 2030, driven by mobile Internet adoption and digital financial services (World Bank, 2023). Additionally, research from McKinsey & Company points to the growing influence of artificial intelligence (AI) and big data in transforming industries such as agriculture, where AI-driven platforms are increasing yields and improving supply chain efficiency (McKinsey & Company, 2022). Despite these opportunities, challenges such as digital literacy gaps, inadequate infrastructure and regulatory constraints remain significant barriers to fully harnessing technology for development.

Leveraging Technology for Economic Growth in Nigeria's Development

In the contemporary global economy, technological innovation is increasingly recognized as a critical driver of sustainable economic growth. For Nigeria, leveraging technology has become essential not only to accelerate its development but also to overcome long-standing challenges, such as poverty, unemployment and infrastructural deficits. As the country grapples with issues of economic diversification and industrialization, technology offers viable solutions to unlock new sources of growth and enhance the productivity of existing sectors.

The Role of Technology in Nigeria's Economic Growth

Technological innovation in Nigeria is already having a transformative impact on key sectors, such as agriculture, finance, manufacturing and healthcare. These sectors, while diverse, are interconnected through the digital ecosystem that is rapidly expanding in the

country. As of 2023, Nigeria is the largest digital economy in Africa, with a projected growth rate of 15.2% annually, according to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). Digital services and e-commerce have become critical drivers of Nigeria's economic activity, providing opportunities for new businesses, jobs and efficiencies across industries.

Agriculture, for example, which is a cornerstone of Nigeria's economy, has been greatly enhanced by the introduction of agritech innovations. Platforms using satellite imagery, IoT sensors and machine learning are being utilized to improve crop yields, monitor soil health and optimize supply chains. These technologies have the potential to increase productivity and food security while addressing the challenges of a growing population. As reported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 2023, the integration of technology into Nigerian agriculture could boost productivity by up to 30% over the next decade (FAO, 2023).

In the financial sector, Nigeria has witnessed a rapid rise in fintech innovation, with mobile money platforms, digital banking services and blockchain technology revolutionizing access to financial services. Mobile money, in particular, has enabled millions of Nigerians who were previously excluded from the formal banking system to engage in economic activities. According to a 2022 report by PwC, the Nigerian fintech sector has grown by over 50% in the last three years, driven by innovations like mobile wallets, payment gateways and peer-to-peer lending platforms (PwC, 2022). This growth has allowed businesses to access financing, individuals to send and receive money with ease, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to expand their operations.

Technology and Job Creation

Another significant benefit of leveraging technology for economic growth is its capacity to create jobs. Nigeria's rapidly growing youth population is in need of sustainable employment opportunities. In recent years, the technology sector has become a major source of job creation, particularly in software development, digital marketing and tech entrepreneurship. Start-ups in cities like Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt are attracting international investment and contributing to the emergence of a vibrant tech ecosystem. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported in 2023 that over 10 million Nigerians were employed in tech-related jobs, a number expected to grow as more digital hubs are established (NBS, 2023).

Programs such as Andela, which trains African software developers and connects them to global companies, are helping bridge the skills gap in the technology sector. Similarly, Google's Digital Skills for Africa initiative has provided training to thousands of Nigerians in digital literacy, entrepreneurship and IT skills, enabling them to participate more effectively in the global digital economy. These initiatives not only provide jobs but

also enhance the long-term employability of Nigerians, especially in high-demand fields, such as cybersecurity, data analytics and artificial intelligence.

Challenges in Leveraging Technology for Growth

While the potential for technology-driven growth in Nigeria is enormous, many challenges persist. These include inadequate infrastructure, a lack of digital literacy and regulatory bottlenecks that hinder the full deployment of technology in various sectors. The country's power sector, for instance, remains one of the biggest impediments to the widespread adoption of technology. Despite significant strides in improving Internet access, frequent power outages and a lack of reliable electricity limit the ability of tech-driven businesses to scale (World Bank, 2023).

Furthermore, regulatory frameworks in emerging sectors, such as fintech and agritech are still developing, which can create uncertainty for investors and entrepreneurs. However, the Nigerian government has begun to take steps toward creating more favourable policies. The National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (2020-2030) aims to enhance the country's technological infrastructure, foster innovation and boost the digital economy's contribution to GDP by improving Internet penetration and supporting the growth of tech start-ups.

Leveraging technology for economic growth in Nigeria holds the promise of transforming the nation's economy and improving the lives of millions. The impact of digital technologies on agriculture, finance and job creation illustrates the profound potential that innovation holds for driving sustainable development. However, to fully harness the benefits of technology, the country must address key challenges, including infrastructure deficits, digital literacy gaps and regulatory barriers. With continued investment and strategic policy direction, Nigeria can become a global leader in the digital economy, utilizing technology to boost economic growth and improve socio-economic outcomes for its people.

Promoting Digital Literacy and Inclusion

Digital literacy and inclusion are fundamental to unlocking the full potential of technology for socio-economic development. In Nigeria, where technological advancements are reshaping industries and everyday life, ensuring that every citizen has the skills and access needed to participate in the digital economy is vital for inclusive growth. While Nigeria has made notable strides in expanding Internet access and mobile phone penetration, there remain significant barriers to digital literacy and inclusion, particularly for rural populations, women and disadvantaged communities. Bridging these gaps is essential for Nigeria to thrive in the global digital economy.

The Importance of Digital Literacy for Economic Empowerment

Digital literacy refers to the ability to use technology to access, evaluate and create information, and is increasingly viewed as a critical skill for both personal and professional development. In Nigeria, a country with over 200 million people and a large youth population, digital literacy plays a key role in empowering individuals, particularly in a time when much of the world's economic activity is shifting online. Digital literacy is not only about understanding how to use computers and smartphones; it is also about developing the critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary to navigate an information-heavy world.

For Nigeria, the economic opportunities created by widespread digital literacy are vast. According to a 2023 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report, there is a strong correlation between digital skills and employment opportunities, particularly in technology-driven sectors such as fintech, e-commerce, software development and data science (UNDP, 2023). In fact, the International Labour Organization (ILO) reported that digital skills are now essential in over 90% of jobs worldwide, a trend that is increasingly relevant in Nigeria, as the demand for tech-related skills continues to rise (ILO, 2023).

In Nigeria, digital literacy is particularly crucial for enhancing the participation of women and marginalized groups in the workforce. A study by McKinsey & Company in 2022 found that women are disproportionately excluded from the digital economy due to factors such as limited access to education, low digital literacy rates and socio-cultural barriers (McKinsey & Company, 2022). In a country where women make up approximately 49% of the population, ensuring that they have the skills to participate in the digital economy is essential for fostering inclusive growth and gender equality.

Digital Inclusion: Bridging the Access Gap

While digital literacy focuses on developing skills, digital inclusion is about ensuring equitable access to technology and digital services for all segments of society. Despite improvements in mobile network coverage and Internet access, significant disparities still exist between urban and rural populations, as well as among different socio-economic groups. According to World Bank (2023), Nigeria's Internet penetration stood at approximately 70% in urban areas but only 35% in rural regions. The gaps in Internet access are compounded by inadequate infrastructure, especially in remote or underserved areas.

The Nigerian government, alongside private-sector initiatives, has made strides in improving digital inclusion. For example, the National Broadband Plan (2020-2025) aims to expand high-speed Internet access to 90% of the population by 2025. However, the challenge remains significant, particularly in rural areas, where infrastructure development is slow and expensive. Mobile technology has played an essential role in

bridging this gap, with mobile phones emerging as a key tool for accessing the Internet, education and financial services.

To further promote digital inclusion, the Nigerian government has also launched programmes to increase Internet connectivity and digital infrastructure. One such initiative is the Digital Literacy Programme, which targets marginalized groups, particularly in rural areas, by providing low-cost Internet access, digital devices and training. Additionally, collaborations between mobile network providers and educational organizations have led to the creation of affordable digital learning resources, making it easier for Nigerians to acquire digital skills remotely.

Initiatives to Promote Digital Literacy and Inclusion

Many initiatives are already underway in Nigeria to promote digital literacy and inclusion:

- **Google's Digital Skills for Africa Program:** This initiative provides free online training in digital skills to Nigerians, with a focus on increasing job readiness, entrepreneurship and digital entrepreneurship. By 2023, Google had trained over 5 million people across Africa, with Nigeria accounting for a significant portion of this number (Google, 2023).
- **Andela's Training Program:** Andela is a prominent Nigerian start-up that trains young Africans to become world-class software developers and connects them to global employers. Since its inception, Andela has trained thousands of Nigerian young people, many of whom have secured jobs with major international companies (Andela, 2022).
- **Lagos State Government's E-learning Initiative:** The Lagos State Government has invested heavily in promoting digital literacy through its e-learning platforms and free access to online courses. The initiative has particularly targeted students and educators, enabling them to access a wealth of digital resources that were previously unavailable (Lagos State Government, 2023).
- **Tech4Dev (Technology for Development):** This Nigerian non-profit organization has been at the forefront of advancing digital literacy and inclusion in underserved communities. It runs several programmes aimed at empowering women, youth and rural dwellers with the skills and tools needed to thrive in the digital world. In 2023, Tech4Dev trained over 10,000 individuals in various digital skills, with a special focus on rural communities (Tech4Dev, 2023).

Challenges and the Way Forward

Despite these efforts, challenges to promoting digital literacy and inclusion persist. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) estimated that approximately 70 million Nigerians remain without Internet access, primarily due to the high cost of data and digital devices.

In addition, the lack of basic digital infrastructure, such as electricity and affordable connectivity, hinders progress in rural areas.

To overcome these barriers, Nigeria needs to enhance its public-private partnerships aimed at improving Internet affordability, digital infrastructure and skill development. The government must also prioritize digital inclusion in its policy-making, ensuring that initiatives are not only available but accessible to all, especially marginalized groups.

Promoting digital literacy and inclusion in Nigeria is not just a matter of expanding access to technology; it is also about empowering individuals, especially the marginalized, to fully participate in the digital economy and society. With digital skills increasingly becoming a prerequisite for economic success, efforts to improve literacy and bridge the access gap are crucial for Nigeria's development. By addressing the barriers to digital inclusion and expanding digital education programmes, Nigeria can create a more equitable and prosperous future where technology serves as a tool for empowerment and sustainable growth.

Addressing Cybersecurity and Data Protection: A Key Pillar for Nigeria's Digital Transformation

As Nigeria embraces digital technologies to drive economic growth and development, ensuring robust cybersecurity and data protection frameworks has become an essential component of this transformation. With increasing digitization across sectors such as finance, education, healthcare and governance, the volume of data generated and shared online is growing exponentially. While these advancements offer significant opportunities for progress, they also expose the country to a rising tide of cyber threats, ranging from data breaches and identity theft to cyberattacks targeting critical infrastructure. For Nigeria to fully realize the benefits of its digital economy, addressing cybersecurity and data protection is not only a matter of ensuring national security but also of fostering trust and encouraging further digital inclusion.

The Rising Threat Landscape

Cybersecurity and data protection are now critical priorities in Nigeria as both the public and private sectors move toward digital solutions. The increasing adoption of mobile payments, e-commerce and online banking has brought with it new risks. According to a 2023 report by PwC Nigeria, the country has seen a significant rise in cybercrime, with a 40% increase in reported cyber incidents over the past year. These incidents include phishing attacks, ransomware, data theft, and malware targeting financial institutions, businesses and individuals (PwC, 2023).

Furthermore, Nigeria's critical infrastructure, such as energy, telecommunications and transportation, is becoming an attractive target for cybercriminals. In 2023, the

Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) reported multiple attacks on telecom providers and government websites, underscoring the vulnerability of vital sectors to cyber threats (NCC, 2023). This situation highlights the urgent need for enhanced cybersecurity measures to safeguard the nation's digital infrastructure.

Cybersecurity in the Context of Economic Growth

A strong cybersecurity framework is essential for fostering innovation and encouraging investment in the tech sector. As Nigeria seeks to strengthen its position as a leader in fintech and agritech, the risk of cyber threats can undermine the trust needed for these industries to flourish. In fintech, where financial transactions are conducted online, the integrity of digital payment systems is paramount. A breach could not only damage the reputation of Nigerian fintech companies but also discourage potential investors. According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), over 100 million Nigerians are now using mobile money and digital banking services, making the need for secure digital environments even more critical (CBN, 2023).

Similarly, as e-government services expand, the protection of citizens' personal data becomes a priority. Digital platforms used for registering businesses, processing taxes, or obtaining government services involve the exchange of sensitive information. Without strong data protection policies, citizens may become more hesitant to use online services, limiting the effectiveness of digital government initiatives. The National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), which oversees the National Identity Database, has faced criticism in the past over security concerns, emphasizing the need for robust cybersecurity to maintain public confidence in national digital systems (NIMC, 2022).

Legal and Regulatory Developments

Nigeria has made significant strides in developing frameworks for cybersecurity and data protection. In 2015, the country passed the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, which criminalizes activities such as hacking, identity theft and cyberbullying. The law also established a Cybercrime Advisory Council to guide national cybersecurity policy. However, while this law has helped address some cybersecurity concerns, there have been calls for updates to keep pace with rapidly evolving cyber threats and technologies.

In 2021, the Data Protection Bill was introduced to provide a more comprehensive approach to data privacy and protection. The bill aims to regulate how personal data is collected, processed, stored, and shared by both public and private entities. In alignment with global best practices, the bill also seeks to ensure that Nigerian data protection standards are in line with international frameworks such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union. If passed, the bill would significantly enhance the protection of Nigerians' personal data and improve the country's data privacy reputation on the international stage. According to a 2023 report by the Nigerian Data

Protection Bureau (NDPB), the country's data protection framework has helped improve transparency and build trust among consumers in sectors like e-commerce and fintech (NDPB, 2023).

Moreover, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has also launched several initiatives aimed at enhancing cybersecurity in the telecommunications sector. For instance, the NCC Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT) provides support for organizations facing cyberattacks, helping to identify, mitigate and recover from cyber incidents (NCC, 2023). These efforts align with the National Cybersecurity Policy and Strategy (2019), which sets out a road map for safeguarding Nigeria's cyberspace, ensuring the protection of critical information infrastructures and fostering collaboration between government agencies and private sector stakeholders.

Building a Cybersecurity Culture

In addition to legal and institutional measures, building a cybersecurity culture among Nigerians is equally important. Despite advancements in Internet access and mobile technology, many Nigerians lack the awareness and knowledge to protect themselves from cyber threats. According to a 2022 survey by the Nigerian Cybersecurity Awareness Program (NCAP), over 60% of Nigerian Internet users were unaware of basic cybersecurity practices, such as using strong passwords or recognizing phishing emails (NCAP, 2022).

Educational initiatives are crucial to addressing this knowledge gap. Programmes aimed at educating Nigerians about online safety and secure practices can go a long way in mitigating the risks posed by cyber threats. For instance, the National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, held annually by the Nigerian government, promotes awareness campaigns to educate citizens, businesses, and government agencies about safe online practices. Additionally, partnerships between tech companies and educational institutions can help develop a cybersecurity workforce capable of meeting the growing demand for cybersecurity professionals in Nigeria.

As Nigeria continues to pursue its digital transformation and leverage technology for economic growth, cybersecurity and data protection must remain central to the country's digital agenda. The rising threats of cybercrime, data breaches and attacks on critical infrastructure highlight the urgent need for comprehensive cybersecurity measures and a strong legal framework to protect citizens and businesses. While Nigeria has made important strides with legislation and institutional support, further efforts are needed to enhance digital literacy, ensure the security of digital platforms and foster a culture of cybersecurity awareness among all Nigerians. It is only by addressing these challenges that Nigeria can fully realize the potential of its digital economy and safeguard its position as a leader in Africa's technological future.

Encouraging Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Nigeria: A Catalyst for Economic Development

In the face of persistent socio-economic challenges, Nigeria has recognized innovation and entrepreneurship as key pillars for economic diversification, job creation and long-term development. With a young and increasingly tech-savvy population, the country is in a unique position to harness the power of innovation to drive economic growth and solve critical problems, such as unemployment, poverty and infrastructure deficits. However, the path to fostering a thriving innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem requires addressing structural challenges, including access to capital, regulatory hurdles and inadequate infrastructure. By creating an environment that supports creative solutions and entrepreneurial ventures, Nigeria can unlock its full economic potential and become a leader in Africa's digital economy.

The Role of Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Nigeria's Development

Innovation and entrepreneurship are integral to Nigeria's growth, particularly as the country works to transition from an oil-dependent economy to one that is more diversified and sustainable. Entrepreneurship provides a means for individuals to create jobs, drive technological advancements and contribute to broader societal changes. Start-ups and innovative solutions are emerging across various sectors, such as fintech, agritech, healthtech and edtech, with young entrepreneurs leading the charge in addressing the country's challenges.

According to World Bank (2023), small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria account for over 90% of all businesses and are responsible for a significant portion of the country's employment. However, despite their crucial role in the economy, many Nigerian start-ups face significant barriers, including access to financing, a complex regulatory environment and limited infrastructure. Nevertheless, innovation is transforming industries and offering new solutions to persistent problems. Fintech start-ups, like Paystack, Flutterwave and Interswitch, are revolutionizing the payments sector, while agritech companies are improving food security and productivity through smart farming solutions.

The Start-up Ecosystem: Growing Opportunities and Challenges

Nigeria has become one of the most dynamic start-up ecosystems in Africa. Cities like Lagos and Abuja have emerged as tech hubs, attracting both local and international investors, and creating an environment conducive to innovation. In 2023, Nigeria's start-up ecosystem saw record funding, with start-ups raising over \$1.5 billion in venture capital, a significant increase from previous years (Disrupt Africa, 2023). This growth is driven by sectors such as fintech, healthtech, agritech and e-commerce, with Nigeria securing the highest share of tech-related investments in Africa.

Fintech start-ups, for instance, have been crucial in addressing the financial inclusion gap in Nigeria, where millions of people remain unbanked. Platforms like Paga and Moniepoint are offering mobile-based banking services to underserved populations, while Paystack and Flutterwave have enabled local businesses to integrate seamlessly into global payment systems. This innovation is not only transforming Nigeria's financial sector but also opening new opportunities for entrepreneurs and businesses to thrive.

However, despite these promising developments, Nigerian entrepreneurs still face several challenges. Access to capital remains one of the most significant obstacles. According to McKinsey & Company (2023), while venture capital funding in the African tech space has increased, Nigerian start-ups continue to struggle with limited access to early-stage investment. Many small businesses face difficulties accessing loans due to high-interest rates, a lack of collateral and a complex regulatory environment that hinders business formation and growth (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

In addition to financing, infrastructure deficits—including unreliable power, poor transportation networks and limited Internet connectivity—are persistent challenges for start-ups in Nigeria. For instance, a survey by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in 2022 found that over 70% of Nigerian businesses reported power outages as a significant hindrance to their operations (NBS, 2022). These infrastructural challenges can deter both local and foreign investments, making it difficult for businesses to scale and reach their full potential.

Fostering a Culture of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

To address these challenges and encourage greater innovation and entrepreneurship, Nigeria must focus on creating a supportive environment for businesses. This involves improving access to capital, streamlining regulatory processes and building better infrastructure.

Access to Capital: One of the most critical areas for intervention is improving access to financing. In recent years, government initiatives, like the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) and the Central Bank of Nigeria's Fund for SMEs, have provided funding and loans to start-ups. Additionally, new financial instruments, such as angel investing and crowd-funding platforms, are emerging to provide alternative sources of funding. According to African Development Bank (2023), the bank is increasing its support for Nigerian start-ups by providing seed funding and partnering international investors to create a more robust venture capital ecosystem.

Regulatory Reforms: Simplifying business registration processes and introducing policies that support entrepreneurship can help mitigate some of the regulatory hurdles faced by Nigerian start-ups. For instance, the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) has made strides in digitizing business registration, which has made it easier for entrepreneurs to start and

formalize their businesses. The introduction of the National Digital Economy Policy aims to improve the digital infrastructure, reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks and provide incentives for tech-based start-ups.

Infrastructure Development: Addressing Nigeria's infrastructure deficit is essential for fostering entrepreneurship. The government's efforts to improve power supply, road networks and Internet access are crucial. In 2023, the government launched a new initiative to increase broadband penetration, which is expected to boost the digital economy and facilitate the growth of tech start-ups (NCC, 2023). Similarly, public-private partnerships focused on enhancing logistics and transportation networks could support businesses by reducing costs and improving efficiency.

Encouraging Youth and Women Entrepreneurship

Given Nigeria's large, youthful population, encouraging entrepreneurship among the youth is a strategic imperative. According to UNICEF (2023), over 40% of Nigerian youth are unemployed or underemployed, making entrepreneurship a key pathway to economic empowerment. In response, the government and private sector have launched various initiatives aimed at fostering youth entrepreneurship. Programmes such as YouWiN! (Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria) and The Tony Elumelu Foundation's Entrepreneurship Programme have provided training, mentorship and funding to young Nigerian entrepreneurs.

Moreover, promoting female entrepreneurship is essential for fostering inclusive economic growth. Women in Nigeria face additional challenges due to social and cultural barriers, but initiatives such as Women in Tech Nigeria and SheTrades Nigeria are creating platforms to support women entrepreneurs in the tech and business sectors. These programmes provide access to mentorship, capital and networks, enabling women to launch and maintain successful businesses.

Innovation and entrepreneurship are key drivers of Nigeria's economic growth and development. By fostering a culture that supports creativity, reduces barriers to entry and provides the necessary resources for entrepreneurs, Nigeria can unlock the full potential of its youth, women and technology-driven industries. However, significant challenges remain, including access to capital, regulatory reform and infrastructure development. Addressing these issues will be critical to creating a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem that not only drives economic diversification but also empowers Nigerians to create solutions that solve local and global problems. With the right policies and investments, Nigeria has the potential to emerge as a leading hub for innovation and entrepreneurship in Africa.

Developing Nigeria's Tech Industries: A Pathway to Economic Transformation

In the face of Nigeria's growing population, rapidly increasing digital adoption and the demand for economic diversification, developing the nation's tech industries has become a central focus for national growth. The technology sector, encompassing areas such as software development, fintech, e-commerce, agritech, healthtech and artificial intelligence (AI), has the potential to drive economic transformation by creating jobs, fostering innovation and enabling Nigeria to compete on a global scale. Nigeria's youth-driven tech ecosystem is rapidly growing, positioning the country as one of Africa's foremost technology hubs. However, challenges like limited infrastructure, access to capital and regulatory bottlenecks must be addressed to fully realize the potential of Nigeria's tech industries.

The Current Landscape of Nigeria's Tech Industry

Nigeria's tech industry has witnessed tremendous growth over the past decade, positioning itself as a leader in the African tech ecosystem. In 2023, Nigeria accounted for nearly 40% of the total tech investment raised across the continent, a figure that underscores the country's growing prominence in the digital economy (Disrupt Africa, 2023). The major sectors driving this growth include fintech, e-commerce, software development and digital services, with a number of home-grown start-ups gaining traction locally and globally.

Fintech stands out as one of Nigeria's most prominent tech sectors. Companies such as Flutterwave, Paystack (acquired by Stripe in 2020) and Interswitch are revolutionizing digital payments, facilitating financial inclusion for millions of Nigerians who are otherwise unbanked. As of 2023, the fintech sector alone raised over \$1.5 billion in venture capital, reflecting the growing investor interest in Nigeria's financial technology space (Crunchbase, 2023). These start-ups are not only addressing local financial challenges but are also expanding into other African countries, and even beyond the continent.

Another burgeoning sector is e-commerce, with platforms like Jumia and Konga leading the charge in online retail. The global pandemic accelerated the shift toward digital shopping, making e-commerce one of the fastest-growing sectors in Nigeria. According to a 2023 report by Statista, Nigeria's e-commerce market is expected to reach over \$20 billion in value by 2025, driven by increased Internet penetration and smartphone usage (Statista, 2023). The rise of online payment gateways, logistics solutions and last-mile delivery services is also contributing to the sector's growth, creating new business opportunities and generating employment.

Agritech and healthtech are other key sectors with substantial potential for growth. Nigerian agritech start-ups like Farmcrowdy and AgroNigeria are leveraging digital technologies to boost agricultural productivity, while healthtech companies such as Doctoora and Helium Health are transforming healthcare delivery in Nigeria through

telemedicine, electronic health records and digital diagnostics. These sectors are essential in addressing critical challenges, such as food security and access to healthcare, which are vital to Nigeria's long-term economic and social stability.

Challenges to Developing Nigeria's Tech Industries

Despite the impressive growth of Nigeria's tech industries, significant challenges remain that must be addressed to unlock the sector's full potential. They include the one below.

1. **Infrastructure Deficits:** The lack of reliable electricity and Internet connectivity continues to hamper the growth of Nigeria's tech industry. While Internet penetration has improved, there are still significant gaps in rural areas and underdeveloped regions. According to the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Nigeria's broadband penetration reached 47% in 2023, but more work is needed to expand access, particularly in underserved areas (NCC, 2023). Furthermore, power outages remain a constant challenge for tech companies, particularly start-ups that rely on 24/7 operations. Companies often spend large amounts on fuel for generators to keep their businesses running.
2. **Access to Capital:** Access to funding is one of the most persistent barriers for tech start-ups in Nigeria. While foreign investment in Nigerian tech is increasing, many early-stage start-ups still struggle to secure the necessary capital to improve their operations. Angel investment, venture capital and government-backed funds are essential to fostering innovation and ensuring that promising tech start-ups have the resources to grow. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has launched several initiatives, such as the Nigerian Innovation Fund, to provide capital to technology-driven enterprises (CBN, 2023). However, greater funding mechanisms and more supportive financial ecosystems are needed to support entrepreneurs throughout the stages of their business journey.
3. **Regulatory and Policy Barriers:** The regulatory environment remains one of the most complex hurdles for Nigeria's tech industry. Start-ups often face unclear or inconsistent policies, making it difficult to navigate legal requirements and ensure compliance. For example, the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR), enacted in 2019, aims to improve data privacy and security but still faces challenges in enforcement, leaving tech companies and consumers vulnerable to data breaches. Additionally, policies that support tech-driven innovation, including tax incentives and intellectual property protection, are necessary to encourage businesses to invest in research and development (R&D).
4. **Skilled Labour Shortage:** Although Nigeria has a large and youthful workforce, the country faces a shortage of skilled talent in critical tech fields, like artificial intelligence (AI), software development and data science. According to McKinsey & Company (2023), the demand for skilled tech professionals in Nigeria is growing faster than the supply, making it difficult for companies to hire the necessary talent

to scale operations. To address this, there is a pressing need for digital skills training programmes, coding boot camps and greater investment in higher education institutions focused on tech.

Strategies for Developing Nigeria's Tech Industries

To overcome these challenges and fully capitalize on the nation's tech sector's potential, Nigeria must focus on the following key strategies:

- **Investment in Infrastructure:** The Nigerian government must prioritize expanding broadband access and improving electricity supply to enable businesses to thrive. The National Broadband Plan (2020-2025) aims to increase broadband penetration to 70% by 2025, which will significantly enhance connectivity and support the growth of tech industries. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are also essential to bridging the infrastructure gap, particularly in underserved regions.
- **Creating Access to Funding:** Nigeria must build a more accessible funding ecosystem for tech start-ups, particularly in the early stages. Initiatives like start-up accelerators, venture capital funds and angel investor networks are essential for providing tech entrepreneurs with the financial backing they need to scale. The Nigerian government can also introduce tax breaks, subsidies and grants to encourage investment in innovation.
- **Strengthening Regulatory Frameworks:** Simplifying the regulatory environment and creating clear, consistent policies will make it easier for start-ups to navigate legal challenges. The government can also focus on enforcing and improving data privacy regulations to foster consumer trust. Furthermore, incentivizing research and development (R&D) in technology will help Nigeria remain competitive globally.
- **Developing Tech Talent:** To address the talent shortage, Nigeria must invest in digital education and skills development programmes. Initiatives such as Code Lagos, which provides coding training to schoolchildren, and Andela, which trains software developers, are vital in upskilling the next generation of tech professionals. Collaboration among tech companies, universities and government agencies can also ensure that training programmes are aligned with industry needs.

Nigeria's tech industry has emerged as one of the most dynamic and promising sectors in the African economy. The rapid growth of fintech, e-commerce, agritech and healthtech underscores the potential of tech-driven innovation to address some of the country's most pressing challenges. However, to fully realize this potential, Nigeria must address the infrastructural, financial and regulatory barriers that hinder start-up growth and innovation. By creating a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and investing in the necessary infrastructure and talent, Nigeria can unlock the full potential of its tech industry and drive sustainable economic development.

Conclusion

The development of Nigeria's tech industries represents a powerful avenue for economic transformation, with the potential to drive job creation, foster innovation, and catalyze long-term growth. As Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria possesses a unique advantage: a youthful, tech-savvy population eager to embrace digital solutions across various sectors, from fintech to healthtech. The impressive growth of Nigeria's tech ecosystem—evidenced by booming sectors, like fintech, e-commerce, and agritech—has already begun to transform the country's economic landscape, positioning it as a leader in Africa's digital economy.

However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited access to capital, complex regulatory frameworks and a skills gap must be addressed to unlock the full potential of the tech sector. To capitalize on the opportunities presented by the digital economy, Nigeria must prioritize investments in broadband access, electricity and education, while creating more supportive funding environments for start-ups. Regulatory reforms, including clearer policies on data protection and intellectual property, are essential for fostering innovation and attracting investment.

By creating an enabling environment for tech entrepreneurs, addressing infrastructure deficits and investing in human capital development, Nigeria can position itself as a leader in Africa's tech industry and diversify its economy away from oil dependence. With strategic investments in digital infrastructure, talent and policy, Nigeria's tech sector has the potential to drive sustainable economic growth, create jobs and empower a new generation of Nigerian entrepreneurs to solve local and global challenges. The country is at a critical juncture and the steps it takes today will define its future as a digital powerhouse on the global stage.

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60**DIGITAL SUPPLY CHAIN TECHNOLOGIES****By****John Ohaka**

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Introduction

There are key prospects for supply chain offered by digitalization that embrace increased information availability and optimized inter-company logistics, supply chain visibility and transparency through end-to-end real-time information access and control, operations efficiency and maintenance, integration and collaboration, innovation and product design and efficient inventory management (Kache & Seuring 2017). Owing to these qualities, supply chain digitalization is gaining increasing attention in both practice and research.

Digital supply chain (DSC) technologies perform a substantial role in transporting solution to supply chain (SC) and encouraging new drivers of economic development. This paper identifies the main elements constituting the digital supply chain transformation, while highlighting the main requirements and obstacles facing such transformation. Clear benefits have been acknowledged from SC digital transformation which can impact different performance metrics. This paper discusses the main drivers which can enable digital SC transformation in the business sector. It employs documentary analysis.

Digital Supply Chain (Supply Chain 4.0)

The Fourth Industrial Revolution – also identified as Industry 4.0 – is taking place, and it is powering the creation of completely connected environment within a firm's diverse functional areas. Organizations are re-shaping their strategies to transfer to utterly integrated borders and to become completely transparent in their business practices as well as their supply chain management, which is currently a decisive achievement factor for organizations (Mentzer *et al.*, 2001). Stemming from digital transformation, the Fourth

Industrial Revolution would allow firms, when developing supply chain management strategies, to attain flexibility and agility, thereby creating more values (Buyukozkan & Gocer, 2018).

Digitalization is designated as the application of digital technologies and shifting the regular business to digital business, which primes the transformation of new income. Digitalization is a technological force that boosts globalization in economic and cultural habits (Isaksson, Wennberg, Se, & Se, 2016). It is the initial process of digital supply chain (Buyukozkan & Goçer, 2018). It is expected to play a progressively significant role in the management and design of global chain supply principally to companies dynamically involved in value-adding activities, including those engaged in production and logistics systems (Porter & Heppelmann, 2015). Digitalization consists of three vital stages: digitalization strategy, digital organization and culture, and digital operations (Corver & Elkhuizen, 2014).

Digital supply chain management's critical features are moving towards centralized procurement/logistics and cost observing, accentuating instantaneous response to customer necessities, enhanced predicting, arranging and sharing sales and processes and knowledge, coercing for cost lessening and establishing steadfast cost savings and supplementary value on service, and operating meticulously with shortening suppliers. In a digital supply chain, real-time response to the phase of preparation and implementation consents to an extraordinary level of receptiveness while conserving competence.

The upcoming vision of digital supply chain assimilates digitalization and automation into the all-inclusive supply chain, integrating all organisms, vendors and consumers, and empowering real-time information sharing. Among the numerous rudiments which can be exploited in digital supply chain from Industry 4.0 are cyber-physical configurations and connected robots in the industry, connected primary logistics trucks, automated warehouses, autonomous shared secondary logistics trucks and last-mile delivery drones.

Cycle economy and shared economy, e-commerce and block chain technology, Fourth Industrial Revolution and COVID-19 have all uncovered numerous forms of vulnerability in corporate strategies (Xu, Xu & Li, 2018). This calls for the enactment of the digitalization strategy. It focuses on establishing the digital goals, and formulates and implements the digital strategy. Digitalization organization and culture evaluate contemporary organization and culture, manage the digital organization and culture, and transmute it into digital organization and culture. In assessment, digitalization operations highlight worker enablement, digital operations management and digital operations implementation. An all-inclusive approach to digital supply chain transformation would set the course for streamlined implementation, starting with a digital strategy and a digital operating model.

A supply chain process can be boosted through the usage of digital technologies to safeguard customer responsiveness. This is convenient because of the ability of smart products (smartphones, tablet computers, handheld devices) to translate any electronic message required by existing systems and consent to electronic data communication amid firm and supply chain members. Xue, Zhang, Ling and Zhao (2013) describe digital supply chain (DSC) as an inter-organizational system that firms implement to digitalize the processes of transaction and collaboration with their supply chain partners (i.e. upstream suppliers and downstream customers). Currently companies are investing in digitalization of their supply chain.

Digitalization and electronic commerce are fundamentally transmuting supply chain structures in diverse sectors (Vendrell-Herrero, Myrthianos, Parry & Bustinza, 2017). The difference between DSC and traditional supply chain is that DSC offers swift shift from manual transactions to digitalized information flows in both intra-firm and inter-firm operations by offering companies the choice of dropping internal management costs and snowballing efficiency by means of digitalization (Korpela, Hallikas & Dahlberg, 2017). Similarly, supply chain is designated as a function within and outside a company that empowers the value chain to make products and provide services to the customer (Cox, Blackstone & Spencer, 1995). Thus, the main difference between the two notions relate to the degree of digitization of the supply chain processes.

Major Drivers of Digital Supply Chain

There are seven major drivers of DSC (technologies, integration, the Internet, electronics, collaboration, digitization and coordination). The Internet and electronics were reflected as slice of technologies. Consequently, the drivers analyzed further are integration, technologies, digitization, collaboration and coordination. These main drivers of are described in detail below.

Technologies: Technologies are playing an important role in changing the dynamics of supply chain. Technologies constitute major drivers of digitization of supply chain (Kernrney/WHU Logistics European, 2015). A type of technology recognized in this respect is radio frequency identification (RFID). It is an inexhaustible technology that delivers supply chain collaboration and visibility and can prime evolutionary transformation by integrating legacy systems with the real-time supply chain management (Attaran, 2007).

Digitization: Digitization is s factor of supply chain reflecting the newness of the concepts of digitalization in the field of supply chain studies. Digitalization is “the transformation of socio-technical structures that were previously mediated by non-digital artefacts or relationships into ones that are mediated by digitized artefacts and relationships”

(Lyytinen, Bolland & Berente, 2010:6). Novel digital technologies are disrupting virtually all facets of traditional supply chain management (Farahani, Meier & Wilke, 2017). Manufacturing is a fundamental fragment of a broader digital infrastructure (Holms & Parlanen, 2014). E-publishing, movie streaming and the music industry are other fields that have perceived broader application of digital supply chain. Digitization will remain relevant in managing global supply chains because of a swift change in values springing from physical artifact to data generated by smart products (Plum, Bodenof, Procki & Chen, 2017), such as mobile phones, wireless devices and scanners, indicating that digitization may continue to energize digital supply chain management.

Integration: This is a powerful factor influencing digital supply chain. Akyuz and Rehan (2009) note that, integration is the key to proficiency and accomplishment of e-supply chains. E-supply chain integration empowers organizations to share real-time information seamlessly, boost productivity, increase efficiency, expand the ability of supply chain to deliver faster and better products/services, boost the balance between supply and demand and lessen the cost through improved coordination and information sharing (Chong & Zhou, 2014). A study by Rai, Patnayakuni and Seth (2006) confirms that the development of supply chain process integration enables firms to appreciate improvements in their performance, precisely operational excellence and increased revenues.

Collaboration: Collaboration is a process whereby two or more companies share the duty of exchanging mutual planning, management, execution and performance measurement information (Xue, Zhang, Ling & Zhao, 2020). It is the dynamic force behind effective supply chain management and may be the eventual fundamental capability (Min, Roath, Daugherty, Genchev, Chen, Arndt and Glenn Richey (2005). With the current exponential evolution in digital platforms, the necessity for inter-firm and intra-firm collaboration is critical for businesses. Kache and Seuring (2017) assert that collaboration approaches with key supply chain members is vital for operative application of data analytics and information availability across the supply chain. With the intensification in digital manufacturing in recent times, high-capacity utilization of digital manufacturing will be possibly attained in collaboration with one or a few equipment manufacturers (Holmstrom & Partanen, 2014). Since digital manufacturing is moving nearer to the use locations where a single machine can sustain a higher number of equipment manufacturers, it is possible that the necessity for improved collaboration between supply chain affiliates will contribute to digital supply chain.

Coordination: Coordination is the act of handling interdependence among activities accomplished to attain a goal (Malone & Crowston, 1990). As supply chain comprises

different functions –marketing, logistics, inventory, manufacturing, operations, purchasing and procurement –the necessity for coordination among these functional parts is becoming a test for organizations. Likewise, poor coordination among supply chain members can cause dysfunctional operational performance (Simatupang, Wright & Sridharan, 2002). Thus, coordination is viewed as vital to achieving flexibility, which is essential to empowering an organization to gradually boost logistics processes in answer to swiftly changing market situations (Simatupang *et al.*, 2002). Coordination is desirable by firms targeting replacing manual paper-based systems with electronic systems, as so many firms are beginning to integrate their online and traditional operations and share more information over the Internet (Johnson, Klassen, Leenders & Awaysheh, 2007). Coordination is becoming more substantial (Swaminathan & Tayur, 2003); therefore, the necessity for coordination is a foremost driver for digital supply chain, as firms perceive the coordination of several functions and activities as critical for enhanced performance.

Five key factors (technologies, digitization, integration, collaboration and coordination) are found to influence the emergence of digital supply chain. The emergence of these technologies has been identified to be the major drivers of digital supply chain.

Technological Enablers of Digital Supply Chain (DSC)

Technological enablers of digital supply chain are technologies revolutionizing supply chain operations. The basic ones are presented below.

- **Big data analytics:** This refers to the application of advanced statistics to any kind of stockpiled electronic communication, which may contain “messages, updates, and images forwarded to social networks, readings from sensors to GPS signals from cell phones (Kache & Seuring, 2017) Big data analytics supports plummeting order-to-delivery cycle times, improves customer relationship and enhances supply chain efficiency. Big data permits firms to accumulate bulky quantity of data from videos, tweets, click streams and other sources, and data analytics remarkably influences supply chain competitiveness (Tan, Carriollo & Cheng, 2013). “The development of big data analytics capability and the classification of the features that could optimistically power that capability edifice ought to be able to maximize a firm’s performance” (Ikegwuru & Acee-Eke, 2020:85). The advent of the Internet, combined with rises in information technology, has engendered interest in big data analytics (Kache & Seuring). The obtainability of storage, network and telecommunications capabilities allows companies to have access to huge volume of data virtually in real time.
- **Cloud computing:** This denotes “the applications delivered as services over the Internet and the hardware and systems software in the data centers that provide those services” (Armbrust, Fox, Griffith, Joseph, Katz, Konwinski, Lee, Patterson,

Rabkin, & Stoica, 2010). The cloud-based platform provides harmonization of supply chain management with the IT system of an organization, thus assisting with scalability, cost reduction, accessibility and efficiency in supply chain operations. "It is possible that, cloud computing can significantly improve transparency that will enhance trust among the supply chain partners" (Ikegwuru & Damian-Okoro, 2024:3).

- 3D printing or direct digital manufacturing: 3D printing utilizes CAD software and additive manufacturing-based technologies to print objects by means of blending a variety of materials with a laser (Berman, 2012). 3D printing or direct digital manufacturing empowers small quantities of customized goods to be produced at comparatively low costs. Swanson (2017) argues that Amazon is revolutionizing its supply chain by offering retail outlets where customers can print more than 200 products. The implication is that there will be few raw materials, elimination of warehouse and shipping cost, and that can prime supply chain transition (Saaon & Johnson, 2010).
- Drones: Drones are unmanned aircrafts that have potential usage in supply chain. For instance, Amazon is operationalizing ways to deliver products ordered online by means of unmanned aircraft (Fawcett & Waller, 2014). Drones are capable of reading RFID tags or bar code, Q-code, and sending the information to centralized database for processing. The benefit of using drones is that it can capture data in aerial view more effortlessly and quicker than humans using handheld devices to capture the same data.
- Mobile applications: These denote types of application software premeditated to run on a wireless mobile device, such as a smartphone or tablet computer as a substitute to a laptop computer. Mobile applications, such as mobile payment, mobile RFID, advance bar code scanning, map routing and inventory optimization are enhancing supply chain operations. Mobile applications simplify the generation of real-time information that shrinks inventory and can prime growth in revenue for the provider company (Cogliamo, Marco & Rafele, 2014).

Digital Supply Chain and Supply Chain Collaboration

Digital supply chain can play a significant role in boosting supply chain collaboration and increasing supply chain efficiency by disclosing correct and real-time information vis-à-vis raw material obtainability, inventory level and consignment status (Sadraoui & Mchirgui, 2014). Digital supply chain can make available solutions to a company's supply chain problem, refining the robustness of her production scheme and supply chains and encouraging new drivers of economic development. Previous studies confirmed the impact of supply chain 4.0 and there are several promising tales. Clear benefits can be

identified from supply chain digital transformation and they will impact different performance metrics. However, in order to achieve the full benefits of digital transformation, companies must fundamentally redesign their supply chain constitution. It is not enough to just seek employing digital technologies. Successful digital transformation also needs the help of the economic system. Another factor that should not be ignored is ensuring the level of readiness, requirements and ecosystem support. The previous studies lacked a comprehensive view in one framework of all elements enabling digital supply chain transformation.

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61**SELF-AWARENESS SKILLS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN
DELIVERING BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA**

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Introduction

In recent years, the growing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into various sectors has revolutionized how businesses and educational institutions operate. One of the most transformative impacts of AI is its application in business education programmes, where it enhances the quality of learning and equips students with the skills needed for a rapidly evolving business environment. This has transformed traditional teaching methodologies, offering adaptive, personalized and data-driven learning experiences. Among the critical competencies that AI-driven education can nurture, self-awareness skills (emotional, cognitive, physical and behavioural awareness) stand out as a fundamental pillar for personal and professional development of business education students. Artificial intelligence offers advanced analytics, adaptive learning systems and feedback mechanisms that can identify individual strengths, weaknesses and learning patterns. These capabilities enable students to gain deeper insights into their abilities, work habits and decision-making styles. Additionally, AI-powered platforms, such as virtual simulations and interactive assessments, can mirror real-world business scenarios, allowing learners to reflect on their actions, understand their motivations and adjust their strategies accordingly. This study examines self-awareness as a key indicator of AI's success in business education, emphasizing four critical dimensions –emotional awareness, cognitive awareness, physical and behavioural awareness.

Concept of Artificial Intelligence

The concept of artificial intelligence (AI) has been described differently by authors. Therefore, there is no generally accepted definition. Gaus and Hoxtell (2019) posit that AI has been erroneously used interchangeably with 'automation.' However, Access Partnership [AP] (2019) opine that the terms may be used interchangeably, stressing that what seems to remain a general position is the fact that AI is technology that enables machines and devices to think as good as, if not better than, man. Clearly, AP (2019) defines AI as a constellation of technologies that enable machines to act with higher levels of intelligence and emulate human capabilities to sense, comprehend and act. These human capabilities are augmented by the ability to learn from experience and adapt over

time. In other words, AI enables machines to sense their environment, think and, in some cases, learn, to take action in response to the environment and the circumstances underpinning it. Artificial intelligence systems are finding ever-wider application across enterprises, as they grow in sophistication. To succinctly differentiate between AI and automation, AP (2019) also defines automation as that which allows systems to be programmed to perform specific repetitive tasks and AI as that designed to seek patterns, learn from experiences and make appropriate decisions — it does not require an explicit programmed path to determine how it will respond to the situations it encounters. While automated machines collate data, while AI systems understand it. Artificial intelligence complements and accelerates automation.

Accordingly, AI refers to computer programs designed with human-like intelligence and structured in the form of computers, robots, or any other machine to aid the provision of any kind of service or tasks to improve the social, economic and political development of society (Raji & Amadi, 2023). Artificial intelligence is an application, collections of systems, packages and programs designed into digital computers or computer-controlled robots to carry out assignments and tasks with human-like intelligence (Ogunode et al. 2023). Rodrigo (2023) defines AI as a branch of research in which computer systems are created to execute skills that are often associated with human beings. Artificial intelligence has continued to develop new ways of application in education, which include customized/personalized learning, smarter content, improved learning effectiveness and efficiency in administration (Chen et al., (2020).

The increasing advancements in AI technology has brought about revolutionary shifts in various organizations, including education. Stakeholders in education are actively looking for ways to smoothly integrate AI into higher education curricula, given the necessity of preparing students for the difficulties of an AI-driven future. As pointedly posited by Nicolaou and Petrou (2023), there is growing agreement that integrating AI technology into education can enable teachers to support students' self-directed learning, create learning communities that are collaborative and foster creativity in understanding concepts. The educational landscape is not immune to changes; AI presents unprecedented opportunities and challenges for preparing the workforce of the future. As industries increasingly embrace automation and AI-driven processes, the imperative for educational institutions, especially those involved in business education, to equip students with relevant skills becomes paramount (EdSurge, 2018). As Blikstein and Worsley, (2016) succinctly posit, AI holds immense potential to revolutionize instructional delivery in education, particularly business education, through personalized learning experiences, real-time feedback mechanisms and data-driven insights. The integration of AI into educational settings has advanced significantly, particularly in enhancing self-awareness among students and depends largely on the lecturer's level of self-awareness skills and competency for effective utilization in instructional delivery.

Concept of Self-Awareness

Self-awareness, traditionally a human psychological construct, refers to the ability to recognize and understand one's emotions, behaviours, and cognitive processes. It is the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions, strengths and weaknesses, and how these factors affect one's performance can significantly impact on others. Morin (2011) views self-awareness as the capacity to recognize and reflect upon one's own mental and emotional states. It involves an awareness of one's own thoughts, feelings and behaviours, and how these internal states align with one's self-concept. Self-awareness is described as the ability to recognize and understand one's emotions and their effect on one's behaviour and thoughts. It is considered a crucial component for effective interpersonal communication and emotional regulation (Goleman, 2013). Similarly, Duval and Wicklund (2020) defines self-awareness as the ability to perceive oneself from an external perspective, including how one is perceived by others and how one's actions affect social relationships. This form of self-awareness is linked to social skills and self-regulation. Those who are self-aware are better at recognizing their strengths and limitations and seeking resources to overcome their limitations. Flavell (1979) defines self-awareness skills in terms of meta-cognition, as the capacity to reflect on one's own cognitive processes. This involves understanding one's learning styles and strategies, and regulating one's cognitive activities to enhance learning and problem-solving capabilities.

Concept of Self-Awareness in Business Education

Self-awareness in business education refers to the ability of students and teachers to recognize their emotions, thoughts and behaviours and understand how these influence teaching and learning. It is a foundational element of emotional intelligence, promoting personal growth, self-regulation and resilience (Goleman, 1995). Self-awareness in students has been linked to enhanced academic performance, motivation and adaptability (Zimmerman, 2002). As it relates to teachers, self-awareness fosters better classroom management, effective communication and empathy, creating a positive learning environment (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). With the rise of digital technology, especially AI, educational tools are evolving to include technologies that enhance self-awareness skills. By integrating AI into teaching and learning processes, students and educators can benefit from tailored feedback, real-time analytics and personalized learning experiences.

By implication, self-awareness allows business educators and students to identify their teaching and learning styles, set achievable goals and monitor their progress. It also plays a critical role in metacognition, helping learners to evaluate the effectiveness of their study strategies and adjust them as needed (Flavell, 1979). For business educators,

self-awareness promotes reflective teaching practices, enabling them to identify biases, improve instructional methods and address students' diverse needs (Schon, 1983).

Self-awareness Instrument for Artificial Intelligence in Business Education Emotional Awareness

Emotional awareness refers to AI's ability to recognize and respond to emotional cues from learners. Emotional intelligence is critical in education, as it ensures the system can identify when students are disengaged, frustrated or confused (Barkoukis et al., 2020). Emotional self-awareness is a key component of emotional intelligence, and it has become increasingly relevant in various domains, including AI and business education programmes. The development of AI that can recognize and respond to human emotions is a growing field. Artificial intelligence systems equipped with emotion recognition capabilities, such as sentiment analysis algorithms, can deliver more personalized and engaging interactions. Emotional self-awareness in AI models involves training these systems to not only detect emotional cues but also to understand and simulate appropriate emotional responses (Kumar et al., 2022). This can be particularly useful in applications such as virtual assistants and effective classroom interactions support systems. In this context, emotional self-awareness can significantly impact the effectiveness of AI systems and the delivery of business education. As clearly posited by Chen and Lee (2020), emotional self-awareness is increasingly recognized as a valuable skill in business education. Educators who possess high emotional self-awareness can create more engaging and supportive learning environments. This includes recognizing and addressing the emotional needs of students, which can enhance their motivation and engagement. For example, business educators who are aware of their own emotional states can better manage classroom dynamics and provide more effective feedback. Incorporating emotional self-awareness into business education curriculum could improve the programme's outcomes. For example, courses designed to enhance emotional intelligence skills can help students develop better interpersonal skills, conflict resolution abilities and resilience (Bar-On & Parker, 2022). A business education programme that includes training in emotional self-awareness can better prepare students for the emotional demands of the business world. Also, AI systems analyze student interactions, tone and behavioural patterns to adjust their teaching style. For example, a system might slow down its delivery when it detects signs of student confusion during a financial analysis module.

Role of AI in Enhancing Emotional Self-awareness in Business Education Students

Real-time Feedback Systems: AI-powered systems, such as learning management systems (LMS) and virtual assistants can analyze emotional cues through text, speech and

facial expressions. These systems provide real-time feedback on emotional states during classroom interactions, presentations or decision-making simulations.

Emotionally Intelligent Chatbots: AI-driven chatbots, using natural language processing (NLP), can engage students in reflective dialogues, prompting them to explore their emotional responses. This interaction helps learners gain insights into their emotional patterns.

Virtual Simulations: AI creates immersive environments where students experience emotionally charged business scenarios, such as conflict resolution or negotiation. These simulations allow learners to observe the impact of their emotions on decision-making and interpersonal relationships.

Behavioural Analytics: Artificial intelligence tools track students' participation, responses and collaboration patterns, identifying trends that indicate emotional strengths or areas requiring growth. For instance, sentiment analysis of students' written assignments can reveal emotional tendencies.

Cognitive Awareness

Cognitive self-awareness is the ability to recognize and understand one's thought processes and mental capabilities. It is an essential competency in modern education. In the realm of business education, particularly in Nigeria, cognitive self-awareness equips learners with critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills. With the integration of AI, the delivery of business education can be enhanced by fostering cognitive self-awareness among students. Similarly, cognitive self-awareness, a component of metacognition, refers to the ability to recognize and understand one's own cognitive processes. This includes being aware of one's thinking, learning strategies and problem-solving approaches.

Cognitive awareness in AI involves understanding the learner's knowledge level, learning style and progress. This dimension allows AI to adaptively frame learning experiences to match individual needs. Cognitive self-awareness plays a significant role in the development of AI and the delivery of business education programmes. Cognitive self-awareness can enhance the design and functionality of AI systems. Artificial intelligence systems that incorporate principles of cognitive self-awareness can more effectively model human-like reasoning and decision-making processes. For instance, AI algorithms that simulate metacognitive processes can adaptively modify their strategies based on performance feedback, leading to improved problem-solving capabilities (Heath, 2020). This approach is particularly relevant in areas such as autonomous systems and adaptive learning technologies.

Also, cognitive self-awareness is crucial for developing AI systems that provide personalized learning experiences. Artificial intelligence systems that understand users' cognitive states can tailor educational content to individual learning needs and preferences. For example, intelligent tutoring systems that incorporate cognitive self-awareness can monitor students' understanding and adjust the difficulty of tasks accordingly, thereby enhancing learning outcomes (Woolf et al., 2018). Similarly, AI systems assess prior knowledge through quizzes and assignments and tailor lessons accordingly. For example, an AI tutor in a marketing course might introduce advanced analytics tools only after ensuring foundational knowledge is secure.

Role of AI in Enhancing Cognitive Self-awareness in Business Education Students

Adaptive Learning Systems: AI-driven adaptive learning platforms, like Coursera and Khan Academy, adjust content delivery based on a student's progress. These systems highlight areas where learners excel or struggle, promoting self-awareness of their cognitive strengths and weaknesses.

Data-Driven Insights: Artificial intelligence tools analyze learning behaviours, including time spent on tasks, accuracy in problem-solving and patterns of engagement. These insights help students reflect on their thought processes and adopt effective strategies for improvement.

Virtual Reality (VR) Simulations: AI-powered VR simulations create immersive business scenarios, such as market analysis or resource allocation tasks. These scenarios test cognitive skills in real-time manner, providing feedback on decision-making and critical thinking processes.

AI-Powered Tutoring Systems: AI chatbots and virtual tutors use natural language processing (NLP) to engage learners in cognitive exercises, prompting them to explain their reasoning and reflect on their thought patterns.

Physical Awareness: Physical self-awareness, the ability to recognize and understand one's bodily responses, posture, gestures and physical expressions, is a critical yet often overlooked aspect of holistic education. In business education, where effective communication, presentation and leadership are vital, physical self-awareness is crucial. This is equally fundamental to AI application in business education. It involves understanding and managing one's own physical states and bodily functions, which plays an emerging role in both the development of AI and the delivery of business education. This type of self-awareness can influence how AI systems interact with users and how business education programmes are structured to enhance learning outcomes and well-being. Physical self-awareness is integral to the development of wearable technologies

that monitor health metrics. AI systems embedded in wearables, such as fitness trackers and smart-watches, use data on physical states—like heart rate, sleep patterns and physical activity—to provide users with insights and recommendations for improving their health (Pardo et al., 2018). The effectiveness of these AI systems relies on their ability to accurately interpret and respond to users' physical states, thereby enhancing user engagement and health outcomes, which is very crucial to physical alertness and stability of business educators in the delivery of effective education programmes.

Furthermore, AI systems that incorporate physical self-awareness can improve human-computer interaction by creating more intuitive and responsive interfaces. For instance, systems that adapt to users' physical states, such as their posture or stress levels, can offer more personalized and contextually appropriate responses. Research has explored how incorporating physical feedback into AI interactions can enhance user satisfaction and usability (Gellersen et al., 2019). This includes adapting interfaces based on users' physical comfort or fatigue levels. Consequently, integrating physical self-awareness into business education can significantly enhance students' well-being and productivity. Business education programmes that emphasize the importance of physical health—such as through ergonomics, stress management and physical fitness—can improve students' overall performance. Research indicates that physical well-being is linked to cognitive function and academic success, suggesting that programmes that address physical self-awareness can enhance learning outcomes (Gonzalez et al., 2019).

Role of AI in Enhancing Physical Self-awareness in Business Education Students

AI-driven tools can foster physical self-awareness in business education through the following mechanisms:

Video Analysis Tools: AI-powered platforms, like Microsoft Azure Cognitive Services and DeepMotion, analyze video recordings of students during presentations or role-plays. These tools provide feedback on body language, eye contact and gestures, helping learners refine their physical expressions.

Speech and Gesture Recognition: Artificial intelligence systems equipped with natural language processing (NLP) and gesture recognition technologies assess tone, volume and physical gestures during communication. This feedback enhances business education students' understanding of their non-verbal communication skills.

Virtual Reality (VR) Simulations: AI-integrated VR environments simulate business meetings, interviews or public speaking events. Students can practise and receive real-time feedback on their posture, movement and confidence levels in immersive settings.

Posture and Health Monitoring: Wearable AI devices, such as smartwatches, can monitor physical cues, like posture and stress levels, during high-pressure tasks. This information helps students recognize the physical impact of stress and learn to manage it effectively.

Gamification: AI-gamified platforms encourage learners to improve their physical self-awareness through interactive exercises, such as maintaining proper eye contact during virtual interviews or matching gestures to specific speech tones.

Behavioural Awareness: This entails the ability of AI to observe, interpret and predict student behaviours to optimize educational outcomes. It includes tracking attendance, participation and task completion rates (Chen et al., 2021). AI-driven dashboards provide educators with insights into student behaviour patterns, such as prolonged inactivity, enabling timely interventions. Behavioural self-awareness is the foundation of emotional intelligence, a critical skill for business leaders (Goleman, 1995). For instance, in Nigeria, where business education aims to produce adaptable and ethical professionals, leveraging AI to enhance this awareness is crucial. Artificial intelligence technologies, such as machine learning, natural language processing and sentiment analysis, enable students to reflect on their behavioural patterns and adapt accordingly. For example, AI-driven platforms can analyze students' interactions in virtual classrooms, identifying communication styles and decision-making tendencies. This feedback helps students improve their interpersonal and leadership skills, vital for business success, especially in Nigeria's diverse cultural and economic environment.

Roles of AI in Enhancing Behavioural Self-awareness in Business Education Students

Personalized Learning Experiences: Artificial intelligence algorithms analyze individual learning behaviours, providing tailored feedback. For example, in Nigeria, where classrooms are often overcrowded (Ololube, 2016), AI can offer personalized attention, enabling students to understand their unique strengths and weaknesses.

Virtual Simulations and Scenarios: AI-powered simulations create realistic business scenarios where students can practise decision-making and observe the impact of their actions. These platforms enhance self-awareness by allowing learners to assess their behavioural tendencies in a controlled environment.

Feedback Mechanisms: Artificial intelligence tools provide real-time feedback through speech recognition, sentiment analysis and performance metrics. For instance, an AI system might analyze business education student's negotiation skill in a simulated business meeting, offering insights into tone, body language and strategy effectiveness.

Summary

It can be pinpointed from this chapter that emotional, cognitive physical and behavioural self-awareness skills are veritable indicators of effective AI delivery in business education programmes. These skills are critical for efficient use of AI tools in teaching and learning as well as effective learner engagement. Business educators and curriculum developers with self-awareness skills are more poised to align AI tools with the specific educational objectives of their programmes, and with significant potential to revolutionize teaching and learning processes.

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**APPLICATION OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF
BUILDING TECHNOLOGY AS A COURSE IN TVET INSTITUTIONS
IN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has been instrumental in the economic development and industrialization of societies all over the world. This is due to the fact that TVET essentially is about the learning of specialized techniques, that is the techniques of doing or simply methods of getting things done. The focus of TVET is on the acquisition and mastery of knowledge about how to do things and get specific outcomes rather than simply acquisition and mastery of knowledge about things. However, educational institutions and institutions with TVET programme are not left out in experiencing period of disruption driven by technological advances and exacerbated by the recent demand for remote service provision caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These disruptive innovations affect both teaching and learning as well as institutional processes, and are weakening digitalization at the institutional level. The construction industry is highly dynamic and the emergence of new technologies in the industry has had a positive impact on the way construction is done. This has led to an upsurge of new trades and skills which are in high demand. These include the combination of digital skills and traditional core employability hard and soft skills. Hence, it is necessary for TVET teachers to utilize and incorporate digital technologies in classroom for TVET graduates to meet future work demands. This paper examined the need for digitalization of Building Technology as a course in institutions running TVET programmes. It X-rayed the application of computers and smartphones in building

technology classes in institutions running TVET programmes in Nigeria. It was recommended that workshops should be organized for building technology teachers in all TVET institutions in Nigeria so as to enable them to digitalize the delivery of Building Technology as a course. Digital classrooms should also be made available by the government in all TVET institutions in Nigeria, as this will open opportunities for distance learning and mobile learning.

Keywords: Digital Technologies, TVET Institutions, Building Technology, CAD, YouTube.

Introduction

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has been instrumental in the economic development and industrialization of societies all over the world. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) defines Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) refers to the training of technically-oriented personnel who are to be initiators, facilitators and implementers of technological development of a nation by adequately training its citizenry, on the need to be technologically literate, leading to self-reliance and sustainability (Uwaifo 2010).

The principal function of TVET remains the development of the human capabilities that societies need to function, grow and develop. These human capabilities are embodied in the abilities of individuals to work and produce products, tangible or intangible, that societies need. The aim of TVET is the preparation of individuals for the world of work. Work, broadly conceived, includes paid work and self-employment, both in the formal and informal sectors. Thus, an additional role of TVET is the creation of employment, through entrepreneurship training. (Billet, 2011; Ed, Ed, & Ed, 2017).

As opined by Nenga (2020), TVET is essentially about the learning of specialized techniques, that is the techniques of doing or simply methods of getting things done. The focus is on the acquisition and mastery of knowledge about how to do things and get specific outcomes rather than simply acquisition and mastery of knowledge about things. In the light of this, FRN (2013) identifies three broad aims of TVET, namely: providing skilled individuals in the applied sciences, technology and business, especially at craft, advanced craft and technical levels; providing individuals with the theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development; and to train and impart the needed skills on craftsmen who shall be self-reliant economically. At the entry level in TVET institutions, it is expected that basic knowledge and skill have been acquired through technical colleges or their equivalents in secondary schools.

Tertiary institutions include colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics and universities. The polytechnic is one of the core TVET institutions as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) to give training and impart the necessary skills for the production of technicians, technologists and other skilled personnel who shall be enterprising and self-reliant. Polytechnics offer courses leading to the award of National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) and are governed by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). Other tertiary institutions, like universities and colleges of education award certificates such as B.Tech, BSc. Ed, and NCE (Tech) and the universities are controlled by National Universities Commission (NUC). Their major goal is to equip learners with necessary skills to earn a living and to impact on society by being gainfully employed and employers of labour (FRN 2004, & Gimba 2011). They all prepare students for the world of work and offer technical education courses, such as mechanical engineering technology, chemical engineering technology, electrical and electronics engineering technology and building technology.

Building Technology is one of the technical courses offered at TVET institutions, such as technical colleges, polytechnics, colleges of education (technical) and some universities in Nigeria. Building Technology, as a vocational programme is aimed at producing technicians who will be able to perform basic functions in building construction practices both in the private and public sectors (Gimba, 2011). Almost all the members of society benefit from the products of Building Technology because it is a course designed to produce skilled builders for the building industry. Building Technology as a course comprising different components of operations which require skills. Some of these components of operation are designing of building plans, setting out of the building, block work, designing and constructing of building foundation, levelling of the building, roofing pattern, plastering and rendering of walls in both residential and commercial buildings. These areas of operation require the students of Building Technology to possess the necessary skills to carry them out in a digitalized form.

Statement of the Problem

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a deadly respiratory disease which is transmitted through contact. Its spread can only be minimized if people stay at least 1 metre away from each other (WHO, 2023). Building Technology as a course in tertiary institutions is taught either in the classroom or workshop and requires student-teacher interaction as a skill-oriented course. It is an important course to the growth of society and should not be stopped due to the report from WHO that the expiration time of COVID-19 is unknown. Therefore, it is necessary for researchers to work on what to do in order to sustain learning. This study suggests the application of digital technologies for effective delivery of Building Technology.

Aim and Objectives

The study examined the application of digital technology for effective delivery of Building Technology as a course in TVET institutions in Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated

2. the processes of digitalizing Building Technology delivery in TVET institutions and
3. the digital technologies for effective Building Technology delivery in TVET institutions.

Processes of Digitalizing Building Technology Delivery in TVET Institutions

Digitalization, according to Ngoaketsi (2021), is the practice of converting physical information into a digital (computer-readable format), by using digital technologies to modify the existing structure through enhancing the efficiency of an organizational process, so as to foster reliability and quality. Going to school is the best public policy tool available to develop skills and potential. School time can be fun, and from an economic point of view the primary point of being in school is increasing a child's ability to become a useful and acceptable member of society. Even a relatively short time in school has a longer impact in the life of a learner; a short period of missed school may also have consequences for skill growth in future. This is why we cannot estimate how much the COVID-19 interruption will affect learning. It is only the visible effect we can see; the gradual decay of inbuilt abilities may not be easily noticed very precisely (Agbele and Oyelade, 2020, Samuel, 2020).

International Labour Organization (2020) notes that skills training institutions are experiencing a period of disruption driven by technological advances and exacerbated by the recent demand for remote service provision caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These disruptive innovations affect teaching and learning as well as institutional processes, and are accelerating digitalization at the institutional level.

In recent times, all aspects of skills systems are moving towards digitalization. The digital transformation in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems have both external and internal pressures. First, the systems must respond to the external demand for skills from the digital society and the transition to new world of work. Second, as other sectors, they have to be engaged in digital transformation and the challenges it presents to institutions and staff. According to ILO (2020), digitalization and technological development are changing the nature of occupations and the skills required in different jobs across all economic activities. Digital transformation means that many of the existing work tasks within traditional jobs will be modified and that some jobs may disappear. The digitalization workflow, as stipulated by Collence, Ngoasketsi and Durodolu (2021), are as follows:

- Material selection: content identification, content selection, content acquisition, registration of documents for digitalization

- Preparation of document: unbinding documents, converting word documents to searchable PDF
- Scanning: scanning of documents with industrial scanner
- Processing for editing: image editing, refining quality by removing noise and unifying size, quality control of documents, returning faulty for documents for scanning
- Quality Assurance: ascertaining the quality of the scanned document
- Metadata and Indexing: allocating traceable keywords to each document
- Quality assurance: verification of previous process, and, if error is identified, going to the previous process
- Back-up and Archiving: saving files in an online storage (digital software) file stored in offline facilities
- Publishing: publishing files on electronic database
- Check Out: digitalization process is completed

To be able to apply digital technologies for the effective delivery of Building Technology as a course in TVET, the above-listed workflow should be integrated. With this, teaching and learning Building Technology will be effective even in the face of COVID-19 and any other subsequent outbreak or pandemic. Hence, it is necessary for TVET teachers to utilize and incorporate digital technologies in classroom for TVET graduates to meet future work demands.

Digital Technologies for Effective Building Technology Delivery in TVET Institutions

Technology has made life easier, friendlier, convenient and impactful. The power of technology is also felt in the education system, on delivering knowledge in various technological forms. The introduction of new technology-assisted learning tools, such as mobile devices, smart boards, massive open online course (MOOC), tablets, laptops, simulations, dynamic visualisations and virtual laboratories have altered education in schools (Abid, Mohd, Mohd, and Rajiv 2022). Digital classrooms are defined by using electronic devices or platforms, such as social media, multimedia and mobile phones, to teach students. With digital technology in learning, today's educational landscape has changed for the better.

Digital learning is a learning strategy that employs technology to fulfil the entire curriculum and allows students to learn quickly and rapidly (Turgut and Aslam, 2021). The digital classroom entirely focuses on teaching via the use of technology. Students use technological or Internet-connected gadgets like laptops, tablets, Chromebooks, Google drive, drop box, YouTube, social media applications, and so on. Instead of taking notes on what the teacher has taught, most of the curriculum is delivered to students online through an engaging and interactive platform.

One digital technology that has become so rampant is the computer. Computers have evolved and their look and function have changed. Chhaya and Ravindra (2017) assert that nowadays, there are desktop computers and portable computers, commonly known as notebooks or laptops. The desktop and laptop computers can be used by teachers to assign work to students and study groups in and outside the classroom. Also teachers can use computers to illustrate visual-related subjects, helping students to learn easily. Modern computers come with installed applications which can help students study well. For example, students can use Internet Explorer to search the Internet. They can use word processing applications to write notes. Teachers can also help their students to learn complicated applications on these computers as a way of making it easier for students to learn and make the teachers' job easier.

The use of computers is very important in TVET institutions. One way computers can be used in TVET is the teaching of technical drawing, structural drawing, architectural drawing, mechanical and engineering drawing, electrical drafting, and so on. According to Oyindoubra (2022), Computer Aided Design (CAD) is a technology that is based on the use of a computer to display graphic images which enable research and design work to be transformed into finished products with higher quality and at lower cost. It has been one of the major technological breakthroughs, which assists the jobs of technologists, as its introduction has improved design quality, decreased errors and save time in several fields and industries. Computer Aided Design is studied in some tertiary and technical institutions in Nigeria. Its knowledge, application and relevance in a technologist's world of work cannot be over-emphasized, as its skills are often a criterion for employment, a requirement to handle jobs in the industry, and it promotes self-employment. Achieving success as a technologist in the building construction world requires skills like CAD, technical expertise, a good understanding of construction and the manufacturing process, and knowledge of design principles. Skills like these are learned and strengthened through different types of training which often involves the use of CAD systems. Okuntade (2014) observes that, despite the importance of building technologists to the industry, a large number of them are still untrained, even though the construction industry all over the world has been implementing skills acquisition programme to meet the demand of change in technology. Hence, there is a crucial need to utilize these digital technologies in TVET institutions.

Orji (2020) opines that Building Technology students in TVET institutions require skills in modelling, rendering, trimming, editing, dimensioning skills, creating layer, placing light, creating 3D drawings from 2D and visualization skills. These skills can only be acquired when TVET institutions are adequately equipped with computers so as to enable them to install different CAD applications, such as Civil 3D, Revit Architecture, AutoCAD, ArchiCAD, Solid Works and Sketch up.

Some of the commonest technologies that can be applied in teaching and learning of Building Technology are examined below

Smartphones are the most powerful technological gadgets of the current time and their multi-functional features have made them a very important part of the everyday routine for almost all people. They play a very significant role in disseminating information without body contact during the COVID-19 era. They are recognized as important tools of work, entertainment, learning and teaching (Wali, and Omaid, 2020). In addition to their effectiveness in different aspects of life, smartphones have also been recognized as important educational tools that facilitate learning and teaching. Students can access their lecture materials on their smartphones, quickly access information online to meet their information needs via learning management systems, access academic databases and websites to mention but a few.

Masiu and Chukwuere (2018) argue that "The smartphone has also made students' lives easier, as they can access their school information on the gadget through electronic learning (e-learning), and mobile learning (m-learning)." Valk, Rashid, and Elder (2010) stated that smartphones have made learning more flexible and easy and have helped to reduce the weaknesses inherent in conventional classroom learning. Smartphone users are able to download recorded online lectures and electronic books to enhance learning. According to Norries et al. (2011), smartphones enable students to access and read materials; they can also take pictures of abstract concepts that are taught in class with the camera on their smartphones so that they can relate them with concrete ideas at a later date, mostly in distance education.

Mobile technology, according to Kalogiannakis and Papadakis (2019), is considered to be the recognized face of educational applications for the recent technologies. Although, many colleges and institutions did not welcome the use of smartphones by students during school hours and its use was recognized as distraction to students' learning. However, with the vast beneficial features that smartphones offer specifically for the benefit of learning and teaching, educators and policy makers in the field of education are already recognizing the smartphone as a powerful educational tool that could be used by students and teachers to facilitate their learning or teaching process. In addition, students of the 21st century are so attached to the technological trends and it would be hard for them to even imagine not using it in their everyday life. According to Robb and Shellenbarger (2012), students in colleges cannot stay long without checking their technological devices, such as smartphones and laptops. Therefore, TVET teachers and instructors should also educate their learners on how to source and download educational videos on YouTube.

All registered users can upload and watch videos on YouTube. The uploaded videos can also be watched by anybody. According to Edache-Abah, and Mumuni (2019), there

are beginner videos, professional videos and educational videos. YouTube has become one of the most used websites and a large amount of educational contents are found on it. The site has millions of videos tagged educational, many of them uploaded by teachers, students and researchers. YouTube is not only meant for digital entertainment; it can also be a great environment for learning and should be used in eLearning, which can truly benefit every eLearning student/audience.”

Ali (2019) explains that YouTube videos can be used directly in the classroom as part of the teaching/learning process. They are usually deployed to introduce and explain some new concepts while teaching by displaying information for the class to see, or at the end of the lesson by recommending some websites. YouTube videos can also be used as an educational material, with the teacher utilising them as a model for classroom activities and discussions. Universities and schools are currently incorporating free video platforms, like YouTube, into their classrooms activities.”

YouTube sessions are produced either by teachers, content developers or lecturers. By using learnable software, like webcam, one can easily upload educational contents to YouTube. The link is then attached in the course contents where the students can watch them at their convenience or on demand. These videos shared can be made public or private. Sherer and Shea (2011) claim that the use of YouTube videos during teaching improves presentations, since more senses are alerted. It is vital therefore for teachers to add instructional technology to their teaching to grab students’ attention, focus students’ concentration, generate interest in the class, draw on students’ imagination, improve attitude toward content and learning, and make learning fun. This will go a long way in building the scientific attitude in the students.”

YouTube videos have the advantages of accessibility, versatility, breadth of content and up-to-date materials, which help teachers and students to form and contribute to course content and improve students’ engagement in classroom activities. In higher education teaching and learning, people are increasingly using online videos. For faculty and students, YouTube has become one of the leading examples of video sharing resources that can empower students in their education, through engaging in classroom discussion and achieving learning goals effectively inside and outside the classroom.

A study conducted by Koko (2022) on the effect of YouTube videos on students’ academic achievement and in mechanical engineering craft practice in technical colleges in Rivers State, Nigeria revealed that there was a significant effect of YouTube videos on the academic achievement of the Mechanical Engineering Craft Practice students taught with YouTube videos. This indicates the effectiveness of supplementing classroom instructions with the use of YouTube videos. Mamon, Saif and Malik (2014) explain that the better performance of students is as a result of voice, image and the movement of objects found on YouTube. Its social communication has increased the motivation of

students and strengthened the concepts and content of students. This may be because students learn in a way they have not experienced before, allowing them to read and review the material more than once and at any time. Moreover, this current method enhances their knowledge of the educational material and contributes to the development of learning in an interesting and attractive way, especially as they deal daily with the channels of social communication.

Using educational videos is important because of their impact on increasing students' achievement in various subjects, whether in technical colleges or tertiary institutions. Learning through YouTube has become one of the basic learning resources in the students' life at the present time, since it provides illustrations, growth of knowledge and ease of searching for sources of knowledge. It gives students limitless space for self-learning and knowledge acquisition, as opposed to other learning sources in which knowledge is defined with narrower boundaries. It can also contribute to the development of students' learning with all its different skills, by helping the learner plan to learn, set goals, determine and manage time, and decide the appropriate place to learn (Eick and King, 2012). This type of learning enables the learner to review and study his educational material more than once without feeling bored at the time he wants and where he wants. This increases the motivation to learn, which increases the direct academic achievement. The method of learning with YouTube videos is a novel technique for students, which has raised their interest and increased their motivation to learn.

Conclusion

The construction industry is highly dynamic. The emergence of new technologies in the industry has had a positive impact on the way construction is performed. This has led to an upsurge of new trades and skills, including the combination of digital skills, and traditional core employability hard and soft skills. Therefore, it is crucial for TVET teachers to utilize and incorporate digital technologies in classroom. This will enable TVET graduates to meet future work demands.

Recommendations

Based on the literature discussed above, the following are suggested:

- Workshops should be organized for building technology teachers in all TVET institutions in Nigeria so as to enable them to digitalize the delivery of Building Technology.
- Digital classrooms should be made available by the government in all TVET institutions in Nigeria, as this will open opportunities for distance learning and mobile learning.
- Government should subsidize Internet subscription for students for proper functioning of digital technologies.

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**PERSPECTIVE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION
ON NIGERIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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Introduction

The modern world has evolved into a highly interconnected entity, influencing nations across various dimensions. This concept of global integration has been a focal point for decades, yielding significant benefits for both developed and developing countries. The term “global world” encapsulates the essence of globalization, an ongoing process that fosters interdependence among nations through exchange of goods, services, ideas and information. Driven by technological advancements and enhanced communication, globalization has transformed the world into a dynamic network of cultures, economies and perspectives (Dozie, 2012). Much like an intricate masterpiece, the global world weaves together diverse societies, forging a unified yet multifaceted human experience. It mirrors the breathtaking view of Earth from space, a vibrant, interconnected sphere where distinct regions and cultures blend into a complex and ever-evolving tapestry of human interaction.

The global world is a vibrant mosaic of diversity, reflecting our shared experiences, mutual dependence and collective ambitions. It is a dynamic entity expanding and contracting, evolving and adapting, held together by the hands of humanity. As humans navigate the path forward, the global world urges them to question, learn and grow. It challenges everyone to envision a future not defined by divisions but by unity, respect and a common destiny. In its essence, the global world is both a journey and a destination, a challenge and an opportunity. It serves as the grand stage where humanity's most profound narrative unfolds, and everyone has a role to play. Among the many facets of globalization, one of the most critical is the global economy, which shapes and sustains this interconnected world (Mansfield, 2003). This essay will look at the perspective on global economy, which would culminate in the perspective of Nigeria's economic development. Contextually, the term perspective refers to the approach or viewpoint on economic issues and developments. As the global economy remains resilient despite

different challenges, it becomes imperative to look at the implication for Nigeria's economy and the approach that will best suit its development.

Perspective of the Global Economy

The global economy highlights the intricate web of connections between national economies, where trade, investment and financial markets create a ripple effect across borders. It encompasses a broad spectrum of activities, policies and decisions that drive financial growth, wealth distribution and resource management. The term "global economy" signifies the seamless movement of goods, services, capital, and labour across nations, facilitated by trade agreements, investment flows and technological advancements. It encapsulates the collective economic interactions that shape global prosperity (Seguino & Heintz, 2012). Currently, the global economy is navigating a phase of cautious optimism, characterized by moderate growth forecasts and notable regional disparities. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasted that global economic growth would stabilize at approximately 3.0% in 2024, following a decline from 3.4% in 2022 to 2.8% in 2023. Similarly, the World Bank projected global growth to hold steady at 2.7% in 2025-26, indicating a settling at a low growth rate insufficient to foster sustained economic development.

A significant factor shaping the global economy is the tariff policies implemented by developed nations, particularly the U.S., which, while fostering domestic economic growth, can create tensions in international trade relations. The economic influence of these developed nations often leaves developing countries vulnerable, amplifying concerns over trade policies and internal economic challenges. For instance, the Central Bank of Nigeria has underscored an existential crisis, with its growth projections trailing behind those of many developed economies. Despite signs of stabilization in the global economy, persistent regional disparities, policy-driven uncertainties and the ongoing need to adapt to technological advancements continue to pose challenges. Greenwood and Holt (2010) assert that, virtually all the developed nations leveraged technological changes to develop their economy, unlike developing nations. Implying that, if developing nations will employ and adapt technological changes to their economies, there would be significant improvement in their economies. For instance, significant investments in artificial intelligence (AI) are anticipated to boost global economic growth. The IMF projected that AI could contribute an additional 0.8% to global growth, though preparedness varies across countries.

Concept of Economic Development

In the study of public sector economics, economic development refers to the process of enhancing a nation's, region's, or community's economic well-being, standard of living, and overall quality of life in alignment with specific goals and objectives. Although the

term gained prominence in the 20th and 21st centuries, the concept has long been a cornerstone of progress in developed nations. Often associated with “modernization” and “industrialization,” economic development has historically centred on industrial growth and infrastructure expansion. However, since the 1960s, its focus has increasingly shifted toward poverty reduction and inclusive economic policies aimed at fostering sustainable growth (Seguino, 2019). Whereas economic development is a policy intervention aiming to improve the well-being of people, economic growth is a phenomenon of market productivity and increases in GDP. Economist Amartya Sen described economic growth as one aspect of the process of economic development.

The definition of economic development has been widely debated. In the 20th century, economists largely equated development with economic growth, whereas sociologists focused on broader transformations, including social change and modernization. Development and urban studies scholar Karl Seidman summarized economic development as “a process of creating and utilizing physical, human, financial, and social assets to generate improved and broadly shared economic well-being and quality of life for a community or region.” Daphne Greenwood and Richard Holt distinguished economic development from economic growth on the basis that economic development is a “broadly based and sustainable increase in the overall standard of living for individuals within a community.” and measures of growth such as per capita income do not necessarily correlate with improvements in quality of life. The United Nations Development Programme in 1997 defined development as increasing people’s choices. Choices depend on the people in question and their nation. The UNDP indicated four chief factors in development, especially human development, which are empowerment, equity, productivity and sustainability (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012).

Perspective of Nigeria's Economic Development

Most developing nations are projected to experience modest growth but continue to face challenges in closing the income gap with developed nations. The World Bank noted that most developing nations, like Nigeria, are not on course to graduate to middle-income status by 2050. Although Nigeria’s economy is experiencing dwindling growth, particularly in the services and oil sectors, alongside high inflation rates, fiscal revenues from taxes have increased significantly, and future projections indicate potential improvements contingent upon the successful implementation of economic reforms and stabilization measures. Nigeria’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has fluctuated over time due to dependence on oil revenues, global economic shocks and domestic policy changes. The economy witnessed rapid growth in the early 2000s, driven by high oil prices, but slowed down due to the 2016 recession and the COVID-19 pandemic. The government has since focused on economic diversification to reduce reliance on crude oil exports. Presently, the key sectors driving economic development are as follows:

- **Oil and Gas:** Nigeria is one of the largest oil producers in Africa, with petroleum accounting for a significant portion of government revenue and foreign exchange earnings. However, volatility in global oil prices has exposed the economy to shocks.
- **Agriculture:** Contributing about 25% of GDP, agriculture remains a major employer, with crops such as cassava, rice, cocoa, and maize playing a crucial role in food security and exports.
- **Manufacturing and Industry:** The Nigerian government has promoted industrialization through initiatives like the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). However, inadequate infrastructure and high production costs limit the sector's growth.
- **Services and Digital Economy:** Telecommunications, banking and fintech innovations have been key contributors to Nigeria's GDP. The rise of digital payment systems and start-ups has positioned Nigeria as a tech hub in Africa.

In addition, Nigeria's economic development has gradually been influenced by other factors, like vast natural resources, demographic strength, policy reforms and external influences. Despite notable effort and progress, Nigeria continues to face critical challenges that hinder sustainable economic development. Below are the key challenges:

- **Dependence on Oil:** Over-reliance on crude oil revenues makes Nigeria vulnerable to global price fluctuations.
- **Infrastructure Deficit:** Poor roads, unreliable power supply, and limited transportation networks hinder economic activities.
- **Unemployment and Poverty:** High youth unemployment and widespread poverty remain major economic concerns, despite Nigeria's vast resources.
- **Security Issues:** Insurgency, banditry and conflicts in various regions disrupt business and investment.
- **Corruption and Governance Issues:** Weak institutions and corruption impact economic policies and discourage foreign investment.

From an economic perspective, Nigeria needs to diversify into skill development for self-reliance, which can be leveraged through technology education training. This implies that the deliberate integration of technology education into critical sectors of the economy can bring about a continuous and rapid economic development that can meet the needs of work life in business and socio-cultural existence. Hence, by leveraging technology education for its young population, digital economy and natural resources, Nigeria has the potential to become a major global economic player.

Perspective of Technology Education on Nigeria's Economic Development

Technology education is the study of technology where students explore the processes, knowledge and skills required to understand, develop and apply technological solutions. This field focuses on humanity's ability to shape and transform the physical world by utilizing materials, tools and techniques to address various needs. It bridges the gap between the widespread use of technology and the often-limited understanding of its technical components and maintenance. As an evolving discipline, technology education aims to enhance scientific and technological literacy, equipping learners with the skills to navigate and contribute to an increasingly tech-driven world. Designed as an integrated, experience-based instructional programme, it prepares students for comprehending technology's evolution, systems, applications and social and cultural impact. By applying mathematical and scientific principles to technological systems, students engage in problem-solving, innovation and hands-on experimentation across fields such as construction, mechanics, electronics, electrical engineering and biotechnology. Through interactive learning, they develop the ability to design, create and implement technological solutions using various tools, machines, computer systems and processes (Lechman, 2015).

The programme and course content are designed with a student-centred approach, fostering a deep understanding of technological concepts, processes and systems. Through hands-on, experiential learning, students are encouraged to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world applications. They are challenged to utilize technology education facilities to design, manipulate materials, operate machinery and apply technical concepts efficiently and safely (Huesemann & Huesemann, 2011). As a vital component of modern education, technology education equips individuals with essential technical and problem-solving skills, preparing them for an increasingly digital and technology-driven world. By nurturing innovation and critical thinking, it plays a significant role in driving national development and technological advancement.

Considering the state of Nigeria's economy, it is obvious that Nigeria's economy is in dire need of proper integration of technology education to develop it, particularly in practical skill disposition and self-reliance. Technology education has the potential to bring tremendous benefits and positive changes in the economy of Nigeria, but it requires responsible and sustainable development to ensure a bright and equitable future for all. Technology education can play a vital role in enhancing economic development in Nigeria. By investing in the different areas of technology education, Nigeria can create skilled workforces, attract investments, enhance productivity and improve overall economic growth.

Below are key areas of technology education that can contribute to the economic development of Nigeria:

- **Information and Communication Technology (ICT):** Information and communication technology refers to the use of digital tools, systems and networks to access, process, store, and communicate information. It encompasses both hardware (such as computers, servers and networking devices) and software (such as applications, databases and cloud services) that facilitate digital communication and information management. A person skilled in ICT can improve access to quality education, boost business and e-commerce, improve governance, strengthen healthcare, drive innovation and job creation, which will, in turn, develop the economy.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automation:** Artificial intelligence refers to the ability of machines and computer systems to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. These tasks include learning, reasoning, problem-solving, decision-making and understanding natural language. Artificial intelligence systems use algorithms, machine learning and deep learning techniques to improve their performance over time. Automation refers to the use of technology, including AI, robotics and software, to perform tasks with minimal or no human intervention. Automation increases efficiency, reduces errors and enhances productivity in various industries. Artificial intelligence and automation can develop the economy of Nigeria by increasing productivity, reducing costs, enhancing innovation, creating new job opportunities and improving decision-making.
- **Renewable Energy Technology:** Renewable energy technology refers to innovations and systems that generate energy from naturally replenished sources, such as the sun, wind, water and biomass. These technologies provide sustainable alternatives to fossil fuels, reducing environmental impact while supporting economic growth and energy security. The impact of renewable energy technology on economic development in Nigeria will be through job creation, foreign investment, energy independence, sustainable industrialization, innovation and entrepreneurship.
- **Biotechnology & Agricultural Technology:** Biotechnology refers to the use of biological systems, organisms or derivatives to develop new products and technologies that improve healthcare, agriculture, industry and environmental sustainability. Similarly, Agricultural Technology (AgriTech) involves the application of modern innovations, such as biotechnology, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and data analytics, to improve farming efficiency, increase food production and promote sustainability. Biotechnology & Agricultural Technology can impact the economic development of Nigeria through the boosting of agricultural productivity, job creation and rural

development, reducing dependence on food imports, encouraging investment in AgriTech start-ups and supporting global trade and export growth.

- **E-Learning & EdTech:** E-Learning (Electronic Learning) refers to education delivered through digital platforms, such as online courses, virtual classrooms and mobile learning apps. It enables students, professionals and educators to access learning materials anytime and anywhere. EdTech involves the use of technology, such as artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), gamification and adaptive learning platforms, to enhance teaching and learning experiences. E-Learning and EdTech can enhance economic development in Nigeria through bridging educational gaps, boosting workforce skills, encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation, reducing unemployment and attracting investment in dTech start-ups
- **Smart Infrastructure & Urban Development:** Smart infrastructure refers to the integration of advanced technologies, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI) and big data, into physical infrastructure systems (roads, buildings, energy and water systems) to enhance efficiency, sustainability and resilience. Similarly, urban development involves planning, designing and building cities in a way that supports economic growth, environmental sustainability and a high quality of life for residents. Smart urban development leverages technology to create “smart cities” with better transportation, energy management and public services. Smart infrastructure and urban development will enhance economic development by attracting foreign and domestic investments, creating high-tech job opportunities, enhancing tourism and real estate value, reducing infrastructure costs and strengthening disaster resilience.

Conclusion

Although the global economy shows signs of stabilization, it continues to grapple with regional disparities and policy-induced uncertainties, which have affected the economy of developing nations, like Nigeria. Nigeria's economic development has been through serious struggles to make remarkable progress, yet challenges persist. Technology education plays a crucial role in modern learning by preparing individuals for a digitalized and technology-driven world. By equipping students with essential technical and problem-solving skills, it fosters innovation and contributes to national development. Thus, it can be seen as a good approach to Nigeria's economic development. Hence, if technology education is effectively managed, Nigeria has the potential to emerge as a major global economic powerhouse in the coming decades.

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**UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGY [ICT]**

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Abstract

The development of information and communication technology [ICT] over the last decade in the Western world has generated overwhelming interest and activity in the Third-World countries. It has a diverse and profound impact on society, which is so apparent in educational and service sectors. Since ICT plays a very significant role in the world today, the level of its implementation requires serious attention. It is evident through research reports and observation that ICT is yet to be in a realistic and effective implementation stage. This challenge came as a result of erroneous interpretation, conception and analysis of the meaning of ICT, culminating in wrong application of ICT in all spheres of life. It has been observed that the concept ICT has been ill-conceived by individuals, scholars, etc. to mean use of computer, the full meaning of the acronym ICT, use of gadgets, technology, etc. It is clear that lack of proper understanding of the concept of ICT enhances wrong application in terms of usage. It is on this premise that this study considered the conceptual meaning of ICT in theory and practice, the various deductions and categories of ICT as a system, with examples and recommendations to enhance ICT applications in all its ramifications.

Keywords: information communication and technology, gadgets, system, deductions, categories.

Introduction

The modern level of human development can be attributed to the level of scientific and technological sophistication, as technology has transformed virtually all aspects of human endeavours. Science and technology has change human perception and thinking in various cultures on creative possibilities. Thus, from crude, manual and analogue tools, human thinking has produced the computer, improved various versions of it, invented telecommunication devices and created a network in which data through information can travel seamlessly. Information is the lifeblood of today's business organizations,

institutions and industries. Every organization regardless of its size and purpose is concerned with processing data in order to provide current and accurate information.

Information is the centrepiece of ICT. Senn (2004) states that the potential of ICT is to increase access, improve relevance and quantity of education and services. This can be achieved through information. We are in a new world of globalization; whatever happens in one part of the globe is transmitted to the other parts through the mass media and the Internet. This is made possible by new technologies, such as telecommunication, computers and electronics.

Definitions of Concepts

The concept of ICT cannot be defined holistically. Thus, the various concepts that make up ICT will be subjected to conceptual meaning singularly before collective meaning of ICT will be considered.

Information: It is one of the concepts that make up ICT. It is an idea communicated for useful purposes and consists of all data to enhance decision-making. Obi (2000) notes that, without materials nothing can exist, without energy nothing happens, and without information nothing makes sense. Information has social dimensions to meet the direct needs of people.

Communication: It is a process of information exchange between two or more individuals, or organization, or a process through which information, knowledge, ideas or messages are conveyed or transmitted from one source to another. Communication involves four main components – sender, message, media and receiver.

Technology: It is a systematic application of various branches of knowledge to practical problems. It involves the systematic application of knowledge to solutions. It is a product because it involves the use of gadgets, tools, equipment, instruments, devices, etc.

What Is ICT?

Few years ago people started hearing about Internet, email, satellite, computer, GSM and others. Before the above-stated technologies, people knew about the old technologies, such as typewriter, landline, post office, library, photograph, slate for writing, board for teaching and learning, pencil and paper, symbol, sign, signpost, etc. The later technologies are being enhanced or replaced with newer technologies. This new information and communication technologies are used in all aspects of human life.

There is no generally accepted definition of ICT. This is a problem, in that many authors perceive the concept or approach it from different perspectives. Wali (2001) defines information technology as a process comprising various kinds and sizes of

computers. The computers are connected via telephones to facilitate the storing of data. Data comes in many forms, such as texts, sounds, signs, symbols and pictures. The emphasis in the above definition is on computer as the information technology process. This definition does not consider the use of the old technologies. The question arising from the above definition is that does it mean that information was not processed, utilized before the advent of computer? This question became necessary because the definition borders on the use of computers.

Laudon et al. (1994), cited in Mandah (2016), views ICT as information technology and systems that include all the different means, methods and tools that humans have used throughout history to help manage information, conduct business, and communicate with others and better understand the world. This definition is elastic, in that it incorporates virtually every kind of device used in gathering and disseminating information, both and new technologies used in processing information. In a nutshell, ICT encompasses a broad range of technologies used to handle telecommunications, broadcast media, audio-visual processing and transmission system, intelligent building management systems, and audio and video conferencing. It facilitates the collection, storage and retrieval of information. Technologies such as database, content management system, and cloud storage and solutions play a crucial role in managing large volumes of data efficiently.

Liverpool (2002), quoted in Mandah (2016), conceives ICT to be a generic term referring to technologies used for collecting, storing, editing and passing information in various forms. This definition, no doubt, possesses attributes of computer. Butcher (2003), cited in Mandah (2016), defines ICT as electronic technologies for collecting, storing, processing and communicating information. They can be separated into two main categories:

- those which process information, e. g. computer system and
- those that disseminate information, such a telecommunication system.

This definition focuses on new technologies, as information existed before the new device and it was processed, utilized and disseminated. Some questions are pertinent here: What happened before the advent of new technologies? Is it that there was no information before the advent of new technologies? An acceptable definition that embraces both old and new technologies is that of Laudon et al. (1994).

Deductions from the Definitions of ICT

From the definitions of information and communication technology, the following can be deduced:

- ICT involves collection of information.

- ICT involves storing of information.
- ICT involves processing of information.
- ICT involves transmission of information.
- ICT involves communicating and disseminating of information.
- ICT involves presentation or display of information.
- ICT involves retrieval of information.
- ICT involves editing information.
- ICT involves technologies, devices, and equipment, both hard and software.
- ICT involves methods to process information.
- It involves strategies, models, etc. to handle information.
- It involves both old and new technologies, such as paper, pencils, books, cameras and computers.
- It involves the input-process-output cycle.
- It involves data in various forms, e.g. raw scores, names, pictures, sounds, and symbols.
- ICT involves analysis of information, e.g. storing, manipulating and rearranging information.
- ICT involves data presentation to learners via screen, printers, loud speakers, etc.
- ICT involves a feedback system.

Traditional and Modern Technologies Used in Processing Information

Devices, channels, equipment, instruments, etc. used to store, retrieve, manipulate, collect, process, display and disseminate data [raw information] or information [processed data] are classified as members of the ICT family. Thus, before the advent of the modern information technology system, there existed devices in which information was stored, retrieved, collected, displayed, etc. It is on this premise that ICT gadgets can be grouped into traditional and modern ways of handling data or information. Traditional ICT includes:

- Printed materials, such as textbooks, resource books, journals, newspapers, news item, letter writing, etc.
- Verbal information and ideas exchanged with peers, teachers, parents, co-workers in a company, etc.
- Graphical materials, such as pictures, chart, maps, diagrams, posters, cartoons, time and sequence charts, etc.
- Three dimensional materials, e.g. specimen, model, puppetry, mock-ups
- Audio-visual materials, like radio, television, slide projectors, overhead projectors, motion pictures, tape recorder, teaching machines, photographs and

phonographs. Others are post office, typewriter, library, landline, etc. These materials, devices, and strategies are used to process information before the advent of modern devices that replaced or supplemented the old versions

Modern ICT devices include:

- Digital video cameras, multimedia projectors, personal computers [pc], laptops, notebooks
- Application software, such as word processing, spreadsheets, and PowerPoint simulation
- Local area network [LAN], wide area network [WAN], metropolitan area network [MAN]
- Multimedia personal computer, laptop with video card and web camera or digital video camera
- Computer data processing mechanism, CD-ROM and DVD
- Digital libraries
- Email, Internet and World Wide Web [www]
- Hypermedia and hypertext resources
- Computer media conferencing, video and audio conferencing
- Video test tele text, interactive video text IVD [interactive video disk], interactive remote instruction [IRL]
- Virtual classroom and virtual reality
- Use of social media platforms: Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Zoom, etc.
- Open educational resources [OER]
- Cloud computing, artificial intelligence [AI] and other modern ways of processing information.

Major Categories of ICT as a System

It has been observed that a large assortment of information and communication technology exists. Mandah (2016) in agreement with Laudon et al., categorizes the different kinds of information and communication technologies into five major types:

- Sensing technologies
- Communication technologies
- Analysing technologies
- Display technologies
- Storage technologies

This can be represented graphically thus:

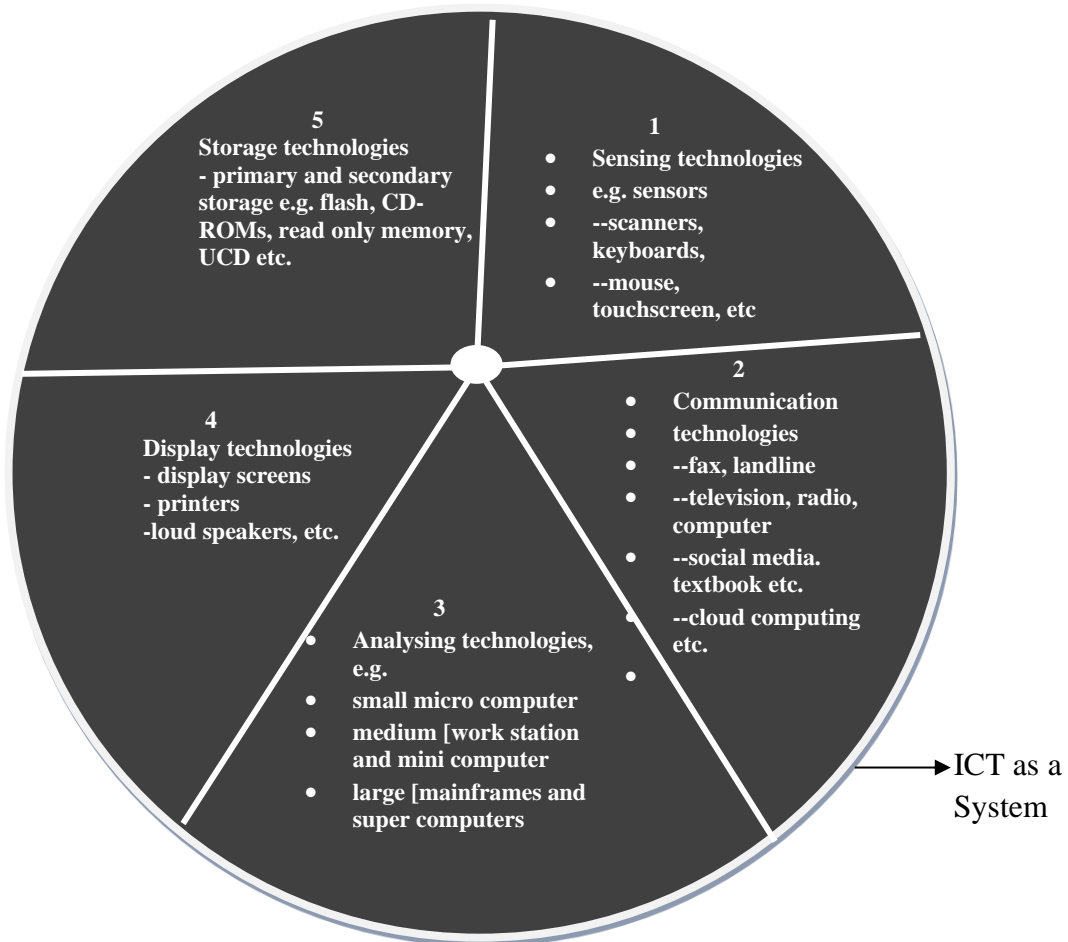


Fig. 1: ICT as a System

The diagram above reveals the five categories of ICT based on the performance task of each technology. The subunits of technology perform different functions, but in conjunction with one another other to achieve the specified objective of the ICT as a system. In ICT, no particular device performs all the functions of information retrieval, storing, analysing, etc., but each technology has a specific function.

Brief Explanation of Each Technology

20. Sensing technologies: These are devices that help to gather information from the environment and translate that information into a form that can be understood by the computer.
21. Communication technologies: These are technologies that tie together and communicate information between the various kinds of technologies.

22. Analyzing technologies: This involve computer hardware and software that take in information from sensing and communication devices and then store and process it.
23. Display technologies: These are essentially output devices; they make processed data available to human users, either through signal or sound.
24. Storage technologies: These help to store large quantity of information in a form that can be easily accessed.

Applications of ICT

Information and communication technology can be applied in virtually all spheres of life:

- Education: It can be used to deliver all or parts of the learning contents to learner, to supplement and extend the content provided in a different form, e.g. print, and to provide a two-way channel of communication for exchange between tutors and students with their peers for feedback.
- It can help in the design and development of learning materials, electronic teaching materials, such as books and journals.
- Virtual library “stocks” electronic versions of books. It plays a key role in administration.
- Business operation by streaming operation, facilitating remote work
- Health care, diagnosis, patient records, telemedicine, etc.
- Security and surveillance through alarms, surveillance, cameras, turnstiles, cyber security, etc.
- Data analysis
- E-commerce
- Entertainment and media and others

It is so vast that all cannot be mentioned.

Limitations of ICT

- Lack of ICT facilities
- Lack of experts
- Resistance to change by individuals
- Lack of finance
- Lack of steady power supply

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, it is recommended that individuals should better understand the concept of ICT, as this will greatly enhance its application where necessary. There is also the need to embrace the concept and apply the old or new technologies of ICT where necessary.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that ICT is a topical issue that requires serious attention by every individual. It has come to stay and ought to be applied at each point in time. The old or new technologies can be applied to achieve some specific objectives.

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**DIGITAL TRUST: A ROADMAP TO STRENGTHENING ORGANISATIONAL
SURVIVAL OF COMMERCIAL BANKS IN RIVERS STATE**

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Abstract

The paper theoretically explored how digital trust serves as a road map to strengthening organizational performance of commercial banks in Rivers State. The objective of the study was to theoretically determine how digital trust in terms of cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade, customer engagement and multifactor authentication relate with organizational survival, especially in terms of financial strength, customer experience improvement and market expansion. Secondary data, that is review of relevant literature, were used in the study. Hence, scholarly materials such as journals, books, Internet and other published materials related to the subject matter written by different authors were explored. It also involved the use of qualitative content analysis. This is as a result of its major dependence on the secondary source of data. This study was anchored to Edward Freeman's (1948) Stakeholder Theory. The study revealed that digital trust, through the instruments of cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade, customer engagement and multifactor authentication, promotes organizational survival, especially in terms of financial strength, customer experience improvement and market expansion. The study concluded that commercial banks' continuous implementation of multifactor authentication, customer engagement and protection against security threats, virtual risks and customer privacy will produce survival and competitive advantage. The study recommended that, as a matter of urgency, commercial banks in Rivers State and other parts of Nigeria should always upgrade their cybersecurity infrastructure to meet up with international standards, in order to improve customer experience and market expansion.

Keywords: Digital trust, Cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade, Customer engagement, Multifactor authentication, Organizational survival, Financial strength, Customer service improvement, Market expansion.

Introduction

The survival of any organization and its competitiveness affect its finances, customer service, employee performance and organizational performance, amongst others. Financial institutions, such as commercial banks, require financial strength, customer experience improvement and market expansion to survive in a highly competitive business environment, such as Rivers State, Nigeria. In the context of this study, organizational survival refers to a company's capacity for innovation and the generation of fresh concepts that will boost its revenue, expand its market share and continue to be profitable despite all odds. It encompasses more than just an organization's continued inclusion in a database of active or registered businesses. Organizational survival offers a logical, evidence-based method for developing a long-lasting business strategy that will satisfy the demands of modern clients and position a company to succeed while having a positive impact on society, the environment, community and the bottom line (Gregory & Nathalie, 2013). According to Balestrero and Udo (2017), a company must take a logical, research-based approach to developing a long-lasting business strategy that is tailored to the needs of today's consumers and positions it to outperform while having a positive impact on society, the environment, the community and the bottom line. This study measured organizational survival using financial strength, customer experience improvement and market expansion.

As used in this study, financial strength refers to the extent to which a corporate organization keeps progressing in the generation, use and control of financial resources. It is primarily concerned with the extent to which a commercial bank is able to generate financial resources higher than its expenditure, incur less debt and record high return on investments. The inability of some commercial banks to sustainably secure high return on investment and equity makes them financially sick; this contributed significantly to the extinction or merger of banks over the years (Gabriel, 2016). Some commercial banks are going through decline in their financial strength. This is characterized by low return on investment, operating cash flow and liquidity.

The survival of a commercial bank is also checked through its customer experience improvement. Operationally, customer experience improvement refers to the enhancement of the services organizations offer to customers for their satisfaction and retention. Customer satisfaction means that customer evaluation about the product or service after purchasing is in tandem with their expectation (Peeter *et al.*, 2016). Satisfaction concerns the customer's judgment as to whether the goods and services

meet expectations and needs, and provide a satisfactory level of consumption-related fulfilment. In addition, market expansion contributes greatly to the survival of any business organization, especially financial organizations, such as commercial banks. Market expansion means employing tactics designed to increase market share, even at the expense of immediate financial gains (Storbacka, cited in Tangus & Omar, 2017). Decisions on the huge number and variety of market expansion strategies are taken at several organizational levels, from the strategic level to the operational and service encounter levels, in order to strategize and offer a service. However, in spite of the proliferation of digitalization in the banking world, many commercial banks are still facing issues of financial weakness, poor customer experience and low market encroachment. Personal experience still shows that customers suffer lack of trust, as commercial banks are still fraught with issues of low cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade, poor customer engagement and poor authentication. All these amount to poor digital security, resulting in digital distrust, which is the fear of many bank active and prospective customers.

Chahal and Rani (2017) posit that trust is the foundation and cornerstone of digital banking and the psychological shortcuts to managing risks, uncertainties and complexities associated with digital banking. Digital trust is the confidence bank customers have in the ability of their banks and the technology they use to provide services to process, create and secure their passwords, pin code and other personal information from online fraudsters. It is an issue in digital banking, giving the degree of fraud in the digital world. The importance of security of commercial bank customers' information and funds when using digital banking platforms cannot be overemphasized. It involves protecting customer data and assurance that they will not be shared unless authorized by the customer. As a matter of fact, many bank customers have refused doing online banking (no use of bank app, USSD transfer, website transaction, etc.) as a result of lack of digital trust. As conceptualized in this study, digital trust is dimensionalized into cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade, customer engagement and multifactor authentication.

Personal experiences suggest that some commercial banks are having very difficult time surviving. Owing to their inability to provide accurate and equitable services to their customers, many commercial banks in Rivers State are not performing competitively in their finance, market expansion and service delivery, amongst others. Customers queue up for a long time before getting serviced; it takes many days, weeks, or even forever before resolving financial issues, such as non-refund of cash during POS, bank app or USSD transfer and non-arrival of cash sent during online transfer. All of these anomalies discourage customers and prospective ones, making them avoid situations of making online transfer and other online financial transactions a lot of times. This is a sad situation, but sadder is the fact that many of these banks do not do regular upgrade in the cybersecurity infrastructure, set strong security standards in their digital platforms, give

attention to customer engagement, etc. This implies that many of these customers face lack of digital trust. Apparently, the issue of digital distrust could be a serious bottleneck to the survival of commercial banks in Rivers State. This demands empirical research to prove this wrong or right. Therefore, this study theoretically investigated the relationship between digital trust and organizational survival of commercial banks in Rivers State.

Conceptual Framework

As a result of the above, the conceptual framework for the work is given as:

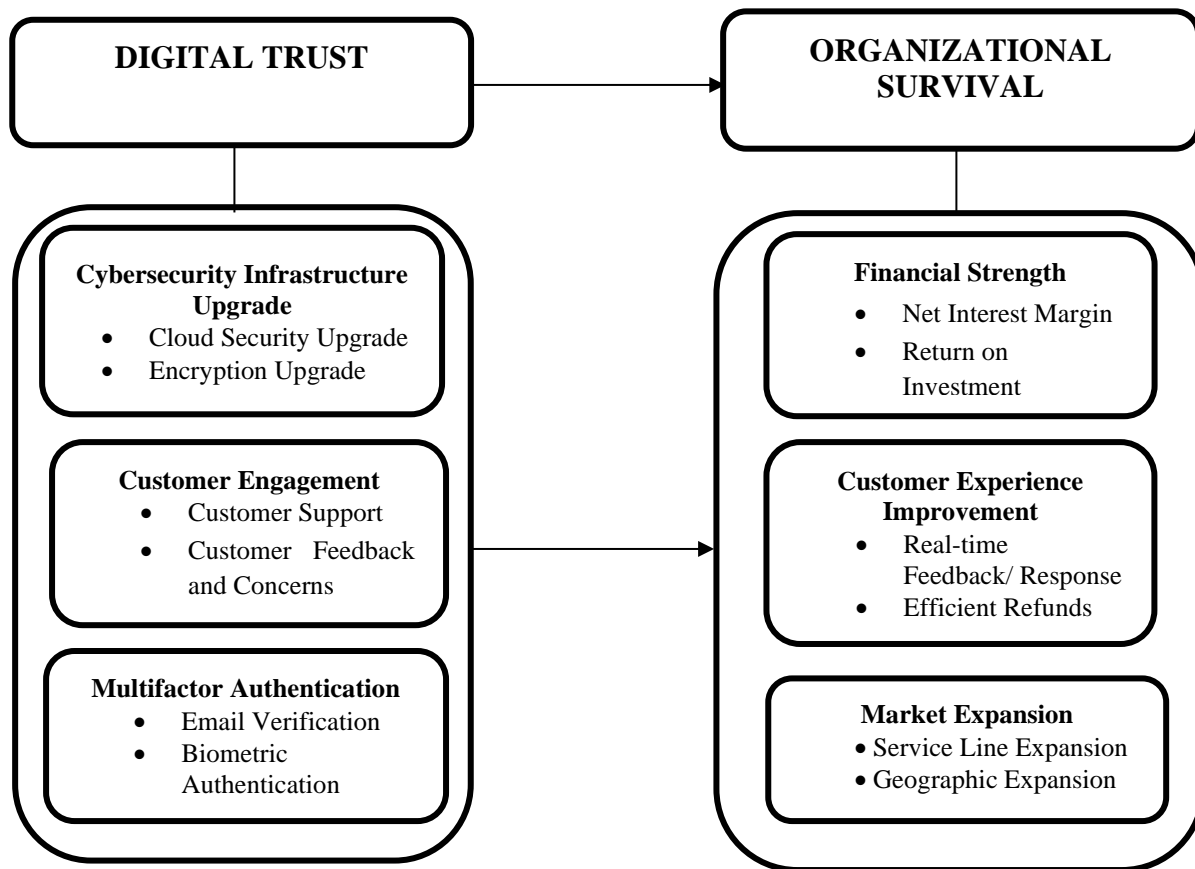


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Digital Trust and Organizational Survival of Commercial Banks in Rivers State

Source: Researchers' Conceptualization (2024)

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to ascertain the relationship between digital trust and organizational survival of commercial banks in Rivers State. The objectives were to:

- ascertain the relationship between cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade and organizational survival of commercial banks in Rivers State;

- determine the relationship between customer engagement and organizational survival of commercial banks in Rivers State; and
- investigate the relationship between multifactor authentication and organizational survival of commercial banks in Rivers State.

Theoretical Review

The study is anchored to Stakeholder Theory. The theory was propounded by Edward Freeman in 1948. It states that business firms owe responsibility to a broad range of stakeholders, not just shareholders. "Stakeholders" refers to all parties who effect or are affected by corporate actions. It includes employees, suppliers, customers, government, investors, community and environment (Asieh *et al.*, 2016). The major assumption of the theory is that:

business firms owe corporate accountability towards a broad range of stakeholders' interest.

The theory considers a firm as an interconnected web of different interests. It is one of the strategies in improving the management of firms' social responsible behaviour. The basis for adopting this theory in this study is that it reveals that firms, such as commercial banks, by way of ensuring digital trust, upgrade their cybersecurity infrastructure, deploy strategies to increase customer engagement and strengthen multifactor authentication. This displays their act of responsibility and commitment towards their esteemed customers, ensuring that they get the best of services. Commercial banks' effort in building digital trust is capable of boosting their financial strength, customer experience and market expansion, amongst other things.

Conceptual Review

The Concept of Digital Trust

With the rising adoption of eSignatures and the acceleration of digital transformation, trust in digital systems is more important now than ever before. As a recession looms, the ability to trust digital systems is critical to the stability and security of the banking and finance industry. Information security, data integrity, and digital trust are crucial for ensuring regulatory compliance and customer satisfaction. Digital trust is empowering banking and finance institutions to effectively tackle issues of identity theft and fraud.

On the surface, digital trust refers to a digital system or platform that is secure and can be relied upon to protect and properly handle sensitive information (Maherry, 2023). Building the confidence that people have in digital systems, platforms and technologies to handle their sensitive information, protect them from fraud and function as intended is paramount for decision-makers. Online trust has various aspects, such as data security, privacy, authenticity and reliability. Digital trust also involves assessing the

trustworthiness of digital entities, like websites, apps and online services, as well as the trust in the integrity and reliability of digital communications and transactions.

Digital trust is a key element of digital transformation, the additional step to ensuring that the digital systems in place are secure. This can include the following: i. online banking platform for customers, ii. digital document approvals and workflows, iii. secure digital signature solutions, know your customer (KYC) checks, and iv. electronic anti-money laundering procedures.

Digital trust is a concept that allows users to carry out digital transactions in a safe, secure ethical and consistent manner. In a digital era, the whole business is ultra-fast and immediate. Liveliness and rapidity are possibly the major key benefits of living in an all-digital world and are probably the most desirable qualities of a digital interaction. Moreover, the digital nature of today's businesses transaction has brought about significant changes in business models, technology enablers and customer expectations. In spite of these rapid changes, one need that has remained constant is trust. The dimensions of digital trust in this study are cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade, customer engagement and multifactor authentication.

Cybersecurity Infrastructure Upgrade: A cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade refers to the process of improving and enhancing the various components and systems that make up an organization's cybersecurity defences. It involves implementing new technologies, protocols and practices to better protect an organization's digital assets and data from cyber threats. The goal of a cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade is to strengthen the organization's overall security posture and reduce vulnerability that could be exploited by cybercriminals. The key aspects and components typically involved in a cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade are as follows: i. hardware and software, ii. compliance and regulations, iii. cloud security, iv. security policies and procedures, v. network security, vi. user authentication, vii. security awareness training, viii. security monitoring, and ix. data protection. As conceptualized in this study, cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade is indicated using cloud security upgrade and encryption upgrade.

Cloud Security Upgrade: This refers to strengthening security for cloud-based services and infrastructure through the use of cloud access security brokers (CASBs), cloud-native security tools and secure configuration practices (Abiola & Adedokun, 2019). Cloud security upgrades are essential for organizations to maintain the confidentiality, integrity and availability of their data and services in cloud environments. By continuously improving cloud security, organizations can reduce the risk of data breaches, compliance violations and other security incidents, ultimately ensuring the long-term viability of their cloud-based operations.

Encryption Upgrade: This is the expanding encryption of efforts to protect data both at rest and in transit, including the use of encryption for emails and data stored on mobile devices. Encryption upgrade is an ongoing process because cyber threats continually evolve. Organizations must regularly assess and update their encryption strategies and technologies to maintain the highest level of data security and protect sensitive information from unauthorized access.

Customer Engagement: Customer engagement is the continuous cultivation of a relationship between the company and consumer that goes far beyond the transaction (Miller, 2021). It is an intentional, consistent approach by a company that provides value at every customer interaction, thus increasing loyalty. Customer engagement is sometimes confused with customer satisfaction and experience; there is some overlap, but each is distinct. Customer satisfaction is how much consumers like or dislike your product, service or experience. Both are essential when interacting with consumers, but customer engagement also involves listening to build a rapport and provide a tailored solution. Effective listening is a powerful skill that affects the entire customer experience. The better a rep can listen, the more they can tailor a solution based on the customer's distinct job role, problems and intended results. As a result, brands that better engage customers are also more profitable. A study by Gallop discovered that, when companies successfully engaged customers, they reported 63% lower customer attrition, 55% higher wallet share, and overall performed 23% better than their competitors.

Increased sales are every company's big picture goal. But there are many other benefits to customer engagement that will position a brand for long-term success and improve its return on investment. By applying proven tools and best practices, a company can strategize and implement a customer engagement plan that improves customer relationship, boosts loyalty and customer retention, uncovers upselling opportunities, streamlines purchase cycles and increases users. Customer support and customer feedback and concerns are further expressions of customer engagement.

Customer Support: This is offering accessible and responsive customer support channels for addressing security concerns and questions (Maherry, 2023). It ensures that customers can easily reach out for assistance when needed. Customer support in digital trust is a fundamental element of building and maintaining trust in online interactions. It helps reassure customers that their concerns are taken seriously and that the organization is committed to their security and privacy. An effective customer support team can play a pivotal role in safeguarding customer trust and confidence in digital environments.

Customer Feedback and Concerns: These have to do with encouraging customers to provide feedback and report any security concerns they encounter, that is actively addressing customer inquiries and issues related to digital trust. Addressing these customer concerns is essential for organizations looking to build and maintain digital trust. Organizations that prioritize data security, transparency and privacy protection can foster trust with their customers, which in turn enhances customer satisfaction, loyalty and the reputation of the organization.

Multifactor Authentication: Multifactor authentication (MFA) is an authentication method that requires the user to provide two or more verification factors to gain access to a resource, such as an application, online account or a VPN (OneLogin, 2022). It is a core component of a strong identity and access management (IAM) policy. Rather than just asking for a username and password, MFA requires one or more additional verification factors, which decreases the likelihood of a successful cyberattack.

The main benefit of MFA is that it enhances an organization's security by requiring its users to identify themselves by more than a username and a password. Although important, usernames and passwords are vulnerable to brute force attacks and can be stolen by third parties. Enforcing the use of an MFA factor, like a thumbprint or physical hardware key means increased confidence that an organization will stay safe from cyber criminals.

Multifactor authentication works by requiring additional verification information (factors). One of the most common MFA factors that users encounter are one-time passwords (OTPs). They are those 4-8 digit codes that are often receive via email, SMS or some sort of mobile app. With OTPs a new code is generated periodically or each time an authentication request is submitted. The code is generated based upon a seed value that is assigned to the user when they first register and some other factor which could simply be a counter that is incremented or a time value. In addition, multifactor authentication can be expressed in terms of email verification and biometric authentication.

Email Verification: Email verification is the process of confirming the validity and deliverability of an email address. It is an essential step in email marketing, online registration, account creation and other online activities where email communication is involved. A verification code is sent to the user's registered email address. The user must access their email, retrieve the code and enter it during login.

Biometric Authentication: This method uses unique physical characteristics, such as fingerprints, facial recognition or iris scans, to verify a user's identity. Many modern smartphones and laptops have built-in biometric sensors.

The Concept of Organizational Survival

Organizational survival and expansion are implicit objectives that must be pursued with resources and effort (Jones & Bartlet, 2008). Organizations that do not prioritize life should re-evaluate their strategy (Gross, 2018). All other objectives are supported by the objective of organizational survival (Gross, 2018). The achievement and execution of other organizational goals are aided by paying attention to this objective. According to Gross, every group has an unwritten rule based on the idea of survival. Organizational Life Cycle Theory is based on the structure found in living things (Bernstein, 2015). Instead of using calendar years, organizations are evaluated according to their stages of growth and development. The stages are connected in a subtle and undetectable way. However, it is important to remember that not every organization exhibits the characteristics of each phase as it advances.

Groups make an effort to keep things as they are, but the majority of their efforts are focused on surviving (Mindy, 2018). Therefore, it is crucial to spot both internal and external threats to an organization's survival. Mentoring is one of the variables in the idea of succession planning (Roddy, the effectiveness of mentoring as a variable of succession planning on the organization depends significantly on the mentoring abilities of the mentors (Roddy, 2014), and the protégé should be provided with an environment that will encourage him to stay with the company (Amburgh *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, organizational survival can further be expressed in terms of financial strength, customer expression improvement and market expansion.

Financial Strength: The varying definitions of financial strength can be simplified and summarised as follows: Financial strength is the ability of a company to generate the money required to make investments, service debts (interest and repayments) and pay dividends to shareholders with its own means, i.e. a profitable business model (Roger, 2022). This summary also takes into account the payment of business expenses incurred as part of the company's business operations, such as salaries, rent, taxes and other costs.

Analysts generally measure the financial strength of companies using a wide-ranging set of key figures. The most common key figures used to analyse banks include total assets, operating costs, profit and equity ratio. These key figures relate to specific periods of time and reporting dates; however, they only provide limited information about how and why companies meet their goals. The so-called soft success factors, such as strong leadership or innovation potential, are insufficiently captured and evaluated when using standard key figures. Net interest margin and return on investment are the indicators of financial strength in this study.

Net Interest Margin: Net Interest Margin (NIM) is a profitability ratio that measures how well a company is making investment decisions by comparing the income, expenses and

debt of these investments (Hart, 2018). The NIM ratio measures the profit a company makes on its investing activities as a percentage of total investing assets. In other words, this ratio calculates how much money an investment firm or bank is making on its investing operations. This is similar to the gross margin of a regular company. Banks and other financial institutions typically use this ratio to analyze their investment decisions and track the profitability of their lending operations. This way, they can adjust their lending practices to maximize profitability.

Return on Investment: Return on Investment (ROI) measures the gain or loss generated by an investment in relation to its initial cost (Herman & Carleton, 2020). It allows the reader to gauge the efficiency and profitability of an investment and is often used to influence financial decisions, compare a company's profitability and analyze investments. Return on Investment (ROI) is a performance measure used to evaluate the efficiency of an investment or compare the efficiency of a number of different investments (Investopedia, 2019).

Customer Experience Improvement: Customer Experience Improvement (CX Improvement) refers to the process of enhancing and optimizing the interactions and overall satisfaction that customers have when engaging with a company, its products, services and brand. It encompasses various strategies, tools and practices aimed at creating positive and memorable experiences for customers throughout their journey with a business. The goal of CX Improvement is to exceed customer expectations, build customer loyalty and drive business growth. It is an ongoing and dynamic process as customer preferences, market conditions and technology evolve. Businesses that invest in enhancing the customer experience often see improved customer loyalty, increased customer lifetime value and a competitive advantage in the market. Real-time feedback response and efficient refunds are indicators of customer experience improvement in this study.

Real-Time Feedback Response: This has to do with giving real-time feedback to customers, addressing concerns and rectifying issues promptly to show a commitment to customer satisfaction. Real-time feedback response is a proactive approach that demonstrates a commitment to customer satisfaction and loyalty. It enables banks to address customer issues promptly, potentially preventing escalations, and shows customers that their opinions and concerns are valued. Additionally, it helps banks adapt to changing customer needs and maintain a positive brand image.

Efficient Refunds: Efficient refunds in banking refer to the streamlined and timely process by which financial institutions return funds to customers in cases where transactions need

to be reversed, cancelled, or when customers request refunds for various reasons. Efficient refund processes are essential for providing good customer service and maintaining trust between the bank and its customers.

Market Expansion: The corporate market expansion strategies that aim to increase sales, assets and profits are the most popular. Businesses operating in developing industries must expand if they want to thrive. Increased sales and the opportunity to utilize the experience curve to lower the cost of goods sold are two benefits of further growth (Storbacka, in Tanguis & Omar, 2017).

Businesses examining prospective markets must take stock of their capabilities and assets. These may include new or existing products with an appeal in untapped areas. Organizations must consider who new customers are. Then they can engage them with a specific brand message. Organizations must finance their initiatives. They must also accept the risks of financial disappointment. Even the most well-developed market expansion strategies do not guarantee success. But success will lead to increased sales and a boon for the financial future of those companies. Market expansion in this study is further expressed in terms of service line extension and geographic expansion.

Service Line Expansion: Service line extension in banking refers to the strategic expansion of a bank's offerings to include new financial products or services that complement its existing portfolio. This expansion allows the bank to diversify its revenue streams, cater for a broader range of customer needs, and strengthen its competitive position in the financial industry. Service line extension in banking requires careful planning, market research, regulatory compliance and consideration of customer needs and preferences. It aims to create a more holistic and competitive banking experience while attracting and retaining a diverse customer base. Banks that successfully extend their service lines can strengthen their position in the financial industry and capture new revenue opportunities.

Geographic Expansion: This refers to the strategic initiative undertaken by a bank to increase its physical presence by opening new branches, offices or service locations in different geographic regions, cities or countries. This expansion strategy allows banks to broaden their customer reach, extend their market footprint and serve customers in areas where they previously had no or limited presence.

Discussion

Digital Trust and Organizational Survival

One of the main reasons why digital trust is so important in banking and finance is that it helps to tackle issues of identity theft and fraud. This is why cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade is vital in achieving digital trust for bank customers. Customers and regulators

require reassurance that personal and financial data will not fall into the wrong hands. These data include customer statements, investment authorisations, legal records and customer personal data.

Online banking is now well established but the technology continues to evolve and so do the potential threats to data security. With phishing and other identity theft a daily concern, establishing digital trust in the industry is crucial. Cyberattacks can result in substantial financial losses for banks, including the cost of remediation, regulatory fines, legal fees and reputational damage (Maherry, 2023). With customer trust secured for digital banking, commercial banks can improve on their financial strength, customer experience, market expansion, competitive advantage, etc.

Customer engagement has a significant impact on the organizational survival of businesses across various industries. It is a critical factor that influences customer loyalty, brand reputation and long-term success. Customer loyalty, repeat business, higher customer lifetime value, resilience during economic downturns, reduced market cost, and brand reputation and trust, are all impacts of customer engagement on organizational survival. Engaged customers tend to use a wider range of a bank's products and services (Miller, 2021). They have a stronger emotional connection to the business, making them less likely to switch to competitors. This loyalty provides a steady stream of revenue and reduces customer churn, contributing to the organization's stability and survival. Engaged customers are more inclined to make repeat purchases and use the organization's products or services consistently. This repeat business helps maintain a steady cash flow and ensures that the organization remains financially viable. Engaged customers tend to have a higher CLV because they continue to do business with the organization over an extended period. This increased CLV can have a significant positive impact on the organization's revenue and profitability.

Multifactor authentication significantly affects the organizational survival of commercial banks in today's digital landscape. Multifactor authentication enhances security by requiring users to provide multiple forms of verification before getting access to accounts or sensitive information. Customers appreciate the added security provided by multifactor authentication. Knowing that their accounts are protected by multiple layers of authentication builds trust and confidence in the bank's digital services. This trust is essential for retaining customers and attracting new ones in an era when online security is a top concern. Banks that implement strong multifactor authentication solutions can use this as a competitive advantage. They can market themselves as being at the forefront of security, attracting customers who prioritize safety in their banking choices. Multifactor authentication is a vital component of a bank's cybersecurity strategy and has a substantial impact on its organizational survival. It helps protect sensitive data, maintain compliance with regulations, build trust with customers and reduce the risk of

fraud and financial losses (Abiola & Adedokun, 2019). Banks that prioritize multifactor authentication are better equipped to thrive in an environment where cybersecurity threats are ever-present.

Digital Trust and Organizational Survival of Commercial Banks

This age of digitalization has affected virtually all aspects of human endeavour. Amongst them is banking. But the issue of digital trust plays a huge role here, even as it affects the financial strength, customer experience improvement and market expansion, amongst others. The more trust customers have in digital banking, the more they are likely to engage in online banking activities, and vice versa. But this trust does not just come on its own. Commercial banks have to enforce it by employing strategies such as cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade, customer engagement, multifactor authentication, etc.

A cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade plays a vital role in enhancing the organizational survival and resilience of commercial banks in today's digital landscape. It protects against cyber threats, mitigates financial losses, regulates compliance, ensures business continuity, enforces customer trust and loyalty, prevents insider threats and enhances competitive advantage, amongst others. Cyber threats, such as data breaches, ransomware attacks and phishing attempts, pose significant risks to banks. A cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade bolsters the bank's defences, making the bank more resilient against these threats. This protection is crucial for safeguarding sensitive customer data, financial assets and the bank's reputation. An upgraded cybersecurity infrastructure helps in early threat detection, rapid response and containment of incidents, reducing the financial impact. Regulatory authorities impose stringent cybersecurity requirements on banks to protect customer data and maintain the integrity of the financial system. Failure to comply with these regulations can lead to fines and penalties that could jeopardize the bank's survival. An upgraded cybersecurity infrastructure ensures compliance with regulatory standards.

Cyber incidents, such as distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks or data breaches, can disrupt banking operations. A robust cybersecurity infrastructure includes disaster recovery and business continuity plans, enabling the bank to continue critical functions even during a cyber-crisis, which is essential for survival. Trust is a cornerstone of the banking industry. An upgraded cybersecurity infrastructure demonstrates a commitment to protecting customer data and financial assets, thereby boosting organizational performance and resilience. When customers know that their information is secure, they are more likely to remain loyal to the bank, contributing to its long-term survival. Insider threats, whether intentional or accidental, can harm a bank's operations and reputation. An upgraded cybersecurity infrastructure includes access controls, monitoring systems, and user behaviour analytics to detect and mitigate insider threats, reducing the risk they pose. In addition, banks with a strong cybersecurity infrastructure

often have a competitive advantage. Customers and investors are more likely to choose a bank known for its cybersecurity excellence; this provides a competitive edge that contributes to long-term survival.

Customer engagement has a significant impact on the organizational survival and success of commercial banks. In today's competitive banking landscape, where customers have more choices than ever before, building and maintaining strong customer relationships is essential for long-term viability. Customers are more likely to open additional accounts, apply for loans, invest in financial products and use fee-based services. This increased usage contributes to revenue growth for the bank. Engaged customers tend to develop a strong sense of loyalty and trust towards the bank. They believe the bank has their best interests at heart and are more forgiving of occasional service issues or mistakes, which helps maintain a positive brand image. A bank with a reputation for excellent customer engagement has a competitive advantage. It can differentiate itself from other banks by offering a superior customer experience, attracting more customers and retaining existing ones. Customer engagement is a key driver of organizational survival for commercial banks, as it leads to higher customer retention, revenue growth and brand loyalty while providing valuable insights for product development and risk management (Sharma, 2022). Banks that prioritize and invest in customer engagement strategies are better positioned to thrive in a competitive and evolving financial landscape.

Digital trust is vital in the secure implementation of eSignatures. In the banking and finance industry, eSignatures are becoming increasingly popular, as they allow for transactions to be conducted quickly and securely. However, for eSignatures to be effective and to provide digital trust, all parties involved must trust in the transaction. This is done by ensuring that eSignatures are valid and that the person signing the document is who they claim to be. If the public loses trust in digital systems, this could lead to a loss of confidence in the financial system. Fraud, in particular, is at the forefront of public concerns. Digital signatures are well positioned to offset the risk of financial fraud, largely due to three critical factors when assessing the digital trust of an eSignature – authentication, tamper-evident and compliance. The banking industry specifically will benefit greatly from investing in digital trust ecosystems that include eSignatures, biometrics and encryption software to provide verification and assurance for customers.

In the future, financial institutions will adopt Know Your Transaction (KYT) as a means of implementing cybersecurity measures at the transaction level in their banking protocols. By utilizing digital signatures at the transaction level and verifying them upon receipt, the financial industry can achieve KYT, ensuring that the source of information is under the control of the endpoint and that transaction information has not been

tampered with. This level of security will be a crucial aspect of achieving digital trust in the financial industry.

Conclusion

Based on the literature assessed, it is crystal clear that digital trust, enforced through cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade, customer engagement and multifactor authentication, promotes the financial strength, customer experience improvement and market expansion of commercial banks. This implies that commercial banks in Rivers State can engage these instruments (cybersecurity infrastructure upgrade, customer engagement and multifactor authentication) to ensure their survival in this digital banking age. The study concludes that commercial banks' continuous implementation of multifactor authentication, customer engagement and protection against security threats, virtual risks, and customer privacy will engender survival and competitive advantage. Digital trust makes it a lot easier for commercial banks to increase customer participation and customer base, thereby enhancing their financial strength, customer satisfaction and market expansion. Digital trust has, therefore, proved to be a profitable path for commercial banks to tread on to achieve organizational survival, amongst others. Commercial banks that do otherwise might suffer market depreciation, poor customer experience, low financial performance, etc.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following are recommended:

- As a matter of urgency, commercial banks in Rivers State and other parts of Nigeria should routinely upgrade their cybersecurity infrastructure to meet up with international standards, so as to improve customer experience and market expansion.
- Commercial banks in Rivers State should strongly work on customer engagement so as to get their feedback, as this will help them know better ways of serving their customers and promote organizational performance, survival and competitiveness.
- Commercial banks should continually take measures to ensure privacy of customers' information by employing the instrumentality of multifactor authentication, thereby enhancing customer experience, market expansion and financial strength.

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66**AI-ENABLED ANALYTICAL TOOLS AND ORGANIZATIONAL WELLNESS OF COMMERCIAL BANKS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA: A LITERARY DISCOURSE****By****Dumo Nkesi Opara**

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Abstract

The paper theoretically explored how AI-enabled analytical tools enhance organizational wellness of commercial banks in Rivers State. The objective of the paper was to theoretically determine how AI-enabled analytical tools, such as Google Analytics, Social Web Analytics and Product Analytics, enhance organizational wellness of commercial banks in Rivers State, Nigeria, especially in terms of financial health, product innovation and customer satisfaction. Secondary data, i.e review of relevant literature, were used in the paper. Hence, scholarly materials such as journals, books, Internet and other published materials related to the subject matter written by different authors were accessed. It also involved the use of qualitative content analysis. This is as a result of its major dependence on the secondary source of data. The paper was anchored to Diffusion of Innovation Theory by Rogers in 1962. Drawing from the review of relevant literature and discussion, the paper revealed that AI-enabled analytical tools, such as Google Analytics, Social Web Analytics and Product Analytics enhanced organizational wellness of the commercial banks in Rivers State, especially in terms of financial health, product innovation and customer satisfaction. The paper concluded that AI-enabled analytical tools are mechanism through which organizations can boost their financial health, product innovation and customer satisfaction, amongst others. The paper recommended that regular Google Analytics should be carried out by commercial banks in Rivers State to give them insights into their customer behaviour and products and services performances, thereby helping them to improve their finance generation and customer satisfaction.

Keywords: AI-enabled analytical tools, Google Analytics, Social Web Analytics, Product Analytics, Organizational wellness, Financial health, Product innovation, Customer satisfaction.

Introduction

A healthy financial organization is characterized by financial strength, product innovation and customer satisfaction, among other things. But achieving these variables takes some great effort from the organization. This implies that, for organizational wellness to be attained in any business environment, strategies and hard work are needed. This paper defines organizational wellness as the capacity of an organization to align organizational processes through communication and function effectively in the pursuit of its core mandate, such as product innovation and customer satisfaction. A healthy organization assures service reliability, customer complaint resolution, financial operational efficiency, human operational efficiency, timely information access and timely notification, amongst others. More explicitly, a healthy organization can also be seen as a firm where the combination and co-ordination of people and practices are optimal to the point that they can produce exceptional performance (Daniel, 2017; Zuci System, 2023).

Organizational wellness is not only how teams work towards a common goal but also how they can cope with organizational change. It is all about happy, proactive employees that are ready for innovation. In line with this, Richard (2018) states that organizational wellness is a veritable ingredient in the functioning of every service organization, especially airline operators, as employees and management require to function healthily for customers' health. The banking industry requires a healthy organization, where there is financial health, product innovation and customer satisfaction, amongst others.

The banking industry, being a digitally-inclined one, can utilize digital means to better their lot. In this dispensation, many organizations with digital presence are utilizing AI-enabled analytical tools to make intelligent analysis of their digital products and services, through which they know how best to serve their customers, creatively develop better products and services, increase performance and productivity and, most importantly, increase profitability. Financial institutions, such as commercial banks, can adopt this same mechanism to enhance their health.

Artificial intelligence (AI) represents the simulation of human intelligence in machines programmed to think, learn and make decisions autonomously. Artificial intelligence technologies use algorithms, data processing, and machine learning to solve

complex problems, optimize processes and provide insights. According to Agarwal et al. (2021), AI has revolutionized organizational processes by enhancing decision-making and operational efficiency. It encompasses diverse applications, including natural language processing, predictive analytics and robotics. The role of AI in organizations extends beyond automation to include strategic insights derived from extensive datasets, improving outcomes in sectors such as finance, healthcare and marketing. These capabilities underscore AI's potential in fostering innovation and driving organizational growth.

Artificial intelligence-enabled analytical tools are specific technologies that leverage AI algorithms to analyze large volumes of data, derive insights and support decision-making. These tools are integral to modern business operations, especially in dynamic sectors like commercial banking, where accurate predictions and efficient resource allocation are critical. As noted by Awoniyi (2022), these tools enable organizations to detect patterns, predict trends and automate routine processes, enhancing productivity and profitability. Mishra et al. (2022) highlight that AI-enabled analytics bridge the gap between raw data and actionable knowledge, offering significant advantages in risk assessment, customer experience and market competitiveness. Their deployment in commercial banks fosters organizational wellness by reducing inefficiencies and improving operational precision.

Google Analytics, as an AI-enabled analytical tool, provides businesses with detailed insights into user behaviour and engagement on digital platforms. With advanced machine learning algorithms, it tracks metrics like website traffic, bounce rates, and user demographics to help organizations organise their digital strategies. According to Geer (2023), Google Analytics uses predictive capabilities to recommend actions that can optimize website performance and conversion rates. Growth Marketing Genie (2024) emphasizes its significance in enabling commercial banks to understand customer preferences, refine online offerings and enhance customer experiences. These capabilities are critical for maintaining customer loyalty and driving revenue growth in competitive banking environments.

Social Web Analytics involves the use of AI tools to analyze data from social media platforms, offering insights into public sentiment, customer preferences and market trends. Nikolaos et al. (2023) discuss how Social Web Analytics empowers businesses to monitor brand reputation, measure campaign effectiveness and identify customer needs. Tools like AI-driven Sentiment Analysis categorize social media mentions as positive, neutral or negative, helping banks adapt strategies to changing customer perceptions.

Salemcity et al. (2023) note that these tools also enable targeted advertising by identifying specific audience segments, enhancing engagement and return on investment (ROI). By adopting Social Web Analytics, banks in Rivers State can improve their public image and strengthen customer relationships.

Product Analytics, another form of AI-enabled analytics, focuses on understanding user interactions with products or services to enhance their design and functionality. Google (2024) highlights how product analytics tracks user behaviour patterns to identify features that attract or deter customers. Raazia et al. (2023) note that AI tools used in product analytics employ machine learning to forecast customer needs, enabling organizations to refine offerings proactively. Drydakis (2022) argues that, by aligning products with customer expectations, businesses can increase satisfaction, loyalty and market share. For commercial banks in Rivers State, employing Product Analytics can result in more personalized financial products and services, boosting customer acquisition and retention while enhancing organizational wellness.

Many commercial banks in Rivers State pay poor attention to satisfying customers. It became worse during the COVID-19 era and increased during the cashless policy. Up until now, the treatments customers receive have been very unacceptable, causing increase in customer churn rate and customer disloyalty. There is also the issue of slow product innovation and poor financial health. Many ATMs function badly, apps and online platforms are not maintained regularly, all depicting the poor state of their financial health and product innovation. These explanations bear the experience of the researchers with commercial banks in Rivers State. Also, the literature suggests that little or no paper has been carried out on the relationship between AI-enabled analytical tools and organizational wellness of commercial banks in Rivers State (Nwakoby *et al.*, 2018; Gado, 2015; Okechukwu & Okoronkwo, 2018; Mohammed *et al.*, 2019). More obviously is the fact that no paper has been done on the relationship between AI-enabled analytical tools and organizational wellness of commercial banks in Rivers State, where AI-enabled analytical tools is dimensionalized into Google Analytics, Social Web Analytics, and Product Analytics, and organizational wellness measured using financial health, product innovation and customer satisfaction. These gaps (reality and literature gap) are the motivators for this paper, with the researchers theoretically finding how AI-enabled analytical tools enhance organizational wellness of commercial banks in Rivers State.

Conceptual Framework

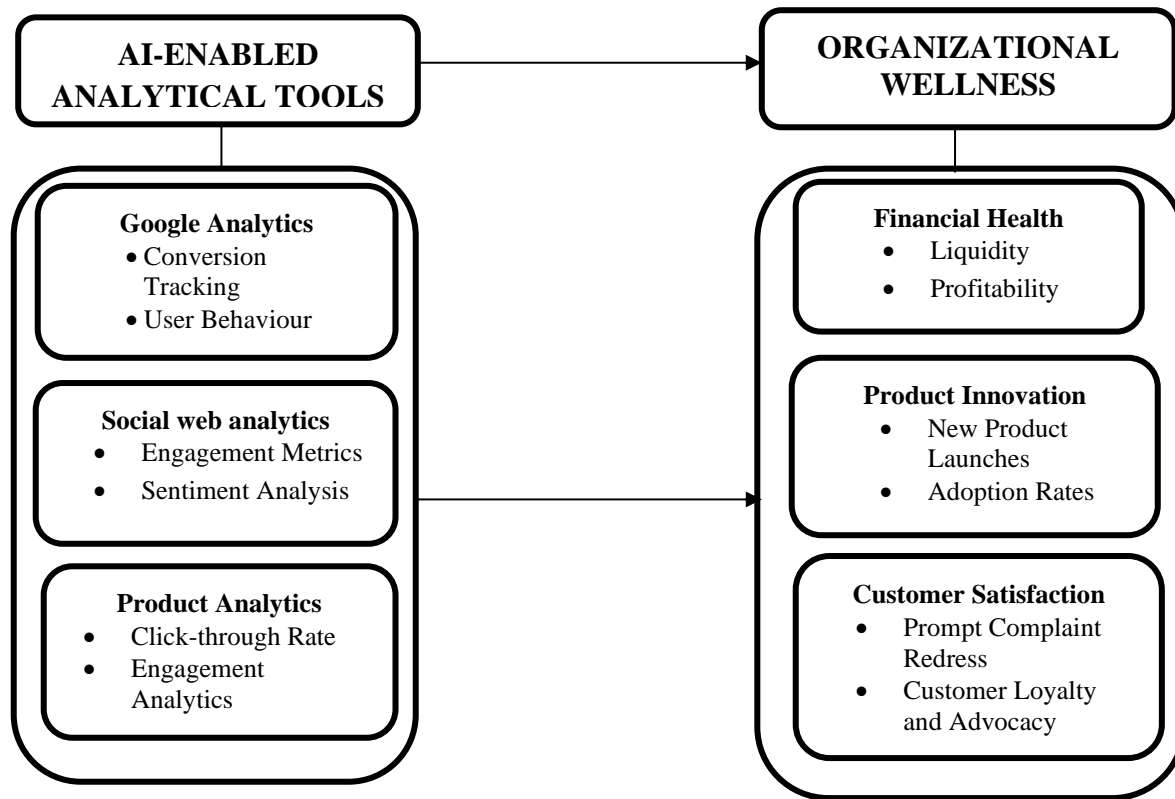


Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework of AI-enabled Analytics and Organizational wellness of Commercial Banks in Rivers State.*

Source: *Researchers' Conceptualization, 2024, aided by Odu, 2021)*

Aim and Objectives of the Paper

The aim of this paper was to ascertain how AI-enabled analytical tools enhance organizational wellness of commercial banks in Rivers State. The objectives were to:

- ascertain how Google Analytics enhances organizational wellness of commercial banks in Rivers State;
- determine how Social Web Analytics Enhances organizational wellness of commercial banks in Rivers State; and
- investigate how Product Analytics enhances organizational wellness of commercial banks in Rivers State.

Theoretical Review

This paper was anchored to the Task-Technology Fit Theory propounded by Goodhue and Thompson (1995). It provides a valuable framework for understanding how AI-enabled analytical tools can enhance organizational wellness in commercial banks in Rivers State.

The theory posits that technology is most effective when it aligns with the specific tasks it is designed to support, improving individual and organizational performance. Goodhue and Thompson (1995) argue that the “fit” between technology and tasks is crucial for achieving optimal outcomes. Artificial intelligence-enabled analytical tools, such as Google Analytics and Social Web Analytics, exemplify this fit by meeting the specific needs of commercial banks, such as predicting customer behaviours, optimizing marketing campaigns and managing operational risks. When these tools are well-suited to organizational goals, they foster efficiency, accuracy and innovation, which are critical to maintaining wellness and competitiveness in the banking sector.

Concept of AI-enabled Analytical Tools

AI-enabled analytics groups together the measurement, collection, analysis and presentation of data from the Internet in order to understand and optimise how websites are used (Adamiak, 2021). Artificial intelligence-enabled analytics is the collection, reporting, and analysis of data generated by users visiting and interacting with a website (Lubowicka, 2019). The purpose of AI-enabled analytics is to measure user behaviour, optimize the experience and flow website users and gain insights that help meet business objectives like increasing conversions and sales. Artificial intelligence-enabled analytics lets one precisely capture user behaviour on one's websites (mobile sites and mobile applications). Today, AI-enabled analytics (also known as digital analytics) is a key element in digital marketing and website optimisation. AI-enabled analytics is based on data collected by audience measurement tools like AT Internet's Analytics Suite.

Artificial intelligence-enabled analytical tools are software packages designed to track, measure, and report website activities, including site traffic, visitor source and user clicks by leveraging AI (Hotjar, 2023). Using AI-enabled analytical tools helps one understand what is happening on one's website and get insights on what is working (and what is not). In turn, one can use this insight to optimize the user experience and drive more engagement and conversions. There are two main types of AI-enabled analytics tools, depending on how data is collected:

- On-site/hosted: a piece of code installed on one's site will generate analytics unique to one (e.g. Google Analytics or Clicky); and
- Third-party/off-site: Insights collected from third-party sources (like search engines and toolbars) generates analytics data about multiple websites. It is ideal for competitive analysis (e.g. Similar Web).

When the topic of analytics comes up, people might immediately think of the industry leader, Google Analytics; but that is just the tip of the iceberg. The twelve top AI-enabled analytical tools are Google Analytics, Micpanel, Kissmetrics, Adobe Analytics, Open AI-enabled Analytics, Matomo (formerly Piwik), Woopra, Hotjar, HubSpot,

Chartbeat, SimilarWeb and Ahrefs. In addition, the dimensions of AI-enabled analytics in this paper are Google Analytics, Social Web Analytics and Product Analytics.

Google Analytics: Google Analytics is an AI-enabled analytics service provided by Google that allows website owners and marketers to track and analyze various aspects of their website's performance and user engagement. It provides valuable insights into how visitors interact with a website, where they come from, and what actions they take while on the site. Google Analytics is widely used by businesses, website owners and digital marketers to make data-driven decisions and optimize their online presence. In the context of banking and financial institutions, Google Analytics typically refers to the use of Google Analytics, the AI-enabled analytics service provided by Google, to track and analyze online user behaviour on a bank's website or digital banking platforms. In summary, Google Analytics in banking refers to the application of the Google Analytics platform to gather and analyze data related to online user interactions with a bank's digital assets, helping banks improve their online presence, marketing strategies and overall customer experience. For further discussion, the paper conceptualizes conversion tracking and user behaviour flow as the indicators of Google analytics.

Conversion Tracking: Conversion tracking in Google Analytics refers to the process of monitoring and measuring specific actions or events on a website that are considered valuable or desirable by the website owner or marketer. These actions are often referred to as "conversions." Conversion tracking is a critical aspect of AI-enabled analytics, as it helps businesses assess the effectiveness of their online efforts, such as marketing campaigns, and understand how well their websites are achieving their goals.

User Behaviour Flow: The behaviour flow report visualizes the path users travelled from one page or event to the next (Analytics Help, 2022). This report can help one discover what content keeps users engaged with one's site. The behaviour flow report can also help identify potential content issues. One must have set up and be tracking events before they appear in the behaviour flow report. The more organized one is about setting up the event tracking code, the easier it is to use the vents or pages and events views of the behaviour flow report. One must also have set up content groupings before they appear in the report.

Social Web Analytics: Social Web Analytics is the collection and analysis of data points that help organizations measure the performance of their social media accounts (McLachlan, 2021). These are the metrics that will help organizations assess their social media marketing strategy on both macro and micro levels. Besides helping banks to see how social media is contributing to their larger business goals, they can also help to gauge customer sentiment, spot trends and avoid PR crises before they happen. Overall, Social Web Analytics is a valuable tool for businesses and organizations looking to harness the

power of social media for marketing, customer engagement and brand management. It helps them make data-driven decisions and adapt their strategies to the ever-changing landscape of social media. In addition, engagement metrics and sentiment analysis are the indicators of Social Web Analytics in this paper.

Engagement Metrics: Engagement metrics in social media analytics refer to the various measures used to assess how actively and effectively an audience is interacting with a brand's or individual's social media content (Umme & Nazrul, 2022). These metrics help gauge the level of audience involvement, interest and interaction with posts, which is a crucial aspect of social media marketing. Engagement metrics provide insights into the effectiveness of your content and one's ability to connect with your audience.

Sentiment Analysis: To Yan (2020), sentiment analysis, also known as opinion mining, is a natural language processing (NLP) technique used to determine and quantify the sentiment or emotional tone expressed in social media content, such as text-based posts, comments, reviews and messages. The primary goal of sentiment analysis is to automatically classify and understand whether the sentiment behind a piece of text is positive, negative or neutral. Sentiment analysis is a valuable tool in the world of social media analytics, enabling organizations to gain a deeper understanding of how their brand and content are perceived by the online community and allowing them to make data-driven decisions based on public sentiment.

Product Analytics: Product Analytics is the use of web-based software to analyze how users engage with a product or service (Tardif, 2018). It enables product teams to track, visualize and analyze user engagement and behaviour data. Teams use this data to improve and optimize a product or service. As defined by Heap (2019), Product Analytics is a robust set of tools that allow product managers and product teams to assess the performance of the digital experiences they build. It provides critical information to optimize performance, diagnose problems and correlate customer activity with long-term value (LTV).

Product Analytics software gives teams and leaders tools to see exactly what is happening in their products. They can assess users' digital experiences, optimize performance of product usage, diagnose problems in your customer experience, correlate customer activity with LTV, and more. If one wants to create a great digital experience, one will need to prioritize correct information and eliminate random guessing. To do this, one will need to capture everything and illuminate critical moments of friction and opportunity (even if one has not chosen to follow them), then pair these insights with qualitative tools to see what people are experiencing. Then, one will know which features customers use, which they ignore, where users experience friction, how to best reduce

churn, and where one can personalize interaction for users. In addition, the paper has click-through and engagement analytics as the indicators of product analytics.

Click-Through: In product analytics, “click-through” typically refers to the action of a user clicking on a specific element, link, or call-to-action within a digital product, such as a website or mobile app, and proceeding to another page or taking a specific action (Yan, 2020). Click-through rate (CTR) is a commonly used metric to measure the effectiveness of these clicks. It is calculated by dividing the number of users who clicked on a particular element or link by the total number of users who had the opportunity to do so and expressed it as a percentage.

Engagement Analytics: As an indicator of product analytics, engagement analytics refers to the process of tracking and analyzing user interactions, behaviours and activities within a digital product or application to gain insights into how users engage with the product. This type of analytics provides a detailed understanding of how users are using a product, where they are spending their time, and how they are interacting with various features and content.

Concept of Organizational Wellness

Organizational wellness determines a company’s ability to develop, communicate and follow a common business strategy by maintaining a highly engaged workforce. It is not only how one’s teams work towards a common goal but also how they can cope with organizational change. It is all about happy, proactive employees that are ready for innovation. It is composed of various psychological, physiological, and social components. There is no “secret sauce” allowing maintenance of a perfectly healthy organization. Nonetheless, here are five key factors that positively affect organizational wellness.

- **Organizational Alignment:** Organizational alignment ensures all employees have a shared vision of the company’s goals, values and strategy. When the topic of organizational alignment is brought up, sales and marketing alignment is the first to come to people’s minds.
- **Clearly Communicated Processes and Workflows:** Organizational alignment cannot be achieved without effective communication. Regardless of the niche, people’s managers are trying hard to maintain clear, transparent communication within organizations. Remote work has taken the reigns, and communication management has become a serious problem for distributed organizations.
- **Employee Well-being and Development:** Employee well-being is critical for organizational wellness. To maintain a healthy organization, people’s managers should shift their focus from financial incentives to employee well-being.
- **To support employee development,** organizations need to develop a career development plan for each hire and introduce professional training programmes. It

is smart to also encourage soft skills development and continuous employee upskilling.

- **Organizational Fairness:** Organizational fairness, or organizational justice, determines the perception of employees of how fair they are treated in the workplace. The concept affects the workforce's attitude to the work they do.
- **Meaningful Work:** Meaningful work is work that creates a sense of purpose and value in an employee's daily routine. It is what gives the workforce the courage to take on challenging, unpopular tasks and complete them.
- **Innovation:** organizational wellness is not all about employee engagement. The ability for digital innovation has recently become a very important issue for organizations all over the world. In a fast-changing market, only companies that have the energy for change can take the lead.

For further expression of what organizational wellness entails, this paper measures it in terms of **financial health, product innovation and customer satisfaction**.

Financial Health: Financial health is the feeling of having financial security and financial freedom of choice, in the present and when considering the future (Garman & Forgeue, 2018). Although financial experts have designed guidelines for each indicator of financial health, the situation differs with each individual. It is recommended that each individual should develop his own financial plan to ensure that his life goals are achieved. Financial health comes about when one's daily systems help one build resilience and pursue opportunities. We believe that financial health is the best indicator of a person's ability to thrive financially – from weathering shocks to achieving their goals.

The financial health of commercial banks refers to the overall condition and stability of a bank's financial position. It is assessed based on various financial indicators, ratios and key performance metrics to determine the bank's ability to operate soundly, manage risk and meet its obligations. A financially healthy commercial bank is one that is stable, well-capitalized and capable of withstanding economic challenges (Utah State University, 2015). Some key aspects and indicators of the financial health of commercial banks are capital adequacy, asset quality, liquidity, profitability, net interest margin, stress testing, regulatory compliance, efficiency, deposit stability and risk management. The assessment of a bank's financial health is a complex process that involves the analysis of multiple financial and operational metrics. Regulators, shareholders and stakeholders closely monitor these indicators to ensure that commercial banks remain financially sound and capable of fulfilling their roles in the financial system. Maintaining financial health is crucial for banks to protect the interests of depositors, shareholders and the broader economy. As conceptualized in this paper, the financial health of commercial banks is further expressed in terms of cash flow and working capital.

Cash Flow: Cash flow in commercial banks refers to the movement of cash into and out of the bank as a result of its various business activities (Aljbiri, 2016). It is a critical aspect of a bank's financial operations and is essential for its liquidity, stability and ability to meet its financial obligations. Commercial banks typically manage multiple sources of cash inflows and outflows to ensure that they can operate smoothly and fulfil their role in the financial system. Cash flow management is crucial for commercial banks to ensure they have sufficient liquidity to meet customer demands, regulatory requirements and operational needs. Banks carefully balance their cash inflows and outflows to maintain stability, financial health and their ability to support economic activities in the communities they serve. Effective cash flow management also helps banks respond to unexpected events and financial stress.

Working Capital: Working capital in commercial banks, similar to other businesses, represents the difference between current assets and current liabilities (Herman & Carleton, 2020). It is a measure of a bank's short-term financial health and its ability to meet its short-term financial obligations and operational needs. Working capital is essential for ensuring that a bank can cover day-to-day expenses, maintain liquidity and continue its operations effectively. Here is how working capital is calculated and its significance in commercial banks:

Working Capital = Current Assets - Current Liabilities

It is important to note that commercial banks typically maintain a certain level of working capital to meet their daily operational needs but may also invest excess liquidity to generate returns. Balancing the need for liquidity with the desire for profitability is a critical aspect of working capital management for commercial banks. The specific working capital requirements can vary based on a bank's size, business model and regulatory environment.

Product Innovation: Su and Tang (2016) define product innovation as the presence of originality or a degree of invention. Product innovation, according to the Oslo Manual (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/OECD, 2005), is the introduction of a good or service that is new or significantly better in terms of its characteristics or planned functions. Evidence suggests that businesses that have a product-based competitive advantage over their rivals—whether through innovation, quality, packaging or design—perform better than their peers (Dong *et al.*, 2016; Batiz-Lazo & Woldesenbet, 2019). In a similar vein, Nuryakin (2018) argues that productivity increases along with product innovation.

Biemans *et al.* (2016) affirm that product innovation is one of the most important instruments for designing strategies to break into new markets, break into the existing profit-enhancing market and provide enterprises with a competitive edge. Businesses respond to customers' ever-evolving wants and demands by innovating new products

(Gast, 2018). New technologies (Filho & Moori, 2017) or improved material components (Nataya, 2018) can be used to innovate products by significantly altering their characteristics and use. The goal of product innovation in the banking industry is to increase customer satisfaction by providing new, high-quality services with more features and benefits (Kong & Masud, 2019). Current examples of electronic product advances in the banking sector include Internet banking, mobile banking, virtual card and, cardless withdrawal (Chong *et al.*, 2016). New product launches and adoption rates are, however, the two indicators of product innovation conceptualized in this work.

New Product Launches: The number of new financial products or services introduced within a specific period is a clear indicator of a bank's commitment to innovation. These can include new loan products, investment options, digital services or payment solutions. In commercial banks, new product launches refer to the introduction of novel financial products, services or solutions to the market (Emenike *et al.*, 2018). These new offerings are designed to meet evolving customer needs, improve the bank's competitive position and often leverage technological advancements to enhance customer experience. New product launches are a key strategy for commercial banks to attract and retain customers, generate additional revenue streams, and stay competitive in the financial industry.

Adoption Rates: Monitoring the rate at which customers adopt and use new products can gauge their success. High adoption rates suggest that the products are meeting customer needs and providing value. Adoption rates in the context of commercial banks refer to the percentage of customers or users who have embraced and actively used a new product, service or technology offered by the bank (Ejike, 2018). These rates are a critical metric for evaluating the success and impact of innovations and initiatives introduced by the bank. A higher adoption rate generally indicates that the bank's customers have positively responded to the new offering, while a lower rate may suggest challenges or barriers to acceptance.

Customer Satisfaction: According to Peeter *et al.* (2016), customer satisfaction means that customer evaluation about the product after purchasing it is in tandem with his expectation. Customers may be dissatisfied, satisfied and delighted regarding the services offered by a particular organization. Satisfying customer is important because they will be willing to spread the positive word-of-mouth comments with other customers. For the past few decades, people only focused on product behaviour in the same manner as a shopper who has functions, features and attributes. Today, customers tend to ask for additional beneficial elements before they finalise their purchases. A pleasant atmosphere is one of those elements which are highly demanded. Jacobson (2017) stresses that if customers do not get fast and friendly services, they will abandon that establishment in search of another one which offers fast, convenient and better services (Tlapana, 2015).

Organizations try to satisfy customers by increasing the perceived service quality. In this respect, one can state that the most important fact is that the customer is at the centre of attention as their satisfaction is sacrosanct to organizational performance (Bracíníková & Matušínská, 2017). Moreover, a negative discrepancy between perceptions and expectations—a “performance-gap.” as it is referred to—causes dissatisfaction, while a positive discrepancy leads to consumer satisfaction (Kumbhar, 2012). Customer satisfaction measures the performance of organizations according to their needs. This further provides a measurement of service quality. By providing feedback on service aspects, customers can actually comment on products and services (Al-Jazzazi & Sultan, 2017; Slusarczyk, 2017). Commercial banks have a prime concern to satisfy customers’ needs, and they keep a close eye on the level of customer satisfaction. This strategy helps organizations to retain customers for a longer period. The cost of attracting new customers is higher than the cost of retaining established customers.

Customer Churn Rate: On the flip side, measuring the rate at which customers leave the bank or stop using its services (churn rate) can indicate dissatisfaction. A high churn rate may signal issues with customer satisfaction. Customer churn rate is the rate at which customers stop doing business with a company over a given period of time (David, 2017). Churn may also apply to the number of subscribers who cancel or do not renew a subscription. The higher the churn rate, the more customers stop buying from the business. The lower the churn rate, the more the customers an organisation retains are. Typically, the lower one’s churn rate, the better it is for one. Understanding one’s customer churn is essential to evaluating the effectiveness of one’s marketing efforts and the overall satisfaction of one’s customers.

Customer Loyalty and Advocacy: Measuring customer loyalty through repeat business and assessing the number of customers who actively promote the bank to others (advocacy) can indicate high levels of satisfaction. Customer loyalty and advocacy in banking refer to the degree of commitment, trust and support that customers have for their bank, as well as their willingness to promote the bank’s services and recommend them to others (Abubakar *et al.*, 2014). Building and maintaining customer loyalty and advocacy in banking requires delivering exceptional customer experiences, consistently meeting customer needs, and providing valuable financial solutions.

Google Analytics and Organizational Wellness

Google Analytics can have a significant impact on organizational wellness in numerous ways, both positive and negative, depending on how it is used and integrated into an organization’s operations. As stressed by Ejike (2018), Google Analytics can impact the data-driven decision making, performance monitoring and marketing optimization of an organization, thereby enhancing its organizational wellness. More expressively, Google

Analytics provides valuable insights into website and online performance. When used effectively, this data can inform strategic decisions, such as content creation, marketing strategies and website improvements. This data-driven approach can lead to better decision-making and improved overall performance. Also, Google Analytics allows organizations to monitor the performance of their online assets in real time. This can help in identifying issues promptly, ensuring that the website is running smoothly and addressing any technical or usability issues promptly.

In addition, organizations can use Google Analytics to track the effectiveness of their marketing campaigns. By analyzing conversion rates, traffic sources and user behaviour, businesses can optimize their marketing spend and focus on the most profitable channels and strategies (Adamiak, 2021). Also, Google Analytics provides insights into user behaviour on a website. By understanding how users interact with the site, organizations can make informed changes to improve the user experience, leading to higher customer satisfaction and retention (Adam, 2022).

Social Web Analytics can enhance the health of a business organisation, especially in the areas of audience insights, competitive analysis, real-time monitoring, ROI measurements, etc. (Lubowicka, 2019). Social Web Analytics can help organizations gain a better understanding of their target audience. This includes demographics, interests, behaviour and preferences. This knowledge allows organizations to organise their messaging and content to better resonate with their audience. Social Media Analytics tools often include features that allow organizations to monitor the social media activities of competitors. This information can be used to identify competitive advantages, discover new opportunities and stay ahead in the market. On real-time monitoring, Social Web Analytics provide real-time monitoring of social conversations. This allows organizations to respond promptly to customer inquiries, feedback and issues, which can enhance customer satisfaction and brand reputation.

Getting information on the click-through rate, engagement analytics and other indicators of product analytics helps a business organization to make data-driven decision. According to Tardif (2018), Product Analytics enable organizations to make informed decisions based on data rather than assumptions. This leads to more accurate strategies, better resource allocation, and improved product development processes. Enhanced product development, user experience improvement, optimized features, churn reduction and competitive advantage are other ways by which Product Analytics enhances the organizational wellness of a business. By analyzing user behaviour, feedback, and usage patterns, organizations can refine their products and features to better meet customer needs. This iterative approach to product development leads to higher-quality offerings and increased customer satisfaction. Product Analytics can

pinpoint areas where users might encounter issues or have difficulties with a product (Heap, 2019).

In sum, Google Analytics, Social Web Analytics, and Product Analytics can significantly impact organizational wellness by aiding data-driven decision-making, improving product quality, enhancing user experiences and optimizing resource allocation. However, organizations must use these tools effectively, ensure data privacy and security, and foster a culture of continuous improvement to maximize the benefits and mitigate potential drawbacks.

Social Web Analytics and Organizational Wellness

Artificial intelligence-enabled analytical tools have proven to be very functional in the survival and health of any business organization, especially tech-oriented businesses, such as commercial banks. Commercial banks now have online presence through platforms such as websites, blogs, apps and social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, X, LinkedIn, etc.). To enhance their health and growth, there is need to utilize AI-enabled analytical tools, such as Google Analytics, Social Analytics and Product Analytics, to check their conversion tracking, user behaviour, engagement metrics, sentiment analysis, click-through rate, etc., and make informed decisions that will improve their financial health, product innovation and customer satisfaction, among others.

Across commercial banks, Google analytics can be carried out to improve market effectiveness. Banks can track the performance of their online marketing campaigns, such as pay-per-click advertising and social media marketing, using Google Analytics (Lubowicka, 2019). This enables them to allocate marketing resources more efficiently and focus on strategies that yield the best results. Commercial banks can also improve their user experience through Google analytics carried out by them. As iterated by Fitzgerald (2020), Google Analytics helps banks understand how users navigate their websites and apps and where they encounter issues. This information can be utilised to optimize website usability, leading to higher customer satisfaction and improved online service delivery.

Similarly, commercial banks can set up goals and funnels in Google Analytics to track user interactions that lead to desired outcomes, such as account sign-ups or contact form submissions. This allows them to optimize their online processes for lead generation and conversion. No doubt, all of these aid the health of commercial banks to achieve more financial growth, improve on their products and services, and enhance the satisfaction of their customers across the globe.

With Social Web Analytics, commercial banks can achieve more customer engagement. Social Media Analytics allows banks to track customer engagement on their social media platforms (McLachlan, 2021). By understanding the types of content that

resonates with their audience and which posts generate the most engagement, banks can tailor their social media strategies to fostering meaningful connections with customers. Brand reputation management, competitive analysis, product and service feedback, and marketing effectiveness are also gains of Social Web Analytics on commercial banks. Explicitly, it enables banks to monitor conversations about their brand in real time. They can quickly identify and respond to both positive and negative comments, mitigating potential reputation risks and enhancing brand image. Banks can use it to monitor the social media activities of their competitors. This can provide insights into competitors' strategies, customer sentiment and emerging trends in the financial industry, helping banks stay competitive. Social media platforms are often used by customers to provide feedback on their banking experiences. Social Media Analytics can help banks gather and analyze this feedback to identify areas for improvement in their products and services. Banks can track the performance of their social media marketing campaigns using it. This helps in assessing the ROI of social media advertising and optimizing marketing spend for better results, all contributing to the enhancement of the health of commercial banks.

By analyzing the cost-effectiveness of various products and services, banks can optimize their offerings and reduce operational expenses while maintaining or improving customer satisfaction. This implies that commercial banks achieve cost efficiency by carrying account product analytics, thereby boosting their financial health. The competitive advantage of a commercial bank can also be enhanced through Product Analytics. Banks can gain a competitive advantage by leveraging it to identify market trends, customer preferences, and opportunities for innovation in the financial industry. Also, analyzing data on loan portfolios, credit card usage and investment products can help banks assess and manage risks more effectively. By monitoring key risk indicators, banks can identify potential issues early and take proactive measures to mitigate them. With these, commercial banks' health can be improved upon.

Conclusion

From the literature review carried out, alongside the discussions, the paper discovered that AI-enabled analytical tools such as Google Analytics, Social Analytics and Product Analytics are veritable enhancers of organizational wellness of commercial banks, especially in terms of financial health, product innovation and customer satisfaction. Through the Google Analytics, Social Web Analytics and Product Analytics commercial banks carry out on their websites, blogs, apps and social media platforms, they gain insights better ways of reaching out to their customers and satisfying their needs, making more financial gains from their online platforms, and innovating ways of enhancing their products and service to expand customer base and market share. Therefore, the paper concludes that AI-enabled analytical tools, through Google Analytics, Social Web Analytics

and Product Analytics, are mechanism through which organizations can boost their financial health, product innovation and customer satisfaction, amongst others. It behoves commercial banks to adopt this working strategy, if they desire to enhance their health; otherwise, they might experience crumbling financial state, incessant customer complaints and unimproved web products and services, among others.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the paper, the following recommendations are made:

Regular Google analytics should be carried out by commercial banks in Rivers State to give them insight into their customer behaviour and products and services performances, thereby helping them to improve on their finance generation and customer satisfaction.

Commercial banks should check on their social site engagement metrics and sentiment analytics through Social Web Analytics, as these will give them insight into how best to satisfy their customers, build better products and services, and enhance their financial realizations.

Commercial banks should also analyze the click-through rates and engagement metrics generated on their products and services to help them enhance these products and services and, by so doing, improve on customer satisfaction and financial health.

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SECTION H

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

**THE EVOLUTION OF AFRICAN STUDIES: TRACING CONTINUITIES AND
DISRUPTIONS IN UKWUANI AND IJAW FOLKLORE**

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Abstract

This study examines the evolution of African studies through the lens of Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore, focusing on the interplay between continuity and disruption across different historical periods. It investigates how colonization, Western education, religion and modernization have influenced the preservation, adaptation or decline of oral traditions, such as proverbs, myths, songs and storytelling practices. The research highlights the resilience of these communities in maintaining cultural identity amidst external pressures, while also documenting the transformative processes that reflect societal changes. This paper contributes to the broader discourse on African cultural studies by emphasizing the role of folklore as a vital repository of indigenous knowledge, values and communal identity. It also underscores the urgency of preserving these narratives to safeguard Africa's intangible heritage in a rapidly changing world. The study draws on historical and ethnographic data, tracing specific case studies from Ukwuani and Ijaw. Additionally, it discusses the intersection of folklore with broader themes, such as resistance, assimilation and identity formation. By situating Ukwuani and Ijaw narratives within global African studies, this research provides a comparative framework to analyze the impact of cultural transformation on African traditions. Finally, the paper advocates enhanced community-led initiatives and policy support for preserving oral traditions in Africa.

Keywords: Ukwuani folklore, Ijaw folklore, African studies, oral narratives, cultural preservation, modernization, indigenous knowledge, colonization, cultural resilience, intangible heritage.

1. Introduction

Folklore holds a central position in African studies as a vital repository of cultural identity, history and communal values. It serves as a medium through which societies transmit knowledge, values, norms and historical accounts from one generation to another. In many African communities, oral traditions, including proverbs, myths, epics and storytelling, form the backbone of social cohesion and cultural continuity.

Historically, folklore has been a tool for preserving the world view of African societies. It encapsulates the philosophies, cosmologies and social structures of

communities. According to Vansina (1985), oral traditions are “verbal messages which are reported statements from the past beyond the present generation.” This makes folklore not just a form of entertainment but also a means of documentation, serving as the “archives” of preliterate societies.

In Ukwuani and Ijaw cultures, for instance, proverbs and folktales often reflect communal values, such as justice, courage and the interconnectedness of all beings. These oral narratives carry profound moral lessons and practical guidance for daily living. As Finnegan (1970) notes, “Oral literature in Africa is inseparable from the lived experiences of its people,” signifying its role in sustaining identity amidst societal changes.

The study of folklore within African studies gained prominence in the postcolonial era, as scholars sought to challenge Eurocentric narratives that dismissed oral traditions as primitive. Okpewho (1992) emphasizes that African oral traditions are complex and dynamic, offering insights into the resilience and creativity of African societies. In this context, folklore has been instrumental in reclaiming African identity and resisting cultural imperialism.

Moreover, folklore has adapted to external influences, reflecting the transformative capacities of African cultures. Colonization and modernization introduced new challenges to the preservation of oral traditions. Western education and religion often marginalized traditional practices, framing them as inferior or superstitious (Miller, 1998). Despite these disruptions, folklore remains a resilient element of African cultural heritage, with communities finding innovative ways to integrate traditional and contemporary forms of expression.

In the Ukwuani society, for example, folktales are often used to educate young people about their roles within the family and community. Similarly, among the Ijaw people, epic storytelling serves to reinforce their historical struggles and victories, particularly their resistance to external domination. These examples highlight the functional role of folklore as both a cultural artefact and a tool for community development.

As globalization continues to shape the modern world, the role of folklore in preserving cultural identity becomes increasingly significant. Scholars like Zipes (2006) have argued that folklore is a living tradition that evolves alongside the communities it serves. In Africa, digital platforms and social media have provided new avenues for the dissemination and preservation of oral traditions, ensuring their relevance in the 21st century.

Thus, folklore is not only a reflection of the past but also a bridge to the future. It continues to shape and define African studies by providing unique insights into the lived experiences of African communities. As scholars, policymakers and cultural custodians

work to preserve these traditions, the study of folklore will remain integral to understanding and safeguarding Africa's rich cultural heritage.

Significance of Ukwuani and Ijaw Communities in African Cultural Studies

The Ukwuani and Ijaw communities hold significant positions in African cultural studies due to their rich oral traditions, diverse cultural practices and historical contributions to the preservation of African identity. These two communities, located primarily in Nigeria's Niger Delta region, provide unique insights into the complexities of African heritage, particularly in the context of folklore as a medium for cultural expression and identity formation.

Ukwuani Community: A Repository of African Wisdom

The Ukwuani people, primarily found in Delta State, Nigeria, are renowned for their vibrant oral narratives, which include proverbs, myths, folktales and songs. These oral traditions are deeply embedded in their social structure and are essential for passing down knowledge, values and history. As Okocha (1998) notes, "Ukwuani proverbs are not just linguistic expressions but serve as a framework for moral instruction and conflict resolution."

Through storytelling, the Ukwuani community teaches lessons on justice, humility and communal responsibility. For example, their myths often explore themes of harmony with nature and the consequences of greed or pride, echoing universal African values. The preservation of Ukwuani oral traditions amidst modernization points to their resilience and adaptability. This resilience makes Ukwuani folklore a valuable case study for examining how indigenous communities sustain cultural identity in rapidly-changing environments (Okobiah, 2002).

Ijaw Community: Guardians of Resistance and Identity

The Ijaw people, one of Nigeria's largest ethnic groups, are primarily located in Bayelsa, Rivers, and Delta States. The people are known for their deep connection to water and marine life. Ijaw oral traditions reflect their environmental realities and historical struggles. Epic narratives, such as the tales of King Koko or Adaka Boro, encapsulate themes of resistance, bravery and self-determination. These stories are not merely entertaining but also serve as historical documentation of the Ijaw's fight against external domination, including colonial exploitation and oil-related conflicts (Alagoa, 1972).

Ijaw songs and dance forms, often performed during festivals, also play a significant role in fostering community solidarity and transmitting cultural values. As Orji (2000) emphasizes, "Ijaw folklore embodies a sense of identity that strengthens the community's ability to navigate external pressures."

Contribution to African Cultural Studies

The significance of Ukwuani and Ijaw communities extends beyond their local contexts. Their oral traditions contribute to a broader understanding of African cultures and challenge monolithic representations of the continent. By studying their folklore, researchers can explore the interplay between continuity and disruption in African traditions, providing insights into how communities adapt to external influences, such as colonization, religion and globalization.

Moreover, Ukwuani and Ijaw narratives enrich African cultural studies by addressing themes such as environmental stewardship, resistance and communal values. These themes are not only relevant for understanding historical contexts but also for addressing contemporary challenges, such as environmental degradation and cultural homogenization. As Nketia (1974) asserts, “The study of specific African communities enhances the global appreciation of the diversity and dynamism of African cultural heritage.”

Preserving Intangible Heritage

The rich traditions of the Ukwuani and Ijaw people underscore the urgency of preserving Africa’s intangible heritage. With the encroachment of modernity, these communities face challenges in sustaining their oral traditions. However, their efforts to document and adapt folklore into modern formats, such as digital storytelling and community archives, demonstrate innovative approaches to cultural preservation (Ademola, 2015).

In sum, the Ukwuani and Ijaw communities are integral to African cultural studies. Their oral traditions provide a window into the complexities of African heritage, offering lessons on resilience, adaptation and the enduring relevance of indigenous knowledge systems. As scholars continue to explore these traditions, they contribute to the global recognition of Africa’s rich and diverse cultural landscape.

Objectives of the Study

This study explores the dynamic evolution of folklore in Ukwuani and Ijaw, particularly focusing on the relationship between continuity, disruptions and transformations within their oral traditions. By examining how historical, social, and cultural changes have impacted these communities, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- to investigate the continuity of oral traditions in Ukwuani and Ijaw communities, highlighting their resilience and adaptability over time;
- to analyze the disruptions caused by external influences, such as colonization, Western education, religion, and modernization, and their effects on the preservation and practice of oral traditions;
- to document the transformations within Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore, exploring how these traditions have evolved in response to societal changes;

- to emphasize the cultural significance of oral traditions as repositories of indigenous knowledge, communal identity and moral values in African societies; and
- to propose strategies for preserving and revitalizing oral traditions, ensuring their sustainability amidst the challenges posed by globalization and cultural homogenization.

These objectives underscore the broader importance of studying African folklore as a critical component of cultural preservation and identity formation in the modern era.

Key Research Questions Guiding the Study

To achieve the objectives outlined above, the study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. How have Ukwuani and Ijaw oral traditions been preserved and transmitted across generations?
- ii. What are the major disruptions caused by colonization, Western education, religion, and modernization in the continuity of Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore?
- iii. In what ways have these oral traditions adapted or transformed in response to societal and environmental changes?
- iv. What role does folklore play in sustaining cultural identity and communal values within Ukwuani and Ijaw communities?
- v. How can policymakers, cultural custodians, and community leaders contribute to preserving and revitalizing oral traditions in these communities?

These research questions provide a framework for examining the cultural dynamics of Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore, facilitating a nuanced understanding of their significance in African studies.

Conceptual Clarifications

To establish a clear framework for this study, it is essential to define the key concepts that underpin the research. These concepts—oral narratives, folklore, and intangible heritage—are fundamental to understanding the cultural dynamics explored in this work.

Oral Narratives

Oral narratives refer to spoken accounts of stories, events, or traditions that are passed down through generations within a community. These narratives encompass a range of forms, including myths, legends, proverbs, epic tales and folktales. Vansina (1985) describes oral narratives as “the spoken word used to preserve and transmit history, culture, and collective memory in societies without written records.”

Oral narratives serve multiple purposes, including the following:

- **Historical documentation:** They chronicle the origins, migrations and significant events of a community.
- **Moral instruction:** They often carry ethical lessons and guidance for personal and communal behaviour.
- **Cultural identity:** By conveying shared experiences and beliefs, oral narratives reinforce a sense of belonging and identity within a community.

In the context of the Ukwuani and Ijaw communities, oral narratives play a crucial role in preserving the essence of their cultural identity and addressing contemporary issues, such as environmental stewardship and communal harmony.

Folklore

Folklore is a broad term that encompasses the collective traditions, customs, beliefs, stories, songs, and practices of a community. Folklore reflects the values, norms and world views of a society, often serving as a mirror of its cultural and social structures. In the view of Dundes (1965), folklore is “the study of people’s traditional customs, knowledge, and expressive culture transmitted orally or through observation and imitation.”

The key elements of folklore include the following:

- **Proverbs:** These are short, memorable sayings that encapsulate wisdom or advice, such as Ukwuani proverbs used in dispute resolution.
- **Legends and myths:** These are stories explaining natural phenomena, origins, or historical events, like Ijaw legends of their maritime roots.
- **Rituals and performances:** These serve as communal expressions of identity, often involving music, dance and storytelling.

In African studies, folklore is not just a cultural artefact but also a dynamic entity that evolves as societies encounter new influences. The adaptability of folklore highlights its role as a living tradition capable of bridging the past and present.

Intangible Heritage

Intangible heritage refers to the non-physical aspects of a culture, including traditions, practices, and expressions that are inherited from previous generations. According to UNESCO (2003), intangible cultural heritage encompasses “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills transmitted through generations, providing communities with a sense of identity and continuity.”

The following are characteristics of intangible heritage:

- **Ephemeral nature:** Unlike physical artefacts, intangible heritage exists in the form of knowledge, practices or performances.

- **Communal ownership:** It is shared among members of a community and serves as a marker of collective identity.
- **Vulnerability:** Intangible heritage is at risk of being lost due to modernization, globalization and other socio-economic factors.

The oral traditions of Ukwuani and Ijaw represent a significant component of their intangible heritage. These traditions embody indigenous knowledge systems, moral values and social cohesion, making their preservation critical in the face of cultural erosion.

By clarifying these concepts, this study situates itself within the broader discourse on African cultural studies and provides a framework for analyzing the complexities of continuity, disruptions and transformations in Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore.

Theoretical Perspectives

This study adopts Functionalism and Postcolonial Theory to analyze the continuity, disruptions and transformations in Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore. These perspectives provide a comprehensive lens to understand the societal roles of folklore and the impact of external influences like colonization and modernization.

Functionalist Theory and Folklore's Societal Roles

Functionalist Theory posits that cultural elements, including folklore, serve specific roles in maintaining the stability and cohesion of a society. According to Malinowski (1944), folklore provides a framework for addressing universal human concerns, such as social order, morality, and conflict resolution.

The major societal roles of folklore include the following:

1. **Preserving cultural identity:** Folklore encapsulates the values, norms and collective memory of a community, fostering a sense of belonging and identity (Bascom, 1954). For example, Ukwuani proverbs, like "*Ofu onye adighi eche mmiri akwa*" (One person does not paddle a canoe), emphasize communal cooperation, a core societal value.
2. **Moral and ethical guidance:** Folklore transmits moral lessons and social expectations. In Ijaw communities, folktales often serve as allegories, teaching virtues like honesty, courage and perseverance.
3. **Conflict resolution:** Oral traditions, such as proverbs and parables, are used in community gatherings to mediate disputes and reinforce social harmony.
4. **Education and entertainment:** Folklore combines pedagogy with entertainment, ensuring the transmission of knowledge in an engaging and memorable format.

Functionalist Theory highlights the resilience of Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore in fulfilling these roles, even as societies encounter modern influences. By addressing the

needs of both individuals and the collective, folklore remains a vital component of cultural sustainability.

Postcolonial Theory: Disruptions from Colonization and Modernity

Postcolonial theory examines the impact of colonization on cultural identities, traditions and social structures. Scholars such as Fanon (1963) and Said (1978) argue that colonial powers often disrupted indigenous practices, imposing foreign systems that marginalized local knowledge and traditions.

The following are the key disruptions caused by colonization and modernity:

1. **Erosion of indigenous knowledge:** Colonial education systems prioritized Western epistemologies, often devaluing oral traditions and labelling them as “primitive” (wa Thiong’o, 1986). For instance, many Ukwuani and Ijaw stories were sidelined in favour of Western literary forms.
2. **Religious influence:** The introduction of Christianity conflicted with traditional practices, leading to the abandonment of rituals, myths and festivals central to Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore.
3. **Cultural hybridization:** Modernization and globalization have led to the blending of indigenous and foreign traditions, resulting in the transformation or dilution of traditional folklore.
4. **Loss of transmission channels:** Urbanization and technological advancements have disrupted traditional forms of storytelling, such as moonlight gatherings, which were integral to preservation of oral narratives.

Postcolonial Theory underscores the agency of Ukwuani and Ijaw communities in resisting cultural erasure and reasserting their identities. It also highlights the transformative nature of folklore, which adapts to new contexts while retaining its core essence. By combining functionalist and postcolonial perspectives, this study provides a balanced view of Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore. While Functionalism emphasizes the enduring societal roles of folklore, Postcolonial Theory sheds light on the challenges and disruptions that threaten its continuity. Together, these frameworks enable a nuanced understanding of the cultural dynamics at play.

Pre-colonial Ukwuani and Ijaw Societies

The pre-colonial period in Ukwuani and Ijaw was characterized by vibrant cultural practices and rich oral traditions that defined their identity and communal life. Both communities relied heavily on oral narratives as a primary means of preserving history, transmitting knowledge, and reinforcing societal norms and values.

Overview of Cultural Practices and Oral Traditions

The Ukwuani and Ijaw peoples, located in present-day southern Nigeria, are known for their unique cultural practices deeply rooted in oral traditions. The pre-colonial Ukwuani society was predominantly agrarian, with an emphasis on communal living and collective responsibility. They thrived as a riverine community, with fishing and maritime trade forming the backbone of their economy.

In these societies, oral traditions served as both a repository of knowledge and a tool for social cohesion. Storytelling sessions were common in family or communal gatherings, where elders narrated tales that conveyed historical events, moral lessons and cosmological beliefs. As Vansina (1985) notes, oral traditions in African societies were not only a form of entertainment but also a method of preserving societal memory and identity.

Among the Ukwuani, folklore often revolves around themes of justice, cooperation and respect for elders. Proverbs such as “*Ezi okwu bu ndu*” (Truth is life) are integral in teaching ethical conduct and ensuring community harmony. Similarly, Ijaw myths and legends, such as those explaining the origin of water deities, reflect the people’s deep connection to their environment and spiritual beliefs (Alagoa, 2004).

The Central Role of Storytelling, Proverbs and Songs

Storytelling

Storytelling was a central element of cultural life in both Ukwuani and Ijaw societies. It was primarily an oral art form, performed by skilled narrators who often dramatized stories with gestures, intonation and music. In Ukwuani, the fable of *Obu-Ogene*, the wise tortoise, for instance, illustrates the consequences of greed and cunning behaviour. Similarly, Ijaw storytelling featured epic tales of heroes like Adum-Ogbokor, who represents bravery and resistance against adversities (Horton, 1965).

Storytelling serves multiple purposes:

1. **Preservation of History:** Stories passed down through generations chronicle the origins, migrations and significant achievements of communities.
2. **Moral Instruction:** Narratives convey moral lessons, guiding individuals on acceptable behaviors and communal expectations.
3. **Socialization of Youth:** Storytelling sessions are platforms for educating the younger generation about their heritage and roles within the community.

Proverbs

Proverbs are another vital component of oral traditions, functioning as condensed expressions of wisdom. In the Ukwuani society, proverbs like “*Ihe onye ara gwara gi na mgbede, I cheta ya n’ututu*” (What a madman tells you in the evening you will remember in the morning) underscore the importance of foresight and careful listening. The Ijaw

also use proverbs extensively, especially in conflict resolution and public discourse. For example, "*Agidigbo emi fie toro emi se owei*" ("The paddle may float, but it is the hand that steers it) emphasizes the role of human agency in shaping destiny.

Proverbs are often context-specific, drawn upon to address issues such as leadership, family relations and community solidarity (Finnegan, 2012). They encapsulate collective wisdom and are a key tool for fostering societal values.

Songs

Songs in the Ukwuani and Ijaw cultures play a significant role, often intertwined with other oral traditions. Songs accompany rituals, festivals and daily activities, reflecting the people's emotions, aspirations and spiritual beliefs. Ijaw war songs, for instance, are performed to invoke courage and unity during conflicts, while Ukwuani agricultural songs celebrate communal labour and bountiful harvests (Eicher & Erekosima, 1980).

Traditional songs are also used in religious ceremonies to honour deities and ancestors. They often incorporate imagery and symbolic language, demonstrating the artistic depth of these communities. As Finnegan (1970) observes, "oral literature in African societies is inseparable from the cultural contexts in which it operates."

In summary, the pre-colonial Ukwuani and Ijaw societies were rich in oral traditions, with storytelling, proverbs and songs forming the cornerstone of their cultural expression. These practices were not mere forms of entertainment but also critical mechanisms for transmitting knowledge, preserving heritage, and reinforcing societal values. Their centrality highlights the resilience and adaptability of oral traditions in shaping the identity of African communities.

Colonial Influences on Ukwuani and Ijaw Folklore

Colonial rule profoundly impacted the cultural landscape of African societies, including the Ukwuani and Ijaw communities. The introduction of Western education and Christianity disrupted traditional systems of knowledge and belief, leading to suppression and adaptation of indigenous practices. These influences reshaped the dynamics of oral traditions, challenging their role in preserving cultural identity while also forcing them to evolve in response to new realities.

Effects of Western Education and Christianity

The imposition of Western education on Ukwuani and Ijaw during the colonial period introduced new ways of learning and communicating that often marginalized oral traditions. Western education, with its emphasis on literacy and formal schooling, devalued oral narratives, which had previously been the primary medium of knowledge transmission (Mazrui, 1993). As African children were taught to prioritize written texts

over the spoken word, traditional practices, like storytelling, proverb usage and song performance, were relegated to the periphery.

Christian missionary activities compounded this marginalization. Missionaries viewed many aspects of Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore as pagan or superstitious, particularly those tied to spiritual beliefs and rituals. For instance, Ijaw myths about water deities, such as Owuamapu and Egbesu, were deemed incompatible with Christian doctrines and were actively suppressed (Alagoa, 2004). In the Ukwuani society, traditional proverbs and songs that reference ancestral reverence or local deities were discouraged in favour of Christian hymns and moral teachings.

Moreover, Christian missionaries introduced new narratives and religious texts that gradually replaced indigenous stories in communal and religious contexts. This replacement disrupted the continuity of oral traditions, as the younger generation grew up with diminished exposure to their cultural heritage (Adediran, 1994). However, it also prompted some adaptation, as traditional themes were sometimes integrated into Christian storytelling and songs to make them more relevant to local audiences.

Suppression and Adaptation of Indigenous Practices

Suppression of Folklore

Colonial authorities, often in collaboration with missionaries, sought to suppress practices they deemed incompatible with “civilization.” Ritual songs, festivals and storytelling sessions—key components of Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore—were increasingly restricted. In some cases, traditional festivals were outright banned, particularly those involving masquerades or spiritual invocations, which colonial powers viewed as a threat to their authority (Ranger, 1983).

This suppression extended to language use, as colonial education systems prioritized English over indigenous languages. Since oral narratives were deeply embedded in local languages, the diminishing use of the Ukwuani and Ijaw tongues further eroded the transmission of folklore. Vansina (1985) avers that language is a crucial carrier of cultural memory, and its marginalization often leads to loss of intangible heritage.

Adaptation and Resilience

Despite these challenges, Ukwuani and Ijaw communities displayed remarkable resilience by adapting their oral traditions to new contexts. Traditional songs and proverbs were reinterpreted to reflect colonial realities. For instance, some Ukwuani songs began to incorporate themes of resistance against colonial exploitation, blending traditional melodies with new political messages (Okpewho, 1992).

In the Ijaw region, folklore adapted to Christian influences in subtle ways. Myths about water deities were reimagined, emphasizing their moral and environmental lessons

while downplaying their spiritual dimensions. Similarly, proverbs were occasionally infused with Christian values, creating hybrid expressions that resonated with both traditional and modern audiences (Echeruo, 1979).

This adaptive capacity highlights the dynamic nature of folklore as a cultural tool. While colonialism disrupted traditional practices, it also spurred innovation, allowing the Ukwuani and Ijaw communities to retain elements of their heritage in altered forms. As Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) argue, traditions are often “invented” or reconfigured in response to historical change, illustrating their fluidity and resilience.

In conclusion, the colonial encounter significantly reshaped Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore, challenging its continuity while also prompting adaptation. The effects of Western education and Christianity led to the suppression of many traditional practices, but they also created opportunities for innovation and integration. This dual dynamic underscores the importance of understanding folklore not as a static artefact but as a living tradition that evolves in response to historical pressures.

Post-independence Modernization

The post-independence period brought significant transformations to Ukwuani and Ijaw societies, driven by modernization processes such as urbanization, globalization, and the increasing influence of digital media and modern education. These factors reshaped the dynamics of folklore, presenting both challenges and opportunities for the preservation and evolution of oral traditions.

Urbanization, Globalization and Changing Values

The rapid urbanization of post-independence Nigeria has had profound effects on the traditional fabric of Ukwuani and Ijaw. As people migrated from rural areas to urban centres in search of economic opportunities, the communal settings that sustained oral traditions began to disintegrate. Storytelling sessions, which were integral to fostering social bonds and transmitting cultural knowledge, became less frequent in urbanized environments, where individualism and modern lifestyles dominated (Akinyele, 2007).

Globalization has further influenced cultural values, introducing new ideologies and practices that often overshadow indigenous traditions. Exposure to Western entertainment, education and media has led many younger people to prioritize global culture over local heritage. For instance, traditional Ukwuani and Ijaw festivals that once emphasized communal values and spiritual themes are now sometimes viewed as outdated or irrelevant (Falola, 2003). This shift underscores the tension between maintaining cultural identity and adapting to global influences.

However, globalization has also provided opportunities for cultural exchange and revitalization. The Ukwuani and Ijaw communities have adapted certain global elements into their practices, creating hybrid forms of folklore that reflect their evolving identities.

For example, traditional songs have been reimagined to incorporate modern musical instruments and styles, making them appealing to contemporary audiences while still retaining their core messages (Smith & Ayakoroma, 2012).

Influence of Digital Media and Modern Education

Digital media has emerged as a double-edged sword in the preservation of Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore. On the one hand, platforms like YouTube, social media and digital archives have facilitated the documentation and dissemination of oral traditions, allowing them to reach broader audiences. Young storytellers and musicians from Ukwuani and Ijaw backgrounds have used digital tools to share traditional proverbs, myths and songs, often infusing them with modern themes to attract urban and global audiences (Okeke, 2020).

On the other hand, the pervasive influence of digital technology has contributed to the erosion of traditional practices. The preference for visual and digital media among the younger generation has reduced their interest in oral narratives, which require active participation and listening (Adegbija, 2004). Furthermore, the proliferation of Western content on digital platforms often overshadows indigenous expressions, making it harder for Ukwuani and Ijaw traditions to compete for attention.

Modern education, with its emphasis on standardized curricula, has similarly impacted the transmission of folklore. Indigenous knowledge systems, including oral traditions, are rarely integrated into formal education, leading to their gradual marginalization. Schools in the Ukwuani and Ijaw communities often prioritize Western literary works over local folklore, depriving students of an opportunity to connect with their heritage (Bankole, 1995). However, recent initiatives to include indigenous languages and cultural studies in school curricula offer a glimpse of hope for the preservation of oral traditions.

In conclusion, post-independence modernization has created a complex environment for Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore. While urbanization and globalization have disrupted traditional practices, digital media and modern education provide opportunities for adaptation and revitalization. The challenge lies in leveraging these tools to preserve and celebrate the unique cultural heritage of these communities in a rapidly-changing world.

Review of Relevant Literature

The review of relevant literature provides an overview of key studies on African oral traditions, their role in cultural preservation and the existing gaps in research regarding Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore. It highlights the scholarly attention given to African oral traditions and identifies areas where further research is required to understand the unique experiences and adaptations of these two communities.

Studies on African Oral Traditions and Cultural Preservation

African oral traditions, encompassing proverbs, myths, songs and storytelling practices, have been widely studied for their role in preserving cultural identity and history. Scholars emphasize that these traditions serve as repositories of indigenous knowledge, ethics and communal values, offering insights into the world view of African societies (Finnegan, 2012). For instance, Ruth Finnegan's seminal work *Oral Literature in Africa* stresses the richness of African oral traditions and their function as a medium for transmitting societal norms and values across generations.

Studies have also explored the resilience of oral traditions in the face of external pressures, such as colonization and modernization. Okpewho (1992) examines the transformative processes within African oral literature, noting that, while colonial influences introduced disruptions, many communities adapted their practices to retain their cultural essence. Similarly, Ong's (1982) analysis of oral cultures highlights the adaptability of oral traditions in maintaining their relevance within changing socio-cultural landscapes.

In the Nigerian context, scholars such as Ajayi (2009) and Akporobaro (2010) have focused on the interplay between oral traditions and modern influences. Their works document how storytelling, proverbs and songs continue to serve as educational tools and cultural markers despite the encroachment of Western ideologies. However, much of the literature tends to generalize African traditions, often overlooking the distinct experiences of specific communities, like Ukwuani and Ijaw.

Research Gaps on Ukwuani and Ijaw Folklore

Despite the extensive body of work on African oral traditions, limited attention has been paid to Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore specifically. While broader studies on Niger Delta cultures address some aspects of Ijaw traditions, Ukwuani oral narratives remain underrepresented in academic discourse. This gap highlights the need for focused research to document and analyze the unique characteristics of Ukwuani and Ijaw storytelling, proverbs and songs.

Moreover, existing studies often lack a comparative perspective that examines how these communities have responded differently to external pressures, such as colonization, globalization and modernization. For example, while the Ijaw people have been extensively studied for their resistance narratives tied to environmental activism and resource control (Alagoa, 2005), there is little exploration of how these narratives intersect with their folklore. Similarly, Ukwuani proverbs, which encapsulate wisdom and societal norms, are rarely analyzed in relation to contemporary issues, such as urbanization and cultural preservation.

Another significant research gap is the role of technology in transforming Ukwuani and Ijaw oral traditions. While studies like Okeke (2020) address the impact of digital media on Nigerian folklore broadly, there is insufficient analysis of how the Ukwuani and Ijaw are using digital platforms to preserve and adapt their traditions. This represents an important area for future research, given the increasing digitization of cultural heritage globally.

In sum, though African oral traditions have been the subject of significant scholarly interest, there is a need for more focused research on Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore. Addressing these gaps will not only enrich the understanding of these communities but also contribute to broader discussions on cultural preservation and adaptation in Africa.

Ukwuani Folklore: Themes and Practices

Ukwuani folklore is a vibrant repository of cultural values, communal identity and indigenous knowledge. This section explores key themes in Ukwuani oral traditions, illustrated through proverbs, myths and storytelling practices. These elements have played a significant role in shaping social norms, guiding moral conduct and preserving historical narratives within Ukwuani communities.

Themes in Ukwuani Folklore: Wisdom and Moral Instruction

Ukwuani folklore emphasizes the transmission of wisdom and ethical values, often through proverbs and parables. For instance, the proverb “*Eze ahu kpa ndubu, eze ọzọ agha ebu ndubu*” (A king who does not care for his people will not last) teaches the importance of leadership accountability. Such expressions encapsulate lessons on integrity, justice and communal welfare.

- **Interconnectedness with Nature**

The Ukwuani people often portray their relationship with the natural environment in their myths and tales. Stories about forest spirits (*mmo ohia*) and river deities emphasize the sanctity of nature and the consequences of exploiting it irresponsibly. These narratives reflect an ecological consciousness deeply rooted in their worldview.

- **Resilience and Communal Unity**

Folktales often highlight resilience in the face of adversity and the significance of community solidarity. For example, the tale of *Ogidigbo and the Lost Yams* narrates how a village overcame famine through collective effort, underscoring the value of collaboration and mutual support.

Proverbs in Ukwuani Folklore

Ukwuani proverbs are a cornerstone of the people's oral tradition, succinctly encapsulating profound truths and cultural norms. A few notable examples include:

- “*A ga agba aka ka e bi ndu*” (One must work to survive): This stresses the value of hard work and self-reliance.
- “*Ndidi bu ihe eji egu oso*” (Patience wins the race): This promotes perseverance and caution in life’s endeavors.
- “*Okenye n’ulo, egbuo nwo nwa, agagh’ekwu na mmiri apu n’anya*”: (If an elder is at home and a goat dies tied up, the elder cannot claim innocence). This proverb reflects the communal expectation of responsibility and vigilance among elders.

Myths and Storytelling Practices

Myths in Ukwuani folklore serve as vehicles for explaining natural phenomena, human origins and societal values. One popular myth is that of *Ulo Nkwa*, the ancestral home of wisdom, where it is said that all knowledge originated before dispersing to the world. This myth reinforces the pride of the Ukwuani people in their intellectual heritage.

Storytelling is an interactive process in Ukwuani culture, often performed during moonlit nights or communal gatherings. Storytellers, referred to as *Otu Akuko*, use rhythm, songs and dramatization to engage their audience. These narratives are passed orally from one generation to the next, ensuring the continuity of cultural knowledge.

Contemporary Practices

Despite modernization, Ukwuani folklore remains relevant in various forms. Folklore is now incorporated into local music, such as the works of Ukwuani musicians who blend traditional proverbs and tales into contemporary Afrobeat and Highlife songs. Additionally, efforts by cultural organizations to document and publish Ukwuani oral traditions in digital formats have provided a new avenue for preservation (Obiakpo, 2019).

Values and Lessons Encoded in Ukwuani Oral Traditions

Ukwuani oral traditions are not merely forms of entertainment but are also deeply embedded with values and lessons that shape societal norms, individual behaviour and communal cohesion. These encoded messages serve as tools for moral instruction, cultural preservation and community development.

1. Communal Unity and Cooperation

A recurring theme in Ukwuani oral traditions is the importance of unity and cooperation. The proverb “*Egbe bere ugo bere, nke si ibe ya ebena, ka nku kwaa ya*” (Let the kite perch, let the eagle perch; if one denies the other a perch, let its wings break) teaches tolerance and coexistence. This highlights the need for mutual respect and harmonious living within the community.

Folktales like the story of *Obioma and the Broken Calabash* emphasize that challenges can only be overcome through collective effort. Such narratives reinforce the value of working together for the common good, a critical aspect of the Ukwuani social structure.

2. Accountability and Leadership

Leadership and accountability are central values in Ukwuani folklore. Proverbs like “*Nwa eze na-ebi n’ime ulo, ma obu na n’ime onu ogba*” (A king’s child lives either in the palace or in the mouths of the people) illustrate the dual responsibilities of privilege and public service. Leaders are reminded of their obligations to serve their people and maintain integrity.

Myths surrounding ancestral leaders often portray them as paragons of justice and selflessness, setting a moral standard for contemporary leaders in Ukwuani.

3. Hard Work and Perseverance

Ukwuani oral traditions stress the virtues of diligence and resilience. For instance, the proverb “*Ika m’aka bu ezigbo oru*” (Clean hands come from good work) promotes the ethic of hard work and honest living. Stories of characters who rise from hardship through determination often serve as motivational lessons for the younger generation. One tale tells of *Ogbu-Ofu*, a farmer who faced repeated crop failures but eventually succeeded through persistence, symbolizing the reward of steadfastness.

4. Respect for Elders and Tradition

Respect for elders is a cornerstone of the Ukwuani culture, reflected in their oral traditions. The proverb “*Okenye adighi ano n’ulo na ewu amuo n’ime ogbiri*” (An elder does not sit at home while a goat gives birth tethered) emphasizes the role of elders as custodians of wisdom and guardians of tradition.

In traditional storytelling, elders often play the role of the wise mentor, guiding younger characters through life’s complexities. This reinforces their position as pillars of knowledge and moral authority.

5. Justice and Fairness

Justice is a key value encoded in Ukwuani oral traditions. Myths and stories frequently depict the triumph of truth and fairness over deceit. For example, in the tale of *Aghogho and the Crooked Hunter*, the protagonist’s honesty saves the village from famine, while the hunter’s greed leads to his downfall.

Such stories serve as moral lessons, encouraging listeners to uphold truth and fairness in their dealings.

6. Ecological Awareness

Ukwuani folklore also encodes lessons on the interdependence of humans and nature. Myths involving river deities or forest spirits caution against the overexploitation of

natural resources. For example, the story of *Okilolo, the River Guardian*, teaches the consequences of polluting sacred waters, fostering a sense of environmental stewardship.

7. Resilience and Adaptability

Folklore often emphasizes the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Songs and stories recounting the survival of the Ukwuani people during periods of hardship illustrate their resilience. These narratives encourage individuals to remain hopeful and resourceful in the face of adversity.

Concluding Remarks

The values and lessons encoded in Ukwuani oral traditions provide a framework for moral conduct, social harmony, and cultural preservation. These traditions serve as living guides, ensuring that key principles, such as unity, hard work, justice and respect for nature are passed on to future generations. By analyzing these encoded messages, scholars and cultural advocates can better understand the worldview and moral philosophy of the Ukwuani people.

Ijaw Folklore: Themes and Practices

Ijaw folklore is a rich tapestry of narratives, songs, epics and traditions that reflect the values, history and resilience of the Ijaw people, one of Nigeria's most prominent ethnic groups. As a coastal people, the Ijaw are deeply influenced by their relationship with water and nature, which permeates their folklore. This section explores Ijaw epics, songs and storytelling traditions, highlighting how folklore has been a vital tool for resistance and identity preservation.

Themes in Ijaw Folklore

- **Relationship with Nature**

Nature is central to Ijaw folklore, often depicted as both nurturing and punitive. For instance, myths about water deities, such as *Owuamapu* (the river goddess), teach respect for aquatic ecosystems and their spirits. Songs like "*Kiyeigbo*" (The Song of the Fisherman) celebrate the harmony between humans and the waters that sustain them, while warning against environmental exploitation.

- **Justice and Retribution**

Many Ijaw epics revolve around themes of justice and retribution. The epic of *Izon-Toru* (Land of the Brave) narrates the journey of a hero who fought against tyranny to restore peace and fairness in his community. Such tales serve as moral compasses, reinforcing societal values of equity and accountability.

- **Resilience and Survival**

Ijaw folklore often recounts stories of survival against overwhelming odds, reflecting the historical struggles of the Ijaw people against colonial incursions and marginalization. These narratives promote perseverance and hope, reminding the community of its enduring strength.

- **Identity and Unity**

Folklore underscores the importance of cultural identity and unity among the Ijaw. Songs performed during festivals, like the *Amasighi* (Unity Dance), emphasize collective heritage and the bonds that hold the community together, even amidst external pressures.

Ijaw Epics, Songs, and Storytelling Traditions

- **Epics as Historical Repositories**

Ijaw epics, such as *The Legend of Perebo*, serve as repositories of historical events and communal achievements. These long-form narratives, passed down orally, recount the heroic deeds of ancestors, wars fought and alliances forged. They function as both entertainment and a means of educating the younger generation about their roots.

- **Songs as Cultural Anchors**

Music plays a crucial role in Ijaw folklore. Traditional songs, often accompanied by drumming and dancing, carry layered meanings and are used in rituals, celebrations and communal decision-making. For example, *Ogele*, a genre of Ijaw music, combines storytelling with rhythmic chanting to convey messages about love, war and peace.

- **Storytelling Practices**

Storytelling in the Ijaw culture is a communal activity, often taking place around bonfires or during festive gatherings. The storytellers, known as *oginiowei*, are revered figures who use vivid imagery, dramatic gestures and symbolic props to bring tales to life. Through their narratives, they instill lessons, warn against social vices and preserve the cultural ethos of the Ijaw people.

Folklore as a Tool of Resistance and Identity Preservation

- **Resistance against Colonialism**

During colonial rule, Ijaw folklore became a subtle form of resistance. Songs and stories critiqued the exploitative practices of colonial authorities while celebrating indigenous autonomy. For instance, the story of *Tamuno-Kunume* (God's Warrior) allegorically depicted the fight against oppression, inspiring the community to maintain their resilience.

- **Assertion of Cultural Identity**

In the face of globalization and modernization, Ijaw folklore remains a crucial tool for asserting identity. Festivals like the *Amaseikumo Festival* feature the performance of traditional songs and dances, emphasizing the distinct heritage of the Ijaw people. These practices counteract cultural erasure and foster pride in the younger generation.

- **Preservation of Environmental Rights**

Ijaw folklore has also been used to resist environmental degradation caused by oil exploration in the Niger Delta. Stories about offended river gods and desecrated sacred spaces serve as both warnings and rallying cries for environmental justice.

Contemporary Adaptations

Ijaw folklore has adapted to modern mediums while retaining its essence. Local musicians incorporate traditional themes into Afrobeat and Hip-hop, creating a fusion that resonates with younger audiences. Additionally, efforts to document Ijaw oral traditions in books, films and digital archives have expanded their reach and ensured their preservation for future generations (Ekine, 2011).

Conclusion Remarks

Ijaw folklore is more than a cultural artefact; it is a living tradition that embodies the struggles, aspirations and resilience of the Ijaw people. Through epics, songs and storytelling practices, it continues to educate, inspire and unify communities, while serving as a powerful tool for resistance and cultural preservation in the face of external challenges.

Comparative Analysis of Ukwuani and Ijaw Folklore

The folklore of the Ukwuani and Ijaw communities reflects their shared African cultural heritage while highlighting distinct adaptations to external influences. This comparative analysis examines the common themes and contrasting responses in their oral traditions, focusing on communal values, morality, identity and how each group has navigated disruptions, such as colonization, modernization and globalization.

Common Themes: Communal Values, Morality and Identity

1. Communal Values

Ukwuani folklore and Ijaw folklore emphasize the importance of community cohesion and collective well-being. In Ukwuani proverbs, sayings such as “*Igwe bu ike*” (Unity is strength) underscore the value of togetherness in overcoming challenges. Similarly, Ijaw songs like *Amasighi* (Unity Dance) highlight the strength derived from solidarity within

the community (Ekine, 2011). These oral traditions act as a cultural glue, fostering cooperation and mutual support.

2. Morality

Morality is a central theme in both traditions, with stories and proverbs serving as tools for ethical instruction. Ukwuani folktales often feature animals like the tortoise as a trickster figure to teach lessons about honesty, diligence and humility. For example, the tale of *Mbekwu and the King's Feast* warns against greed and deceit. In Ijaw folklore, myths involving water spirits like *Owuamapu* are used to teach respect for nature and integrity, reinforcing the belief that actions have consequences in both the physical and spiritual realms (Ogele, 2015).

3. Cultural Identity

Folklore in both communities serves as a repository of identity, preserving their histories and values across generations. For the Ukwuani people, oral narratives often recount migration stories and the founding of clans, linking individuals to their ancestral roots. Similarly, Ijaw epics like *The Legend of Perebo* not only celebrate historical achievements but also reaffirm cultural pride in the face of external influences.

Divergent Responses to External Influences

1. Colonial Disruptions

- *Ukwuani Response*: The Ukwuani people incorporated Western education and Christianity into their cultural framework while retaining significant elements of their folklore. For instance, traditional songs and dances are now performed during church events, blending indigenous and Christian practices (Okoh, 2018). However, some oral traditions, particularly those deemed “pagan,” were marginalized or transformed to fit the new religious paradigm.
- *Ijaw Response*: The Ijaw resisted many colonial influences, particularly in the context of environmental and cultural exploitation. Folklore became a form of subtle resistance, with songs and epics criticizing colonial oppression and asserting indigenous autonomy. Myths about sacred rivers and gods, for instance, were strategically employed to oppose encroachments on traditional lands by colonial authorities (Tamuno, 2008).

2. Modernization and Globalization

- *Ukwuani Response*: Modernization has led to the adaptation of Ukwuani folklore into written forms and digital media. Folktales are being published in books and feature in Nollywood productions, making them accessible to a broader audience. However, urbanization has also diluted traditional

storytelling practices, with the younger generation increasingly disengaged from oral narratives (Onyemachi, 2020).

- *Ijaw Response*: Ijaw folklore has similarly embraced digital platforms, with traditional songs and epics being recorded and shared online. Notably, Ijaw musicians often incorporate traditional themes into Afrobeat and Hip-hop, keeping their cultural heritage alive while reaching global audiences. Despite these adaptations, the Ijaw maintain a strong focus on environmental advocacy, using folklore to highlight the ecological impacts of oil exploration in the Niger Delta (Ekine, 2011).

Key Differences in Folkloric Adaptation

1. Integration vs. Resistance

- Ukwuani folklore demonstrates a greater tendency towards integration with external systems, blending indigenous practices with Western influences to create a hybrid cultural identity.
- Ijaw folklore, in contrast, often retains its original form and functions as a means of resistance, especially in environmental and cultural conflicts.

2. Focus on Nature and Ecology

- While both communities have narratives centred on nature, Ijaw folklore places a stronger emphasis on environmental stewardship, reflecting their proximity to and dependence on water bodies. Ukwuani folklore, by comparison, focuses more on agricultural themes and land-based practices.

Concluding Remarks

The Ukwuani and Ijaw communities demonstrate both shared and unique approaches to preserving their folklore amidst historical disruptions. Common themes, such as communal values, morality, and cultural identity, highlight their shared African heritage, while divergent responses to external pressures reveal the adaptability and resilience of these traditions. This comparative analysis underscores the importance of understanding local nuances within broader African cultural studies and emphasizes the need for tailored preservation strategies that honour these distinct heritages.

Mechanisms of Cultural Resilience

Role of Elders and Traditional Custodians

Elders and traditional custodians play a pivotal role in sustaining cultural resilience within the Ukwuani and Ijaw societies. As repositories of wisdom, history and cultural practices, these individuals ensure that oral traditions are preserved and adapted to changing

contexts. Their influence extends across storytelling, preservation of rituals, and teaching of the younger generation.

Elders as Storytellers and Knowledge Keepers

In both communities, elders are central figures in the transmission of oral traditions. Their storytelling sessions serve as entertainment and education, embedding societal values, historical knowledge and communal identity into the fabric of daily life. Ukwuani elders, for instance, are often responsible for recounting migration myths and moral tales, which link the present generation to their ancestors and the land (Onyemachi, 2020). Similarly, Ijaw elders use epics and songs to commemorate historical events, such as battles and alliances, ensuring that these narratives are not lost to modernity (Ogele, 2015).

Preservation of Rituals and Ceremonies

Traditional custodians also oversee the preservation of rituals and ceremonies that are critical to communal identity. For instance:

- Among the Ukwuani, rituals such as the *Ekpe Festival* feature proverbs, songs and dances that celebrate agricultural success and communal harmony. Elders guide the ceremonies, ensuring their authenticity and continuity (Okoh, 2018).
- In the Ijaw society, water-related ceremonies, like the *Ama-Owuo Festival*, honour aquatic deities and emphasize the community's symbiotic relationship with its environment. These rituals often include performances of traditional songs and dances that highlight themes of environmental stewardship and resilience (Ekine, 2011).

Educating the Younger Generation

Elders play a critical role in bridging generational gaps by mentoring younger members of the community. Through storytelling, they inculcate moral values, communal responsibilities and respect for traditions. For example:

- Ukwuani elders use parables and riddles to engage children, teaching them lessons about honesty, humility and perseverance in ways that are both entertaining and instructive.
- Ijaw elders adopt a similar approach, integrating folktales and songs into daily life to ensure that cultural knowledge is retained despite external pressures, such as urbanization and globalization (Tamuno, 2008).

Adapting Traditions to Modern Contexts

While elders are custodians of tradition, they also play a role in adapting cultural practices to modern realities.

- In the Ukwuani society, elders have embraced the use of printed collections of proverbs and folktales, enabling younger generations who are more literate to engage with traditional knowledge (Onyemachi, 2020).
- In the Ijaw society, elders collaborate with local artists and musicians to incorporate traditional themes into contemporary music and art, ensuring the relevance of their cultural heritage in modern settings (Ekine, 2011).

Challenges to the Role of Elders

Despite their importance, elders face several challenges in maintaining their roles as custodians of culture:

- The increasing influence of digital media has shifted the younger generation's focus away from traditional storytelling to modern forms of entertainment (Tamuno, 2008).
- Urbanization has led to the fragmentation of communities, limiting the opportunities for elders to engage with younger members.
- The decline of indigenous languages poses another significant threat, as many oral traditions are intimately tied to specific linguistic expressions (Okoh, 2018).

Concluding Remarks

The resilience of Ukwuani and Ijaw cultural traditions hinges significantly on the active participation of elders and traditional custodians. Their ability to preserve, adapt and transmit oral traditions ensures that these communities retain their cultural identity amidst external pressures. However, the challenges they face call for innovative strategies, including policy support and digital documentation, to safeguard their invaluable contributions to cultural resilience.

Mechanisms of Cultural Resilience

Community Efforts to Maintain Cultural Practices

Community efforts play an instrumental role in ensuring the resilience and preservation of Ukwuani and Ijaw cultural practices. These collective actions involve diverse stakeholders, including families, cultural associations, schools and religious groups, who work together to safeguard and adapt oral traditions to modern realities. Such efforts demonstrate the power of community agency in resisting the erosion of indigenous knowledge and identity.

Family as the Primary Custodian of Culture

Families remain the foundational unit for transmitting cultural knowledge and practices. In Ukwuani households, parents and grandparents use daily interactions to teach children

proverbs, songs, and folktales that embody societal values and historical narratives. This intimate setting fosters a strong connection between younger generations and their cultural heritage (Onyeagocha, 2019). Similarly, Ijaw families integrate storytelling into communal activities, such as fishing expeditions and evening gatherings, creating natural opportunities for cultural transmission (Tamuno, 2018).

Cultural Associations and Festivals

Cultural associations in both Ukwuani and Ijaw communities actively promote and preserve oral traditions through organized events and programmes.

- **Ukwuani Cultural Associations:** Groups such as the Ukwuani Cultural Renaissance Society host annual festivals featuring traditional dances, music and storytelling competitions. These events serve as platforms for showcasing and teaching oral traditions to wider audiences, including the diaspora (Eze, 2020a).
- **Ijaw Heritage Organizations:** Similar initiatives among the Ijaw include the Ijaw National Congress, which organizes the Boro Day Festival. This event not only celebrates Ijaw heritage but also incorporates oral narratives that emphasize resistance and unity against historical and contemporary challenges (Fubara, 2017).

Schools and Educational Programmes

Educational institutions are increasingly becoming hubs for cultural preservation through formal and informal programmes.

- **Ukwuani Schools:** Local schools in Ukwuani areas have incorporated indigenous knowledge into their curriculum by teaching proverbs, traditional songs, and oral histories during cultural studies classes. This integration ensures that students learn about their heritage within the context of modern education (Okonjo, 2019).
- **Ijaw Education Initiatives:** Non-governmental organizations, like the Ijaw Cultural Education Foundation provide workshops and storytelling sessions for students, emphasizing the importance of oral traditions in building a cohesive identity (Tamuno, 2018).

Religious Institutions and Cultural Preservation

Religious institutions also play a dual role in preserving and reshaping cultural practices. While some Christian and Islamic groups have historically discouraged certain traditional rituals, others have embraced elements of indigenous culture that align with their values.

- Among the Ukwuani, churches often incorporate local songs and proverbs into worship sessions, providing a modern context for these traditions (Onyeagocha, 2019).

- Ijaw religious leaders, particularly those associated with syncretic practices, have maintained traditional rituals, such as water blessings and sacred songs, blending them with contemporary spiritual practices (Fubara, 2017).

Youth-led Initiatives

Young people in Ukwuani and Ijaw communities are increasingly taking the lead in preserving their cultural heritage. Through social media, music and art, they are redefining the relevance of oral traditions in a modern context.

- Ukwuani youth groups use platforms like YouTube and Instagram to document and share performances of traditional dances and folktales, reaching global audiences (Eze, 2020a).
- Ijaw youth activists incorporate oral narratives into spoken word poetry and Hip-hop music, using these mediums to address social issues while celebrating their heritage (Tamuno, 2018).

Challenges to Community Efforts

Despite these efforts, several challenges persist:

- Urbanization: Migration to cities has disrupted the close-knit communal structures that facilitate cultural transmission.
- Language Decline: The erosion of indigenous languages threatens the authenticity and richness of oral traditions (Onyeagocha, 2019).
- Modern Entertainment: Digital and globalized entertainment options often overshadow local cultural practices, especially among younger generations (Eze, 2020b).

Concluding Remarks

Community efforts to preserve Ukwuani and Ijaw cultural practices underscore the resilience of these societies in the face of external pressures. By leveraging family traditions, cultural associations, education, religious institutions and youth initiatives, these communities demonstrate the importance of collective action in safeguarding their heritage. Addressing the challenges, they face requires sustained collaboration, policy support and innovative approaches to ensure the continuity of these invaluable traditions.

Transformation of Folklore

Influence of Globalization and Urbanization

Globalization and urbanization have significantly impacted the preservation and transformation of Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore. As these communities experience increased

interaction with external cultures, the traditional practices of storytelling, proverbs and myths face both opportunities and challenges. Globalization, particularly through the digitalization of cultural content, has opened new avenues for storytelling, but it has also introduced external influences that sometimes overshadow indigenous narratives.

Globalization and Cultural Integration

Globalization facilitates cultural exchange, allowing the Ukwuani and Ijaw communities to interact with a broader spectrum of global traditions. This integration often leads to the blending of indigenous folklore with external narratives. For example, some modern adaptations of Ukwuani myths and proverbs now feature elements of Western popular culture, including characters and themes from global films and television. While this incorporation can enrich the tradition, it risks diluting its authentic form, as traditional symbols and morals may become overshadowed by more dominant global values (Nwankwo, 2017).

The globalization of media platforms, such as television, social media and online streaming services, has exposed young people to a variety of cultures, leading to the hybridization of folklore. Traditional stories are increasingly being adapted into contemporary formats that combine indigenous elements with Western storytelling techniques. However, this fusion often risks commodifying the culture for entertainment purposes, thereby shifting the focus from the educational and moral functions of folklore to mere entertainment (Njoku, 2018).

Urbanization and the Displacement of Traditional Storytelling

Urbanization has led to significant demographic shifts, with many of the Ukwuani and Ijaw people migrating from villages to urban centres in search of better opportunities. This movement has had profound effects on oral traditions. In rural settings, storytelling was an integral part of community life, often occurring around a fire or during communal gatherings. However, in urban environments, the space for such communal activities has been significantly reduced. Modern lifestyles, characterized by busy work schedules and the dominance of mass media, have lessened the emphasis on oral traditions.

In urban areas, the younger generation is often more inclined to embrace global trends, such as digital entertainment and consumer culture, which leads to a decline in interest in traditional forms of folklore (Ajani, 2019). For instance, the popularity of social media platforms, like TikTok and Instagram, has created a space for new forms of expression, which in many cases, overshadow traditional storytelling formats. While these platforms offer the potential to share cultural stories, they also introduce a challenge in maintaining the integrity of oral traditions that were previously passed down face-to-face within local communities.

Adaptations in Modern Storytelling Formats

Despite these challenges, the transformation of folklore through modern storytelling formats presents an opportunity for revitalization. Digital media, in particular, has provided new platforms for Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore to thrive in contemporary contexts.

1. **Digital Narratives and Storytelling:** The rise of podcasts, YouTube channels and social media pages dedicated to the retelling of traditional stories has injected new life into folklore. Young people in Ukwuani and Ijaw are now using platforms such as YouTube and Facebook to record and share their traditional stories, songs and proverbs, reaching global audiences while maintaining local authenticity (Eze, 2020b). These digital narratives often incorporate visuals and audio elements that enhance the storytelling experience, creating a fusion of old and new.
2. **Interactive Storytelling and Gaming:** Modern technologies, like virtual reality (VR) and interactive video games, are increasingly being used to retell traditional myths and epics in more engaging formats. For example, Ukwuani and Ijaw youths have begun to incorporate elements of their cultural folklore into online games, where players interact with characters from indigenous stories. These games allow participants to explore the myths and values of their cultures while engaging with modern technology. This hybrid form of storytelling retains traditional themes of heroism, morality and community while embracing technological innovations (Nwankwo, 2017).
3. **Music and Visual Arts:** Another area where folklore has adapted to modern storytelling formats is in music and visual arts. Many contemporary Ukwuani and Ijaw musicians incorporate traditional proverbs and themes from folklore into their songs, often blending them with genres like Hip-hop, Reggae and Afrobeat. Visual artists, too, are creating murals and installations that reflect traditional stories, thereby preserving the folklore while making it accessible to modern audiences (Ajani, 2019).

Challenges of Modern Transformation

While the adaptation of folklore to modern formats offers opportunities for cultural preservation, it also comes with challenges:

1. **Commercialization:** The desire to appeal to a wider audience through digital media and globalized platforms can lead to the commercialization of traditional folklore, which may undermine its educational, spiritual and cultural value (Njoku, 2018).
2. **Loss of Authenticity:** The more folklore is adapted to fit modern tastes and technologies, the more it risks losing its cultural essence. The deep moral lessons, historical contexts and cultural significance embedded in the stories can become diluted or misunderstood.

3. **Language Barrier:** A major concern in adapting folklore to digital formats is the potential loss of the original language. As global digital platforms often operate in English or other dominant languages, the indigenous languages that carry the essence of the stories may not be preserved in these new media (Ajani, 2019).

Concluding Remarks

Globalization and urbanization have undoubtedly transformed the way Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore is transmitted and adapted. While these processes pose challenges to the preservation of traditional forms, they also offer opportunities for innovation and revitalization. By embracing digital media and modern storytelling techniques, these communities are finding new ways to keep their cultural heritage alive. However, the balance between adaptation and preservation is delicate, requiring careful attention to ensure that the core values of folklore are not lost in the process.

Folklore in Contemporary Contexts

Integration of Folklore in Education and Cultural Festivals

In recent years, there has been a concerted effort to integrate Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore into educational curricula and cultural festivals, both of which play pivotal roles in preserving and transmitting traditional knowledge. Education, particularly in the formal school system, has been identified as an essential platform for fostering the next generation's understanding and appreciation of their cultural heritage. In communities where oral traditions were once the primary means of knowledge transmission, integrating folklore into the formal education system offers a structured way to pass down these stories and values.

Folklore in Education

In both primary and secondary schools within Ukwuani and Ijaw, there has been an increasing recognition of the need to teach local folklore as a way to enhance cultural literacy. Folklore serves as an effective tool for imparting moral values, communal ethics and historical awareness to students. It is often embedded in subjects such as Nigerian Languages, Cultural Studies and Social Studies. These lessons expose students to traditional stories, proverbs, myths and songs that encode important life lessons. Furthermore, the incorporation of folklore into educational content helps to counter the dominance of Western perspectives that are often emphasized in the curriculum (Eze, 2020b).

Teachers have been trained to use storytelling as an engaging pedagogical tool that connects students with their heritage. For instance, in Ukwuani and Ijaw schools, proverbs and folktales are used not only to teach language skills but also to instil values such as

respect for elders, the importance of community and the consequences of moral choices. This educational approach reinforces the idea that folklore is not just a form of entertainment but also an essential aspect of the community's moral and educational fabric (Ajani, 2019). The inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems in formal education helps foster a sense of identity and pride among the youth, equipping them to navigate modern challenges while remaining connected to their roots.

Folklore in Cultural Festivals

Cultural festivals have become another key avenue for preserving and promoting folklore in Ukwuani and Ijaw. These festivals, often held annually, provide a platform for the performance and re-enactment of traditional stories, songs, dances, and rituals. They serve as living demonstrations of the community's heritage and a celebration of its folklore. Events like the *Ijaw Day Festival* and the *Ukwuani Cultural Festival* are crucial in maintaining the vibrancy of these traditions in contemporary society. These festivals often feature competitions in traditional music and storytelling, where elders pass down oral histories to younger generations.

In the context of globalization, cultural festivals have also become a way to introduce indigenous folklore to a wider audience. For instance, Ijaw festivals are now attracting tourists from various parts of the world, providing a global stage for Ijaw myths and folklore. Similarly, the Ukwuani showcase their traditional stories at national and international events, promoting cross-cultural exchange and raising awareness about the importance of preserving intangible heritage (Nwankwo, 2017). Through these cultural events, folklore is not only kept alive but also adapted to fit the aesthetic and cultural expectations of contemporary audiences, ensuring its relevance across generations.

New Challenges in Preserving Oral Traditions

While the integration of folklore in education and festivals presents exciting opportunities for cultural preservation, it also brings new challenges that must be addressed to safeguard the integrity of oral traditions. These challenges range from the erosion of language and authenticity to the influence of modern media and changing social norms.

Erosion of Indigenous Languages

One of the significant challenges in preserving Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore is the erosion of indigenous languages. As the global dominance of languages like English and Pidgin continues to spread, the younger generation are increasingly abandoning their native languages in favour of more globally recognized tongues. This shift has a profound effect on folklore, as many traditional stories, proverbs and myths are deeply tied to the language in which they were originally told. The loss of language leads to the diminishing

ability to fully understand or appreciate the cultural and philosophical meanings embedded in oral narratives (Ajani, 2019).

While some efforts are being made to teach indigenous languages in schools, the widespread use of English in formal education and media continues to marginalize native languages. The decline in fluency, especially among the urbanized youths means that many traditional stories are at risk of being lost or misinterpreted.

Commodification and Modern Media

Another challenge to folklore preservation is the commodification of traditional stories through modern media. With the rise of digital platforms and global entertainment industries, there is a trend of turning folklore into products for entertainment. For instance, films and television series that depict traditional stories often prioritize sensationalism over cultural accuracy, leading to a distortion of the original narratives. In some cases, traditional stories are simplified or altered to fit the tastes and expectations of global audiences, undermining their cultural significance (Eze, 2020b).

Additionally, the rapid consumption of digital media has made it more difficult for oral traditions to thrive in their original form. While some aspects of folklore are being recorded and shared online, they are often presented in a context that does not allow for the communal interaction and reflective nature of traditional storytelling (Nwankwo, 2017). This shift can dilute the educational and social functions of folklore, reducing it to mere entertainment.

Generational Disconnect

As the younger generations become more influenced by global trends and urbanized lifestyles, there is a growing disconnect between them and the older generation, who are the custodians of oral traditions. Elders, who once served as the primary transmitters of cultural knowledge, often struggle to maintain the interest of youth, especially when the latter are drawn to modern technologies and mass media (Ajani, 2019).

This generational gap, coupled with the rapid pace of societal change, threatens the continuity of oral traditions. For instance, young people may show less interest in attending traditional gatherings where folklore is shared orally, preferring to engage with online platforms or Western entertainment forms. Consequently, oral traditions may become further marginalized, and the important role that folklore plays in community identity may get weakened.

Concluding Remarks

While integrating folklore into education and cultural festivals offers an exciting opportunity for preserving Ukwuani and Ijaw traditions in contemporary contexts, it also presents significant challenges. The erosion of language, commodification through

modern media and the generational disconnect pose substantial threats to the survival of these oral traditions. Nevertheless, by leveraging the power of digital media, enhancing the role of education, and strengthening community efforts, there is hope for revitalizing and preserving these valuable cultural narratives for future generations.

Summary of Findings

This study explored the evolution of African folklore, specifically within the Ukwuani and Ijaw communities, and examined the dynamic relationship of continuity, disruption and adaptation of oral traditions over different historical periods. Many key findings emerged through this investigation, contributing significantly to understanding of the resilience and transformation of African cultural heritage.

Insights into Continuity and Disruption

The research revealed a complex pattern of continuity and disruption within Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore, shaped by historical, social and cultural forces. Despite the disruptive forces of colonization, Western education and modernity, both communities have demonstrated remarkable resilience in preserving their oral traditions. Storytelling, proverbs, myths and songs continue to serve as vital vehicles for transmitting cultural knowledge, moral values and collective identity.

The study found that, although colonization and Westernization had significant impacts on the traditional practice of folklore—especially through the introduction of Christianity and Western education—many elements of indigenous stories and customs have been preserved, albeit with some modifications. For example, the introduction of literacy and formal education did not entirely erode the oral tradition; instead, it led to adaptations that integrated folklore with new forms of communication. As communities modernized and urbanized, folklore also found new expressions, notably through digital media, cultural festivals and integration into educational curricula.

However, the impact of globalization and urbanization on younger generations has presented a more serious challenge. The increasing preference for modern media and the erosion of indigenous languages among the youth threaten the transmission of traditional knowledge in its original form. This generational disconnect, compounded by the dominance of foreign cultural influences, signifies a pressing need for cultural preservation efforts that bridge the gap between tradition and modernity.

Cultural Resilience and Adaptation

The resilience of Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore is evident in the active efforts of community elders and traditional custodians who have worked to preserve and transmit oral traditions through informal means, such as communal storytelling sessions and performances at cultural festivals. These elders are often seen as the “living archives” of

their communities, ensuring that the younger generation remain connected to their cultural roots despite external pressures.

Moreover, communities have also adapted their folklore to suit contemporary realities. The incorporation of folklore into modern educational frameworks, as well as its display at cultural festivals, has allowed for an innovative reinterpretation of traditional stories, ensuring their continued relevance in the modern world. Furthermore, the use of digital media to record and disseminate folklore has expanded the reach of these stories beyond traditional community settings, offering a global stage for their preservation.

Impact of External Influences

External influences, particularly from Western education, religion and mass media, have undeniably disrupted the continuity of oral traditions. Christianity, for example, often supplanted traditional religious beliefs and practices, leading to the suppression of certain elements of indigenous folklore. Similarly, the rise of digital media and the global spread of Western culture have reshaped how the younger generations engage with folklore, often relegating traditional narratives to the margins of their cultural consciousness.

Nevertheless, the study also found that these disruptions have not entirely erased folklore. Instead, they have sparked new forms of adaptation. Folklore in both communities has been actively reinterpreted in a manner that incorporates both the old and the new, thereby ensuring the survival of folklore in the modern world. For instance, some traditional proverbs have been featured in contemporary music, and traditional stories have been adapted into novels and plays, reflecting a fusion of past and present cultural expressions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, some recommendations are made to ensure the continued preservation and transmission of Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore, as well as other African oral traditions, in the face of modern challenges:

1. Strengthening Community-led Preservation Efforts

It is crucial to support grassroots initiatives focused on preserving and promoting oral traditions within local communities. This includes organizing regular storytelling sessions, folklore competitions and cultural performances. Elders should be empowered to pass on their knowledge, and community members should be encouraged to record oral narratives through written and digital media. Additionally, collaborative efforts among cultural organizations, local governments and educational institutions can facilitate the establishment of platforms for the intergenerational transmission of knowledge.

2. *Integrating Folklore into Formal Education*

Folklore should be more systematically integrated into formal education curricula at all levels. By including proverbs, myths and oral histories in subjects like language, social studies and cultural education, students can better understand their cultural heritage. This will also encourage the development of critical thinking skills, as folklore often challenges listeners to reflect on complex moral and societal issues. Teachers and educators should be trained to incorporate folklore into their lessons creatively, so as to foster a deeper connection to indigenous cultures and values.

3. *Promoting the Digital Documentation and Dissemination of Folklore*

Given the growing influence of digital media, there is an urgent need to harness technology to document and share folklore. Digital archives, online storytelling platforms and multimedia content (such as podcasts, videos and e-books) can make traditional stories accessible to a global audience while still preserving their authenticity. Initiatives like community-based oral history projects and digital storytelling workshops can help bridge the generational gap and create a digital archive of oral traditions.

4. *Revitalizing Indigenous Languages*

To ensure the preservation of folklore in its original form, efforts should be made to revitalize indigenous languages. Language is inextricably linked to folklore, and the loss of language equates to the loss of cultural nuance and meaning. Language preservation programmes should be incorporated into school curricula, and indigenous language teachers should be trained and supported. Furthermore, digital tools, such as language learning apps, social media platforms and audio resources, can facilitate the wider use and appreciation of indigenous languages.

5. *Encouraging Cross-cultural Exchange and Global Awareness*

Finally, promoting cross-cultural dialogue, through festivals, international conferences and collaborations, can raise awareness of the importance of folklore in cultural preservation. Through these exchanges, communities can share their traditional knowledge with a broader audience, which will foster global appreciation for African folklore and cultural heritage. Additionally, these platforms can help to preserve folklore's relevance, ensuring that it remains a vibrant and influential part of global cultural discourse.

Conclusion

This study highlights the dynamic nature of Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore and its ability to adapt to external pressures while maintaining a core of continuity. Despite the challenges posed by modernity, globalization and colonial legacies, the resilience of these

communities preserve their oral traditions, indicating the significance of folklore as a crucial part of African cultural heritage. By addressing the challenges of language erosion, digital commodification and intergenerational disconnect, the recommendations provided can help safeguard these oral traditions for future generations. Preserving folklore is not merely an academic exercise; it is a cultural imperative that ensures the survival of African identities, values and knowledge in an increasingly globalized world.

Implications of the Findings for African Cultural Studies

The findings of this study hold significant implications for the broader field of African cultural studies. By focusing on the continuity, disruption and transformation of oral traditions within the Ukwuani and Ijaw communities, this research offers valuable insights into the resilience of African cultures amidst external influences. The key implications for African cultural studies are presented below:

1. *Reaffirming the Importance of Oral Traditions in Cultural Studies*

The study underscores the continued relevance of oral traditions, such as folklore, in the preservation and transmission of African cultural identity. Oral traditions are not static relics of the past but dynamic and evolving practices that adapt to changing socio-cultural contexts. This challenges the conventional view of oral traditions as outdated or marginal, emphasizing their central role in contemporary cultural discourse. African cultural studies must continue to prioritize the study of these living traditions, recognizing their significance in understanding African worldviews, social structures and values.

2. *Redefining African Resilience*

Through the exploration of how Ukwuani and Ijaw have maintained their oral traditions despite the disruptive forces of colonization, Christianity and modernization, the study contributes to a broader understanding of African resilience. It highlights the creative ways in which communities preserve their cultural practices, adapt them to new realities and reinterpret them to remain relevant in modern contexts. This perspective enriches the study of African resilience by focusing not only on the survival of cultures but also on their capacity for transformation and innovation.

3. *Interdisciplinary Approaches to African Studies*

The research reinforces the need for interdisciplinary approaches in African cultural studies. By combining elements of history, anthropology, linguistics and Postcolonial Theory, the study demonstrates the complex and interconnected nature of cultural preservation. This interdisciplinary framework enables a deeper understanding of how external factors, like colonialism, globalization and modernity, have shaped African cultural expressions, as well as how African communities have navigated these challenges. Future research in African studies can benefit from this holistic approach,

which draws on diverse methodologies to explore the intersection of culture, history and social change.

4. *Broadening the Scope of African Folklore Studies*

By focusing specifically on the Ukwuani and Ijaw, this study expands the scope of African folklore studies to include less-studied groups, contributing to a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of African oral traditions. It challenges the Eurocentric focus on major ethnic groups and highlights the diversity of cultural practices across Africa. African cultural studies should continue to explore and document the folklore of various ethnic groups, particularly those that have been historically marginalized or overlooked in mainstream scholarship.

5. *The Role of Folklore in Identity Formation*

The study reinforces the critical role of folklore in the construction and preservation of communal identities. Folklore serves as a repository of collective memory, reinforcing social norms, communal values, and ethical principles. By examining the role of folklore in resistance, assimilation and identity formation within the Ukwuani and Ijaw communities, the research provides a framework for understanding the complex relationship between culture, power and identity. This perspective can be applied to other African communities, offering insights into how folklore shapes collective consciousness and responses to external pressures.

6. *Reconceiving African Modernity and Globalization*

The study challenges the notion that modernization and globalization necessarily lead to the decline of traditional cultural practices. It shows how African communities, including the Ukwuani and Ijaw, have integrated modern elements like digital media and contemporary education into their cultural practices without abandoning their heritage. This finding has implications for how African cultural studies approaches the relationship between tradition and modernity, suggesting that African cultures can maintain their integrity while engaging with global cultural trends. The resilience of African folklore, particularly in the face of globalization, calls for a reimagined understanding of modernity—one that is rooted in African experiences and perspectives.

7. *Policy and Advocacy for Cultural Preservation*

Lastly, this study highlights the importance of cultural preservation in the policy and development agendas of African nations. It underscores the need for institutional support for the safeguarding of oral traditions, particularly in the face of the challenges posed by urbanization, digitalization and the loss of indigenous languages. African cultural studies should advocate policies that protect intangible heritage and create opportunities for the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge. The study calls for a concerted

effort to integrate cultural preservation into national development plans, so as to ensure that the cultural heritage of African communities is not lost in the process of modernization and globalization.

This research contributes significantly to the field of African cultural studies by offering a nuanced understanding of the resilience, transformation and adaptation of folklore in the Ukwuani and Ijaw communities. The study encourages scholars, policymakers and community leaders to prioritize cultural preservation as a central element of African identity, advocating strategies that bridge tradition and modernity. The insights gained from this research not only expand the scope of African cultural studies but also offer a framework for preserving and celebrating African cultural heritage in an increasingly globalized world.

Recommendations for Cultural Preservation

The preservation of African oral traditions, including folklore, is crucial for maintaining cultural identity and safeguarding intangible heritage. Based on the findings of this study, some recommendations are given to enhance the preservation and revitalization of Ukwuani and Ijaw folklore, while also ensuring that broader African cultural traditions are protected in the face of modernization and globalization. These recommendations are community-led initiatives, policy frameworks and the role of technology in revitalizing and documenting folklore.

1. *Community-led Initiatives to Safeguard Oral Traditions*

One of the most effective ways to preserve oral traditions is community-led initiatives that directly involve the custodians of these traditions—elders, storytellers and cultural practitioners. The Ukwuani and Ijaw, like many others across Africa, have long relied on these oral traditions as repositories of knowledge, moral values and communal identity. However, the threat posed by urbanization, modern education and digital media calls for a concerted effort from local communities to safeguard these practices.

- **Reviving traditional storytelling forums:** Communities can organize regular storytelling sessions and folklore festivals where elders and cultural leaders pass down stories, proverbs, and songs to younger generations. These gatherings not only serve as a space for preserving cultural heritage but also foster intergenerational dialogue, ensuring that cultural knowledge is transmitted effectively (Ngubane, 1995).
- **Empowering cultural custodians:** It is essential to identify and support cultural custodians, such as elders, griots and traditional healers, who are the primary bearers of folklore in these communities. These individuals can be provided with platforms to share their knowledge, perhaps through community radio stations or local cultural centres (Kebede, 2017).

- **Youth engagement:** Encouraging the younger generations to actively participate in these oral traditions can help bridge the generational gap. This could be done by integrating folklore and oral history into youth programmes, arts and performance spaces, making traditional practices more appealing to the younger population (Dei, 2002).

These community-based approaches are vital for ensuring that folklore is not only preserved but also actively practised within the community.

2. *Policy Frameworks for Integrating Folklore into Education and National Identity Programmes*

The integration of folklore into national education curricula and cultural identity programmes is essential for ensuring the sustainability of African oral traditions. Governments and educational institutions must play an active role in policy formulation to recognize and promote the value of folklore in both formal and informal settings.

- **Incorporating folklore into national curricula:** African governments should mandate the inclusion of local folklore in primary and secondary school curricula as part of the broader effort to teach indigenous languages, history and cultural practices. Studies have shown that, when young people are exposed to the richness of their own heritage through folklore, they are more likely to appreciate and preserve it (Nyirenda, 2019). This can also encourage a sense of national identity grounded in local traditions.
- **Establishing cultural heritage programmes:** Cultural programmes that celebrate the rich diversity of African folklore can be institutionalized at the national level, with a focus on using folklore as a tool for fostering national unity and pride. For instance, in Nigeria, folklore could be incorporated into national cultural days, heritage months and museum exhibits dedicated to preserving intangible cultural heritage (Nwachukwu, 2015).
- **Cultural preservation as a policy priority:** Governments should enact policies that recognize folklore as a vital aspect of national heritage and promote the establishment of cultural heritage institutions, such as folklore archives, libraries and museums. This can be accompanied by the creation of incentives for local cultural practitioners, such as grants and fellowships, to support their efforts in maintaining traditional art forms (Adeyemi, 2014).

By integrating folklore into educational and cultural frameworks, national governments can help ensure that oral traditions remain relevant and widely understood.

3. *The Role of Technology in Revitalizing and Documenting Folklore*

Technology plays a pivotal role in the modern preservation and dissemination of oral traditions. While the digital age presents challenges to the survival of oral practices, it also

offers innovative solutions for revitalizing and documenting folklore in accessible and lasting ways.

- **Digital archives and databases:** The creation of digital archives that store audio and video recordings of storytelling, songs and proverbs is a key step in preserving folklore. These digital platforms allow folklore to be accessed by individuals across the globe, making it possible for future generations to connect with their cultural heritage (Abimbola, 2018). Additionally, digital archives offer a means to preserve folklore in indigenous languages, which are at risk of extinction (Eze, 2017).
- **Interactive platforms for storytelling:** Technology can also be used to create interactive storytelling platforms that allow people from different parts of the world to share and engage with African folklore. Websites, apps and social media platforms could host storytelling sessions, cultural festivals and interactive games that highlight the themes and lessons encoded in oral traditions. For example, the development of mobile apps that use augmented reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR) to bring folklore to life could attract a global audience and create immersive learning experiences (Okoro & Akinlolu, 2016).
- **Educational video content:** Platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo can serve as important tools for both documenting and disseminating oral traditions. Educators and cultural practitioners can upload videos of traditional performances, interviews with elders and storytelling sessions. These platforms provide an opportunity to reach a wide audience and ensure that cultural practices are preserved in their authentic form (Nnamani, 2017).
- **Crowdsourcing folklore collections:** The use of crowdsourcing platforms can help gather folklore from different communities, particularly those that may be isolated or overlooked by mainstream cultural preservation efforts. This digital approach empowers individuals to contribute their local stories, songs and proverbs to a collective database, ensuring the preservation of a more comprehensive and inclusive representation of African folklore (Barrett, 2020).

By leveraging technology, African communities and cultural institutions can create digital repositories and platforms that not only preserve folklore but also ensure its wide dissemination to audiences around the world.

In sum, the preservation of African folklore, including that of the Ukwuani and Ijaw, requires a multifaceted approach that combines community-led initiatives, supportive policy frameworks and strategic use of technology. By recognizing the importance of oral traditions and actively working to preserve them, African nations can safeguard their intangible cultural heritage for future generations. It is essential that both local communities and national governments take responsibility for the preservation of folklore, with the help of modern tools and platforms that allow for collection,

documentation and sharing of these invaluable cultural resources. Through these efforts, African folklore can continue to thrive, adapt and enrich the global cultural landscape.

Final Reflections

The preservation of intangible cultural heritage, such as oral traditions and folklore, is of paramount importance for the continued existence of African cultural identities. This study highlights the interconnectedness of folklore with the social, moral and historical fabric of communities like the Ukwuani and Ijaw. Given the rapid changes in global society, including the effects of globalization, urbanization and modern education, there is an urgent need to focus on safeguarding these cultural practices that form the bedrock of African identity.

1. *The Urgency of Preserving Intangible Heritage*

In many African communities, oral traditions have functioned as vital tools for preserving history, passing on wisdom and fostering communal values. Folklore is not only a form of entertainment but also a profound means of connecting generations and preserving cultural continuity. However, as modernization progresses, these practices face significant threats from external influences, such as Westernization, urban migration and the dominance of digital media. Without intentional efforts to protect them, these traditions risk being lost to time, leaving future generations without a tangible connection to their heritage.

The urgency for preservation is heightened by the fact that many African cultures are undergoing rapid transformations, which often lead to the erosion of indigenous practices. As younger generations become increasingly engaged with modern forms of media and technology, there is a growing disconnect between them and their cultural roots. Additionally, many African languages—crucial to the transmission of oral traditions—are endangered, further complicating preservation efforts. As noted by Nwachukwu (2015), the integration of indigenous knowledge and oral practices into educational systems and public policy frameworks is an essential step in ensuring that these valuable cultural resources are preserved for future generations.

Moreover, the intersection of folklore with intangible cultural heritage has become increasingly recognized by international organizations, such as UNESCO, which has highlighted the importance of safeguarding oral traditions as part of global efforts to protect cultural diversity. The global community must take action to prioritize the protection of African folklore and other forms of intangible heritage, especially in the face of rising technological and cultural homogeneity.

2. *Call to Action for Researchers, Policymakers, and Communities*

The preservation of African folklore is not solely the responsibility of one group or entity. It requires collective action from researchers, policymakers and communities. To ensure the survival and revitalization of oral traditions, all stakeholders must be engaged.

- **Researchers:** Scholars and researchers in African studies, anthropology, linguistics and cultural heritage must continue to document and analyze the rich diversity of oral traditions across the continent. Researchers should collaborate with community elders and custodians of culture to ensure that folklore is accurately recorded and its significance properly understood. Additionally, scholars should explore new methodologies for using technology to capture, preserve and disseminate oral traditions in ways that resonate with younger, tech-savvy generations (Abimbola, 2018). It is essential that researchers remain vigilant to the evolving nature of folklore and its role in contemporary society. Further research into the transformations of oral traditions in response to modernity and globalization is needed to understand how folklore can adapt while retaining its core cultural values.
- **Policymakers:** Governments and international organizations must recognize the intrinsic value of oral traditions and folklore in national identity and cultural heritage. Policymakers should create supportive frameworks for the protection and promotion of intangible cultural heritage. This can include incorporating folklore into school curricula, establishing cultural heritage centres, providing funding for local storytelling projects, and facilitating international partnerships to promote the exchange of cultural knowledge. The creation of policies that incentivize the use of folklore in national development plans could also help integrate indigenous traditions into modern economic and social frameworks (Dei, 2002). Additionally, the establishment of digital archives for folklore and oral traditions can ensure their continued access and preservation.
- **Communities:** Local communities, as the primary bearers of folklore, must take responsibility for preserving and transmitting their traditions. Elders and cultural practitioners should be empowered and supported to pass down stories, proverbs and songs to younger generations. Communities should also advocate the inclusion of oral traditions in public cultural festivals, educational programmes and local arts initiatives. Moreover, communities can leverage technology to share their folklore widely, ensuring that it reaches global audiences and remains relevant in the digital age. The involvement of young people in cultural activities can also reinvigorate interest in traditional practices, ensuring their continued practice and enjoyment (Ngubane, 1995).

In summary, the preservation of African folklore requires a multi-faceted approach that involves grassroots participation, academic inquiry and governmental support. By creating policies, fostering local initiatives and utilizing technology, stakeholders can work together to ensure that the rich heritage of African communities, such as those of the Ukwuani and Ijaw, is not lost but rather revitalized and embraced for generations to come.

The findings of this study demonstrate that African oral traditions, particularly those of the Ukwuani and Ijaw, are integral to the social, cultural and moral fabric of their societies. Despite the ongoing challenges posed by external forces such as modernization and globalization, there is hope for the preservation and revitalization of these traditions. Through continued research, community-led initiatives, supportive policies and strategic use of technology, African folklore can remain a vital and dynamic force in the cultural landscape.

It is imperative that researchers, policymakers and communities collaborate to protect and celebrate the intangible heritage that defines African identity. This task is urgent, as the survival of African folklore depends on collective efforts to ensure that it thrives in the modern world. The time to act is now, before more cultural treasures are lost.

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**GLOBALIZATION AND DEVALUATION OF AFRICAN CULTURE:
CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE**

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Introduction

The devaluation or “inferiorization” of African culture in the global space is not a recent phenomenon, as it dates back to the earliest times of European contact with the continent. Globalization, that is variously described as global construction, global orientation and global expansion and neo-colonialism by different school of thoughts, is the latest phase in an ever-evolving process that is rooted in the expansion of modern capitalism, and it encompasses political, economic and social realms. All of these underpinnings are premised on the innovation in science and technology, but it is typical of scholars to muddle the three realms of globalization under one umbrella. Globalization is an even process in its manifestation to different cultures and peoples of the globe. But to the people of Africa, globalization is just another name for colonialism, as its basic tenets are not different from those of the “moribund colonization.”

Globalization means different things to different people. Some say it is the movement of people, language ideas and products around the world. Others see it as the dominance of multinational corporations and the destruction of cultural identities. Broadly speaking, globalisation refers to the expansion of global linkages, the organization of social life on a global scale and the growth of global consciousness, that is the consolidation of the world society. The term is historically complex, as definitions vary in every historical and sociological moments. If that be the case, is “colonization” actually moribund or is the term colonialism made to wear a new cloak? Although the debate over colonialism in Africa is emotive and contentious, especially from the viewpoint of Africans in the current global system. This is because Africa has been made to wear names that are denigrating and subjected to unimaginable humiliations. All of these inhumane names and treatment are carried over into the current global system with no end in sight. This engender the issue of whether globalization is a distant cousin of colonialism or just another name for colonialism.

Colonialism best describes the humiliating experiences of Africa and Africans within the global system prior to independence, while globalization attempts to

encapsulate Africa's experiences in the post-colonial era. In other words, colonialism and globalization are concepts are two sides of the same a coin, thus they are not different. The question of whether colonialism is actually death or moribund in Africa, especially in the new millennium, can be answered with an African axiom that says "one must use one's tongue to count one's teeth"; simply put, experience is the best teacher. Africa has been labouring to assert itself in the murky waters of global economics and politics, especially in the 21st century. Through geo-politics, the colonialists have continued with their business of exploiting and subjugating the continent in all realms. Simply put, geo-politics (neo-colonialism) did put "Africa in chains." chains that were not put on her by God but by European politics, economics and social laws.

Globalization in theory and practice in Africa has continued with the same social, economic and political dislocations noticed under colonialism. In simple words, it is responsible for the increasing acceleration in the "devaluation" and "inferiorization" of African cultures. The question then is whether there are possibilities for Africa, especially in a globalized world, to break the new chains put on her by globalization.

Culture is seen and considered as the totality of a people that includes customs, costumes, manners and mannerism, ideas and ideology, arts, beliefs and all the things that integrate people as members of society. In other words, culture differentiates one community from the other even within the African continent. Culture is a complex whole including knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws and any other capabilities and habits created by members of a society. However, culture is the vehicle through which a people relate with other people. Therefore, it transcends ideology and it is the substance of identity for individuals in a society. An awareness of common language, ethnicity, history, religion and landscape represents the building blocks of culture. But Murden (2008) notes thus:

Few cultures are completely insular or unchanging but to recognizable, totems of identity must enjoy some consensus and persistence within the community. Societies also define internal and external boundaries by inducing individuals and communities to believe in the values of their culture and importance of its distinctiveness.

He adds that culture often encapsulates ideas and practices which support patterns of domination or hegemony within and between societies. Murden (2008) makes subtle reference to some cultures having the desire to dominate other cultures. But why do they have this kind of desire? From the standpoint of independence of states/people, whatsoever produces that desire to dominate is not far from greed, selfishness, false sense of superiority and entitlement.

Culture refers to a variety of totems and boundaries but religious affiliations have historically been among the most powerful of influences. Kornblum (2005) argues that no

society exists without culture. Thus, societies are populations that are organized to carry out the major functions of life. A society's culture consists of all the ways in which its members think about their society and about amongst themselves. Kornblum (2005) asserts that:

We can define culture as the modes of thought, behavior and production that are handed down from one generation to the next by means of communicative interactions –language, gesture, writing, building and all other communications among humans –rather than by genetic transmission or heredity.

This definition encompasses an array of behaviours, technologies, religions – just about everything made by humans. Thus, the culture of any society, no matter how simple it may seem or appear, is a complex set of behaviour and artefact. Bierstedt (1963), cited in Kornblum, built a framework for this purpose, with the following constituting the tripod –ideas, norms and material culture. Ideas represent notions or theories about how the universe operates, strongly holding on to the thinking about what is right or wrong (values). Traditional beliefs, legends and customs (folklore) are among the most important types of ideas found in any given culture. Values represent socially shared ideas about what is considered important. Thus, in societies undergoing transformation at an accelerated rate, there is bound to be conflict – conflict over family values, sanctity of marriage and obligations to children. The more the diversity there is amongst the people that share a basic culture the more the conflict there is likely to be. Such disputes often turn on ideas about how to behave –that is on the norms governing behaviour in a society.

The third part of the tripod is the norm that stems from the people's considerations of what is right or wrong in their values – derived norms or rules of behaviour of a society. Values are more abstract than norms; they are ideas that support or justify norms. Norms are more specific and are adjustments made to suit the challenges or situations. Therefore, norms are more than behaviours.

For the African continent, the commencement and export of globalization in all its forms beyond the shores of Europe meant the criss-crossing of cultures. The early contacts between Europe and Africa set in motion series of events that culminated in the devaluation and "inferiorization" of Africa. The earliest of the contacts to be established with legions of foreigners (Arabs) that has write glowingly about the "stupendous wealth" of the continent made other foreign legions to follow in the footsteps of the Arabs. These foreign legions plundered the wealth of Africa and Africans by devaluing Africans and Africa through colonialism, geo-politics, imposition of alien cultures and globalization. The greatest beneficiaries of these instruments are Europeans.

History and Conceptualization of Globalization

Conceptualization of Globalization

The term globalization has been defined by various scholars based on their perspectives on the concept. While some are “positive” and global in their outlook of the definitions of globalization, others see the concept from a negative point of view. However, globalization may be explained according to Nsibambi (2001) as:

a process of advancement and increase in interaction among the world's countries and peoples facilitated by progressive technological changes in locomotion, communication, political and military power, knowledge and skills, as well as interfacing of cultural values, systems and practices.

Therefore, globalization refers to increased integration and interaction among countries of the world, fuelled by sophisticated and advanced communication technology, for the purpose of trade as well as political, economic, social and cultural networking. It enables the countries of the world to operate under a common umbrella. However, globalization is not a new thing in Africa. It is

a continuation of a long tradition of over five hundred years, the tradition of imperialism. Globalization is the latest phase and expression of an uninterrupted history of domination and subjugation of peoples, nations and conquistadors and colonizers. It is a tradition of political, economic and cultural domination of some nations over others (Wilfred 1997).

Global historians claim that globalization creates a platform where the developing countries of the world showcase their local products, expertise, culture and tradition, among other things, to the world, while the technology, culture and tradition of the Western society are also transmitted to all the nooks and crannies of the world. It is a two-way concept, but it tends to favour the Western world over the developing countries. However, Khor (1998) counters the argument of global historians by positing that globalization is an uneven process thus the logic of globalization creating equal platforms for all countries of the world is way of the mark.

Global historians further claim that, as different countries interact, their cultures and traditions also come into contact, and this brings about interface of various cultures across the globe. In the process, the countries that have the control of highly developed information technology tend to exert influence on other countries that are not as advanced as they are in this respect. Since the former has wider coverage and audience, there is the tendency to project their cultures over others. Simply put, with the advancement in technology globalization helps create a universal culture where cultures considered inferior are discarded for those of the more advanced cultures. It is in this light that Offiong (2001) posits that there is also the possibility by the developing countries to

see the culture of the developed countries as the acceptable and standard way of life even though it runs contrary to their values.

Globalization became a popular term in the 1980s (Offiong, 2001). However, an all-encompassing definition for the “term” is non-existent currently. The reason for this is the term extends into almost all spheres of human endeavours. Therefore, many scholars have offered various definitions, including the economic social and cultural perspectives, and even those laden with radical viewpoints that reject globalization as the triumph of the Western capitalist system (Western super powers) over the rest of the world.

As noted by Brecher and Costello (1998), economist generally have a positive view of globalization. David Rockefeller of Chase Manhattan Bank once remarked that, where free market forces can transcend national boundaries, broad human interests would be served best in economic terms.

In a competitive global market, different countries will specialize in the products they can make best, according to Ricardo’s law of comparative advantage. However, Siddiqui (2018) claims that, in Africa, it translates to the law of comparative disadvantage in part because specialization and export of raw materials were not voluntary and it is not altogether profitable. Essentially, globalization is an even process. Aja (2001), citing Maria Elena, construes globalization as the change in the way production is organized as demanded by the “general dismantling” of trade barriers and the free mobility of financial and productive capital, in the context of accelerated technology change. This definition brings to the fore the nexus between technology and enhancement of economic relations between countries in the aspect of production and commerce.

Oyejide (2007) asserts that globalization refers to increased integration, across countries, of markets for goods, services and capital. This definition refers to an accelerated expansion of economic activities globally and sharp increases in the movement of tangible and intangible goods/services across national and international boundaries. In sum, globalization is indeed beyond the flow of money and commodities, thus the assertion of globalization creating a global village based on shared values.

All of these definitions found expression in the thoughts of Onimisi (2014), who notes that globalization is a process integrating not just the economy but also culture, technology and governance. It represents the growing worldwide interdependence of peoples and cultures. Offiong, Ellah, Nta, and Bassey (2021) aver that scholars whose definitions of globalization can be classified or categorized as coming under economic perspective carry a tint or reflection of their grievances towards international economic order in the age of globalization. Offiong (2001) views globalization as the zenith of the “internationalization of capitalism” with its associated institutions that aided the subjugation of the non-European cultures over time and space.

Some Eurocentric scholars view globalization as the triumph of “Americanization” – the American culture –over the world. Conversely, others are of the opinion that it means a race to the bottom by labour standards – exploitation of the working class in the “nations of the global south” with the payment of low wages by the multinational corporations wishing to maximize profit. However, it is pertinent to note is that the entire definitions of globalization have one common denominator, which is the process that is erasing many boundaries that have divided the world (Rouke, 2005).

Furthermore, Otor (2017) posits that globalization is “experienced when virtually all nation-state becomes part of a larger pattern of global transformation and global flow of goods, people, information, and communication as well as crime.” Fashion, belief and rapid movements across territorial boundaries are major indices of globalization. Globalization has shrunk state-centric political economy and military rivalries that have dominated the international system after the Cold War due to the reasoning that national borders cannot stop the flow of information and technological advancement (Otor, 2017).

The age of globalization is witnessing the visible and deliberate collapse of the political, social and economic boundaries that hitherto impeded large interactions amongst different cultures and peoples of the world. Thus, the proponents of globalization hinged their beliefs and thoughts on the premise of interdependency that has opened up the world, reduced the abuse of human rights and eradicated, to a large extent, social and economic injustices by national governments (Ogbonnaya 2013).

Ake (1999), from the economic perspective, argue that globalization is “excessive European profit looking for excessive profit.” This yields the conclusion that globalization is a powerful phenomenon, a real aspect of the current global system and it represents one of the most significant forces in determining the future of the globe. It has diverse dimensions in economic, political, security, environmental, health, social, cultural and other aspects of life (Ellah, 2017).

A Brief History of Globalization

Offiong (2001) and Akpuru-Aja (2001) note that the 15th century AD was indeed a watershed in the history of humankind and globalization. It was the century that the world and humankind took the very first step towards globalization through the voyages of discoveries by Vasco da Gama (1498), Bartholomew Dias (1488), and Christopher Columbus (1492). Bartholomew Dias and Vasco da Gama, through these voyages, offered the “European man” a long-anticipated opportunity to join in the trade in spice in the Far East. These discoveries accelerated the establishment of trade and cultural contact between Europe and Africa and Asia.

Ekwutosi, Ellah, Eke and Bassey (2021) all noted that:

Having learned that the world is spherical in structure and shape, Christopher Columbus sought to establish a shorter transport route to the East Indies through the West Indies. It was in this process that America was discovered and Europe immediately established contact and interaction with the people of the New World – the Red Indians. Ultimately, between 1519 and 1522, Ferdinand Magellan circumnavigated the globe. With these landmark discoveries, there came a large integration of peoples and cultures formerly divided by large oceans and mountains, thereby solving the geographical barriers that hindered communication in the past. (cf. Rourke 2005)

The advancement in communication, coupled with the invention of the printing press in 1454 and many other innovations, increased global communications, but the integration process gained speed with the dawn of telegrams, the radio, telephones, television, satellite, communications and the Internet. Inspired by all these advancements in science and technology, Europeans moved out to dominate, conquer and enslave other cultures, especially those in Africa, Latin America and South East Asia that were considered good enough for the hard labour on the large European plantations in the New World. The efforts of the Europeans at creating an international system exclusively on their parameters make suspect every effort of the Europeans concerning globalization to African scholars, thus, the eternal suspicion of it being a grand plan towards the integration of the rest of the world into the Western capitalist economy.

Grigory (2020) opines that globalization, prior to the 1800s, was effectively termed and situated as “creeping globalization” because the changes that occurred were very slow. From the 1800s, the pace of globalization increased exponentially, thus the 18th-century phenomenon the Industrial Revolution, became the “head cornerstone” of globalization. The transport system was revolutionized with the discovery of steam ships and later ships and aircraft. The bliss of the Industrial Revolution aided the growth of multiple factories in Europe, where raw materials became scarce and manufactured goods surplus. These factors, amongst other issues, led to the establishment of colonial projects and territories in African and other Third-World countries by the European powers. It was at the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885 that leading European nations carved out the African continent into territories/states to be shared amongst themselves, while the territories served as sources of cheap raw materials and markets for the surplus manufactured goods from Europe at expensive prices. The situating of Africa as a market for finished products from European factories became another major source of African grievances towards the idea of globalization and its present status in world affairs.

As the colonial project was taking root in the international system after the Berlin conference of 1884-45 so too were colonialism and imperialism were devouring,

appropriating and destroying every inch of non-European land and its culture (African culture and traditional religion) and forcefully bringing them into the ambit of the current global system on the terms of the Europeans (Offiong 2011; Offiong 2016; Egbe & Okoi 2017).

The colonial project in Africa, to a large extent, is the bane of African nations/states in the current global system, as the colonial project (both new and old) has translated into Africans and Africa having to continually fight civil wars and tribal wars, which keep Africa vulnerable to external manipulations and interventions. The invention of machines in the 19th and 20th centuries resulted in significant changes that aided leading European countries and the United States taking control of huge new stores of energy and large amounts of materials at no costs. Offiong (2001) posits that:

Surplus capital in Europe was often more profitably invested overseas, where cheap labour, limited competition, and abundant raw materials made a greater premium possible. The major difference between the early processes of globalization and the present one is the all-out effort by the United States and its Western allies to use the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to consummate the process.

As the “creeping globalization” ushered the Berlin Conference, so too the present globalization has accelerated the formation of international organizations after the World Wars and global cultures. Tariffs and other trade barriers decreased significantly at the end of World War II, and investment across national borders and monetary exchanges grew very rapidly. The European Union (EU) has even largely abandoned traditional currencies, such as the French franc, in favour of the common EU currency, the Euro.

As already noted, globalization is not new to Africans and Africa. It has made Europe and the United States of America a window shopping continent for other non-European cultures. But whatever these leading nations of Europe and America are enjoying in terms of growth and development was achieved at the peril of non-European cultures.

Ajayi (2003) posits that, for reason of clarity in understanding globalization, it can be categorized into three major phases: 1870-1914, 1945-1980, and 1980 to date. The first phase, which was at the tail end of the 19th century and before the First World War, was the period of colonization and colonial domination of developing states of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Colonialism served as a veritable platform for the spreading of Western culture and values to the detriment or devaluation of the indigenous (local) cultures. The second phase was from the Second World War down to the period of decolonization in the late 1950s through the 60s to the 80s. This period represents the post-colonial era and the emergence of neo-colonialism in the developing states of Africa, Latin America and South East Asia. The third phase represents the period of the second

wave of democratization (Huntington (1991;1996; Schreder, 1995). Within the period, the democratic thesis gained momentum, as most developing states in Africa changed their systems of governance to Western liberal democracy.

Ajayi (2003) concludes, just like Devet (1993), Toyo (2000) and Ibrahim (2013), that the process of globalization started in small way in the 19th when capital moved from Europe to open up new areas in America and Australia, mostly in building of rail road systems and agriculture that would be central to the expansion of capitalism. But can “economic globalization” be effective without “political globalization”? The salient point to note is that no arm of globalization goes it all alone. They go together. Globalization is a complex web that is intricately woven around the global dominance of leading powers in the current global system. Due to the imposition of Western cultures and values, countries of the world come together under one umbrella (global village) for the purpose of trades and investments, economic transactions, bilateral relationships and interface of cultures, among others. It is facilitated by information and communication technology.

Devaluation of African Culture in a Globalised World

The spread of globalization has always evoked emotions. It is most often intertwined with power and privileges. The many cultural changes witnessed in today's world was brought about by people who seized the opportunity to finish the business that they started centuries ago. Europeans took full advantage of the advance in science and technology to perpetuate the ever-expanding cultural imperialism in other regions. This made some scholars see globalization as post-modernization, in which Western values have become dominant even if they operate within a global cultural context. There is nevertheless a paradox, if not outright contradiction, in Westernization and preservation of unique local cultures. Each culture has its unique personality. Fanning ignorance of this fact would mean ignoring cultural diversity as created by “God.”

In terms of culture, is globalization an opportunity to devalue non-European cultures? If globalization represents greater integration and or interconnection, would this overwhelm the world's cultural diversity? Does globalization encourage cultural homogenization, polarization or hybridization? These are perhaps the most important questions that can be asked when it comes to examining the effects of globalization on culture. An attempt at proffering answers to these question means understanding the underlying power dynamics involved in cultural changes globally since the thrust of the paper is on the devaluation of African culture by globalization. The weakening of culture is becoming synonymous with a decline of any meaningful social order (Castells; 2005).

Global historians/global expansionists disagree with African scholars who view globalization as an inescapable development gaining momentum due to the intensification of global interactions and the waning of importance of national

boundaries. Global expansionist believes that national economies, cultures and policies will integrate into a global network and that the dominance of local/national authority will diminish in favour of a homogenous global economy and culture (Giddens, 1996; Held; 2000). African scholars, described by Giddens (1996) as pessimist, challenge the dominance of capitalism. The perceived globalization as synonymous to Westernization and Americanization. They contend that cultural globalization will result in cultural dominance and supremacy, leading to the devaluation of weaker cultures, which Africa is currently experiencing.

The devaluation of weaker cultures, such as those of Africa, will inadvertently translate into the growth of universal cultures that would promote excessive consumption and dominance of the economic and information and technology powers of the world. Globalization has indeed impacted on certain morals that are rooted in major religions and cultures of the world, for example, the fast changing definition of marriage, where gays, lesbians and animals are being admitted into the new definition of marriage. Muzaffar (2002) and Kaul (2012) posit that the concepts of good and evil, right and wrong, individualism and pluralism, individual interaction with society and the very meaning of life are all twisted and corrupted by global capitalism, international markets, mass media and promotion of excessive consumption. Even some local languages and valuable traditions are on the verge of disappearing as a result of globalization. Global consumerism is now forming a homogeneous global culture, where indigenous cultures of the Global South are being replaced by Western cultures.

Social globalization (globalization) primarily attempts creating a global culture in which identities are amalgamated, thereby bringing a homogeneous culture throughout the world, which might help the local beliefs and cultural value to be universalized, rather than to be demolished. Kaul (2012), citing Castles (1996), argues thus:

On the contrary such a cultural invasion is a threat that causes serious problems for some conservative states by virtue of the fact that openness to foreign content can erode the traditional values and indigenous cultural identity. This overcoming of cultural experience reduces the socio-religious identity of a country... that globalization is really the globalization of modernity and modernity is the harbinger of identity.

Howes (1996), however, states that cultural identity is not likely to be easy prey for globalization. This is because identity is not merely some fragile communication psychic attachment but a considerable dimension of institutionalized social life in modernity. The understanding of what is called "identity" may not be universal, but just one particular modern way of socially organizing and regulating "cultural experiences." This negates the argument that globalization inevitably destroys identity (culture). The question to Howes (1996) is whether he is conversant with the phrase

“best global standards.” This phrase means the coagulating of the values and culture of the leading powers/states at the top of the social pyramid in a globalized world which they consider as construing the best global standards. The cultures and values of the indigenous people or those of the developing states are considered inferior and therefore devalued or “inferiorized.”

The posture of the leading states when it comes to the devaluation of Africa culture helps them maintain their privileged grip on the social, political and economies of African states. Mikali and Abdullah (2017) argue that:

In the process of international interactions there is an interaction of cultures and thus a borrowing and diffusion of cultures amongst nations. This is not unusual but, unusual and unfortunate is the domination of one culture over the other. In other words, globalization is the process that is detrimental to the cultural values and beliefs of devastated countries in Africa. This shows globalization has negative impacts on indigenous culture that would make the people behave outside their traditional orientation customs and beliefs

Globalization is not new; it has been in operation since the period of the trans-Atlantic trade (15th-19th centuries) and colonialism (1870s and 1900) to this present time. However, currently it is having new indexes and wearing a new cloak. The new cloak and the new boundaries globalization is exploring are demonization of African cultures and values. For example, the definition of marriage in Africa is under intense scrutiny – marriage is no longer a union between an adult male (man) and a female (woman), but between two consenting adults, which brings gays, lesbians and transgenders into the purview of marriage. This has become a subject of intense debate in Africa. Nigeria was threatened by the United States of America because of her refusal to acknowledge this foreign policy projection across Africa. The “clash of civilization” between African culture and the global culture is acknowledged by Achebe in his novel *Things Fall Apart*. It centres on the struggle of African culture in refusing to be devalued, demonized and considered inferior in all its ramification.

This perilous situation of African culture is captured by Babatunde and Ifedayo (2015) in the following words:

America continues to export her culture to all parts of the world with great impunity in attempt to dominate world society. This is evident in the alarming rate at which American culture is being exported to African countries with unrelenting force. The pretext of technological importation continues to be conduit for this cultural importation. The irony of the entire scenario of this cultural imperialism is that there is nothing in place to filter or differentiate the good from the bad, the moral from the immoral, and the fair from the unfair.

The leading European nations (the Western society) continue to use the platform of globalization to erode and subjugate African culture through cultural imperialism. They bombard Africa with Western films, Western music and Western television programmes, situating, demonizing and mocking African cultures to pursue their advocacy of change in culture.

In conclusion, the youth are the harbinger of change in any society, but in Africa, they continually have to struggle on whether to go with the global culture or stay with the devalued African culture. Oni (2005) argues that "Nigerian youths are rapidly losing touch with cultural values and this could be seen in the alien culture which they portray; their bizarre dressing, dancing, language and so on which invariably affect other aspects of social life."

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**PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TRADITIONS: THE TEXTILE
TECHNOLOGY PARADIGM**

By

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Abstract

Culture encompasses the various ways of life and interactions developed by a group of people as strategies for coping with the uniqueness of their environment. The benefits of culture are numerous, providing nations with vital advantages and positive stimuli to help retain their cultural heritage. However, globalization has placed many Nigerians in conflicting positions regarding their true cultural identity and has blurred cultural boundaries. Consequently, urgent and compelling actions are needed to enhance the methods available for preserving African cultural heritage and traditions, which are at risk of extinction. The textile technology paradigm offers veritable opportunities for immense exploration. Textiles serve as active or passive objects which convey information and can as well be regarded as billboards. Certain iconic textile designs function as intentional metaphors for various agendas, communicating specific meanings and providing additional avenues for exploration. This highlights the potential of the textile technology paradigm as an effective medium for preserving the cultural and traditional heritage of the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria, particularly through the *Agu-ulo and Ejirimara Adaeze* cultural motifs and symbols. In this context, the *Agu-ulo and Ejirimara Adaeze* motifs were explored to create culturally distinctive designs of clothing and apparel for the Igbo people. Consequently, the batik textile technique was employed, with the *Agu Ulo Batik* showcasing an adaptation of the *wall gecko motif*. This motif symbolizes speed, agility, adaptability, change, flexibility as well as cunningness and trickery within traditional Igbo culture. The Igbo people are known for their ability to adapt to various environments, making the *Agu Ulo Batik* a well-received development that serves as a traditional costume for cultural identification and preservation. The *Ejirimara Adaeze Batik* highlights significant elements of the regalia worn by a princess, including a crown, an eagle feather, a necklace of coral beads and other decorative features. Ladies adorned with a royal crown, an eagle feather, a horsewhip and coral beads represent the first daughter of an Igbo traditional ruler. It is recommended that efforts be intensified to preserve cultural identities through innovative

approaches within the textile technology paradigm. Furthermore, the government should develop targeted cultural policies and allocate funds to promote cultural preservation while establishing frameworks that focus on protecting indigenous cultures and traditions, allowing for adaptability in response to global dynamics.

Keywords: Preservation, Culture, Traditional Heritage, Paradigm, *Agulo*, *Ejirimara Adaeze*.

Introduction

Preservation of the essence of the nation's cultural heritage has become very necessary, especially in the face of the current wave of globalization. Without such preservation, the nation risks losing valuable traits associated with its culture and tradition, such as respect, hospitality, care for the extended family, dress code, hard work and accountability. This urgency is highlighted in Akanle's (2011) call for a timely recognition of the importance of positive cultural traits in fostering national and regional growth and development. Experiences demonstrate that the pathways to development in Nigeria are deeply rooted in the socio-cultural and political determination to effect changes. Various scholars, such as Olutayo and Akanle (2007), Shokpeka (2009) and Egwemi (2009), have argued that culture plays very significant roles in the growth, unity, integration, identity and overall development of a people or nation. Their studies indicate a strong relationship between culture, growth, progress, development and national integration. Consequently, there is the need to preserve the cultural heritage of the nation using both conventional and innovative methods within the textile technology paradigm. Furthermore, Akanle (2009) acknowledges the powerful roles cultures play in driving growth and development, whether in their traditional and isolated forms or when they are collectively embraced within a nation.

Culture and Its Definitions

Culture, along with its components and attributes, has been defined and analysed by numerous scholars from various perspectives. For example, Chukueggu (1998a) describes culture as the principles that facilitate the functioning of societal institutions, influenced by their academic and professional contexts. Despite this, research on culture has continued to grow. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 1997) defines culture as the collection of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social group. This definition encompasses not only art and literature but also lifestyles, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

Components of Culture

There are two aspects of culture, namely artefacts and social organization, often referred to as material and non-material culture or tangible and intangible culture. Material culture encompasses objects that humans create or use to support their ways of life. It includes architectural styles, clothing, various types of motifs, farming practices and hair designs. In contrast, non-material culture involves people's thoughts, beliefs, ideas, attitudes, verbal expressions, traditions, techniques, mores, values and similar elements (Achilike, 2016).

According to Akanle (2012), a strong connection must exist between tangible (material) culture and social (intangible) aspects of culture in any society for it to thrive. The social aspect of culture serves as the driving force behind material cultures and significantly influences the growth direction of a society. Some traditional motifs used in fabric design represent both material and non-material culture because they are derived from the physical or natural environment of the artists or community, yet they embody the ideas, beliefs and values unique to that specific group. For instance, to someone unfamiliar with the Igbo culture, a wooden gong may appear to be simply a carved piece of wood. However, for an Igbo person, it serves as a means of communication, with its sound—based on the number of strikes—signifying an emergency, an alarm for warfare, or a gathering announcement for people in a designated village square. Unfortunately, the progression of modernity, acculturation, the passage of time and the availability of alternative means of communication have negatively impacted the necessity and frequency of using these traditional methods in Igbo society. Therefore, it is essential to preserve these cultural symbols through textile technology and fabric designs. This preservation serves not only to maintain the cultural identity of the Igbo people but also to ensure that the utility and cultural significance of these symbols are transmitted to future generations.

Moreover, Kristin (2018) argues that ancient, luxurious textiles were used to convey information about cultural identity, rank, wealth, power or majesty. The patterns and designs of textiles played significant roles in the social and economic structures of communities in the past. Cultural heritage evolves from human activities and is preserved and transmitted through oral traditions or written forms across generations (Chukueggu and Onekpe, 2018; Arua et al., 2019). In the past, various forms of education and informal tools, such as proverbs (Adom, 2016), myths, folktales, folklores and taboos, were used to communicate the meanings, implications and moral lessons embedded in Igbo cultural symbols to younger generations in village squares. Unfortunately, these aspects of Igbo culture are gradually going into extinction. The paradigm of textile technology offers a promising means of cultural preservation.

The Textile Technology Paradigm

Textile technology involves the study of textile production, processing, and its relevance to everyday life. It integrates engineering principles with specialized knowledge of textile equipment and processes. This field focuses on applying scientific and engineering techniques to the design and management of all aspects of fibres, textiles, apparel, related products and machinery (SCERT, 2016). Textile technology encompasses both natural and synthetic materials, examines how these materials interact with machinery, and considers safety and health aspects, energy conservation, and waste and pollution management. Recent advancements in the textile industry and the fashion world have expanded research opportunities, driven by a growing demand to improve existing products and develop new ones.

An important aspect of textile technology is the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, which involves maintaining the non-material attributes of a society or group for future generations. These attributes include ideas, memories, knowledge, skills, creativity, spirituality, emotions and traditions. Textile designs can incorporate cultural symbols and motifs from various cultures, helping to sustain the significance and symbolism of these elements. Kristin (2018) notes that textiles can be seen as either active or passive objects that provide information about their wearers or carriers, acting as “billboards.” Certain iconic textile designs may symbolically represent social, economic, cultural or political agendas, with some designs reflecting traditional practices from various cultures. Cyril-Egware (2016) argues that textiles, as a mobile art form, can serve as an alternative medium for preserving the cultural heritage and environment of communities through clothing, decorative items and souvenirs.

Given these insights, the textile technology framework for preserving cultural and traditional heritage through the adaptation of Igbo cultural motifs on fabric is particularly relevant. This approach involves designing cultural symbols and motifs on fabrics as an effective means to preserve, promote and revive Igbo cultural symbols and their rich meanings. In this framework, the adaptation of Igbo cultural symbols on fabrics will utilise batik textile techniques. Batik is a resist-dyeing process where wax is applied to the fabric to prevent dye from penetrating certain areas, resulting in uncoloured spaces in the dyed material. This wax-resist technique can be repeatedly applied to create intricate, multicolour designs. The goal is to preserve, diversify and document the Igbo art by incorporating various Igbo cultural motifs, thereby fostering a sense of cultural identity through batik art and creating a distinctive design pool for the Igbo people.

Methodology

The research design employed in this study utilized a practice-led studio research approach, which has been recognized for its unique ability to generate knowledge and innovations through the processes and content of creative practice. As Smith and Dean

(2009) highlight, this approach not only complements other research methodologies but also stands apart in its depth and adaptability, allowing it to span various creative disciplines seamlessly. At its core, the practice-led approach consists of two interdependent components: a creative output and an accompanying text, often referred to as an exegesis. These components are not mere adjuncts; they are intricately linked, working together to address the research question effectively. This methodology empowers researchers to integrate their creative practices into their work, thereby legitimizing the insights they provide and reinforcing the research methods representative of their discipline.

In this study, the vibrant Igbo cultural symbols were skilfully transferred onto fabric through a meticulous waxing method. The process began with the waxed fabric being allowed to harden before it was immersed in a dye bath for a carefully timed period. Once removed, the fabric underwent oxidation to deepen its colour. It was then subjected to boiling water and gently agitated to remove the wax. Following this purification, the fabric was cleaned, laid out to dry, and finally pressed with a thickener to achieve a strikingly sharp appearance. This method not only showcases the beauty of Igbo culture but also exemplifies the effectiveness of the practice-led research approach in creative disciplines.

Pilot Study

In a study of this nature, conducting a pilot study was essential. The purpose of the pilot study was to identify potential issues and shortcomings in the research instruments and protocols before conducting the full study. This approach helped the research team become familiar with the procedures outlined in the protocol and facilitated decision-making between two competing study methods, such as choosing interviews over self-administered questionnaires. For this study, the pilot involved creating a one-metre batik fabric featuring *Agu-ulo* and *Ejirimara Adaeze* cultural symbols. These designed fabrics were then used to sew sample clothing.

Results and Discussion

Description of Studio Production Methods

The following processes and procedures were used to produce the practical studio work: materials such as dye, caustic soda, hydros, paraffin wax, dye bath, stencil paper, starch, and an iron were prepared. The studio production method began with tying and dyeing five yards of fabric. The fabric was manipulated and bound so that certain areas would resist the dye during the dyeing process. These dyed and undyed areas created unique textures and patterns on the cloth, forming the background designs.

The second stage involved cutting stencils featuring Igbo cultural symbols and transferring them onto the fabric using the waxing method. In the third stage, the waxed

fabric was submerged in the dye bath for the dyeing process. The next step was to remove the wax by dipping the fabric in a pot of boiling water and stirring until all the wax was completely removed. The final stage included drying, starching and ironing the fabric to achieve a sharp, finished look.

Development of Thumbnail Sketches

The development of thumbnail sketches stemmed from careful reflection and close observation of photographs from our surroundings events, and relevant issues. Pencil, ink and pen were used as mediums to create these sketches, which ultimately guided the production of the textile design.

These sketches serve as visual exercises in problem-solving and provide opportunities to experiment with new techniques and expressive possibilities. Additionally, rough sketches can be an effective tool for visual communication. Therefore, the preliminary thumbnail sketches presented below were created and utilized for the development of the cultural textile design in this research.

Figure 1:

Artist: Anyanwu, Chinwe

Title: *Thumbnail Sketches of Wall Gecko and Uli Designs*

Medium: Pen on Paper

Size: 30 x20cm

Year of Production: 2021



Figure 2:

Artist: Anyanwu, Chinwe

Title: *Thumbnail Sketches of Ejirimara Adaeze*

Medium: Pen on Paper

Size: 30 x20cm

Year of Production: 2021



Analysis of *Agu Ulo* (Wall gecko)



Plate 1:

Artist: Anyanwu, Chinwe

Title: *Agu Ulo*,

Medium: Batik Design

Size: 5 yards

Year of Production: 2021

The intricately designed pattern in the piece titled *Agu Ulo Batik* reflects the characteristics of the wall gecko, which symbolizes speed, agility, adaptability, change, flexibility, cleverness, and, in some contexts, trickery within traditional Igbo culture. The *Agu Ulo*, or wall gecko, holds significant cultural value for various groups and is often featured in contemporary cultural, artistic, and marketing contexts, such as logos or mascots.

In Igbo culture, the *Agu Ulo* represents adaptability and transformation. The Igbo people are renowned for their ability to adjust to any environment globally. As a result, the *Agu Ulo* motif in fabric design would be well-received and appreciated among the Igbo as traditional attire or uniforms for cultural identification. The *Agu Ulo* is a true master of adaptation, equipped with specialized claws that enable it to climb and access places that are challenging for other animals.

There is hardly a part of the world without the presence of the Igbo. Ajani and Onah (2016) note that a 1997 study conducted by the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research on migratory behaviour among various ethnic groups revealed that the Igbo are the most migratory among the over 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria. As they move from one location to another, they adapt to their new environments. Thus, the *Agu Ulo Batik* symbolizes the Igbo people's ability to adjust to diverse surroundings, much like the *Agu Ulo* (wall gecko) itself.

Analysis of *Ejirimara Adaeze*



Plate 2:

Artist: Anyanwu, Chinwe

Title: *Ejirimara Adaeze*

Medium: Batik Design

Size: 5 yards

Year of Production: 2021

The piece titled *Ejirimara Adaeze Batik* (Plate 2) features a batik design that incorporates motifs representing the *Ejirimara Adaeze* symbols. These motifs highlight the identity and significant elements of the regalia worn by the princess, which includes a crown, an eagle feather, a chain of coral beads and other decorative elements.

The crown worn by the *Adaeze* is a crucial part of the traditional ruler's regalia, symbolizing her status as the first daughter of the traditional ruler. This crown is seen as an extension of the traditional ruler's influence among his children. In Igbo culture, a lady adorned with the royal crown, an eagle feather, a horsewhip and coral beads is recognized as the first daughter of an Igbo traditional ruler. The horsewhip symbolizes the grace, prestige and strength of the princess, while the eagle feather reflects her father's excellence and the stringent standards expected of her. As the first daughter of an Igbo traditional ruler, she is required to uphold high moral standards and meet various societal expectations. The design of the royal crown itself is a striking combination of intricate elements.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary

Culture is a rich tapestry woven from the various modes of existence and interactions that a group of people develops in order to navigate the complexities of their environment. Within this framework, both tangible and intangible cultural elements emerge, enhancing and supporting one another. Among these elements are the vibrant cultural motifs and symbols from southeastern Nigeria, particularly the *Agu-ulo* (wall gecko) and *Ejirimara*

Adaeze, which play a crucial role in textile technology aimed at preserving the invaluable cultural and traditional heritage of the Igbo people.

In the realm of textile technology, the *Agu-ulo* and *Ejirimara Adaeze* motifs serve as inspiration for designing distinctive clothing and apparel that celebrate the identity of the Igbo community. Artisans utilize batik techniques to create stunning pieces that are not only beautiful but also deeply meaningful.

The *Ejirimara Adaeze Batik* stands out by showcasing essential aspects of a princess's regalia, including a crown, eagle feather, coral beads and other decorative elements. The crown symbolizes the connection to the traditional ruler, embodying the pride and status of the first daughter. Ladies who wear this royal crown, along with an eagle feather, horsewhip and coral beads, epitomize the grace and significance of an Igbo traditional ruler's first daughter. The horsewhip, in particular, represents her grace, prestige and strength—qualities that define the role of a princess in Igbo culture. Embracing these symbols allows celebrating and preserving the rich heritage of the Igbo people for future generations.

Conclusion

Culture represents a rich tapestry of ideas, practices, tools and institutions that humanity has developed to navigate the complexities of the environment. To achieve meaningful progress, it is crucial to consciously harness and preserve this cultural heritage in pursuit of societal goals, like community and national development.

We must actively seek and implement innovative strategies to safeguard our cultural and traditional legacies. The exploration of textile technology holds immense potential for this preservation, as clothing is an essential aspect of human life. Textile technologists have the unique ability to design garments that not only serve practical purposes but also convey important cultural messages that can drive development.

Agulo and *Ejirimara Adaeze* Batiks, brilliantly crafted pieces, are more than just clothing—they are vital representations of the Igbo people's cultural identity. They exemplify how traditions can adapt and thrive, illustrating the importance of culture in connecting humans, regardless of where they are in the world.

Recommendations

Given the importance of cultural and traditional heritage in shaping identities and the significant threats posed by globalization, it is essential to prioritize its preservation. To this end, the following are recommended:

- **Innovative Approaches to Cultural Preservation:** Governments should actively support and champion creative strategies aimed at preserving cultural heritage. By encouraging innovative methods, humans can safeguard their unique identities for future generations.

- Targeted Cultural Policies and Funding: To effectively protect our rich cultural and traditional heritage from the erosion caused by globalization, governments and cultural institutions must implement focused policies and allocate dedicated funding. These cultural frameworks should strive to preserve indigenous cultures and traditions while allowing for mindful adaptations to global influences.
- Leveraging Media for Cultural Visibility: Public broadcasting has the power to significantly enhance cultural expression. By producing and sharing content that highlights the distinct cultures and traditions of communities, media outlets can ensure that local cultures remain vibrant, visible and relevant in an increasingly globalized world.

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SECTION I

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

70

**A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF STATE VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA: THE
EXPERIENCE OF THE ORASHI PEOPLE**

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Introduction

The Orashi people, an ethnic minority group in Nigeria, have faced persistent state violence across colonial, post-colonial and contemporary periods. This study examines the historical trajectory of state violence against the Orashi people, highlighting the continuities and discontinuities in the forms and patterns of violence. During the colonial period, the British colonial administration employed coercive measures to assert control over the Orashi people, including torture, imprisonment, forced labour, land expropriation and cultural suppression. Those who resisted colonial penetration encountered gunboat diplomacy and the worst form of violence expressed in the imprisonment of Nworisa of Ogbele, Akalisuo Ugusha of Engenni and others.

Following independence in 1960, the Nigerian State and the Biafran soldiers continued to perpetrate violence against the Orashi people, particularly during the Nigeria Civil War (1967-1970). The Orashi people were subjected to aerial bombardments, massacres and forced displacement. In recent years, the Orashi have faced renewed state violence, including extrajudicial killings, torture and arbitrary detention. The Nigerian military has been accused of committing human rights abuses in the region, particularly in the context of the Niger Delta insurgency and oil-related conflicts. Oil companies, including Shell, Total Energies and Agip, have perpetrated violence against the Orashi people. They have employed the Nigerian State police and army to suppress Orashi resistance to oil extraction and environmental degradation. Security forces have committed human rights abuses, including killings, torture and arbitrary detention. Oil companies have also destroyed Orashi communities and farmlands with impunity because they were/are backed up by the specialists of warfare. The violence has resulted in significant human suffering, environmental degradation and economic displacement. The Orashi people have continued to demand justice and compensation for the harm inflicted upon them. This discourse argues that state violence against the Orashi people

has been a persistent feature of their history, from colonialism to the present day. The Orashi experience highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of state violence and its impacts on marginalized communities.

Explication of Concepts

For the purpose of contextual clarity, certain concepts need to be explained to aid the understanding of this study.

Origin of the State

In the beginning of life, there was no society, State or social organization that regulated the activities of men. This was the time the Holy Bible recorded that. in those days, there was no king but every man did that which was right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). According to the Bible, life was chaotic, amoebic and disorderly. Life was individualistic, and everyone looked up to his survival. In this period, man was driven by pursuit of his personal happiness and whatever might stand against the satisfaction of his self-interest kept him always on the move for competition, feud and warfare and without an iota of pity, compassion and morality.

In this early stage of life, the survival of the fittest played out conspicuously. Power was as a result of physiology. The strongest and the powerful feasted on the weak and the powerless, and man had the power to direct his own life and the lives of others around him. This early stage was called the stage of nature. In this stage, man was unable to create interaction, association or community, in Hobbes' state of nature. Hobbes' graphic description of the state of nature is summed up in this excerpt:

In such condition, there is no place for industry, because the fruit therefore is uncertain and consequently no culture on the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instrument for moving and removing, such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time, no arts, no letters, no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty brutish and short.

This state of nature got people tired, depressed and despondent of the state of uncertainty and the disorderliness that prevailed in the earliest time of life. According to Thomas Hobbes, in his book *The Leviathan*, unless men are placed on check by a superior power, men are bound to continue in feud and irrationality. The tiresomeness of men in the state of nature called for the formation of an organization called the state, where all men would submit to one man or group of men who alone were to have the power to enforce rules, keep order and punish offenders who breached the peace of all. The state

therefore became the common power which could take the multitude of wills previously active in individuals (Banigo, 2006).

According to Hecker, "the state of nature eventually proved to be either impossible or undesirable to maintain. Therefore, at a specific time the inhabitants of a natural state came together and consequently agreed to set up social and political institution. This agreement is called a social contract or a covenant or, sometimes, a social compact. It marked the beginning of a social and political authority. For Hobbes, "the only way to erect such a common power as may be able to defend them (i.e. men) from invasion of foreigners and injuries of one another...is to confer all their power and strength upon one man or upon assembly of men." The individual submitted their natural rights and the state assumed them to be the custodian of their rights, duties and social justice. They declared, "I authorize and declare and give up my right of governing myself to this manor, to this assembly to men, on this condition that thou give the right to him and authorize all his actions like manner. This done, the multitude, so united in one person called commonwealth." This philosophy made the state to become the neutral coordinator and protector of common good and happiness of all. This was the basis of the social contract and also the origin of the state. This postulation emanates from the liberal view of the state.

Theoretical Matrix

According to Ekekwe (1986), from the liberal conceptualization of the state, the state is neutral; it merely balances things between competing elite groups. According to this view, there is no ruling class as such in society; therefore, state power is not exercised in favour of any such group. Alapiki (2015) presents the liberal traditional view of the state as a public force, which uses its monopoly of coercive force to police the society, maintain law and order, and always act in the public interest or guides society impartially. Orugbani (2005) opines that, from the bourgeois political thought, the state is a moral and collective body and, as a neutral body, it is impartial to all within its fold. This bourgeois conception of the state conceals the true nature of the state and its class character and its economic base.

The Marxian school strongly disagrees with the above position of the liberal traditional view of the state, arguing that the state is not an umpire that balances things between competing interests and plural groups. Rather, the state constitutes the instrument of the ruling class because it maintains order in favour of the dominant classes. The state functions to preserve the status quo (Alapiki, 2015). Contrary to the bourgeois justification, the state is an instrument of the powerful, that is the capitalist, to protect themselves and their wealth. The state is purely for class dominance and control of property accumulation bid. Karl Marx traced the origin of the state to the division of labour and the need to contain social conflict arising from the intense struggles between

classes in order to keep such conflicts, competitions and struggles within the bound of orders (Jaja, n.d.). It is this condition that gave the role and functions of the state the false semblance of neutrality (its autonomy) and umpire that balances things for public interest.

Frederick Engels in his magisterial book *The origin of the family, private property and the state* (1978), opines that:

Because the state arose from the need to hold class antagonism in check but because it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. Thus, the state of antiquity was above all the state of the slave owners for the purpose of holding down the slaves, as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding the peasant serfs and bondmen and the modern representative state is the instrument of wage labour by capital.

Banigo (2006), Adeleja (2016) and other Marxists have posited that the state is not an umpire, nor is it an immanent creation of the divine but emanated from a historical and political trajectory of man's conflictual social existence that defended the interest of the exploiters against the exploited and established hegemony of one class over another. The state maintains a public force and possesses the instrument of coercion, collect taxes and possesses a territory. According to Marx and Engels (1971), the executives of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie. Those who are disadvantaged by the State orchestrated social order, particularly the distribution of the commonwealth, have a strong desire to change the status quo and midwife a new social order where everyone would be catered for. This causes the high degree of state repression. From the analysis of Ake (1981), repression is a direct result of the need to curb the inevitable demand of the exploited class for the redistribution of their commonwealth. The existence of a lopsided state structure that favours only the economically and politically privileged class and the inevitability of social change that is geared towards emancipation and liquidation of exploitation is what set the tone of politics and define the use of coercion in Nigerian society.

Violence

Violence is the use of physical force or power, actual or threatened, against oneself, another person or a group, that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, or deprivation. Violence is perhaps one of the challenging issues in contemporary times. There is no safe haven on this earth; violence or terrorism has permeated everywhere. The global nature of violence has made every citizen to be

equally susceptible and vulnerable. The essence of the use of violence is to intimidate government or society in pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological. Institutional violence is most common in Nigeria, where the state with the monopoly of violence, uses the police, army and paramilitary personnel to bully, intimidate and coerce the citizens. This kind of violence has become a norm in Nigeria. When violence becomes a norm in society, it means it has been glorified as an acceptable means of resolving conflict or achieving goals. When violence is normalized, tolerated and encouraged in a society without the realization of the probable backlash, one finds the absence of the rule of law as the dominant guiding principles of governance. In such a circumstance, social institutions are likely to be in a state of near comatose. When this eventually happens, those who are in charge of the state power govern in a ruthless and reckless manner (Alapiki, 2015), hence the enthronement of the culture of violence at all strata of government. The consequences of the culture of violence are death, damage of property, high rate of crimes, trauma, and mental and health deterioration.

Orashi Region

The Orashi Region is made up of four local government areas: Abua/Odual, Ahoada East, Ahoada West and Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni. The study area is criss-crossed by a maze of estuaries, rivers, creeks and rivulets, and some of these water bodies empty their waters into the Atlantic Ocean and River Niger. Prominent among these rivers are Sombreiro and Orashi Rivers. The environmental features have great implications for the socio-economic and political history of the Orashi Region. The prominent occupation of the people is agriculture, with little fishing and trading playing only subsidiary roles. Trading became prominent when the environmental endowments could not satisfy the expanding population; the need for trading relations became the nexus which enabled traders to access the environmental products of their near and distant neighbours.

The Colonial State Violence

Colonialism is the outward drive to build empires and correct certain contradictions that bedevilled capitalism, which warranted the transplant of capitalism to a new environment in which the process of accumulation could proceed apace (Ake, 1981). This movement instigated Western imperialism, which took different stages –the pillage of Africa's natural resources, trade and colonization. The colonial state used all counteracting forces to establish colonialism in Africa. Colonialism was a class-centred measure designed by the capitalist class in Europe in control of state power to extract surplus from the alien peoples for the enrichment of members of their class (Orugbani, 2005). The overall objective of the colonial state was to integrate Africa into the world capitalist system for rapacious accumulation of wealth. To achieve this, the substructure and the superstructure were in the hands of the colonial officials who represented the European

State. Profitable trade and the establishment of stability for exploitation required the use of bayonets and cannons to consummate the aim of colonial imperialism (Fanon, 1980).

According to Osaih (2020), the imposition and consolidation of colonialism in Africa was made possible by conquest. The conquest was military, entailing campaigns and expeditions, that is the so-called wars of pacification. The people of Africa were cowed by the indiscriminate use of violence, bloodshed, vigilantism and gunboat diplomacy. The imperialists had followed Hilaire Bolloc's military logic: "whatever happens, we have got the ... gun and they have not." Tamuno (1978) notes that coercion and diplomacy were used to establish, expand and consolidate their colonial control over Southern Nigeria. Fanon (1967) claims that colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasonable faculties; it is violence in its natural state. Many scholars of the Marxist school have opined that the power of colonial state was absolute, arbitrary, hegemonic, aggressive, authoritarian, crude, destructive, disempowering, repressive and oppressive (Fanon, 1989; Ake, 1996; Adeleja, 2006; Obari, 2013; Obulor, 2015; Alapiki, 2015; Osaih, 2020).

Naanan (2015) posits that the creation of British socio-economic policies in Nigeria was not for nation-building and the establishment of a modern economy; it was purely for resource exploitation. According to Orugbani (2005), the socio-economic policies of the imperialist ruling class in control of state power in Nigeria was to direct state policy for their benefit; this explains why industrialization beyond the extractive industry was discouraged. Colonialism allowed crumbs which were by-products of exploitations (Osaih, 2020). The modicum of social services provided was the barest needed to facilitate the extraction of surplus for the interest of alien bourgeois class (Orugbani, 2005). The colonial state used force to compel the Nigerian people to conformity, exploited free labour and expanded the wealth of the home government through compulsory taxes and servitude; overturned and abused the very fundamentals of Western standard of democracy, justice and due process in their frantic bid to construct a Nigerian State (Banigo, 2008).

Alapiki (2015) opined that taxes and forced labour were other forms of state oppression. All these generated developments for Europe and fostered underdevelopment for the colonized. The colonial state used violence to establish, expand and consolidate colonialism and deployed violence to maintain itself in power. These were to enable the colonialists to continuously exploit the resources of the peripheral nations and protect the interest of merchant capital. The colonial state elevated the use of violence to the level of a principle in government. The colonialism was basically forceful; policies were dictated and implemented by the avowed means of violence and laws and orders were sustained by state violence (Obulor, 2015). The state of violence masterminded indiscriminately by the colonial state in the Niger Delta, in

particular, and Nigeria, as a whole, elicited the reactions of the indigenous patriots and nationalists. It was the defence of the Nigerian patriots over their people and the resources that made heroes of the likes of Jaja of Opobo, Nana Olomu of Itsekiri, Nwabuzi Iyogolo of Igwashi-Uku, King Koko of Nembe Brass, Ovonranmwun Nogbaisi of Benin, King Ibani Chuka of Okrika, King William Dappa Pepple of Bonny, King Nworisa of Ogbele, Akalisuo Ugusha of Engenni, Chief Obuge Egiom of Abua and host of other distinguished leaders (Ogbogbo, 2018; Osaih, 2020).

Those who vehemently resisted this colonial state violence experienced severe punishment, dethronement, imprisonment, deprivation and banishment. The Oba of Benin was banished to Calabar in 1897; King Jaja of Opobo was kidnapped and deported to West Indies in 1887; Nana Olumo of Itsekiri was banished to Fernando Po in 1894; King Koko died prematurely of British pressures; William Dappa of Bonny was exiled in 1854; Ibanichuka of Okrika in 1896; Chief Obuge was dethroned in 1897; King Nworisa of Ogbele was deported to Degema, where he died in 1899; while Akalisuo Ugusha of Egenni was deported to Calabar and later to the Canary Island, where he suffered for several years of hard labour and imprisonment. Some Ekpeye villages that resisted the expeditionary forces of Captain Sawyer in 1902 suffered horrible devastation. Many houses were burnt and many people were heavily tortured (Enemugwen and Ediyekio, 2002; Osaih, 2020).

In the Engenni axis, Akalisuo and his warriors who resisted the colonialists were greatly tortured. Akalisuo was exiled and imprisoned. In the Ogba axis, Olomu Nwa Ajie was flogged and tortured mercilessly and left half dead. The confrontation Obrikom warriors gave to the colonial invaders led to why the Obrikom and Obloko villages were set ablaze, which finally led to the breaking of weapons and the people of Obrikom and Obloko submitted to the force of European military technology. Otari, the seat of power in Abua, was razed and Chief Obuge, who engaged the British troops on a fight, was dethroned. Okwu Ogida, an accomplice to British colonial rule, was asked by Captain Sawyer to recover all the guns in Abua. All the Abua warriors who resisted the British contingents took to their heels while others who were captured were shipped to Port Harcourt for force labour (Osaih, 2020). King Nworisa of Ogele faced the wrath of the British majesty due to his military and religious attacks, which finally landed him in Calabar for imprisonment.

According to Ake (1991), colonialism, which was the arbitrary seizure of territory and resources of the colonized and a concerted assault on their history and culture, was obliged to rely predominantly on force. In the view of Efemini (2010, p. 14) colonial state in Nigeria was not democratic but authoritarian, externally oriented, coercive and oppressive. The colonial state precluded all democratic processes and avenues for redress of native grievances. The violent nature of colonialism made the colonial state to lack legitimacy; it concentrated overriding power in itself. It also created a violent society

contrary to the civilizing mission thesis by the colonialists. In all, the colonial state was an instrument of oppression, exploitation, disempowerment and violence, and it gave no attention to the development of Nigeria, including the Orashi Region.

Post-Colonial State Violence

Nkrumah (1970) opines that the end of colonialism was the establishment of a history of a developed state machine and a veneer of parliamentary democracy concealing a coercive state run by an inheritance elite with practically unlimited power; indoctrinated with Western values mainly to maintain the social order mapped out for it in the world system and to continuously serve the socio-economic interest of the metropolitan state. Ake (1981) asserts that colonial institutions were not decolonized, as the new elite did not enjoy the freedom to fabricate new institutions from the scratch. The mentality of the post-colonial state, as reflected in the federal government-owned *Morning Post*, in its editorial of April 13, 1962, was “we shall rule with the same efficiency with which the British governed.” The post-colonial state controlled by the bourgeois class was destitute of economic power that was prevalent with the European bourgeoisie. This poverty of economic strength made them to engage in ceaseless inter/intra class struggles to strengthen their material base, which plunged the fledgling nation into long and vicious political competition and instability. The intensity of power struggle was grossly an aberration and the absence of an effective social institution to mediate socio-political conflicts made the political terrain to be vitiated by warfare. Political competitions assumed the character of warfare. The culture of the colonialists which the political elite inherited from the colonial mentors paved the way for the ascendancy of the masters of violence (the armed forces or the veteran of warfare) (Ake, 1996).

The emergence of military rule was the biggest setback to the growth of democracy. Military rule is the archetype of leadership by impunity, aberration and extremity. The culture of violence became the dominant political culture of military politics. Ake (1996) avers that the method of the military is violent aggression, which exposed all Nigerians to all assault of violence and the vulnerability of harassment; the abuse of fundamental human rights was high in military junta. This mentality of violence culminated in long and vicious years of civil war that claimed the lives of millions. The long years of military rule in Nigeria (1966-1979) and 1983-1999), which lasted one year away from three decades, institutionalized the culture of violence.

In the view of Alapiki (2015), military rule installed the culture of terrorism as the basic feature of political governance. Culture is a way of life of a people; the dominant political culture in governance has great effect on the rest of society. The process of political socialization can only inculcate the values and principles of the dominant culture. Military tradition in governance was conducted with the mentality of “war.” such that even the programme of re-orientation of the citizenry for orderly public conduct was

called “War against Indiscipline.” The politicians, who have worked closely with the military and imbibed the military culture of governance, continue to exhibit the culture of impunity. The militarization of the social life for almost 29 years largely accounts for this.

During the military regimes, people were arbitrarily detained and tortured without reasons. Military regimes unleashed terror, crushing dissent with iron fists. Torture chambers echoed with screams; prisoners were subjected to inhumane treatments. Imprisonment without trial was commonplace; innocent lives were ruined without questions. Forced disappearances left families searching, never knowing their loved ones’ fate. Military dictators, especially the late Sani Abacha ruled with anarchy, disregarding human rights and dignity. Prisoners were subjected to physical and psychological torture, leaving lasting scars. Military regimes silenced opposition, shutting down free speech and independent media. Dissidents were hunted, forced into exile or hiding, their lives forever changed. The rule of law was disregarded; military might was used to maintain power and control. Human rights abuses were rampant, leaving deep wounds that still linger until today.

Examples of State Violence against the Orashi people

The Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970

During the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), the Orashi people were subjected to inhuman and brutal treatment in a war they knew nothing about. Some of the innocent Orashi people were branded saboteurs and executed. Nti from Erema in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni was executed by Nigerian soldiers. A man from Omoku having been labelled “sabo” was given a basin of water by the Biafran soldiers to drink when he requested water to drink to justify that he was a saboteur. Connotatively, being given water to drink is a proverb in Ogba community which means to swear to a deity to justify one’s innocence. The man, under compulsion, drank and the water was coming out of his nostrils (Interaction with Orji, 7/12/2024). Oji Oduma from Engenni was killed during the war. Captain Dennis, an Ijo man stationed at Akabuka, killed many civilian populations in Akabuka and its environs. Captain Udela, a Hausa man stationed at Idu and Commander Adekunle were also terrors to those termed as saboteurs. The Ogba people were brutally murdered, houses were burnt, and women were beaten and sexually molested and violated. Others were lynched and disabled. Beautiful women became compulsory servile cook for the soldiers. Many of them were forcefully married against their wishes.

Elechi Amadi (1973, pp. 172-174), has this to say about Ahoada Division:

Ahoada was still a battleground... At Obrikom fierce battles were raging... Thousands of refugees under my care... Controlling thousands of refugees who streamed in from liberated areas was the hardest part of my job. I

had never seen so much suffering in my life. Intense suffering rendered people stupid, desperate, hopeless. Their problems were partly emotional, partly physical; it was not always easy to know which outweighed the other.... Your problems will soon end. I am too your Divisional Officer and I represent the Federal and Rivers State Governments. Your problems are many, but we shall tackle them one by one. Immediately there would be a flood of complaints: "I have lost my children." "I have lost my wife." "My mother is dying in the bush." "My father is rotting unburied." "I am sick." "I am dying of hunger." "My daughter has been raped and abducted." "Soldiers are occupying my house." The intensity of the suffering made women and young girls to give themselves to the sex-starved soldiers for food and security or to run away from intolerable starvation and extreme poverty to enable them survive the war. Che Ibegura was arrested and detained by the Biafran soldiers to be executed based on the petition of local Egni rivals.

After fifteen months of his incarceration, he was released in 1968 by a mild-mannered Biafran soldiers, Major Ihenacho, who said the allegation against Che was baseless and frivolous (Oriki, 2012; Interaction with Ibegura, 8/9/2013). Che Ibegura was arrested again at the tail end of civil war in April 1969 by federal troops and flown in a plane to Kirikiri Maximum Security Prison, Lagos under the allegation of his old foes that he was running a militia group instead of a civil defence. He regained his freedom in March 1970, after eleven months of imprisonment and suffering.

Mr Cooke from Okarki, Fara Baynes of Mbiama and Ekomoso Jackson off Kunusha died in the war (Osugbo, 2007). At Egbema, Obrikom, Omoku, Ogbidi, etc., there was serious gun battle between the both divide. My informant said:

Men and women ran to the thick forest to hide. Many dug the ground to escape from flying bullets from planes; no food, no salt, people were killed. The Ndoni community lost their children and the soldiers raped women. Nobody should pray for war to happen again; it was a horrible situation. What a heavy history. (Okwosah, 11/10/2013).

In September 1998, Total Fina Elf, now called Total Energies, invited the Nigerian Army to harass and arrest indigenes of Egi in the Ogba community who expressed their grievances through peaceful protests over the lackadaisical attitude of the oil company to fulfil the part of the bargain of corporate social responsibilities enshrined in the memorandum of understanding to the Egi communities and its antics not to release an Environmental Impact Assessment study of the Obite Gas Plant Project.

On 27th October, 1989, the Oboburu Youths were embittered about the incessant environmental hazards coupled with the indiscriminate sitting of Total E & P Nigeria Limited (now Total Energies) project at the heart of the town. After several negotiations

to relocate the project to safer environment to avoid deafening noises and environmental nuisance, the plea fell on deaf ears of the oil company. Jerry-Chuku, a vocal and concerned youth, observed that “if a blowout that occurred at a well several kilometres away could seriously threaten lives at Oboburu, can you imagine what happen if such an incident should occur right in the heart of the villages (*The Tide*, October 25, 1989). In a press conference, Jerry-Chuku pointed out that:

We do not want to stop them from working because we know that oil is the mainstay of the country's economy. The point we were making was to make them realize that it was hazardous to drill in the heart of the village. We are not saying they should stop drilling for oil in Oboburu. After all, they have 17 successful and viable wells in Oboburu since 1963 without a word from the people. What we are saying is that the well is located too dangerously close to residential houses, that the well should be moved away to a safer distance and that if after all the pleadings, Elf insists on drilling at the present site, then it relocate the entire community.... A situation where a group of persons or community would be sacrificed in the altar of oil prospecting was not in the interest of the nation.

The Oboburu youths collectively confronted oil workers and their policemen with simple demonstration, leading to work stoppage. Elf and the government (birds of a feather) responded militarily. By October 27, 1989, a Black Maria full of over 400 armed policemen, invaded the peace-loving community and started mass arrest (Clever, 2012). Those arrested, tear-gased, detained and flogged were Bob Agi (Bob Canter), Clever Sunday Dibia, Elekwachi Sunday Nwobi, John Nwobi, Jeremiah Chuku (the oldest person in Oboburu as of the time of the event), London Allen, Jonathan Chuku, Sunday Edegbe, Kenneth Avra, Okwudi Chukwu, Levi Okariki, Shadrack Chuku and many more (Ibid.). The detainees were released from court after much rigorous processes and consolidated understanding between Oboburu community and the oil company.

Another state-inflicted violence was unleashed in Ogbogu by the police. It was a period where the police practised whatever training they had acquired. Nnimmo Bassey (2009) said that the Egi appeared to be in a state of warfare as Ogbogu (an immediate neighbour to Obite) was “raided again” and the giant oil company, Elf, was indicted in this case of oppression. On 28th March 1997, Mrs Ugochukwu Agi, Marinho Okiridu and Uche Azuma were arrested, tortured, and detained at the Ahoada Divisional Police Headquarters while Mr Kenny Osi (Youth leader of Akabuka) was also arrested and detained at Omoku Police Station (Uche, 9/7/2014).

In 1994, The Nigeria Police unleashed terror and pain on the Obagi community; persons were maimed, lives were lost and property worth billions of naira were destroyed. One Mr Ozuruoke was stabbed with a dagger by a Mobile Policeman; Okwudili Ajie (15 years old) was shot on both legs; King Ekiti (15 years old) was hit on the right leg; and Miss

Gladys Orike (14 years old) was shot. Mrs Patience Chibor (20 years old), who was four months pregnant, was also shot. The reason for this repression was that the workers of Eden Erectors (a Sub-contractor of Elf) indiscriminately fired oil workers of Ogbogu without payoff. Barrister Ikiri Joe declared that Ogba, a peace-loving community was besieged: "It is as though the whole of Ogba is besieged by military as if there is a state of war." Due to this wanton repression, the Egi elite and ERA demanded total demilitarization of Egni land, equitable labour relations with her staff and respect of people's right to life and dignity (Nnimmo, 2009).

Conclusion

Nigeria state was a project of British colonialism/capitalism aimed at serving the British commercial interest. The colonial state was a failure in state-building project and the state that emerged after the demise of colonialism was anti-people's welfare and violent-ridden. It was manipulated to serve the interest of the colonizer and the new elite indoctrinated in the culture of violence and exploitation. This is the type of politics of violence that has prevailed in Nigeria since independence. The Orashi people have faced decades of violence and human rights abuses perpetrated by oil companies and facilitated by the Nigerian state. This violence has resulted in significant human suffering, environmental degradation and economic displacement. The Nigerian government and oil companies must take immediate action to address the human rights abuses and environmental damage inflicted upon the Orashi people, and work towards providing justice, compensation and reparations to affected communities. Oil companies and the Nigerian State should be held accountable for human rights abuses. The Nigerian State and its security sector should be reformed to be people-oriented to prevent further abuses of ordinary citizens' rights.

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71**OGBA AND HER NEIGHBOURS: A PRE-COLONIAL HISTORY OF
CONCORD AND DISCORD****By****Osaih Rufus**

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Introduction

The Ogba people have always had continuous interactions with their neighbours of Ekpeye, Ikwerre, Engenni, Obua/Odual and the Kalabari people from the precolonial times to the present. The environment which is a God-given gift has helped man to eke out a living. Man is deficient without the environment. Environmental science has greatly demonstrated that the environment is neither an irrelevant backdrop nor an unaltered determinant of human activities (Zezeza, 1993, p. 25), and this symbiotic relationship between man and his environment has altered both society and the environment. The environment has a great influence on the way people dress, on the food people eat, the occupation of the people and the types of crops they cultivate. The creeks and the deltas have produced canoe-making, salt-production and a fishing economy. Likewise, the forest region has produced hunters and agriculturists.

According to Ikime (1968, p. 1), the environment determines the mode of life of people. This has made the Itsekeri people, for instance, to be primarily fishermen due to the abundance of three large rivers, like Benue, Escravos and Forcados, with a dense network of creeks. It is the environment that determines the emergence of local economy. It is when the domestic economy within a given geographical region could not satisfy local needs that there the urge for regional interaction to remedy the environmental impediments and insufficiencies. This is because no society has reached the stage of autarchy, where people and society need no help from others. No society is an island.

As revealed by the study of economic history, intergroup relations rests on the axiom that economic factor is the primary reason for intergroup relations. The literature on Interdependence Theory states that social relations in the Niger Delta hinged on interdependence. The primary and secondary sources utilized in this study revealed that no society, no matter how developed, is satisfied that it will not need to associate and interact with others. This insufficiency in human history is the reason for multifaceted and complex interactions. The study further revealed that these interactions led to mutual

exchanges of economic products, which was accompanied by contacts of polities, cultures, ideas, religions and philosophies. Scholarly findings have confirmed that these inter-communal and regional interactions were established to actualize basic economic needs of people. However, these interactions did not yield only peace and concord but also discord, confrontation and conflict and were centred on military struggles to gain control of trade, trade routes and economic resources which resulted in freedom, mutual distrust, disharmony and disruption of economic activities. This study, therefore, recommend harmonious and peaceful intergroup relations hinged on the "live and let live" ideology.

Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted for this study is historical materialism, otherwise called the materialist conception of history, which posits that economy is the determinant (base or substructure) and point of departure for the explanation of social life and helps in the understanding of the societal culture (Ake, 1981, p. 1). The economy is a cause of conflict and war due to the competition for scarce resources. For the continuous survival of man from one generation to another man needs to fulfil one of the most fundamental needs (economic need). This accounted for engagement of production and intergroup relations between Ogba and her neighbours. The agricultural resources of Ogba and the riverine products of the coastal principalities caused the reasons for inter-communal and interregional interactions. To sustain commercial interests, Ogba interacted peacefully with her neighbours of the Ekpeye, Ikwerre, Engenni, Obua/Odual, Egbema and Ndoni communities. However, the case was different with Aboh, whose confrontational and overbearing stance created the room for warfare in 1895, leading to Ogba's independence.

Clarification of terms

Ogba People and Communities

The area under study is part of the northern fringes of the Niger Delta in Rivers State. The area is bounded on the north by the Egbema, Ndoni and Oguta communities of Imo State and Rivers State. In the north east are found the Awara and Asa communities of Abia State; while the Ekpeye and the Ikwerre are found in the southern part, and the Ijo and the Aboh people on the west. Ogba land is divided by minor creeks and two main rivers, namely Sombreiro and Orashi. These rivers and rivulets form part of the tributaries of River Niger. This drainage system, which emanates from the north ultimately empties southwards into the Atlantic Ocean. Sombreiro and Orashi served as migratory, trade routes, communication, and carrier of trade and idea in the past more than they do in modern times (Osaih, 2019, p. 92). Alagoa and Kpone (2002, p.177) assert that the Ogba

and the Ekpeye had trade contacts with the Nembe, Kalabari and Bonny, Ijaw groups through Orashi and Sombreiro Rivers.

Ogba occupies an area of about 924 square kilometres. The area has two main climatic seasons, namely dry and wet seasons, which affect the vegetation and occupation of the people. The Ogba clan is grouped into Egni, Igburu and Usomini. These names derived from the material and physical surroundings of the topography occupied by each group. Egni signifies the dry land remote from rivers and creeks, with a sedentary culture in the finest region which is predominantly agriculturally-based. Igburu means the marshy land close to the banks of Sombreiro River on the eastern border. Usomini is reminiscent of its appellation, dwellers of the bank of Orashi River. There are forty (40) towns and villages in Ogbaland. There are seventeen (17) villages in Egni, fifteen (15) in Igburu and eight (8) in Usomini. The people are involved in agriculture, trading, fishing, palm-wine tapping, wood carving, mat-making and clay-making. The 2006 population census estimated 345,104 for the area. The language of the Ogba people is Ogba, with dialectal variations due to intergroup relations and diffused environment.

Akalaka was the ancestral progenitor of Ogba. Ekpeye was the brother of Ogba. Akalaka left Benin because of the misrule of the Oba and settled at Ahiahu and left Ahiahu to Obigwe (a safe haven) after the Mbaeki tragedy. In the pre-colonial times, they settled and appreciated their daily socio-cultural, economic and political activities. In 1901, the Ogba people were conquered by the British and brought under Ahoada Division in Owerri Province. In 1967, following the creation of twelve states, they were under Ahoada Local Government. In 1991, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babaginda created Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area (Osaih, et al. 2020, p. 17). Due to crude oil, Ogba has become a cosmopolitan city thronged by people of different cultures.

The Ogba people are peace-loving and orderly, which made them to establish a long-standing relations of concord with their coastal hinterland neighbours – Ikwerre, Aboh, Awara, Asa, Oguta, Ndoni, Egbema, Ekpeye, Ijo and Engenni. This interaction of concord was hinged on interdependence (Osaih et al. 2019, p. 93). Jones (1965, p. 13) avers that neither the Eastern Delta people nor their neighbours were self-sufficient in their economy. No community was abundantly rich not to associate with others. This insufficiency led to contact and interaction that took the forms of trade, diplomacy, inter-marriage, migration, cultural management of trade routes and wars (Osaih, 2020, p. 59). Wars were basically on the basis of either defence of reprisal to put up bold confrontation against imperialists and aggressors and to retaliate or revenge ordeal meted out to them by assailants. It was this incursion that led to the name Ogba, meaning protective covering of wooden door to bar invaders.

History

History is a Greek word called *historie*, which means investigation or inquiry. History is the study of man through the evidence of his past actions (Alagoa, 1978, p. 12). History is an exploration into the past actions of man in order to know what happened, why and when it happened, and its impact on society. History is the study of past human experiences, events and cultures. When the historian turns to the past through critical investigation or research, he or she believes that the past has a nexus with the present and the past and the present together provides a basis for forecasting the future (Okpeh, 2023, p. 6). It is this continuous interaction with the past, present and the future that helps man, through the wisdom gained from the study of the past, to navigate the complex challenges of the contemporary world. The knowledge of the past of man, which is made up of verified facts methodically arrived at through honest inquiry, inferences and interpretation, helps humans to understand who they are and how society evolved, triumphed and floundered. It helps humans to leverage past successes and avoid the mistakes of the past. This is why history is a sine qua non for all and sundry for self and societal development.

Concord

In the context of intergroup relations, concord and discord refer to the quality of relationships between different social groups. Concord in intergroup relations refers to a state of harmony, cooperation and mutual understanding between different social groups. Such relations manifest positive intergroup attitude towards each other characterized by mutual respect and trust, cooperation, collaboration and effective communication, which facilitates understanding and helps to resolve conflicts should any misunderstanding arise. Concord leads to cultural exchanges and learning from each other's customs, traditions and values, thereby building and fostering peaceful social cohesion.

Discord

Discord in intergroup relations refers to a state of conflict, tension and competition between different social groups. Such relations involve negative attitudes towards each other, characterized by prejudice, stereotypes, hostility, competition and conflict. Competition for power, status and scarce resources leads to tension, conflict, misinterpretation and social fragmentation. Discord is an albatross to human development. Wherever there is discord, peace and development is far-fetched.

Nature of Intergroup Relations and Their Impact

One of the reasons for concord is to redistribute what was unevenly distributed by nature. Geographical and ecological variations led to the production of diverse crops so as to

satisfy local needs. As local commerce could not satisfy the needs of the expanding population, the innate urge to grow led to the emergence of internal long distance trade. The Orashi and the Sombreiro waterways became beneficial links to relate with coastal city-states and their hinterland neighbours of Ikwerre, Ekpeye, Ndoni, Oguta, Engenni, Ahoada, Asa and Awara. These waterways linked various periodic markets and served as a means through which the various villages and clans united and interacted to influence one another. According to Orugbani (2005, p. 1), Orashi River provided access to coastal and hinterland neighbours, leading to the exchange of sea food (fresh and dried fishes, oysters, lobsters, prawns, periwinkle, salt, crayfish, etc.). The coastal neighbours leveraged the interaction to get yam, cassava, plantain, palm oil and palm kernel from the Ogba people.

Orashi and Sombreiro Rivers were major arteries of trading relations. Through this commercial intercourse, they had access to Europe-made goods, such as iron, walking sticks, mirrors, dresses and confectionery. Alagoa (1971, p. 65) observes that traders were the official representatives of their communities who promoted the interest of their state or community in other lands. They are economic diplomats and avant-garde of every group.

Cultural relations were developed, leading to cultural borrowing. The Egbukele, Aganipele and the Owu dances were borrowed from the Kalabari people and dressing patterns of George, Don, Etibo, etc. were also part of intergroup relations (Osaih, Enemugwem and Gbenenye, 2019, p. 96). Some Ogba traders travelled down to Kalabari in groups to trade and formed a security group to ward off attacks from headhunters, kidnappers, pirates and marauders. Some of the Ogba traders stayed in Kalabari for days and, as a result of this, they established friendly relations. Some of these relationships culminated in marriages. Commerce itself encouraged intermarriage, which helped to establish long-lasting diplomatic peace, diffused kinship relationships and minimized, to a great extent, inter-communal hostilities either. To further cement the relationships, Ogba traders gave riverine names to themselves or their children. Such Kalabari names are found in Omoku, Akabuka, Erema, Kregani, etc. Riverine names, like Sunday Petro, is found in Obieti, Dakoru families in Obakata and Erema. Wokoma and Benibo families are in Usomini, Braide families in Kregani, and Amachree and Abonnema are found in Erema (personal observation, Nwala, Orji and Sokari 2009, p. 589).

These trading relations brought about markets where goods and services were exchanged. Such markets, like Abonnema, Omoku, Ede and Akabuka, were the centre of commercial exchange. Socially, these markets served as a centre of information dissemination over imminent august occasions. The markets were also a place of amusement. They provided a vital opportunity for estranged lovers, friends and business partners to discuss issues bordering on life and success. Also, in the markets, there were

traditional display of dances, festivals and ceremonies. Drummers, singers, folklorists and poets often practised their art in the markets (Osaih, 2020, p. 63).

Marriage is a means of ensuring the survival of the human race in the world for continuity. If the flow of life is to continue, marriage is the masterstroke for the three layers of life recognized by most African peoples –past, present and future (Orime, 2015, p. 22). Little marriages existed between the Ogba people and the Ijo people. Osaih (2020, p. 63) comments that some of these inter-ethnic marriages were entered into for the sake of security and this promoted cordial and long-lasting relationships across ethnic and cultural zones, especially through the coming and going of in-laws, grandchildren and other kinsmen on both sides. In the course of inter-visitation, the husband's and the wife's people bring along some elements of languages, dances, folklores, world views, special dishes and songs. When these elements of culture are absorbed on both sides, cultural exchange is promoted. Based on this reason, Dike (1956, p. 5) emphasizes that such interaction was always accompanied by contacts of culture, exchange of ideas, mingling of people and led not infrequently to political intrigues and wars.

In the course of this trading overtures that culminated in intergroup marriages and cultural exchanges, there is no pretence that a perfect state of concord prevailed all through between the Ogba and their Ijo neighbours. Such a situation hardly ever happens in real life. Wherever there are people, conflicts are bound to occur. Trade disputes were a recurring feature in the trading relations among the people. Traders quarrelled over long debts, abusive and vulgar exchanges of words, gossips, outrageous hike of prices of goods and low pricing of goods. Strains in commercial relations were the *casus belli* to the Ogbogu-Kalabari encounter (Orji, 2012, p. 234). The Idu-Biseni conflict happened over claim to land boundary at the bank of Orashi River. Orike (2008, p. 5) argues that Ogba relations with Ijaw in Emegni and Ijaw in Kalabari had historical hiccups and unsustained invasions. The discord was never long-lasting, as trading relations did not result in cessation of intergroup trade, marriage and cultural interaction. This was why intergroup relations oscillated between concord and discord, harmony and hostility, accommodation and conflict (Ogbogbo et al., 2012, p. 2).

The history of intergroup relations right from time immemorial is an interface of concord and discord, harmony and disharmony, cooperation and conflict, peace and war. It is a dialectics that revolves around thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The relations between Ogba and their Aboh neighbours to the west were chequered and less peaceful. Ake (1981, p. 53) notes that Ogba maintained very peaceful relations with her neighbours except for the Aboh people, who took Ogba sons away for sacrifice during their annual festival.

Orji (2012, p. 53) avers that the envious nature of the Aboh people over the geographical expansion and population increase of the Ogba people fanned the embers

of war, which made the Ogba warriors to put a stop to the undue human exaction and tyranny of the Aboh people in 1895. The success of this war victory and independence was not far from the attribution that characterized the transition from a stateless Ogba society to a state society reminiscent of the Benin centralized political system headed by the Oba, their ancestral roots, whose awe in military history was a by-product of its monarchical government. This change from a republican system, borrowed from Igbo land as a result of cultural interaction with Ogba, was abandoned. The appointment of Okoya Nwaebe as the Eze-Ogba, a central figure who commanded the loyalty and unity of the Ogba people both in the shrewd discharge of administrative duties and military welfare, was the reason for the victory over Aboh. The reason why Ogba could not be conquered by any of their neighbours, like the Ijaw, Ikwerre, Igbo, Aboh, Ndoni, Egbema, Mbiama, was that Ogba terrain was difficult to navigate. Orashi River had to be crossed by Mbiama to Ekpeye (blood brother to Ogba) to Idu before Ogba would be attacked. The difficult typography between the Omoku/Obrikom axis stretching into Elemabri and Utuechi was a great impediment that gave the assailants a worrisome adventure.

The island nature of Ogba has made invasion impossible. Ogba is surrounded by rivers. In the east is Sombreiro River that stretches to Ekpeye in the southern axis; in the west is Orashi River; River Niger is in the north-west, which made Aboh invasion and conquest of Ogba as a vassal state strenuous and costly. So, Ogba nation is a fortress. Alagoa states that “these communities served as buffers between Nembe and Kalabari when internal dissension engulfed them.”

Ogba-Ekpeye Relations

The relations between Ogba and his brother Ekpeye were largely peaceful and cordial because they shared common paternal ancestry. Oral traditions have accorded great relationship to Ogba and Ekpeye. They regarded themselves as blood brothers, scion of a common ancestor called the Great Akalaka. This is still expressed in their sayings Ekpeye Nwa-Akalaka, Ogba Nwa-Akalaka. According to oral traditions, there were cross-migrations and secondary migrations from eponymous ancestors who found the settlement unsuitable for agriculture, not because of war between the two nationalities. This has enabled inter-community bond and intersectionality of families.

The Umuakpa and Umuedihuru are found in Ekpeye and Ogba, respectively. The family of Umuakpa in Erema who migrated from Ekpeye were often invited by their kinsmen in Olokobu (Ekpeye) to take their own share of fishes killed in the collective ancestral pond. The Olokobu Umuakpa family recognized the right of Erema Umuakpa to partake of all ancestral belongings (personal interaction with Ibegura, 22/5/2013, Sam, 1979, p. 67). This common origin, ancestry and kinship, has been the reasons for traditional non-aggression covenant most helpful for the presentation and survival of the concord between the two scions.

There was also high degree of socio-cultural interactions in recreational activities. There were wrestling exchanges between the Ogba and the Ekpeye people. Even in some decades ago, wrestling exchanges were still carried out between Erema and Ihugbogo. Visiting groups were not expected to carry food items and equipment, as such was anathema to the African sense of hospitality (Osaih, 2020, p. 64.). The visitors were honourably entertained and sheltered. This also existed in burial ceremonies and festivals.

Kinship ties between these two communities obliged them to sympathize with each other in times of eventualities, like death, accident and sickness. This was not only in misfortune; they also share in fortune with their kinsmen in either yam festivals or marriages. The Ogba people who had part of their families in Akpabu, Ihugbogo, Olokobu, Owube, Ubirama, Abarikpo, etc. sent gifts (fishes, bush meats, clothes, etc.) to their kin in Ekpeye as a sign of goodwill. This was also reciprocated by their brothers and sisters in their sister communities. These interactions carried a higher rate of intergroup marriages, especially amongst the border communities of Ekpeye and Ogba more than the central communities. The inhabitants of Erema, Akabuka and Oboburu, married from Ihuje, Abarikpo, Ubirama, Owube, Ihugbogo, etc. These inter-marriages fostered long-lasting unity and played great roles in political and social fusion in the post-colonial politics. These inter-cultural interactions resulted in linguistic diffusion, bilingualism and mutual intelligibility in their dialects. This considerable degree of linguistic affiliation and affinity could be attributed to proximity to each other and the fact that they had the same traditions of origin linked to a common progenitor. Evidence of this linguistic affinity with Ekpeye, Engenni, Kalabari, Igbo and Ikwerre, etc. is presented below:

Ogba	Ekpeye	Ikwerre	Igbo	English
Owhor	Owhoh	Owhoh	Offo	Staff
Ali	Ele	Ela	Ala	Land
Eka	Eka	Aka	Aka	Hand
Ekpa	Ekpa	Akpa	Akpa	Bag
Ohia	Oha	Oza	Oha	Cooking leaf
Onu	Onu	Onue	Onu	Mouth
Chukwu-Abiama	Chukwu-Obioma	Chukwu-Abiama	Chukwu-Abiama	The Creator
Chineke	Chineke	Chiokike	Chineke	God
Ogba	Engenni	Kalabari/Nembe	English	
Egberi	Egberigba	Egberigba	Story	
Efere	Efere	Efere	Plate	
Akpa	Akpa		Bag	

Nkachi	Ekashi	Chair
Ogba	Aboh	English
Ishi	Ishi	Head
Uku	Uku	Feet
Azhu	Azu	Fish
Onu	Onu	Mouth
Anuh	Anu	Meat
Egih	Egu	Fear
Ali	Ani	Land

(Osaih, 2020, pp. 65-66, Onuoha, 17/12/2022)

It is crystal clear from the examples cited above that there are similarities between the languages of Ogba and her neighbours, pointing to a high rate of intergroup relations that existed in the precolonial period. Language is a tool of identification of a people. This mutual intelligibility in languages practically indicates origin, kinship, common descent and levels of interactions. This is the pristine place of historical linguistics as a useful aid to history. According to Williamson (1987, p. 3), historical linguistics is that aspect of linguistics that feeds into history. This varied intelligibility in languages debunks the notion that Ogba is a stock of Igbo extraction, a contradistinction to Ogba unique traditions and culture history.

Ogba-Ikwerre Relations

The Ikwerre ethnic nationality have linked their tradition of origin with the Ogba, claiming that Ochichi (half mother to Akalaka) migrated from Benin Empire with Akalaka at the same time as a result of misrule and insecurity. Sam (1979, p. 10) alludes to the same point. The Benin tradition of origin has continued to gain prominence among prominent Ikwerre scholars. Chinda (2015, p.176) also buttresses the assertion that Akalaka was the progenitor of some Ikwerre villages. Oral traditions of the Ibba, Obelle, Ogbodo, Omagwa, Ndele, Rumuji, Ogbakiri and the central sections of Ikwerre, according to Chinda (2015, pp. 175-177), claimed that they were descendants of Akalaka. This is exactly why the Ogba, Ekpeye and Ikwerre people have identical customs and cultural institutions. These important areas of cultural identity are family, land, festival, marriage, ancestral veneration, beliefs in religious deities, funerals, ceremonies, masquerade (Egbukele and Owu) dances, and wrestling, with little variations in wrestling style.

These three communities have extant philosophies that are implicit in their social and political lives. These philosophies are equity, equality, egalitarianism, village democracy, and age-grade administration. Marriage was a common feature that characterized Ogba-Ikwerre intergroup relations. The contacts were not devoid of

linguistic affiliation, bilingualism and other socio-cultural benefits capable of foreclosing inter-community feud. Diplomatically, some of the Ikwerre villages closer to Ogba, exchanged gifts (clothes, fishes, cowries, beads, etc.) with one another. The Akpabu people sent gifts to Erema villages as a sign of happiness and commemoration to festival, child delivery and marriage ceremonies. They also sent condolence messages in times of misfortunes. This kind of indigenous diplomacy was used to promote peaceful coexistence between these two villages.

Belief in supernatural beings encouraged inter-community/regional relations. Supernatural deities/oracles were regarded as impartial or disinterested judges. Deities perform protective functions, cure illnesses, increase fecundity/fertility, remove impurity, send premonitional messages to communities, reveal the future, defeat enemies in wars and settle conflicts (Andah, 1988, p. 93). They are custodians of morality, and expose bizarre/heinous crimes and protect people from physical and spiritual forces, witchcraft, wizardry and vicissitudes of life (Nweneka, 1990, p. 39). The search for solutions to physical and spiritual predicaments have led Ogba people to famous shrines for consultation and solutions. The famous oracles that the Ogba people consulted were the Igwekali at Umunoha in Owerri and Amadioha (god of thunder and lightning of Isu-Ozuzu) in Etche. These famous oracles at Awka, Ozuzu, Umunoha, Agwu and Arochukwu united and integrated several villages of the Igbo, Ibibio, Ogba, Ikwerre, Engenni and Ekpeye people of the Niger Delta, which made people from far and near to consult these deities for personal and non-personal problems. In pre-colonial Ogba, consultation for personal and community problems was the reason for the avalanche of different deities, which are still in existence and venerated today in Ogba. Most of them have strong connections to their mother oracles in Etche, Owerri and Arochukwu.

Conclusion

Economic need is man's most primary and essential need. The desire to satiate this need prompted man to cultivate, farm and fish to eke out a living. According to Ake (1981, p.1), man was primarily a worker or a producer. When this need became satisfied, man became pre-occupied with pursuing socio-cultural, political and religious needs. Man's needs are insatiable. It was on the basis of these needs that the Ogba related with their neighbours. The intergroup relations promoted the cultivation and sustenance of friendly diplomacy between contiguous and far communities. These diplomatic relations culminated in cultural diffusion, direct borrowing and linguistic affiliation. In the relentless pursuit of these insatiable needs, peace and conflict, cooperation and confrontation, and concord and discord emerged significantly.

The overriding purpose of this paper is to contribute to research in intergroup relations which is urgently demanded as a means to minimize the perennial conflict that

has become a norm in society. This work will also foster unity and peaceful coexistence. This kind of academic discourse will become very imperative in view of the obvious problems of national integration facing Africa, including Nigeria.

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72**ENHANCING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS OF THE SAHEL STATES AND
THE REST OF ECOWAS****By****Dennis U. Ashara**

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Introduction

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional bloc comprising 15 West African countries committed to promoting economic integration, political stability and sustainable development. Among these states, the Sahel region, characterized by unique challenges, such as political instability, climate change and security issues, presents a compelling case for enhancing diplomatic relations within ECOWAS.

The Sahel region, spanning parts of West Africa and characterized by vast semi-arid landscapes, is a geographical and geopolitical area of critical importance to ECOWAS. Comprising countries such as Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad (an observer state), the Sahel is central to discussions of security, economic integration and sustainable development within the region. Despite its strategic significance, the Sahel faces complex challenges, including political instability, terrorism, climate change and socio-economic disparities, which have occasionally strained relations with the coastal ECOWAS states.

Diplomatic relations within ECOWAS are foundational for addressing these issues. As a regional bloc established in 1975 to promote economic cooperation and political stability, the ECOWAS provides a framework for collective action and mutual support among its 15 member states. However, the distinct challenges faced by the Sahel, coupled with its historical, cultural and socio-economic differences from the coastal members, necessitate tailored diplomatic strategies to enhance cooperation (Kohnert, 2023b).

This chapter explores the imperative of strengthening diplomatic relations between the Sahel states and the rest of ECOWAS. It emphasizes the need for a collaborative approach to address shared challenges, unlock economic potential and

foster political stability across the region. Through an examination of historical relations, current initiatives and strategic opportunities, this discussion aims to provide practical insights for deepening diplomatic ties within ECOWAS, in order to ensure the Sahel's integration into the broader regional framework for collective progress and stability.

Historical Context of ECOWAS and Sahel Relations

The Sahel region, encompassing parts of West Africa's semi-arid zone, has long held geopolitical and economic significance. Its inclusion within ECOWAS reflects the region's pivotal role in the broader West African framework. However, the historical relationship between ECOWAS and the Sahel has been shaped by unique challenges, such as security threats, economic disparities and environmental issues. Understanding this historical context is crucial for appreciating the dynamics of diplomacy and cooperation within the region.

The ECOWAS was established on May 28, 1975, with the signing of the Treaty of Lagos by 15 West African nations. The founding vision was to create a unified economic space to foster development, reduce trade barriers and ensure regional stability (ECOWAS, 2021). The inclusion of Sahel states, such as Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, was significant, reflecting the need to integrate diverse geographies and socio-economic realities into a cohesive regional framework.

From its inception, the ECOWAS recognized the unique needs of its Sahel members. The Sahel, characterized by low human development indicators, limited infrastructure and high vulnerability to climate change, presents challenges distinct from those of its coastal counterparts. In the 1980s, the ECOWAS initiated programmes aimed at addressing food security, drought resilience and rural development in the Sahel. These efforts aligned with global initiatives like the United Nations' Sahelian Relief Operations during the drought crises of the late 1970s and the early 1980s (UNDP, 1985).

Security concerns have historically influenced ECOWAS-Sahel relations. The Tuareg insurgencies in Mali and Niger during the 1990s highlighted the region's instability and its potential to disrupt the broader West African peace. The ECOWAS played a significant role in mediating peace agreements, such as the 1995 National Pact in Mali, which sought to integrate Tuareg rebels into the national framework (Zartman, 1995). These efforts underscored ECOWAS' commitment to ensuring stability in the Sahel as part of its broader regional security mandate.

Economic disparities between Sahel and the coastal states have been a persistent issue in ECOWAS. The coastal economies, benefiting from port access and robust trade networks, have historically been more developed than the landlocked Sahel states. Recognizing this disparity, the ECOWAS introduced the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence, and Establishment in 1979, aiming to facilitate regional trade and migration (ECOWAS, 2021). These measures sought to integrate Sahel economies into the

broader West African market but faced challenges due to poor infrastructure and limited institutional capacity in the Sahel states.

Environmental challenges, particularly desertification and recurring droughts, have significantly shaped ECOWAS-Sahel relations. In response, the ECOWAS has partnered global initiatives like the Great Green Wall project, aimed at combating desertification and promoting sustainable land use across the Sahel (African Union, 2012). Such collaborations highlight ECOWAS' role in addressing transnational environmental issues that disproportionately affect the Sahel.

The historical context of ECOWAS-Sahel relations reveals a complex interplay of shared challenges and collaborative efforts. From addressing security threats to mitigating environmental crises, the ECOWAS has consistently sought to integrate the Sahel into its regional framework. However, the persistent economic and institutional disparities underscore the need for tailored strategies to enhance Sahel's role within ECOWAS. Understanding this history is essential for formulating effective policies to strengthen regional cooperation and achieve sustainable development in West Africa.

Contemporary Developments in ECOWAS-Sahel Relations

The relationship between the Sahel states and ECOWAS in recent decades has been shaped by a mix of persistent challenges and innovative strategies. Contemporary developments in these relations emphasize the urgency of addressing security, economic integration and environmental sustainability within the Sahel while fostering its integration into the broader ECOWAS framework. This section explores key areas of progress and challenges in contemporary ECOWAS-Sahel relations.

Security and Counter-terrorism Efforts

The rise of violent extremism in the Sahel region has significantly influenced ECOWAS' policies and initiatives. Islamist insurgencies, such as Boko Haram in Nigeria and ISIS affiliates in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, have destabilized the region and necessitated regional collaboration.

ECOWAS Counter-terrorism Strategy (ECTS): Launched in 2013, the ECTS is a comprehensive framework aimed at preventing terrorism, improving intelligence sharing and enhancing the operational capacity of member states to combat extremists' threats (ECOWAS, 2020). The strategy highlights ECOWAS' commitment to regional security as a shared responsibility, with Sahel states receiving significant attention due to their vulnerability to insurgency.

Collaboration with G5 Sahel: The G5 Sahel Joint Force, formed in 2014, is a collective security initiative involving Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. Although not

an ECOWAS initiative, the joint force has partnered ECOWAS in areas like intelligence sharing and military coordination. These efforts demonstrate ECOWAS' support for complementary regional mechanisms to address security threats (Kohnert, 2023c).

Mediation and Peacekeeping: The ECOWAS has played an active role in mediating conflicts in the Sahel, particularly in Mali. Following the 2012 coup and subsequent insurgency, the ECOWAS led negotiations that resulted in a transitional government and deployed peacekeeping forces under the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA). This proactive role underscores ECOWAS' commitment to stabilizing the region.

Economic Integration and Infrastructure Development: Economic integration remains a priority in ECOWAS-Sahel relations, with contemporary efforts focusing on bridging infrastructure gaps and boosting trade.

- **Trans-Sahelian Highway and Connectivity Projects**
The ECOWAS has prioritized projects such as the Trans-Sahelian Highway, which aims to enhance connectivity between landlocked Sahel states and coastal economies. Improved road networks facilitate the movement of goods and services, promoting regional trade and economic inclusion.
- **ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP):** The ECOWAS Agricultural Policy addresses food security and rural development challenges, particularly in the Sahel states prone to drought and famine. By supporting value chain development and climate-resilient agriculture, ECOWAP contributes to sustainable economic growth in the Sahel (ECOWAS, 2021).
- **Single Currency Initiative:** The ECOWAS initiative to establish a single currency, the "Eco." is a long-term goal aimed at reducing trade barriers and fostering monetary integration. The initiative faces delays, but its successful implementation could significantly benefit Sahel economies by easing cross-border trade and investments.

Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resilience

The Sahel's vulnerability to climate change, particularly desertification and erratic weather patterns, has prompted ECOWAS to focus on environmental sustainability.

- **Great Green Wall Initiative:** In collaboration with the African Union, the ECOWAS supports the Great Green Wall project, which aims to combat desertification by creating a belt of vegetation across the Sahel. This initiative has ecological, economic and social benefits, including job creation and improved agricultural productivity (African Union, 2012).

- **Renewable Energy Projects:** The ECOWAS has launched renewable energy projects, such as the West African Power Pool (WAPP), which seeks to expand energy access in the Sahel through solar and wind power. By addressing energy poverty, these projects contribute to socio-economic development and regional integration.

Institutional Reforms and Governance

The ECOWAS has undertaken institutional reforms to ensure greater inclusivity and representation of the Sahel states. These reforms aim to address perceptions of marginalization and ensure that the region's unique challenges are prioritized.

- **Enhanced Representation:** The Sahel states now play a more prominent role in ECOWAS decision-making processes, with increased representation in key bodies, such as the ECOWAS Parliament and Commission.
- **Governance Initiatives:** The ECOWAS has supported governance reforms in the Sahel, promoting democratic transitions and institution-building. For example, the ECOWAS mediated post-coup transitions in Mali and Burkina Faso, emphasizing the need for constitutional order and accountability.

Challenges in Contemporary Relations

The contemporary relationship between ECOWAS and the Sahel region is marked by both progress and persistent challenges. While strides have been made in addressing shared security threats, fostering economic integration, and building climate resilience, a number of obstacles continue to hinder the realization of deeper and more effective cooperation. These challenges are multifaceted, encompassing issues of political instability, economic disparities, resource constraints and socio-cultural differences. Understanding these challenges is vital to crafting sustainable strategies for regional cohesion and development.

Political Instability and Governance Challenges: One of the most significant challenges to ECOWAS-Sahel relations is political instability within the Sahel. The region has experienced a series of coups and transitional governments, particularly in Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea. These disruptions weaken national institutions, undermine democratic governance and erode trust between member states. For ECOWAS, managing these crises requires balancing non-interference with the imperative to uphold democratic norms and constitutional order.

For instance, the ECOWAS has imposed sanctions and mediated negotiations following coups in Mali and Burkina Faso, yet such events still recur, suggesting deeper systemic issues. Fragile governance structures, corruption and limited state presence in

rural areas exacerbate instability, creating a cyclical pattern of crises that strain regional efforts toward integration and cooperation.

Security Threats and Cross-border Insurgency: The Sahel is a hotspot for terrorism and armed insurgency, with groups like Boko Haram, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and Islamic State affiliates exploiting porous borders and weak state control. These groups not only destabilize individual states but also threaten the broader region, spilling violence into neighbouring countries, such as Niger, Nigeria and Burkina Faso. The ECOWAS has implemented measures, such as the Counter-terrorism Strategy, and collaborated with initiatives like the G5 Sahel Joint Force. However, limited resources, inadequate coordination, and differing national priorities have constrained the effectiveness of these efforts. The inability to fully address cross-border terrorism undermines regional trust and highlights the need for greater synergy among member states.

Economic Disparities and Infrastructure Gaps: Economic disparities between Sahel states and coastal ECOWAS members present a major obstacle to regional integration. Sahel states, which are predominantly landlocked, struggle with underdeveloped infrastructure, limited industrial capacity and high poverty rates. These challenges hinder their ability to fully participate in regional trade and benefit from ECOWAS' economic initiatives. For example, the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) and free trade protocols are less impactful for the Sahel states due to poor transportation networks and high cost of moving goods across borders. This economic inequality fosters a sense of marginalization among the Sahel states, which may view ECOWAS policies as disproportionately benefiting more developed coastal members.

Environmental and Climate Challenges: The Sahel is one of the world's most environmentally fragile regions, facing severe desertification, erratic rainfall, and frequent droughts. These climate challenges exacerbate food insecurity, displace populations, and strain natural resources, complicating efforts at regional cooperation.

While the ECOWAS has supported environmental initiatives like the Great Green Wall and renewable energy projects, implementation has been slow due to funding constraints and logistic difficulties. Climate-related displacement also creates tension between the Sahel and neighbouring states, as migrants seek refuge in areas that may already face economic and environmental pressures.

Resource and Institutional Constraints: The ECOWAS itself faces significant resource constraints that limit its capacity to address the challenges of the Sahel. The organization relies heavily on contributions from member states, many of which are struggling with

their own economic challenges. As a result, funding for critical initiatives, including security operations and infrastructure projects, is often inadequate.

Institutional inefficiencies within ECOWAS further compound the problem. Decision-making processes can be slow and are sometimes hindered by a lack of consensus among member states. Additionally, the perception of unequal representation and prioritization of certain regions over others fosters resentment, particularly among the Sahel states that feel their needs are overlooked.

Socio-cultural Differences: West Africa is characterized by a rich tapestry of cultures, languages and traditions, but these differences can sometimes create barriers to effective regional cooperation (Nyabiage, 2024). Sahel states, with their predominantly Muslim populations and semi-arid landscapes, often have distinct socio-cultural and economic realities compared to the coastal members with diverse religious practices and maritime economies. These differences can influence policy priorities and create friction in negotiations, particularly when addressing sensitive issues like migration, security and resource allocation. Bridging these divides requires deliberate efforts to foster mutual understanding and inclusivity in regional decision-making processes.

The challenges facing contemporary ECOWAS-Sahel relations are substantial but not insurmountable. Political instability, security threats, economic disparities and environmental vulnerability continue to test the resilience of this regional partnership. However, these challenges also present opportunities for innovation and collaboration. By addressing the root causes of instability, investing in infrastructure and economic development, and fostering inclusive governance, the ECOWAS can strengthen its ties with the Sahel and enhance regional integration. Overcoming these obstacles requires sustained commitment, resource mobilization and a shared vision for a united and prosperous West Africa.

Strategies for Enhancing Diplomatic Relations: Lessons from Regional Bodies

The ECOWAS and the Sahel region share historical and geopolitical interdependence that demands robust diplomatic relations. However, to effectively address shared challenges such as security threats, economic disparities, and climate change, the region requires innovative diplomatic strategies. Drawing on evidence from successful case studies from other regional bodies, such as the European Union (EU), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the African Union (AU), this section outlines strategies for enhancing ECOWAS-Sahel diplomatic relations.

1. Strengthening Regional Security Cooperation

Security challenges, particularly terrorism and cross-border insurgencies, are significant barriers to regional stability. Lessons from NATO's cooperation with the EU illustrate how

structured partnerships and mutual defence mechanisms can enhance regional security. The NATO-EU Security Partnership demonstrates the importance of shared intelligence, joint training exercises and pooled resources. This cooperation enabled effective responses to the Balkans crisis in the 1990s and counter-terrorism measures after 9/11 (NATO, 2019).

The ECOWAS can enhance its diplomatic relations with the Sahel states by institutionalizing frameworks for intelligence sharing, joint military operations and border management. Collaborative efforts, such as the ECOWAS Counter-terrorism Strategy, can benefit from funding and technical assistance, sourced from partnerships with external actors, like the UN or the EU.

2. Economic Integration through Infrastructure and Trade

Economic integration fosters interdependence and strengthens regional ties. The ASEAN provides an exemplary model through its success in boosting intra-regional trade and connectivity. It reduced trade barriers and developed infrastructure to facilitate the seamless flow of goods and services across member states (Yabi, 2010). The ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and large-scale projects, like the ASEAN Highway Network, were instrumental in achieving this integration (ASEAN Secretariat, 2018). The ECOWAS could replicate ASEAN's model by investing in trans-Saharan infrastructure, such as highways, railways and energy projects. Initiatives like the Trans-Saharan Highway can improve connectivity between the Sahel states and coastal economies, fostering stronger economic ties and reducing perceived marginalization.

3. Promoting Inclusive Governance and Representation

Inclusive governance ensures that all member states feel adequately represented in decision-making processes. The African Union (AU) offers valuable insights into how inclusive institutional structures can foster regional unity. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) promotes good governance and accountability among AU member states. By encouraging dialogue and providing peer reviews, the mechanism has helped address governance challenges and fostered trust among nations (AU, 2020).

The ECOWAS can strengthen diplomatic relations by creating mechanisms that ensure the Sahel states have an active voice in decision-making. Incorporating Sahel-specific issues into ECOWAS agendas and increasing the representation of the Sahel states in regional institutions, like the ECOWAS Parliament, can build trust and enhance cooperation.

4. Addressing Environmental Challenges Collaboratively

Climate change and environmental degradation disproportionately affect the Sahel, necessitating coordinated regional responses. The EU's Green Deal provides a

comprehensive strategy for addressing such challenges while fostering regional cooperation. The EU Green Deal aims to make Europe climate-neutral by 2050 through investments in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and biodiversity conservation (European Commission, 2020). This initiative not only addresses environmental issues but also strengthens diplomatic ties within the EU through shared objectives. The ECOWAS can adopt a similar strategy by expanding support for environmental projects, like the Great Green Wall. Collaborative efforts to combat desertification and promote sustainable land use can serve as a unifying platform, fostering stronger diplomatic ties among member states.

5. Enhancing Multilateral Partnerships

Multilateral partnerships enable regional bodies to leverage external resources and expertise. The partnership between the EU and AU highlights the benefits of such collaborations. The EU-AU partnership supports capacity-building in areas like peacekeeping, governance and economic development. Joint programmes, such as the African Peace Facility, have enhanced the AU's ability to address security challenges (EU Commission, 2021). The ECOWAS can enhance its diplomatic relations with the Sahel states by seeking multilateral partnerships with organizations like the UN, World Bank, and bilateral donors. These partnerships can provide technical assistance, funding and capacity-building for addressing security, economic and environmental challenges in the Sahel.

6. Leveraging Cultural Diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy fosters mutual understanding and solidarity among diverse regions. The UNESCO's cultural initiatives in conflict zones demonstrate how cultural heritage can serve as a tool for peacebuilding. For example, UNESCO has used cultural heritage preservation to promote reconciliation in conflict-affected areas like Syria and Iraq. By fostering dialogue and celebrating shared cultural identities, these initiatives have strengthened local and regional cohesion (UNESCO, 2019). The ECOWAS can invest in cultural diplomacy by celebrating the shared heritage of West African states. Initiatives like regional festivals, art exhibitions and language exchange programmes can strengthen diplomatic relations by promoting mutual respect and understanding between the Sahel and the coastal states.

Enhancing diplomatic relations between ECOWAS and the Sahel requires a multifaceted approach that addresses security and economic, environmental and cultural challenges. Drawing on successful strategies from regional bodies like the EU, ASEAN and AU, the ECOWAS can foster deeper cooperation and integration. By institutionalizing frameworks for security collaboration, investing in infrastructure, promoting inclusive

governance, addressing environmental challenges, leveraging multilateral partnerships and prioritizing cultural diplomacy, the ECOWAS can build stronger, more resilient ties with the Sahel region. These strategies benefit the Sahel and contribute to the overall stability and prosperity of West Africa.

Conclusion

The relationship between ECOWAS and the Sahel is a cornerstone for West Africa's stability, economic prosperity and resilience in the face of modern challenges. This book chapter has examined the historical context, contemporary developments, challenges and potential strategies for enhancing this critical partnership, drawing lessons from other regional bodies to inform practical insights.

The historical evolution of ECOWAS-Sahel relations underscores the foundational role of shared cultural, economic and security interests in shaping regional dynamics. Despite these strong historical ties, contemporary realities, including political instability, cross-border insecurity and environmental vulnerability, have strained diplomatic and cooperative efforts. These challenges necessitate a renewed commitment to strategic action that addresses both immediate crises and long-term developmental needs. Lessons from regional organizations, such as the EU, ASEAN, and AU, demonstrate the transformative potential of robust security frameworks, economic integration, inclusive governance, multilateral partnerships and cultural diplomacy. The ECOWAS can adapt these strategies to its unique geopolitical and socio-cultural landscape, fostering a partnership with the Sahel that is more resilient, inclusive and impactful.

Achieving enhanced diplomatic relations requires prioritizing capacity-building, resource mobilization and institutional reform within ECOWAS. Strengthening security collaboration through shared intelligence and joint operations, investing in trans-regional infrastructure to bridge economic disparities and addressing environmental challenges collectively can provide a solid foundation for regional stability. Moreover, embracing cultural diplomacy and inclusive governance will foster trust and solidarity, ensuring that all member states, including those in the Sahel, feel represented and valued within the broader ECOWAS framework.

In conclusion, the future of ECOWAS-Sahel relations lies in a shared vision that transcends national interests and prioritizes regional integration, peace and sustainable development. By building on its historical foundations and adopting innovative, evidence-based strategies, the ECOWAS has the opportunity to not only strengthen its ties with the Sahel but also serve as a model for regional cooperation across Africa. This unified approach is essential for addressing the pressing challenges of the 21st century and ensuring a prosperous and stable future for all West African states.

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**NEWS REPORTAGE AND PROMOTION OF PEACEFUL
COEXISTENCE IN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The paper examined the role of news reportage in promoting peaceful coexistence in Nigeria. The study was anchored to Cultural Theory of Conflict. The study reviewed the concept of news reportage as well as media and conflict reporting. The study revealed that journalists face numerous challenges in their efforts to accurately report issues that can potentially lead to conflict or violence. The study proposed strategies to overcome these challenge. It concluded that, by promoting accurate and balanced reporting, challenging stereotypes, and fostering dialogue, news outlets can contribute to building a more inclusive and tolerant Nigerian society

Keywords: News, News reportage, peace, Peaceful coexistence.

Introduction

News reportage is a crucial aspect of journalism that plays a significant role in informing the public about current events, issues and developments. It involves the gathering, verification and dissemination of news through various media channels, such as newspapers, television, radio and online platforms. News reportage serves as a primary source of information for individuals, communities and societies, shaping public opinion and influencing decision-making processes. It focuses on providing accurate, timely and relevant information to the audience. Journalists and news organizations strive to report events as they unfold, ensuring that the public is kept informed about important developments in their local, national and global communities. This commitment to accuracy and timeliness is essential in maintaining the credibility and trustworthiness of news sources.

In addition to providing factual information, news reportage also involves analysis and interpretation of events to help audiences understand the significance and implications of the news. Journalists often rely on expert opinions, background information and historical context to provide context and perspective on complex issues.

This analytical approach helps audiences make sense of the news and form informed opinions on various topics, including peaceful coexistence. The way news is reported can either promote harmony and understanding among different groups or exacerbate tensions and conflicts.

News reportage equally plays a crucial role in holding individuals, organizations and governments accountable for their actions. Investigative journalism, in particular, involves in-depth research and reporting on issues of public interest, uncovering corruption, abuse of power, and other wrongdoings. By shining a light on these issues, journalists help promote transparency, accountability and good governance in society.

When news outlets report conflicts or issues that may lead to tensions between different groups, it is important that they present all sides of the story in a fair and balanced manner. By doing so, news reportage can help to foster understanding and empathy among individuals from different backgrounds, ultimately leading to greater harmony and cooperation. Smith (2015) notes that biased and sensationalized reporting can fuel stereotypes and prejudices, leading to increased social divisions and conflicts. Jones (2018) argues that balanced and objective reporting can promote empathy and mutual understanding among diverse communities, contributing to peaceful coexistence.

By highlighting positive stories and examples of cooperation between different groups, showcasing instances of individuals coming together to overcome differences and work towards a common goal, news outlets can inspire others to do the same. This type of reporting can help to shift the narrative away from conflict and division, towards one of unity and collaboration. News reportage also has the capacity of challenging stereotypes and dispelling misinformation that may contribute to conflict and division. By providing accurate and balanced coverage of issues related to ethnicity, religion and culture, the media can help foster a more inclusive and tolerant society. Jones (2019) avers that news stories that challenge stereotypes and promote diversity can have a positive impact on promoting peaceful coexistence among different racial and ethnic groups. In other words, news reportage has the power to shape public perceptions and attitudes towards different groups and communities. By highlighting stories of cooperation, tolerance and understanding among diverse populations, the media can promote a culture of peace and mutual respect. Smith et al. (2017) claim that positive news stories about interfaith dialogue and cooperation can help reduce prejudice and promote peaceful coexistence among religious communities. News reportage also serves as a platform for promoting dialogue and understanding among conflicting parties. By providing a space for different voices and perspectives to be heard, the media can facilitate constructive conversations and promote reconciliation. As noted by Brown et al. (2018), news coverage of peace building efforts in conflict-affected regions can help build trust and foster cooperation among warring factions.

Despite the potential of news reportage to promote peaceful coexistence, there are also challenges and limitations that need to be addressed. One of such challenges is the prevalence of biased and sensationalized reporting, which can exacerbate tensions and perpetuate stereotypes. Negative news coverage of minority groups can fuel prejudice and discrimination, undermining efforts to promote peaceful coexistence (Lee, 2016).

Another challenge is the commercialization and politicization of the media, which appear to have hindered its ability to promote peace and understanding. News outlets may prioritize sensational stories over nuanced and balanced reporting, leading to a distortion of reality and reinforcement of divisive narratives. Additionally, political interference in the media can undermine its credibility and independence, making it difficult to promote objective and impartial coverage of issues related to peaceful coexistence.

Also, news reportage is faced with the challenge in today's globalized and interconnected world. This interconnectedness via the Internet has proliferated fake news and misinformation. According to Smith (2020), the rise of fake news and misinformation online, has increased the spread of divisive narratives that can incite violence and hostility. It is important to explore how traditional news outlets and online platforms can work together to combat misinformation and promote accurate and responsible reporting that contributes to building trust and unity among diverse communities. This paper, therefore, strives to analytically discuss the various strategies of combating these challenges of news reporting to promote peaceful coexistence in Nigeria, particularly Rivers State.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored to Cultural Theory of Conflict. The theory was propounded by Mary Douglas and Aaron Wildavsky in their seminal work "Risk and Culture: An Essay on the Selection of Technological and Environmental Dangers." in 1990. It posits that conflicts arise from differing cultural world views and value systems. It emphasizes the role of culture in shaping individuals' perceptions of risk and conflict, and how these perceptions influence their behaviour and decision-making processes. According to Douglas and Wildavsky (1990), individuals belong to different cultural groups that have distinct ways of understanding and interpreting the world. These cultural differences lead to divergent views on what constitutes a threat or danger, and how to respond to it. Conflicts arise when individuals from different cultural backgrounds come into contact with each other and clash over their differing beliefs and values.

This paper used the Cultural Theory of Conflict as its theoretical base to explain vividly the supposed role of the media in a conflict situation. This theory identifies social difference, particularly cultural, as the main factor that creates a social identity and social

exclusion, thereby creating the “we” against “them” feeling. This nurtures animosity, hatred and contemptuous relationship among people of divergent cultures, leading to conflict, how the competing interest of groups tie conflict directly into the social, economic and political organizations of society as well as the nature and strength of social networks within and between community groups (Ademola, 2005). The culturally-induced conflict that this relationship cultivates is a result of the creation of the enemy image, which is learned from the early stage of growth to adulthood and is passed on from generation to generation.

The theory highlights the importance of understanding and respecting cultural diversity in order to effectively manage and resolve conflicts. By recognizing and acknowledging the role of culture in shaping perceptions and attitudes towards conflict, individuals and groups can work towards finding common ground and reaching mutually acceptable solutions. It is, therefore, very important to adequately manage these differences for peaceful coexistence, and the media, through objective and balanced news reportage, can help achieve this goal.

Conceptual Review

News Reportage

News, in its diversified formats, is fundamentally an account of a current but unexpected event whose occurrence interests’ audiences and draws debates and discussions on the event. News around the world vary considerably in their styles, structures and social and political roles (Hallin and Giles, cited in Overholser, 2005). The distinction made by the authors among the liberal, polarized pluralist and the democratic corporatist models highlight the diversity in form and content and the overlapping of perceived boundaries as they seek to achieve particular goals within the socio-political system which they uniquely serve.

News reporting is a type of journalism, typically written or broadcast, which involves a social process of narrative construction (information gathering, processing and reporting) guided by acceptable news language, news style and news distribution systems (Hasan, 2013). However, at the heart of the analytic discourse about news and news reporting is the understanding that news construction or news language “is a profoundly social activity” (Conboy, 2007).

News reportage is a crucial aspect of journalism that plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and disseminating information to the masses. It involves the collection, verification and presentation of news stories through various media channels, such as newspapers, television, radio and online platforms. In this paper, focus is on detailed explanation of news reportage, particularly its importance, challenges and ethical considerations.

News reportage provides the public with timely and accurate information about current events and issues. Journalists are tasked with the responsibility of gathering facts, interviewing sources and presenting the news in a clear and objective manner. This helps to keep the public informed and educated about important developments in their communities and around the world. Many studies have examined the role of news reportage in shaping public opinion. Smith et al. (2017) conducted a study on the framing of news stories related to immigration. They found that news reports that framed immigration as a threat tended to increase negative attitudes towards immigrants among the public. This highlights the importance of how news is framed in influencing public opinion. Similarly, Jones and Brown (2018) conducted a content analysis of news reports on climate change. They found that news reports often presented conflicting viewpoints on the issue, leading to confusion among the public. This demonstrates the need for accurate and balanced reporting on complex issues, such as climate change. Furthermore, Johnson (2019) conducted a study on the use of sensationalism in news reportage. They found that sensationalist news reports tended to attract more viewers, but also led to a decrease in trust in the media. This highlights the ethical considerations that journalists must take into account when reporting sensitive issues, so as to promote peaceful coexistence among members of society.

The Media and Conflict Reporting

Conflict and peace reportage are a critical aspect of media coverage that involves the representation and portrayal of conflicts, violence and peace building efforts in various forms of media, including newspapers, television and online platforms. The media, according to Wilson, cited in Paul (2022), have an important role to play in promoting an honest and pluralistic political debate and in providing accurate and timely information about the issues, policies and strategies that will reduce tension, create the conditions for equitable development and reduce the level of ignorance and fear that contribute to misunderstanding and hostility in society.

The MacBride Commission (1980) views the roles of media in times of conflict as significant in informing the public of the necessary facts however unpleasant or disturbing they might be. According to Adeboya and Adebisi (2021), the information the media provide becomes a vital factor for evolving and fully enlightening the masses to be fully responsive to the dynamics of society. Adewale and Oloruntoba (2017) state that responsible and useful communication can heal conflict. Adeyemi and Ite (2017) also observe that there cannot be peace and understanding among members of the community unless they have better and truer information about one another, which is the idea behind conflict reporting.

Conflict reporting is the art and practice of gathering, compiling and disseminating information about conflict through the mass media. It involves reporting and writing on

events and situations of conflict or impending conflict and its magnitude and consequences. It equally involves the dissemination of information about contentious issues, including armed conflicts, civil unrest, political crises and intergroup tensions (Ayeni & Adepoju, 2018).). Peace reportage, on the contrary, focuses on covering efforts towards conflict resolution, reconciliation and establishment of peaceful coexistence (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2017).

Conflict reporting has also been called peace journalism or conflict resolution journalism (Anaeto, quoted in Paul, 2022). Conflict and peace reportage can significantly impact conflict resolution efforts and peace building initiatives. The way media portray conflicts can influence public opinion and shape policy responses (Ayeni & Adepoju, 2018). Misrepresentation or biased reporting may perpetuate stereotypes and exacerbate tensions, while accurate and impartial reporting can promote understanding and empathy among conflicting parties (Ivanova, 2019). The placement and prominence of conflict and peace articles within media outlets are crucial factors influencing their impact on the audience. Articles placed on the front page or as headlines receive more attention and are likely to shape public discourse more significantly than those buried within the pages (Cassidy, 2018).

Conflict reporting in the media makes for the introduction, interpretation or clarification of issues in a conflict situation to which many have given little or no attention at all. Ivanova (2019) states that the media in conflict reporting puts the reader to task to think, brainstorm, dialogue, agree and disagree, accuse and counter-accuse to bring a lasting solution to the conflict. The role of the media in conflict reporting is basically for conflict solutions. It is to bring about peace. It seeks to bring the parties in the conflict to a peaceful common plane. Conflict reporting assists citizens to rebuild their society and reduce tension or at least not exacerbate existing divisions (Aondover et al, 2023). According to Pate (2002) conflict reporting tries to depolarize conflict by showing the black and white of all sides and de-escalate by highlighting peace and conflict resolutions as much as violence.

Peace journalism seeks to minimize the rift between opposed parties by not repeating facts that demonize one side and set the stage for conflict. In conflict reporting, journalists need to work independently and make a decision on everything from the headline, to the people interviewed and the selection of images, quotes and the language used, and to the basic decision of what stories are covered and why (Park & Deshapriya, 2008). Makana (2017) adds that, in covering conflict stories, journalists should add an “S” (for a solution) and a “C” for common ground to the additional “five W’s and H” formula (who, what, when, where, why and how). This is simply corroborating the idea that the ultimate goal of conflict reporting is conflict resolution.

Pate (2013) summarizes the common professional errors that are found in media reports thus. They are promoting prejudicial stereotypes about groups and individuals through selective reporting; reporting intergroup conflicts out of their fundamental sociological, economic, political and other contents; making generalized statements not supported by concrete facts and figures; attributing statements by individuals to collectives; publishing rumours as facts; and publishing unfair and discriminating advert. Others are using inflammatory language in news reporting; use of inflammatory, misleading and sensational headlines to attract sales; demonizing certain ethnic religious or political groups in an already divided and tense society; and un-objective and biased reporting against some groups, individuals or communities. Also included are inappropriate use of language in reporting conflict; using unrepresentative pictures; unethical editorial conduct of allowing letters to editors and opinion pages to be used as platforms for making inflammatory statements against people or groups; and exposing sources of information to harm and exposing victims of violent attacks to further attack.

Globally, journalism practice is guided by some operational guidelines, namely objectivity, balance, fairness and neutrality, which, according to (Ogunleye and Oso, 2020), form the fulcrum of the international principles of journalism and are deemed binding on the practising journalists and the institutions that employ them. The principle of objectivity behoves journalists (editors and reporters) to give a truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of an event in a context that gives them meaning. These they achieve by “selecting, writing, editing, positioning, scheduling, repeating and otherwise massaging information to become news” (Shoemaker & Reese, 2009). Journalists daily receive a large volume of information from different sources out of which they select the newsworthy ones for publication, which is what is referred to as the gatekeeping function of the media. The principle of objectivity demands that journalists employ appropriate news judgment and value to determine the amount of time (television and radio) and space (newspaper and magazine) allotted to conflicting sides of a news report. It also determines the degree of the importance attached to a story in the newspapers and news broadcast, which, in the opinion of Isola (2010), is a function of understanding and experience.

“Balance,” “fairness” and “neutrality” are other problematic aspects of objectivity. These, according to Isola (2010), presuppose open and free access to media space and time by every participant involved in the news. It is, however, noteworthy that, due to time and space constraints, not everyone could enjoy this privilege but only those who can pay for it. This is where Oso (2017) notes that the commercialization and the privatisation of mass media have come to clash with media objectivity. Notwithstanding, it has been observed from the foregoing that objectivity runs through every aspect of the news reporting process.

There is usually a clash of perceptions between journalists and the public over the issues of balancing and fairness in news reporting. Many times the media are in a dilemma when it comes to reflecting a contrary view against public opinion, especially on issues perceived as antisocial or sectional in purpose. For instance, by analyzing and reporting the primary, as against secondary, causes of violent activities, such as kidnapping, armed robbery and terrorism among the Nigerian youth, and by locating the cause at the doorstep of the government, media are usually dismissed as rebels and saboteurs. Similarly, the media often run into problems either with the government or with a group when the media attempt to differentiate between sectional and national interests (Aondover et al., 2022).

One other notable component of objectivity is neutrality, which requires a reporter to be emotionally detached from his writing. The aspect of neutrality is the most difficult demand of objectivity that makes reporters walk on a tight rope, because human beings have idiosyncrasies, which affect their communication process. For example, every journalist brings into the practice some personal attributes and personal history, which somehow influence his perception and understanding of the situations being investigated and reported. His personal history is a product of education, religious and cultural backgrounds, childhood family life, social and economic ties, friendship and associations. From the several details of an event, the reporter selects which aspect he considers more important based on personal history and experience, among other factors. These will equally determine the slant and the direction of the story.

Similarly, how language is used to communicate meaning is critical to the possibility of achieving objectivity in conflict reporting. Language is an indispensable tool of the journalist and, according to McDonald, cited in Oso (2017), it demands the ultimate in craftsmanship, moral sensitivity and intelligence. This is because word usage and the meaning attached to it depend on the experience of the reporters and the media literacy level of the readers or the listeners (Governor et al., 2024). Moreover, different words may mean different things to different people. The wrong use of words by a reporter or ascribing wrong meaning to a word by listeners or readers may create a communication gap and the outbreak of conflict.

In managing conflict and creating a peaceful atmosphere for societal advancement, the mass media are thought to have an important role to play. However, such expectations could be seriously vitiated if the mass media are not objective in their presentation of news and issues. Olusola (2018) notes that some say journalism is not objective, others say that it cannot be objective and still others say that it should not be objective. However, Wilson, cited in Paul (2022), states that the ideals of objectivity hold that facts can be separated from values and opinions. He notes that traditional studies of objectivity and bias in news accounts assume that news can and ought to be objective

and a reflection of social reality. Despite the ambivalence which some persons often associate with objectivity, it is somewhat certain that news consumers want to read reports and features that are as close to reality as possible because such useful information would help them in making appropriate decisions. Therefore, if the media truly desire to assist in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, they must be seen to be objective.

According to Wilson, quoted in Paul (2022), there are different aspects of objectivity, including truth, fairness, balance, neutrality and absence of value judgments. In achieving a higher level of objectivity, journalists are encouraged to always present conflicting possibilities, supporting evidence, judicious use of quotations, structuring information in appropriate sequences and, above all, humility (Nwanne, cited in Tanko, 2018).

Pate and Dauda (2015) examine the challenges of Nigerian journalists. They note that many of them work to beat very strict deadlines. They are handicapped by a weak resource base, poor infrastructural facilities, the absence of basic working tools and inadequate security cover, among others. Consequently, they are forced to depend on unreliable or incomplete sources of information without conducting proper, deeper, and contextually relevant journalistic investigations. Similarly, some of the journalists, even where they appear competent, are often subdued by the attitude and policies of their individual media houses to the detriment of their professional honour (Ezeonyejiaku et al., 2021). Thus, it is important also to address media owners on this issue. Closely linked to the above is the survival instinct pervading most media organisations. In their desire to sell copies and attract viewers and listeners, they violate journalistic ethics through “colourful, unique and unexpected” stories, which may have negative effects on society.

No appreciable progress can be made in a society with the absence of peace and order. Since conflict is always present, all concerned must work towards conflict management and peace building, which necessarily require communication. That is where the mass media, equipped with communication messages and devices, come into the matrix. The media can achieve this important task of minimizing the effects of conflicts and enhancing a peaceful atmosphere. As noted by Wilson (2009), the agenda-setting role of the mass media is crucial in conflict resolution and peace building. This is often done by drawing attention to the salient issues in a conflict which those involved may have conveniently ignored either out of genuine ignorance or sheer mischief. Newspapers, magazines as well as radio and television, often focus attention on different interests in a conflict situation, which might escalate the problem. In this era of social responsibility, the media's role in providing credible information is crucial. The mass media, while relying on the fairness doctrine, must make their space and airtime available

to all those involved to ventilate their views. By so doing, the persons on the opposing side of the conflict can know their opponent's views on the issues at stake.

The media are armed with the professional ability to gather and disseminate true and credible information. With the death of rumours and the birth of true information, the negotiators and mediators of a conflict are better placed to achieve heartwarming results. Through the education functions of the mass media, those involved in conflict may learn the huge cost of the conflict, which may serve as a disincentive to continue the conflict. Since the media operate in society, it must work hard to ensure peace and tranquillity. However, the ability of the media to fulfil these responsibilities credibly depends on many internal and external contingencies, like ownership patterns, the openness of the communication system, freedom of the media, and rights of the audience to receive and impact mediated messages (Pate & Dauda, 2015).

Challenges of News Reporting to Promote Peaceful Coexistence

News reportage, as already established, plays significant role in shaping public opinion and promoting peaceful coexistence among diverse communities. However, journalists face numerous challenges in their efforts to accurately report issues that can lead to conflict or violence. Some of these challenges are examined here:

1. **Sensationalism and Bias:** One of the major challenges in news reportage is the tendency towards sensationalism and bias. Journalists often prioritize stories that are sensational or controversial, rather than focusing on issues that promote understanding and dialogue among different groups. This can lead to misrepresentation and exacerbate existing tensions.
2. **Lack of Diversity in Newsrooms:** Another challenge is the lack of diversity in newsrooms, which can result in a narrow perspective on complex issues related to peace and conflict. When news organizations do not reflect the diversity of society, certain voices and perspectives may be marginalized or ignored, leading to a one-sided narrative that does not promote peaceful coexistence.
3. **Limited Resources and Time Constraints:** News organizations are often under pressure to produce stories quickly and with limited resources. This can result in superficial reporting that fails to provide a nuanced understanding of the root causes of conflict or the potential for peaceful resolution. In-depth reporting requires time, resources and expertise, which may not always be available in the fast-paced world of journalism.
4. **Political Interference and Censorship:** Journalists may face political interference or censorship when reporting sensitive issues related to peace and conflict. Governments or powerful interest groups may seek to control the narrative and suppress dissenting voices, making it difficult for journalists to report objectively and promote peaceful coexistence.

5. **Social Media and Disinformation:** The rise of social media has also posed challenges for news reportage, as misinformation and disinformation can spread rapidly and undermine efforts to promote peaceful coexistence. Journalists must navigate the complex landscape of social media while upholding ethical standards and verifying information to ensure accuracy and credibility.

Strategies for Overcoming the Challenges

- **Training and Education:** Journalists should receive training on conflict-sensitive reporting and intercultural communication to enhance their understanding of complex issues related to peace and conflict. Education on ethical standards and media literacy can also help journalists navigate the challenges of news reportage in promoting peaceful coexistence.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** News organizations should collaborate with civil society organizations, peace building initiatives, and academic institutions to enhance their reporting on issues related to peace and conflict. By working together, journalists can access expertise, resources and diverse perspectives that can enrich their reporting and promote peaceful coexistence.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** News organizations should prioritize transparency and accountability in their reporting to build trust with their audiences. By disclosing sources, verifying information and correcting errors promptly, journalists can uphold ethical standards and promote accurate reporting that contributes to peaceful coexistence.
- **Promotion of Ethical Journalism Practices:** Journalists have a responsibility to report accurately and impartially issues related to conflict and peace, avoiding sensationalism and bias. By adhering to ethical standards such as accuracy, fairness and balance, journalists can help build trust with their audiences and contribute to a more informed and nuanced public discourse on peace building efforts.
- **Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion in Newsrooms.** By ensuring that news organizations reflect the diversity of the communities they serve, journalists can bring a variety of perspectives to their reporting and avoid perpetuating stereotypes or biases. This can help foster a more inclusive and empathetic approach to reporting on issues related to peace and conflict, ultimately contributing to greater understanding and cooperation among different groups.

Conclusion

News reportage is a vital component of a democratic society, serving as a watchdog, a public forum and a source of information for citizens. Through accurate, timely and analytical reporting, journalists play a critical role in informing the public, shaping public discourse and holding power to account. Within the frame of this study, it was found that

news reportage plays a crucial role in promoting peaceful coexistence by shaping public perceptions, challenging stereotypes and facilitating dialogue among conflicting parties. However, there are challenges and limitations that need to be addressed to ensure that the media fulfil their potential as a force for peace and understanding. Based on this, the study concludes that by promoting accurate and balanced reporting, challenging stereotypes and fostering dialogue, news outlets can contribute to building a more inclusive and tolerant Nigerian society.

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SECTION J

LINGUISTIC AND MEDIA PERSPECTIVES

**EMERGENCE OF TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE
PEDAGOGY**

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Abstract

This work examines the multifaceted impact of technology on language learning, particularly in the context of English language acquisition. The influence of technology on English language learning has become increasingly prominent in contemporary educational settings. Technological advancements offer diverse tools and platforms, such as interactive multimedia resources, language learning applications and virtual classrooms, which facilitate personalised and interactive teaching and learning experiences. This work highlights and describes some available and efficient technological tools necessary for language learning. The theory adopted for this study was the Language Acquisition Theory by Noam Chomsky (1957) contained in his work on universal grammar. The descriptive design was employed for the study while the instruments for data collection were personal interviews and observations. The findings indicated that there are many grey areas in language pedagogy to which technology can proffer solutions; learning is faster and with wider reach when technology is employed; language learning via the use of technology is time-bound and is at the learner's pace and convenience; and learning is interactive, personalised and with immediate feedback. This work therefore recommends that the government as well as teachers of English as a second language (ESL) should make language learning resources available, especially for rural dwellers who intend to learn English as a second language. There should also be training and retraining of teachers and facilitators on the use of these technological learning tools to enable learners to maximally and effectively use learning devices. In conclusion, the advent of technology in language learning will enable learners to acquire the required skills and knowledge regardless of their age, time factor and location. Technology in pedagogy brings the classroom to the learners' space.

Introduction

The use of language is not restricted to only human beings. But for the purpose of this project we will be concentrating on language used by human beings. Language as a human property is used to perform various functions in society, such as communication, instruction and socialization, which is why its study is indispensable.

Over the years, linguists have studied language and have actually expanded the wings of language to various levels. Technology has traditionally been integral to English language education. Technology is positively related to English language education. In the 1960s and 1970s, many institutions of higher learning established language laboratories consisting of many cabinets with microphones among others used to monitor students' interactions using a central control panel. The technology's main aim is that students' verbal interaction is aided in learning the second language quickly. The language laboratory was an encouraging strategy in incorporating technology into the language learning and teaching.

However, the technique was tedious and boring for learners. Besides, it only allowed minimal teacher-student interactions, impeding language education. During the audiolingual age, the technology used in teaching education was audio labs. In the 1980s/1990s the concept of "New Technology" emerged, focusing on communicative techniques for language teaching and learning, in which the personal computer played a central role. The transition to communicative language teaching (CLT) altered the role of technology in language teaching. Technologies that can enhance linguistic competence include text-reconstruction software, telecommunication software, multimedia stimulation software, concordance software and speech-recognition software. CALL is a very powerful language teaching and learning tool. Computer use in the language benefits teachers and learners

Currently, there exist numerous software application programs, including vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar programs, electric workbooks, spelling checks and writing and reading programs. Many other learning packages that assist teachers in executing tutorial classes also exist. Earlier generations' application of technology in language classrooms included radio, television, film, language labs with video/audio clips, computers and interactive videos. Currently, various types of CALL have become commonplace. Computer technologies are becoming more and more accessible to individuals and schools. Society's growing understanding of the potential of computer technology has encouraged a shift in emphasis from the technology to its applications, i.e. finding how best the computers can be used to enhance teaching and learning has prominently featured in research. Today, the interest in using the Internet, multimedia and various forms of online learning as tools to support language learning is widespread.

Given such interests, it is important to examine how computer technology can be (and has been) used to support teaching and learning ESL. Besides, computers have numerous other technological tools that can be used in language teaching. All technological mediums have specific benefits and utilities vis-à-vis the four language skills –writing, reading, listening and speaking. Hence, learners and teachers must familiarize themselves with the technological tools to acquire the requisite linguistic competence in English. The impact of technology on the teaching and learning of the English language is phenomenal. Thus, amalgamating the teachers' role with technology would amount to more advanced and targeted learning outcomes among ESL students.

Globalization has played a vital role in enhancing the global stature and significance of the English language. Consequently, the importance of English language teaching keeps growing, stimulated partially by the Internet revolution. By 2000, there were about one billion learners of English –the number doubled by 2010. Nearly 80% of the information stored on the Internet is documented in English, implying the number of English learners as a second or foreign language will keep increasing in the future. The number of non-native English users currently exceeds that of native English speakers. Accordingly, a wide diversity of contexts based on learners' nationality, age, and educational, cultural and social backgrounds are currently the striking features of English language teaching/learning in the contemporary world.

Rapid science and technological development have provided numerous technological tools that facilitate English teaching. Such tools include electronic dictionaries, online English learning websites, chatting and email messaging programs, CALL programs, virtual conferences, course management software (like Web CT and Blackboard), language-enhancing 3D virtual world programs, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) and listening CD players. Other software application programs include electronic workbooks and grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, writing and reading programs, among other packages that help instructors create tutorial exercises to enhance English language teaching. Word processing (WP) software is perhaps the most accepted and universal computer use in education today. It offers spelling, grammar, style checkers, dictionaries and thesauri. It transforms traditional learning tasks into novel ones, making students enjoy and appreciate routine assignments. It also helps augment the curriculum by focusing on the writing process. The class can use the WP app to create, share and turn in soft copy assignments via a flash disk or email. Such a type of composition process facilitates the formation of communicative writing communities, transforming instructors' directive role into a facilitator of class discourse.

Moreover, Internet-based tools that facilitate English language teaching and learning include email, HTML, bulletin boards, XML, digital video, synchronous chat, simulated emissions and web publishing. Such tools expose ESL students to authentic,

culture-laden contexts to communicate/respond by speaking or writing in English (the target language). For instance, email is generally facilitation; it is a realistic communication/conversation about relevant topics with real people. Besides, email and synchronous chat can help students develop communicative language skills, creating a chance to share and collaborate. The tools also help develop critical thinking skills; for example, chat cultivates ESL students' ability to think and compose spontaneously.

Multimedia technology is also another powerful and effective tool for teaching the English language, mainly in the context of ESL. Its visual, animation and audio effects offer an interesting and engaging platform for innovation in the contemporary English classroom. Therefore, multimedia technology promotes language learning activities and innovative initiatives for ESL teachers and students. Besides, the Internet revolution has continuously boosted the growth of the English language. Internet-enabled computers and tablets permeate the entire English teaching and learning process. In English literature, technology has been recognized as the quintessential part of teaching and learning. More effort is being directed toward reinforcing the role of technology in language pedagogy, obliterating the human teaching role. Thus, English language teachers must familiarize themselves with the latest technological developments. Such awareness will help them handle the emerging technological revolution and yield maximum outcomes in the English language classroom.

Statement of the Problem

The integration of technology into education, particularly in language learning, has seen exponential growth in recent years. In the context of English language learning, technology is increasingly perceived as a vital tool for enhancing teaching methods, providing access to resources, and creating interactive and personalized learning experiences. However, while the benefits of technological tools, such as mobile applications, online platforms and digital media are evident, there are also challenges and concerns regarding their actual impact on learning outcomes. The disparity in access, teacher training and the effectiveness of various technological interventions raises significant questions about how technology influences English language proficiency.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the influence of technology on English language learning. The objectives of this study are to:

- analyze the role of digital tools in improving English language learners' proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing skills;
- examine the effectiveness of multimedia resources in enhancing learners' comprehension and retention of English vocabulary and grammar;

- identify the challenges and limitations faced by learners and educators when using technology for English language learning;
- investigate the influence of personalized learning technologies on the progress of the individual and self-paced learning of English language students; and
- examine how various technological tools and platforms enhance or hinder the acquisition and mastery of language.

Significance of the study

The study on the influence of technology on English language learning holds significant importance for various stakeholders, including educators, learners, policymakers and future researchers. Below is a detailed discussion of the significance of this study:

1. **Innovative Learning Approaches:** Technology, such as mobile applications, online platforms, and artificial intelligence-based tools, has revolutionized traditional language learning methods. This study helps educators and institutions understand how these technologies can be harnessed to improve learning outcomes.
2. **Wider Access to Education:** Technology enables English language learning to be accessible worldwide, breaking geographical and socio-economic barriers. Learners from remote areas or underprivileged backgrounds can access online courses, virtual tutors and language apps. The study is significant in highlighting the potential of technology to democratize education, making English learning more inclusive.
3. **Classroom and Online Integration:** The findings from this study are critical for the development of hybrid learning environments, where traditional classroom teaching is combined with technological tools. These blended learning models create more flexible learning pathways.
4. **Teacher Training and Professional Development:** The research stresses the need for teacher training programmes that equip educators with the skills to integrate technology into their teaching methods. This ensures that teachers are not left behind in the technological shift and can effectively guide learners.
5. **Foundation for Further Studies:** For future researchers, this study lays the groundwork for exploring the intricate relationship between technology and language acquisition. They can build on the findings by examining specific technological tools, learning environments, or even age and demographic factors in more detail.
6. **Exploration of Emerging Technologies:** As new technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning and virtual reality, evolve, future researchers can investigate how these emerging tools impact English language learning. The study provides a benchmark for comparing older technologies with innovations.

Literature Review

Conceptual literature

Conceptual literature refers to literary works that prioritize abstract ideas, philosophical concepts or experimental narrative structures over traditional storytelling elements like plot, character development or setting. In conceptual literature, the focus is often exploring themes, emotions or intellectual concepts in innovative or unconventional ways.

Technology

Technology refers to the collection of techniques, skills, methods and processes used in the creation of goods or services or in the accomplishment of objectives, such as scientific investigation. It encompasses a wide range of tools, machinery, systems and methods that enable humans to solve problems, accomplish tasks and improve their lives.

Technology can be broadly categorized into the following:

- Information Technology (IT): This includes computer systems, software, networks and data storage technologies used to create, process, store, secure and exchange information.
- Communication Technology: This encompasses technologies used for transmitting, receiving and processing information, such as telecommunications networks, the Internet and mobile devices.
- Biotechnology: This involves the use of living organisms, cells and biological systems to develop products and technologies for various purposes, including healthcare, agriculture and environmental protection.
- Green Technology: Also known as clean technology, this refers to technologies and practices aimed at reducing environmental impact and promoting sustainability, such as renewable energy sources, energy-efficient systems and waste management solutions.
- Manufacturing Technology: This includes tools, equipment and processes used in manufacturing and production, such as robotics, automation, 3D printing and advanced materials.
- Transportation Technology: This involves technologies used for transporting people and goods, including vehicles, aircraft, ships and infrastructure, such as roads and railways.
- Medical Technology: Also known as med-tech or healthcare technology, this includes devices, equipment and procedures used in healthcare for diagnosis, treatment, monitoring and prevention of diseases and medical conditions.

- Nanotechnology: This involves the manipulation of matter at the atomic and molecular scale to create materials, devices and systems with novel properties and functions.

Technology continues to evolve rapidly, driving innovation and impacting virtually every aspect of human life, including business, education, healthcare, communication, transportation, and entertainment.

Concept and Evolution of Technology

The concept of technology encompasses the tools, systems devices and methods that humans develop to solve problems and enhance their quality of life. It is rooted in the Greek word “*techne*,” which means art or craft, signifying a systematic approach to knowledge and skills. Technology encompasses a broad range of tools and processes beyond machinery and electronics, including methods for communication, transportation, construction, data transmission and I-problem-solving, from ancient agricultural practices to modern digital innovations (Emem, 2023).

The evolution of technology can be traced back to prehistoric times, marked by the development of simple tools made from stones and wood. As societies progressed, so did their technologies. The Agricultural Revolution around 10,000 BC transformed human existence, allowing for settled communities and the cultivation of crops, which laid the foundation for civilizations. This era witnessed the invention of the plough, irrigation systems and storage techniques, revolutionising food production and societal organisation. The next significant leap came with the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries. Characterised by mechanisation, this period introduced steam power, the spinning jenny, and the power loom, fundamentally altering manufacturing processes and labour. It marked the shift from agrarian economies to industrial ones, leading to urbanisation and changes in social structures. The proliferation of machines increased productivity and initiated a culture of innovation, setting the stage for modern technology.

In the 20th century, technological evolution accelerated dramatically, driven by advancements in electricity, telecommunications and computing. The invention of the telephone and the radio transformed communication, while the advent of computers paved the way for information technology. The digital revolution, which began in the late 20th century, brought about a profound change in how humans interact with information and each other. The rise of the Internet democratised access to knowledge, reshaping economies and societies worldwide (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016). Today, technology continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace, encompassing fields like artificial intelligence, biotechnology and renewable energy. These advancements raise new ethical considerations and challenges, prompting debates about privacy, job displacement and the environmental impact of technological growth. However, the concept and evolution

of technology reflect humanity's relentless pursuit of improvement and adaptation. As technology advances, it reshapes the world, influencing everything from daily life to global structures, while continually challenging ethical and moral frameworks.

Technology That Can Enhance English Language Learning/Teaching

Technology has significantly transformed English language learning and teaching, offering various tools and resources to enhance the experience. Here are some notable technologies:

- **Language Learning Apps:** These have become increasingly popular due to their convenience and interactive features. Here are some of the most popular and effective language learning apps:
 - **Duolingo:** Uses gamification to make learning engaging and interactive
 - **Babbel:** Focuses on conversation skills and real-life dialogues
 - **Rosetta Stone:** Immersive method with speech recognition technology to improve pronunciation
- **Online Courses and Platforms:** These have revolutionized education, offering a wide range of subjects and flexibility in learning. Examples:
 - **Coursera and edX:** Offer courses from top universities that include interactive exercises and peer discussions
 - **Udemy:** Wide range of courses on English language skills, including specific areas like business English
 - **AI-Powered Writing Assistants:** These are software tools that utilize artificial intelligence (AI) and natural language processing (NLP) technologies to enhance the writing process.

Examples:

- **Grammarly:** Provides real-time grammar, punctuation and style suggestions, helping learners improve their writing skills (Zhang & Zou, 2020)
- **Quillbot:** Assists with paraphrasing and enhancing vocabulary

Speech and Pronunciation Tools

- **Elsa Speak:** Uses AI to provide feedback on pronunciation and fluency
- **Speechling:** Offers pronunciation practice with feedback from native speakers

Podcasts and Audiobooks

- **Spotify and Audible:** Offer a wide range of English language learning podcasts and audiobooks, providing exposure to different accents, dialects, and contexts

- BBC Learning English: Provides a variety of audio and video resources focused on different aspects of the English language

Translation Tools

- Google Translate: Offers quick translations and pronunciation guides, useful for understanding new vocabulary and phrases
- DeepL Translator: Known for its high accuracy in translation, helpful for advanced learners needing precise language use

Writing Platforms

- Medium and Wattpad: Platforms where learners can write and publish their own stories or articles, receiving feedback from a global audience

Areas Where Technology Can Be Applied with the Use of Interactionist Theory

The Interactionist Theory posits that language development is influenced by both biological factors and environmental stimuli, particularly social interactions. In the context of technology's influence on English language acquisition, the theory suggests that technology can play a significant role in facilitating language learning by providing opportunities for meaningful interaction and engagement.

- **Social Interaction:** Technology, such as online forums, language learning apps and virtual classrooms, can create environments where learners interact with others in English. Through these interactions, learners engage in meaningful communication, negotiate meaning and receive feedback, all of which are crucial aspects of language acquisition, according to the Interactionist Theory.
- **Scaffolding:** Technology can offer scaffolding tools that support learners at their individual proficiency levels. For example, language learning apps often adapt content and difficulty based on the user's progress, providing just enough challenge to promote learning without overwhelming the learner. This aligns with the Interactionist Theory's emphasis on the importance of appropriately challenging tasks in language development.
- **Authentic Input:** Technology provides access to authentic English language input in various forms, such as videos, podcasts and online articles. Exposure to authentic language input is essential for language acquisition, according to the Interactionist Theory, as it allows learners to observe how language is used in real-life contexts and to internalize linguistic patterns and conventions.
- **Collaborative Learning:** Technology facilitates collaborative learning experiences, allowing learners to work together on tasks and projects regardless of their physical locations. Collaborative learning environments promote language development by encouraging learners to communicate with one another,

negotiate meaning and co-construct knowledge, all of which are central to the Interactionist Theory.

- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Technology can provide immediate and personalized feedback to learners, helping them identify errors and areas for improvement in their English language skills. Feedback is crucial for language acquisition, as it allows learners to monitor their progress and make adjustments to their language production, in line with the emphasis of the Interactionist Theory on the role of feedback in language development.

Language

Language is a system of communication used by humans, typically consisting of a set of sounds, words and grammar rules, that allows individuals to convey meaning, express thoughts, exchange information and interact with one another. Language can also refer to the written symbols or signs used to represent this system of communication. Chomsky is one of the most influential linguists of the twentieth century and he still dominates the scene of theoretical linguistics. He views language as an innate human capacity, suggesting that humans are born with a predisposition for language acquisition. He says that the ability to learn language is facilitated by a biological framework that he calls Universal Grammar.

Language can be divided to various parts:

- **Phonology:** The system of sounds used in a particular language and the rules governing their combination and pronunciation
- **Morphology:** The structure and formation of words, including prefixes, suffixes and root words
- **Syntax:** The rules governing the arrangement of words to form phrases and sentences in a language
- **Semantics:** The meaning of words, phrases, and sentences within a language
- **Pragmatics:** The social and cultural aspects of language use, including the appropriate use of language in different contexts and for different purposes

Overview of Language Learning

Language learning is a complex and dynamic process that involves acquiring the ability to communicate effectively in a new language. This process can be understood through various dimensions, including cognitive, social, cultural and technological factors. The motivations for learning a new language are diverse, encompassing personal, professional and academic reasons. Understanding these facets can provide a comprehensive overview of language learning and its significance in a globalised world. At its core, language learning is a cognitive process that engages various mental faculties. Research in linguistics and psychology has shown that individuals have different learning styles, like

visual, auditory and kinaesthetic, which can influence how they acquire new languages (Dey, 2021). Motivation plays a crucial role in language learning. It can be intrinsic, driven by a personal desire to connect with others or understand a new culture, or extrinsic, such as the need for language skills in a professional context. Various models, like Gardner's socio-educational model, highlight the impact of motivation on language proficiency (Lapadat & Lapadat, 2024).

Highly motivated learners are more likely to engage with the language, practise regularly, and persevere through challenges. Conversely, a lack of motivation can hinder progress and result in frustration. Language is inherently social and cultural. Learning a language is not just about mastering vocabulary and grammar; it also involves understanding the cultural nuances and social contexts in which the language is used. Cultural competence, the ability to navigate and appreciate the cultural intricacies of a language, is essential for effective communication. Engaging with native speakers, participating in cultural activities and immersing oneself in the language environment can enhance this aspect of language learning. In recent years, technology has transformed the landscape of language learning. Digital tools, such as language-learning apps, online courses and interactive platforms, have made language acquisition more accessible and engaging. These resources often incorporate gamification, allowing learners to practise language skills through interactive exercises and real-life scenarios (Bharathi, 2023). Online communities and social media platforms also facilitate language exchange, connecting learners with native speakers worldwide.

The use of artificial intelligence and machine learning in language learning applications can personalise the learning experience, adapting to individual needs and progress. Overall, language learning is a multifaceted process influenced by cognitive, motivational, social, cultural and technological factors. Understanding these dimensions can help learners navigate their language acquisition journey more effectively. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the ability to communicate across languages and cultures is not just an academic skill; it is also a vital competency that fosters understanding and collaboration in a diverse global society.

English as Second Language (ESL)

English as a Second Language (ESL) refers to the teaching and learning of English by individuals who primarily speak a different language. It is a term commonly used in educational contexts, particularly in countries where English is not the native language. English as a Second Language programmes aim to help non-native English speakers develop their language skills for various purposes, such as academic study, work or everyday communication. These programs often include instruction in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and may cater for learners of different ages and proficiency levels.

The programmes typically focus on helping non-native English speakers develop proficiency in the English language to effectively communicate in various contexts.

Here are some additional aspects of ESL:

Language Skills: English as a Second Language programmes typically cover the four primary language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Instruction is designed to improve learners' abilities in each of these areas, often through a combination of classroom activities, exercises and real-life practice.

Grammar and Vocabulary: English as a Second Language instruction often includes a focus on grammar rules and vocabulary acquisition. Learners may study grammatical structures, verb tenses, sentence patterns and common idiomatic expressions to improve their accuracy and fluency in English.

Communication Skills: English as a Second Language programmes emphasize practical communication skills to enable learners to interact effectively in English-speaking environments. These include practising conversation, participating in group discussions, giving presentations, and engaging in activities that simulate real-life communication situations.

Cultural Awareness: English as a Second Language instruction may also incorporate elements of cultural awareness and sensitivity. Learning about English-speaking cultures and customs can help learners navigate social interactions and better understand the cultural context in which the language is used.

Tailored Instruction: English as a Second Language programmes often cater for learners with diverse backgrounds, needs and proficiency levels. Instruction may be tailored to accommodating different learning styles, goals and levels of English proficiency, ranging from beginner to advanced levels.

Support Services: Many ESL programmes provide additional support services to help learners succeed, such as tutoring, language labs, conversation partners and workshops on study skills or academic writing.

Overall, ESL programmes play a crucial role in helping non-native English speakers develop the language skills they need to thrive in English-speaking environments, whether for academic, professional or personal purposes.

Emergence of Technological Tools in Language Education

The emergence of technological tools in language education has revolutionised the way students learn and engage with languages. The integration of technology in education has been accelerated by the proliferation of digital devices and the Internet, allowing learners to access resources and practise languages like never before. This transformation is not

only enhancing language acquisition but also fostering greater accessibility and inclusivity in language education. One of the most significant technological advancements in language education is the development of language learning apps and online platforms. Applications like Duolingo, Rosetta Stone and Babbel have made language learning interactive and enjoyable. These platforms use gamification techniques to motivate learners, providing immediate feedback and rewards for progress. This personalised learning experience allows students to learn at their own pace, accommodating different learning styles and preferences (Karasimos, 2022).

Moreover, the rise of social media has created new opportunities for language practice and cultural exchange. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram enable learners to connect with native speakers worldwide. Language learners can engage in real-time conversations, share experiences and immerse themselves in the target language (Sainal & Rahmat, 2020). This interaction not only enhances language skills but also promotes cultural understanding, which is crucial for effective communication.

Another notable technological advancement is the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in language education. AI-powered tools, such as chatbots and virtual tutors, offer students personalised learning experiences by adapting to their individual needs and providing tailored exercises. These tools can simulate conversations, allowing learners to practise speaking and listening skills in a safe environment. Additionally, AI can analyse a learner's progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, and suggest resources for improvement (Igbokwe, 2023).

Online courses and webinars have also transformed traditional language education. Educational institutions and language schools now offer virtual classes that can be accessed from anywhere in the world. This flexibility not only makes language learning more convenient but also allows learners to choose from a wider range of courses and instructors, enhancing their educational experience (Pichugin et al., 2022). Furthermore, these online platforms often include multimedia resources, such as videos, podcasts and interactive quizzes, which cater for diverse learning preferences.

However, the rise of technology in language education is not without challenges. Issues such as digital literacy, access to technology and the potential for distractions during online learning must be addressed. Educators need to ensure that all students have equal access to these tools and that they are equipped with the skills to use them effectively.

Evolution of Educational Technology for English Learning

The evolution of educational technology for English learning reflects the dynamic interplay between advancements in technology and pedagogical theories. From the early days of printed materials to the current use of sophisticated technologies like artificial intelligence, the journey has transformed how English is taught and learned. The journey

began with the advent of the printing press in the 15th century, which democratised access to educational materials. Textbooks and grammar guides became widely available, laying the groundwork for systematic English learning. By the 20th century, language laboratories emerged, enabling students to engage with audio recordings of native speakers. This focus on listening skills marked the beginning of technology's role in language acquisition, fostering a more immersive learning experience (Embark, 2020). The mid-20th century saw the introduction of audio-visual aids.

Educational films and slides enhanced the learning environment, making it more engaging. The availability of television in classrooms during the 1960s provided new opportunities for exposure to English, especially through shows designed for language learners. These tools facilitated a more interactive approach, allowing students to learn vocabulary and pronunciation in context (Omariba, 2022). The 1980s and 1990s heralded the computer age, bringing with it multimedia resources. Software programs for language learning began to proliferate, incorporating interactive exercises, quizzes and games. These tools catered for diverse learning styles, providing visual and auditory stimuli that engaged students more effectively than traditional methods. The Internet further revolutionised English learning with online resources, forums and email communication, enabling learners to practise English in real time with peers and native speakers. With the advent of the 21st century, e-learning platforms emerged, transforming English education into a flexible, accessible format. Learning management systems, like Moodle and Coursera, offer courses from renowned institutions, allowing learners to access quality education from anywhere. Mobile applications like Duolingo and Babbel further democratised language learning, enabling users to practise English wherever they are, gamifying the process and enhancing user engagement (Niaz et al., 2021). Today, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) is shaping the future of English learning.

Artificial intelligence-powered tools, such as chatbots, and language learning apps personalise the learning experience, adapting content to individual learner's needs and progress. Speech recognition technology assists in pronunciation practice, offering instant feedback that traditional methods could not provide. Moreover, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are beginning to create immersive environments where learners can practise English in simulated real-life scenarios. The evolution of educational technology for English learning has been marked by significant milestones that reflect broader societal changes. As technology continues to advance, it is essential to ensure that these tools are used effectively to enhance learning outcomes, making English education more engaging, personalised and accessible to all. This ongoing journey promises exciting possibilities for future generations of English learners.

Types of Technology Used in English Language Learning

Technology plays a pivotal role in modern English language learning, enhancing the educational experience through diverse tools and methodologies. Here are some notable types of technology that facilitate the process of language learning, according to Vijayakumar & Chellapandiyan (2024):

- **Language Learning Apps:** Mobile applications, such as Duolingo, Babbel and Rosetta Stone, have revolutionised language acquisition. These apps offer interactive lessons, quizzes and gamified learning experiences, making it easier for learners to practise vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation at their pace. The convenience of learning wherever they are allowing users to integrate language practice into their daily routines.
- **Online Courses and MOOCs:** Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), like Coursera and edX, provide access to high-quality English language courses from reputable universities and institutions. These platforms offer structured learning paths, including video lectures, assignments and peer discussions, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the language. They cater for diverse proficiency levels, from beginners to advanced learners.
- **Virtual Classrooms:** Platforms like Zoom and Google Meet have enabled virtual classrooms, allowing teachers and students to connect from anywhere in the world. These tools support live interactions, discussions and collaborative learning. Educators can share resources in real time and facilitate group activities, enhancing engagement and making learning more dynamic.
- **Language Learning Software:** Dedicated software, such as FluentU and Pimsleur, provides immersive experiences by incorporating videos, audio and interactive exercises. These tools often use real-world content, like movie trailers and music videos, helping learners grasp language nuances and cultural contexts. The language learning software tracks progress and adapts to individual learning styles, optimising the educational experience.
- **Social Media and Online Communities:** Social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, and language exchange sites, like Tandem, connect learners with native speakers. These platforms facilitate informal learning through chat, video calls and content sharing, promoting practical language use in real-life contexts. Engaging with communities allows learners to practise conversational skills and receive immediate feedback.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Artificial intelligence-driven tools, like chatbots and virtual tutors, provide personalized language practice. They can simulate conversations, offer corrections and plan exercises based on user performance.

This technology enhances the learning experience by providing immediate support and feedback, helping learners build confidence.

The integration of technology in English language learning offers innovative approaches to education. By leveraging various tools from apps to virtual classrooms learners can enhance their skills, making language acquisition more accessible, engaging and effective. As technology continues to evolve, it will undoubtedly play an even greater role in shaping the future of language learning.

Benefits of Technology in English Language Learning

The integration of technology in English language learning has revolutionised the way learners acquire and practise language skills. Here are some of the key benefits, according to Samiri & Esmaeili (2024):

- **Accessibility and Convenience:** Learners can access a vast array of materials, including videos, podcasts, articles and e-books, which cater for different learning styles. Students can study at their own pace and schedule, allowing for personalised learning experiences.
- **Interactive Learning:** Incorporating videos, audio and graphics makes learning more engaging and helps reinforce concepts. Educational games and apps encourage motivation and can make learning more enjoyable, improving retention.
- **Immediate Feedback:** Online quizzes and interactive exercises provide instant feedback, allowing learners to identify areas for improvement. Applications often include adaptive learning algorithms that adjust difficulty based on performance, enhancing the learning process.
- **Global Communication:** Technology enables learners to connect with native speakers worldwide, facilitating real-world practice and cultural exchange. Engaging in English through platforms like forums and social media encourages learners to use the language in authentic contexts.
- **Personalised Learning:** Technology allows for customisation of learning experiences based on individual interests and proficiency levels. Programmes that adjust to a learner's pace and progress can help in targeting specific language skills that need improvement.
- **Enhancing Motivation and Engagement:** The use of different technologies keeps learners engaged and motivated through varied content and learning methods. Technologies like online collaborative documents allow learners to work together, fostering a sense of community and shared learning.
- **Access to Native Speaker Input:** Learners can easily find authentic audio and video materials featuring native speakers, enhancing their listening skills and

pronunciation. Access to global content exposes learners to different accents, dialects and cultural contexts.

- **Development of Digital Literacy:** By engaging with various digital tools, learners develop important skills beyond language proficiency, such as navigating software and online communication.
- **Integration of AI and Language Learning Tools:** Artificial intelligence-powered applications can offer tailored exercises, pronunciation checks and instant translations, enhancing the learning experience. Tools that analyse spoken language help learners improve their speaking skills through real-time feedback.
- **Support for Different Learning Styles:** Technology accommodates auditory, visual and kinaesthetic learners through varied multimedia content. Learners can choose how they engage content, allowing for a more personalised approach that fits their unique learning preferences.

The benefits of technology in English language learning are extensive and transformative, making language acquisition more accessible, engaging and effective. By leveraging these tools, learners can develop their language skills in a more personalized and interactive environment, preparing them for successful communication in an increasingly globalised world

Future and Emerging Trends in Technology for English Learning

The future of technology in English learning is promising and dynamic, driven by emerging trends that cater for diverse learning needs and environments. Here are some key trends and innovations shaping this landscape, according to Leahy et al. (2019):

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning:** Artificial intelligence technologies are enhancing personalised learning experiences through adaptive learning systems. These systems analyse learners' progress and customise lessons based on individual's strengths and weaknesses. AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants can provide instant feedback, helping learners practise conversational skills in real time.
- **Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR):** These create immersive language learning environments. These technologies allow learners to engage in real-world scenarios, such as ordering food in a restaurant or navigating a city, which helps build contextual language skills. Virtual Reality classrooms can simulate interactions with native speakers, making learning more engaging and realistic.
- **Gamification:** Incorporating game-like elements into English learning can increase motivation and engagement. Gamification strategies, such as points, badges and leaderboards, encourage learners to progress through lessons while making the

experience enjoyable. Educational games also enhance vocabulary retention and grammar practice through interactive challenges.

- **Mobile Learning and Apps:** Mobile technology continues to revolutionise English learning by providing flexibility and accessibility. Language learning apps offer instantaneous practice with features like flashcards, quizzes and speech recognition. This allows learners to study at their own pace and incorporate language practice into their daily routines.
- **Social Learning Platforms:** Online communities and social media platforms are fostering collaborative learning. These platforms enable learners to connect with peers and native speakers for language exchange, providing authentic practice opportunities. Discussion forums and collaborative projects encourage the sharing of resources and experiences.
- **Data Analytics and Learning Analytics:** Educational institutions are increasingly using data analytics to track learners' progress and engagement. Analysing data can help educators identify trends and tailor instruction to individual needs. Learning analytics can help curriculum development and improve the overall learning experience.
- **Voice Recognition Technology:** Voice recognition technology is enhancing language practice by allowing learners to improve their pronunciation and fluency. Tools like speech-to-text and pronunciation analysis provide immediate feedback, enabling learners to refine their speaking skills effectively.
- **Content Creation and Digital Literacy:** As digital literacy becomes essential, learners are encouraged to create content, such as blogs, videos and podcasts, in English. This trend not only enhances language skills but also promotes critical thinking and creativity, preparing learners for a digital world.
- **Flipped Classrooms and Blended Learning:** The flipped classroom model, where learners engage with content at home and practice in class, is gaining traction. Blended learning combines online resources with traditional classroom experiences, providing flexibility and catering for different learning styles.
- **Collaborative Learning Tools:** Tools like Google Workspace, Microsoft Teams, and educational platforms enable collaborative projects and group discussions. These tools foster teamwork and communication skills, which are essential for language learning.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework serves as a foundational structure for research, guiding the investigation of a phenomenon. It consists of concepts, theories and propositions that provide a lens through which to analyse data and interpret findings. Establishing relationships among variables helps researchers formulate hypotheses and design their

studies. The framework also contextualises the research within existing literature, demonstrating how it builds upon or diverges from prior knowledge. Furthermore, a theoretical framework enhances the validity and reliability of the study by offering a coherent justification for the chosen methodology. A well-defined theoretical framework enriches the research process and contributes to the advancement of knowledge in a specific field. This study adopts the theories of language acquisition and interactionist theory.

Theories of Language Acquisition

Theories of language acquisition seek to explain how individuals, particularly children, learn and develop language. One prominent theory is the nativist approach, championed by Noam Chomsky. It posits that humans are born with an innate ability to acquire language through Universal Grammar that underlies all languages (Barman, 2014). In contrast, the behaviourist perspective, associated with B. F. Skinner, suggests that language learning occurs through imitation, reinforcement and conditioning, where children learn by mimicking adults (Nor & Rashid, 2018). Another influential theory is the interactionist approach, which emphasises the role of social interaction in language development. This theory argues that language is acquired through communication with caregivers and peers, where context and meaningful exchanges shape understanding (Alharbi, 2023). Additionally, connectionist models highlight the importance of neural networks and statistical learning, suggesting that children absorb linguistic patterns from their environment (Westermann et al., 2019). Together, the theories of language acquisition provide a comprehensive view of the complex processes involved in language acquisition.

Theories of language acquisition inform the study of technology's influence on English language learning by highlighting different learning processes. Nativist theories, which emphasise innate social and affective dimensions of interaction, is consistent with the Interactionist Theory.

Summary

This study argues that technology plays a critical role in English language learning, promoting recommendations for curriculum development that incorporate more technological tools, professional development for educators and investment in technological infrastructure to support learning. The findings highlight the need for future research to explore the specific types of technology that best enhance various language skills.

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of how technology impacts language acquisition among students. The findings reveal a strong positive correlation between the

use of technology and improvements in essential language skills, namely reading, writing, speaking and listening. The study highlights the transformative potential of technology in the academic environment where its integration not only facilitates access to learning materials but also promotes collaboration and interaction.

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of integrating technology into English language curricula to optimize student engagement in learning outcomes. Educational institutions, should consider investing in technological resources and training programme to equip both students and educators with the necessary tools to fully leverage the benefits of technology in language education. Ultimately, the study serves as a valuable guide for future strategies aimed at enhancing English language learning through effective use of technology.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, important recommendations emerge to enhance language learning outcomes through effective use of technology. These recommendations address key areas, such as curriculum development, teacher training, resource allocation and future research initiatives:

- **Curriculum Development:** Educational institutions should incorporate none technology-based tools and platforms into the English language curriculum. The study demonstrated that students benefit significantly from using online learning platforms and technological tools for language practice and collaboration. This calls for the integration of digital learning resources, such as multimedia content, interactive learning platform and guage apps, into teaching methods. This can make learning engaging and accessible, helping students develop language skills at their own pace while benefiting from a variety of resources.
- **Teacher Training and Professional Development:** To maximize the benefits of technology in language education, teachers must be equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively use these tools. The study notes that students find technological tools highly beneficial. So, teachers should to guide students in utilizing these resources optimally. Professional development programmes focusing on the integration of technology in language teaching will help educators adopt innovative teaching practices.
- **Investment in Technological Infrastructure:** The findings underscore the need for a robust technological infrastructure within educational institutions to support the widespread use of technology in language learning. Students need access to high-quality digital tools and platforms to improve their language skills effectively. Educational institutions should prioritize investing in reliable Internet access, learning management systems and other essential technological resources.

- **Student-Centred Learning and Technological Empowerment:** Since the study revealed that students feel empowered by technology, particularly for collaborative tasks, it is essential to encourage a more student-centred learning environment. By providing opportunities for students to take charge of their learning through the use of technology, they can become more independent and confident in improving their language skills.
- **Further Research:** The study identified technology as a key factor in improving language skills, but further research is needed to explore the specific types of technology that have the greatest impact on different aspects of language learning (e.g. reading, writing, speaking and listening). This could help refine strategies for using technology more effectively in education.
- **Promoting the Use of Social Media for Language Learning:** The study indicated that social media platforms play a positive role in language learning. Educators and institutions should promote the responsible and strategic use of social media to enhance language practice. Social media can provide informal settings for communication, vocabulary building and cultural exchange, which can enrich students' learning experiences.
- **Personalized Learning Experiences through Technology:** With the availability of numerous technology tools, students can now benefit from personalized learning experiences that cater for their individual needs. This study suggests the importance of customizing learning to maximize student outcomes, especially since students may have varying levels of proficiency or areas that need improvement.

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**EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION: PANACEA FOR PEACEFUL ETHNIC
RELATION IN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Nigeria is a country known for its diverse ethnic groups and complex intergroup relations. Therefore, effective communication can play a crucial role in achieving and sustaining peaceful ethnic relations in Nigeria. To this end, the study anchored to Conflict Theory and Intergroup Contact Theory, explored the concepts of communication, effective communication, effective relations and the various ways in which effective communication can be utilized to achieve and sustain peaceful ethnic relations in Nigeria. The paper established that promotion of dialogue, understanding, conflict resolution and social cohesion are effective communication techniques that can be used to promote peaceful ethnic relations in Nigeria. It concluded that effective communication is a powerful tool that can be utilized to bridge ethnic divides, build trust and foster a sense of unity among different ethnic groups and work towards a more inclusive and harmonious society.

Keywords: Communication, Effective communication, Ethnic relations, Peaceful ethnic Relations.

Introduction

Communication is a fundamental aspect of human interaction, and its importance in intergroup relations cannot be overstated. It can be defined as an act or process through which information is transmitted between individuals via a common system of symbols, signs or behaviour (Nwana, cited in Ineji, 2024). It can also be described as a means by which social inputs are fed into social system. According to Okonkwo (2020), communication is the sharing or exchanging of ideas, opinions, views and other societal concerns between two parties.

Thus, communication is the hub on which human society rotates. It is also used as a means of interaction in every sphere of human activity. It is deployed to regulate and

interpret all human action. This is why Emenanjour, cited in Ibrahim (2019), opines that communication is at the centre of human society. Communication is the channel through which man establishes and maintains relationships in society. It is the mechanism by which power is acquired, exercised and sustained, plans are developed and decisions are made and managed. In other words, communication is what holds society together and it is crucial for peaceful ethnic relations. It is therefore important that individuals in society communicate effectively.

Effective communication is the process of exchanging ideas, thoughts, opinions, knowledge and data so that the message is received and understood with clarity and purpose. It occurs when the message the sender intends to convey is understood accurately by the receiver. Effective communication brings about satisfaction to both sender and receiver of the message. It leaves all parties in the communication encounter satisfied and with a feeling of accomplishment. With effective communication, there is limited chance for misunderstanding of messages, which decreases the potential for conflict.

Effective communication incorporates the ideas of meaning and consistency of meaning. Meaning is that which the individual who initiates the communication process wishes to convey. In effective communication, the meaning is transmitted in such a manner that the receiving person understands it. According to Dupe (2015), communication is a vital tool in any relationship. Without communication one cannot have relationship whether at work or in other spheres. Communication helps the parties concerned to understand each other for better performance and better relationship since communication enables the parties to have understanding of what each person is putting across. According to Stephen (2011), communication is a critical factor in directing and mobilizing individuals towards the accomplishment of personal and societal goals or objectives. By creating understanding, it enhances co-operation and promotes improved ethnic relationship.

In the context of ethnic relations, effective communication plays a key role in promoting mutual respect, understanding and empathy among different ethnic groups. In other words, effective communication is essential for promoting peaceful coexistence and social cohesion.

Again, effective communication can help to address underlying issues of inequality, discrimination and marginalization that often fuel ethnic conflicts. By promoting inclusive communication practices that give voice to marginalized groups and promote dialogue among all stakeholders, it is possible to address the root causes of ethnic tensions and promote social justice and equality. Ogbeidi (2019) opines that, by facilitating dialogue and exchange of ideas, effective communication can help to bridge cultural divides, dispel stereotypes and build trust among diverse communities. Similarly, Smith (2020) notes

that effective communication is widely recognized as a crucial factor in fostering peaceful ethnic relations within diverse societies. The ability to communicate effectively across cultural and ethnic boundaries is essential for promoting understanding, resolving conflicts and building trust among different groups.

Nigeria, with its diverse population comprising over 250 ethnic groups, has a history of ethnic tensions and conflicts which have been fuelled by misunderstandings, lack of dialogue and miscommunication among different ethnic groups. This implies that there are significant challenges and barriers that hinder effective communication in multicultural settings of Nigeria resulting in poor ethnic relation. One of such challenges is the presence of language barriers. This has been proven to be a major challenge to effective communication (Habi, 2018; Brown & Garcia, 2019; Ineji, 2024). This is because it can impede the exchange of ideas and information between individuals from different ethnic backgrounds. In multicultural societies like Nigeria, individuals may speak different languages or dialects, making it difficult to communicate effectively with one another. This can lead to misunderstandings, misinterpretations and ultimately, conflicts between ethnic groups.

Another challenge is the lack of cultural sensitivity and awareness in communication practices. Cultural differences in norms, values and communication styles can impact how messages are perceived and understood by individuals from different ethnic backgrounds. Without a deep understanding of these cultural nuances, communication breakdowns and conflicts can arise, further exacerbating the tensions between ethnic groups.

Furthermore, the proliferation of misinformation and stereotypes in the media and online platforms also hinders effective communication and perpetuates negative perceptions of different ethnic groups. Biased and inflammatory language used in communication can fuel prejudice, discrimination and hostility between ethnic communities, undermining efforts to promote peaceful coexistence.

In the light of these challenges, it is clear that effective communication is not only a key component but also a potential panacea for peaceful ethnic relations. By addressing language barriers, promoting cultural sensitivity and combating misinformation, Nigeria can create a more inclusive and harmonious environment where individuals from different ethnic backgrounds can communicate and collaborate effectively for economic growth and sustainable development. This paper therefore, X-rays ways effective communication can be used to achieve peaceful ethnic relations in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored to Conflict Theory and Intergroup Contact Theory.

Conflict Theory

The Conflict Theory was propounded by Karl Max (1818-1883). The theory posits that society is in a perpetual conflict as a result of competition for limited resources. Conflict theorists hold the view that order and coherence in societies are founded on conflict and domination of some over others resulting from the inequitable distribution of resources or the exploitative relationship prevalent in society (Ezekiel-Hart and Adiele, 2010:45). This implies that the rich and powerful in society try to dominate by all means possible, basically by suppressing the poor and powerless.

The Marxists believe that all historical societies are characterized by basic contradictions which prevent them from surviving forever in their original forms. The exploitation of one group by another creates a fundamental conflict of interest between social groups since one gain at the expense of another. This conflict of interest must ultimately be resolved since a social system containing such contradictions cannot survive unchanged (Haralambos and Holborn, 2000). Thus, the theory revolves around the concept of social inequality in the division of resources, political conflict and on the conflict that exist among classes.

This is the root cause for the ethnic conflict among the indigenous people of different ethnic groups in Nigeria. Members of each group, especially in the recent economic meltdown, believe that the citizens of the ethnic group have been marginalized and cheated in terms of revenue allocation, political office positions, resource control and development of the region.

Intergroup Contact Theory

The Intergroup Contact Theory is a prominent framework in social psychology that seeks to understand the dynamics of intergroup relations and prejudice reduction through direct contact between members of different social groups. Developed by Gordon Allport in the 1950s, this theory posits that intergroup contact can lead to improved attitudes and reduced prejudice towards outgroup members under certain conditions. The theory propagates the notion of equal status contact, which emphasizes the importance of interactions between individuals of equal status within a supportive environment. This type of contact is believed to challenge stereotypes and promote empathy and understanding between groups, ultimately leading to more positive intergroup relations. Additionally, the theory highlights the role of cooperation towards common goals as a facilitator of positive intergroup interactions. When individuals from different groups work together towards a shared objective, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes towards each other and reduce intergroup bias.

Research by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) on the theory provided empirical support for its effectiveness in reducing prejudice and improving intergroup relations. Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe and Ropp (1997) argue that positive contact experiences can lead

to increased empathy, reduced anxiety and improved intergroup attitudes. Furthermore, meta-analyses have demonstrated that intergroup contact interventions are among the most effective strategies for reducing prejudice and promoting social cohesion.

Achieving all of these in a multi-ethnic society in Nigeria will be impossible without effective communication. By promoting positive interactions via effective communication between members of different ethnic groups, there will be greater understanding, empathy and cooperation across ethnic boundaries.

Conceptual Review

Overview of communication

Communication is an inevitable element in human existence. It is at the centre of all man's affairs. His activities depend on it so much that, without communication, his existence will be meaningless, purposeless and uninteresting. Thus, communication can be considered the most important skill man needs for his survival because it is the avenue through which he maintains contact with himself and with the world. Man is a social being; thus, he needs communication to socialize. This is why Akpan, quoted in Wilson and Ekanem (2016) asserts that "without communication, human beings cease to exist as social creatures because communication is a social affair." It helps in modifying people's ideologies, perceptions, behaviour or attitude of the other and thus creates understanding between two or more persons. It also enables humans to socialize, disseminate information, create, nurture and maintain relationships, and achieve cooperation and unity. Communication in human society can be likened to having respiration, because it is only through exchange of ideas and information that a society can grow and develop.

Communication as a concept is indeed an enigma. People get to know about the happenings in the world outside when they receive stimuli (information) from these areas and interpret these stimuli through the central nervous system (i.e. decoding process). Communication enables human beings to access information, transmit it, store it and retrieve it at their convenience for usage. This means that communication involves man's active interaction with his biological, physical, psychological and social environments. It is a requirement of social existence and a resource in order to engage in the sharing of experiences, through symbol-mediated interaction (Hasan, 2013). From the foregoing, communication can be defined as a vehicle of transmitting, receiving, interpreting information or ideas and expressing one's feelings, thoughts, hopes, desires and aspirations.

Communication is a dynamic process of action and interaction towards a desired goal. Therefore, if man is deprived of it, he will no longer be aware of whether he is hated or loved or even whether he is hungry or satisfied. The importance of communication to humans has made man and society to see isolation as the severest punishment for human

beings. That is why defaulters of law (criminals) are locked up in solitary cells, deprived of the basic needs, especially their right to communicate. Human beings are naturally curious. Drastically reducing the amount of normal social interaction, reasonable mental stimuli, exposure to natural world and of almost everything that makes life human and bearable, is emotionally, physically and psychologically destructive. This is because it denies them the ability to ask questions and seek reasons and information to form explanations that allows them to understand themselves as well as their world, and their place and purpose in the world. It is logical that man feels less stable and secure overall when the things that his brain and body rely on to connect to and understand his surroundings are taken away from him (Hasan, 2013).

Every communication experience serves one or more purposes. It helps human beings to discover themselves, establish and maintain meaningful relationships, and examine and try to change either their personal attitudes and behaviour or those of others. In other words, communication enables human beings to inculcate in their younger ones their beliefs, values, norms, culture and tradition as well as a sense of belonging and oneness. However, communication can only be effective when those involved in the process possess good communication skill.

Communication skill is a person's ability to communicate with his or her interlocutor, transfer ideas, feelings or data, both verbally and non-verbally, with the aim of being able to achieve fostering healthy relationships (Syamsuddin, 2021). It is also a viable tool man uses to manipulate and incite people to action.

Communication performs the following functions:

- It helps individuals to develop self-awareness and understanding of others: Through communication one is able to have an insight into oneself as well as others. When one gets to know and understand others, one gets to know oneself and learn how others affect one. Through communication activities, individuals in society are able to make clear their thoughts and feelings. This will effectively help them make reasonable decisions and resolve conflicts in their society.
- It helps individuals to establish meaningful relationships: Man is a social being; hence, he needs others to fully develop his potential. Thus, through effective communication, these basic physical and social needs of interdependence are met. Gamble and Gamble (2002) note that people who are isolated from others—people who lack satisfying social relationships—are more likely to experience health problems and die earlier than those who have an abundance of satisfying relationship.
- Communication also enables human beings to educate themselves and their younger ones. It provides them with knowledge, experience and skills that enable them to be fully integrated and actively participate in public life within and outside their society.

- Communication provides humans with adequate information about the happenings within their immediate environment and the world at large. This helps them to be proactive in matters or issues that affect their lives either positively or negatively.
- Communication provides man with the opportunity to transmit their cultural value, beliefs, norms and traditions to their younger generation and also preserve these values. This guarantees continuity of such tradition and values.
- Communication equips human beings with the skill to incite and persuade others into desired action. It helps, especially leaders, to make decisions on public policy and persuade the populace to accept and adopt such policies for the purpose of smooth and good governance. Also, it can be used to incite people to adopt good and healthy lifestyle, and change of attitude and wrong perspectives about others.
- Through communication man finds it very easy to develop himself and his surroundings. This means that communication is very important to development. Poor or ineffective communication can hinder development, because when people do not understand one another, there is high tendency of chaos, anarchy and even war in society, and development can never happen where there is such situation. A good example is in the Bible, during the building of the Tower of Babel. God made human beings to fail in their effort by confusing their language and making them not understand one another. In other words, there was communication breakdown amongst them. Also, Syria has suffered a huge setback in their level of development due to war which started as a result of breakdown in communication.

Effective communication is a necessity in all aspects of life because it can leave a good impression and improve good relations with those involved in the process. The ability to convey ideas, information or feelings and data accurately, clearly and correctly is a pre-requisite in peaceful ethnic relationships.

Effective Communication

Effective communication is a critical component of successful interactions in various contexts, including academic, professional and personal settings. The ability to convey information clearly and concisely, as well as to listen actively and empathetically, plays a crucial role in building relationships, resolving conflicts and achieving common goals. Adeniran (2018) defines effective communication as “using language that is appropriate to others’ levels of understanding, making sure others receive the information or knowledge intended, developing relationships with others, talking with others in a way that facilitates openness, honesty and cooperation and providing feedback.” Effective communication is a part and parcel of any peaceful society. Any communication should be free from barriers so as to be effective.

Effective communication occurs when there is shared meaning: the message that is sent is the same message that is received. There must be a mutual understanding between the sender and the receiver for the transmission of ideas or information to be successful. A major aspect of effective communication is the ability to convey messages clearly and accurately. According to Guffey and Loewy (2015), clear communication involves using language that is easy to understand, avoiding jargon and technical terms that may confuse the audience. In addition, effective communicators are able to organize their thoughts logically and present information in a coherent manner. By structuring their messages in a way that is easy to follow, communicators can ensure that their intended meaning is accurately conveyed to the recipient.

Another important factor in effective communication is active listening. According to Adler and Rodman (2016), active listening involves paying close attention to the speaker, asking clarifying questions and providing feedback to demonstrate understanding. By actively engaging with the speaker and demonstrating empathy and understanding, listeners can create a supportive and collaborative communication environment that fosters mutual respect and trust. In addition to clear communication and active listening, nonverbal communication also plays a significant role in effective communication. As noted by Knapp and Hall (2014), nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions, body language and tone of voice, can convey important information about the speaker's emotions and intentions. By being aware of and responding to these nonverbal cues, communicators can enhance their understanding of the message being conveyed and adjust their own communication style accordingly.

The foregoing implies that effective communication is a multifaceted process that involves clear and concise message delivery, active listening and awareness of nonverbal cues. By developing these skills and strategies, individuals can improve their communication effectiveness and build stronger relationships in both personal and societal settings.

The Characteristics of Effective Communication are:

- 1. *Clarity of Purpose:*** The message to be delivered must be clear in the mind of the sender and the receiver and the aim of the message should be clear.
- 2. *Completeness:*** The message delivered should be complete. It should be supported by facts and observations. It should be well planned and organized. No assumptions should be made by the receiver.
- 3. *Conciseness:*** The message should be concise. It should not include any unnecessary details. It should be short and complete.

4. Feedback: Whether the message sent by the sender is understood in same terms by the receiver or not can be judged by the feedback received. The feedback should be timely and impersonal. It should be specific rather than general.

5. Empathy: Empathy with the listeners is essential for effective communication. The speaker should step into the shoes of the listener and be sensitive to their needs and emotions. This way, he can understand things from their perspective and make communication more effective.

6. Modify the Message According to the Audience: The information requirement by different people in the different ethnic groups differs according to their needs. What is relevant to one ethnic group might not be relevant to the other. Use of jargons should be minimized because it might lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretations. The message should be modified according to the needs and requirements of the targeted audience.

7. Multiple Channels of Communication: For effective communication, multiple channels should be used, as such use increases the chances of clarity of message. The message is reinforced by using different channels and there are less chances of deformation of message.

Ethnic Relation

Ethnicity may be defined as “the employment or mobilization of ethnic identity and difference to gain advantage in situations of competition, conflict or cooperation” (Smith, 2016). It encompasses the behaviour of ethnic groups, which are groups with ascribed membership, usually but not always based on claims or myths of common history, ancestry, language, race, religion, culture and territory (Brown, 2019).

Ethnic relations, therefore, refer to the interactions and dynamics between different ethnic groups within a society. These interactions can encompass a wide range of behaviours, attitudes and power dynamics that shape the relationships between individuals from different ethnic backgrounds. Understanding ethnic relations is crucial for scholars and policymakers, as it plays a significant role in shaping social cohesion, political stability and economic development within a society. According to Jones (2018), there are several aspects of ethnic relations. These are examined below:

Ethnic identity: This refers to the sense of belonging and attachment that individuals feel towards their ethnic group. This identity is often shaped by a combination of factors, including shared cultural practices, language, religion and historical experiences. Ethnic identity can influence how individuals perceive themselves and others, as well as their attitudes towards issues such as immigration, multiculturalism and social justice. Phinney (1990) and Berry (2003) assert that individuals’ sense of belonging to their ethnic group

can influence their attitudes towards other groups. Cultural differences and traditions can either facilitate or hinder communication and cooperation between ethnic communities. *Intergroup conflict and cooperation:* Interactions between different ethnic groups can range from peaceful coexistence to violent conflict, depending on a variety of factors, such as historical grievances, economic disparities and political power dynamics. Understanding the root causes of intergroup conflict and promoting mechanisms for peaceful resolution are essential for building harmonious ethnic relations within a society.

Ethnic relations also involve the study of power dynamics and inequality between different ethnic groups: In many societies, certain ethnic groups may hold more social, economic or political powers than others, leading to disparities in access to resources, opportunities and representation. Bonilla-Silva (2006) and Feagin (2013) highlight how systems of oppression and discrimination can perpetuate negative stereotypes and attitudes towards certain ethnic groups. These power dynamics can create barriers to positive intergroup relations and contribute to the persistence of ethnic conflicts. Addressing these power imbalances and promoting equity and inclusion for all ethnic groups are critical for fostering positive ethnic relations and social cohesion.

Peaceful Ethnic Relations

Peaceful ethnic relations are essential for the stability and prosperity of societies around the world. The following are the factors that promote peaceful ethnic relations:

Factors Promoting Peaceful Ethnic Relations

Social Cohesion: Social cohesion plays a crucial role in fostering peaceful ethnic relations. When individuals from different ethnic backgrounds feel a sense of belonging and connection to their community, they are more likely to engage in positive interactions with members of other ethnic groups. Putnam (2007) has shown that communities with high levels of social cohesion tend to have lower levels of ethnic conflict and violence.

Intergroup Contact: Intergroup contact refers to interactions between members of different ethnic groups. Allport's contact hypothesis suggests that positive interactions between individuals from different ethnic backgrounds can help reduce prejudice and promote understanding. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) aver that increased intergroup contact can lead to improved attitudes towards out-group members and greater willingness to cooperate.

Political Inclusion: Political inclusion of ethnic minorities is another important factor in promoting peaceful ethnic relations. When members of different ethnic groups have equal representation and participation in political decision-making processes, they are more likely to feel valued and respected. Horowitz (1985) claims that inclusive political systems can help prevent ethnic conflicts and promote social cohesion.

Economic Equality: Economic inequality is often a source of tension and conflict between different ethnic groups. Promoting economic equality and opportunities for all members of society can help reduce intergroup disparities and promote peaceful coexistence. Societies with lower levels of economic inequality tend to have lower levels of ethnic conflict (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2000).

Peaceful ethnic relations are essential for the stability and prosperity of societies. By promoting social cohesion, intergroup contact, political inclusion, and economic equality, policymakers and community leaders can help foster harmony and cooperation among diverse ethnic communities. However, there are several barriers to peaceful ethnic relations that must be addressed in order to promote harmony and coexistence among diverse ethnic communities in Nigeria.

Barriers to Peaceful Ethnic Relations

Ethnic relations have been a significant issue in many societies around the world, including Nigeria, often leading to conflicts and tensions between different ethnic groups. Despite efforts to promote peace and harmony among diverse ethnic communities, there are several barriers that hinder the achievement of peaceful ethnic relations. Some of these barriers are as follows:

1. *The presence of historical grievances and unresolved conflicts between ethnic groups:* These grievances can stem from past injustices, discrimination or violence, and can create deep-seated animosities that are difficult to overcome. For example, in countries with a history of colonialism or ethnic conflict, such as Rwanda or Bosnia, these historical grievances continue to fuel tensions and prevent reconciliation between different ethnic groups.
2. *The presence of structural inequalities and discrimination within society:* In many cases, ethnic minorities face systemic barriers to equal opportunities in areas such as education, employment and political representation. This lack of equal access to resources and opportunities can create feelings of resentment and marginalization among minority groups, leading to intergroup tensions and conflicts.
3. *Cultural differences and misunderstandings:* Cultural stereotypes, prejudices and misperceptions can contribute to intergroup hostility and prevent meaningful dialogue and cooperation between different ethnic communities. For example, misunderstandings about religious practices or cultural traditions can lead to tensions and conflicts between ethnic groups.
4. *Political factors, such as the manipulation of ethnic identities for political gain, can exacerbate tensions and hinder efforts to promote peaceful ethnic relations.* Politicians and leaders may exploit ethnic divisions to mobilize support or deflect attention from other issues, leading to polarization and conflict between different ethnic groups.

Effective Communication as a Panacea for Peaceful Ethnic Relation in Nigeria

Effective communication plays a crucial role in achieving peaceful ethnic relations within a society. By fostering understanding, empathy and mutual respect among different ethnic groups, communication can help bridge cultural divides and promote harmony.

One way effective communication can contribute to peaceful ethnic relations is by promoting dialogue and understanding. When individuals from different ethnic backgrounds engage in open and honest communication, they can share their perspectives, experiences and concerns. This can help dispel stereotypes, misconceptions and prejudices that may exist between ethnic groups. By listening actively and empathetically to each other, individuals can develop a deeper appreciation for the diversity and richness of different cultures, fostering a sense of unity and solidarity. This can be done through educational programmes, cultural exchanges and community events that bring people from different ethnic backgrounds together to share their experiences, traditions and values. By promoting empathy and understanding among different ethnic groups, communication can help break down stereotypes and prejudices that often lead to conflict.

Besides, effective communication can help resolve conflicts and address grievances in a peaceful and constructive manner. By encouraging dialogue and negotiation, communication can provide a platform for individuals to express their grievances, seek redress and work towards mutually acceptable solutions. Ibrahim (2019) notes that, by providing a platform for dialogue and negotiation, communication can help facilitate the resolution of disputes through peaceful means, such as mediation, arbitration or dialogue. By promoting transparency, accountability and respect for human rights, communication can help build trust and confidence among different ethnic groups, leading to more peaceful and harmonious relations. Hence, through effective communication, conflicting parties can find common ground, build trust and collaborate towards building a more inclusive and harmonious society.

Furthermore, peaceful ethnic relations can be achieved in Nigeria through effective communication via the promotion of inclusive and participatory decision-making processes. By involving representatives from different ethnic groups in policy-making and governance, communication can help ensure that the interests and concerns of all ethnic groups are taken into account. This can help build trust and cooperation among different ethnic groups, leading to more inclusive and sustainable solutions to ethnic conflicts.

Finally, effective communication can play a crucial role in promoting social cohesion and integration among different ethnic groups. By fostering a sense of belonging and community, communication can help create a shared identity that transcends ethnic boundaries. Through inclusive language, symbols and narratives, communication can promote a sense of unity and solidarity among diverse ethnic groups, fostering a sense of common purpose and collective action.

Conclusion

The major concern of this study was to establish ways effective communication can be used to achieve and sustain peaceful ethnic relations in Nigeria. The paper discussed some key concepts, such as communication, effective communication, ethnic relations and barriers to peaceful ethnic relation in Nigeria. It reviewed past works that also support the promotion of peaceful ethnic relation, but noted that the difference between the present paper and the past works stemmed from the fact that none of them to the researcher's knowledge emphasized the ways effective communication can be used to achieve and sustain peaceful ethnic relations. Therefore, it is the position of this paper that effective communication is a powerful tool for promoting peaceful ethnic relations within a society. By fostering dialogue, understanding, conflict resolution and social cohesion, communication can help build bridges between different ethnic groups and promote a culture of peace and tolerance. Through open and respectful communication, individuals can overcome cultural barriers, build trust and work towards a more inclusive and harmonious society.

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76**NIGERIA: REPOSITIONING THE MASS MEDIA IN A DEPOLITICISED
DEMOCRATICS SPACE IN THE DIGITAL AGE****By****Williams W. Wodi**

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Abstract

My thesis in this presentation is that there cannot be true democracy without the people; and the people cannot make informed choices without a robust, free and independent media that does not pander to business interests. Unfortunately, the major beneficiaries of the much-advertised Information Age and digital revolution are just a handful of extremely powerful politicians and corporate moguls, who exercise control over “mainstream opinion.” which poses a big threat to participatory democracy in Nigeria. In the age of media globalisation, cultural production has been commercialised, while the so-called “popular opinion” has been privatised to such a distasteful extent that most media practitioners and civil society groups merely sit on the fence, while claiming to “defend” democracy. The paper recommends that the mass media should serve as a robust platform for progressive-minded, cerebral and dispassionate activists and civil society groups to defend democratic values by defending the right of the media to hold the powerful accountable. The media should also enlighten the citizens to make informed choices, and resist extraneous editorial interferences by those who wish to hijack public discourse to achieve their personal objectives. The media must insist on the non-commercial values of news, and forge alliances with other pressure groups to usher in a participatory democratic society that must serve the greater interest of the people, rather than the narrowly-defined interests of the oligarchs, who prefer to run “democracy” by excluding the polis.

Keywords: Information Age, media, participatory democracy, digital age, journalists, Fourth Estate of the Realm, oligarchs, official source journalism, think-tank journalism

*Vital decisions are made all the time concerning
the future of our media system, but they are made
behind closed doors to serve powerful special
interests, with non-existent public involvement
and miniscule press coverage*

Robert W. Mcchesney

Conceptual Notes

It sounds quite bizarre to submit that the political class in Nigeria has successfully depoliticised society by hijacking the electoral process and limiting the choices available to the citizens. As political apathy envelopes the system, what is seen is democratic recession on every front. As Karl Marx famously declared: democracy cannot exist without a robust media system that insists on a rigorous accounting by people in power, and the presentation of a wide range of informed opinion on the important issues of the day and age. Chaos and anarchy are the twin symptoms of societies in advanced stages of decay. Despite the existence of press freedom and those willing to exercise it to build a democratic society, understanding the decay of power is the first step toward finding a way forward in a world that is being reborn (Naim, 2017).

Cognisant of the fact that there cannot be true democracy without democrats and participation by the citizens, this paper basically focuses attention on four broad thematic concerns that would show how the media fell into the trap set by powerful political and corporate interests. So, how can the mass media free itself from the grip of these narrowly-defined interests, and how can the Fourth Estate of the Realm defend democratic principles without siding with those who place profit over people?

Here is the presentation outline:

- Conceptual notes
- Role of the mass media in a democracy
- Media ownership and public interest
- Media reforms
- Media and the paradox of democracy in Nigeria
- Conclusions

Cultural anthropologists submit that every society has evolved through the five stages of human development, namely: the *savage*, *pastoral*, *consummation*, *destruction* and *decline* stages. That is why early humans went beyond the chaotic savage and pastoral or “Hobbesian state of nature” to establish the state, the rule of law and accountable government with the *Leviathan* (government), that regulated human conduct and levied sanctions against citizens who infringed on the rules that moderated behaviour.

A general principle of government, according to Edward Gibbon, is for the rulers to be wise, simple, benevolent and beneficent to the governed (1998). Despite its popularity, Greek-style representative democracy is a relatively new concept of social engineering that is now facing daunting challenges that are the main focus of this research. As the Fourth Estate of the Realm, it is the statutory role of the mass media to wield what English medieval historian Edmond Gibbon described as “efficacious weapons” of mass scrutiny of the powerful. Interactions between the media, on the one

hand, and political and business interests, on the other hand, are taking on quite familiar forms with respect to the practice of true participatory democracy. The tensions between political actors, business owners and journalists have been enormous (Graber *et al.* 1998).

Many momentous developments have taken place in the post-World War II era, such as the breathtaking economic rise of the East Asian tigers, the collapse of global communism, the acceleration of capitalist-led globalisation and what Samuel Huntington described as the “third wave of democratisation” that started in the 1970s (Fukuyama, 2012: xi). According to Francis Fukuyama, 1970 to 2010 recorded enormous upsurge in nations that claimed to parade “democratic” credentials. For instance, in 1973, American-based Freedom House classified 45 of the world’s 151 countries as “free.” That year, Spain, Portugal and Greece were dictatorships, the defunct Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites looked strong and cohesive; while China was caught up in the post-Mao Zedong’s Cultural Revolution. “Life Presidents” were on the rise in Africa, while Latin America reeled under military dictatorships. By the late 1990s, however, some 120 countries, more than 60% of the world’s independent states had embraced electoral democracies—thus, justifying Huntington’s “third wave of democratisation.” Huntington and Fukuyama appeared to have revelled in a sense of invidious triumphalism rather too early.

So, what happened? Well, it is true that the rise of Western-style democracy was the result of the determination of millions of previously passive citizens who insisted on participating in the political life of their societies—thanks to the new political and economic consciousness created by the media and civil society groups. The demand for representative government could be traced to the rise of the educated citizenry, advent of information technology (mass media), travel and accumulation of wealth away from monarchical structures of governance, etc. Recent events in Nigeria and much of Africa, and the rest of the so-called Third World, have proved that the mere presence of democratic institutions and citizens’ voting rights tells very little about the presence of good governance that is anchored to personal freedom and prosperity for the majority of the citizens. The failure of democratic institutions to serve the citizens has become the greatest challenge to the legitimacy of the state (e. g. #EndSars in Nigeria; #Ruto must go in Kenya, #Stopthequota in Bangladesh, #Create a new world in Korea), etc.

There can, however, be no true democracy without the liberal rights we take for granted. In a democracy, citizens retain the right to choose their leaders in periodic elections and remove them from office, if they perform below expectation. The mass media provide citizens a veritable platform to debate issues that guarantee majority rule, including checks on the use of power by various arms of government. It is important for the media system to serve the expressed interest of all citizens and hold the rulers to account. The troubling paradox between the media and democracy has resulted in the

political crisis being witnessed today. The commercialised media poses an existential threat to the survival of democracy.

The fundamental question is, *who* controls the mass media system and for *what* purpose? Around the world and especially in the most Internet-intense markets, the sources and repositories of the news were—and are—in a constant state of flux. The rapid and relentless digitisation of information and communication has led to cohabitation on the same platforms by different types of content (news, analysis, opinion, commercial, propaganda, etc.), emanating from media organisations, advertisers, advocates and individuals (Naim, 2017). The convergence of business and political interests undermines the independence of the mass media, which in turn weakens the democratic culture. In the age of social media, journalists invest much of their time worrying over the future of their cherished profession and the direction it is going. With mega mergers and hostile acquisitions, media theorists are concerned that fewer companies now exercise firm control over major global media organisations, which threaten plurality of opinion on issues of public interest. So, rich media has resulted in poor democracies around the world, especially in Third-World countries, where dictators use draconian legislation to rein in the press.

The American political system revolves around stringent checks and balances that ensure that no one arm of government becomes too powerful as to dominate other arms. Fukuyama argues that the failure of democracy can be traced to its *implementation*, rather than in the *concept*. He rightly submits that ... “there is no guarantee that any given democracy will continue to deliver what it promises to its citizens, and thus no guarantee that it will remain legitimate...” We notice that several non-state actors are in the trenches, working hard to delegitimise the state today. This is because people are increasingly disillusioned by the inability of “democracy,” which is anchored to periodic election (read selection in Nigeria) to deliver on its lofty promises. Disillusioned by the inability of Western-style democracy to deliver on its electoral promises, former President Olusegun Obasanjo, who benefitted from Nigeria’s imperfect democracy, has called for an “indigenous” African system of governance, which he did not elaborate upon.

Role of the Mass Media in a Democracy

American President Thomas Jefferson underscored the importance of the mass media in a democracy in his great quote that is chiselled on marble: “I would rather have a free press without a government than a government without a free press.” In her brilliant postulation, Ellen Wood, argues convincingly that many people have mistaken *democracy* with *liberalism*. According to her, *liberalism* developed in Europe during the movement to protect the rights of feudal lords (the nobility) from absolute monarchs who claimed “divine right” to rule. With the rise of capitalism, liberalism became an important principle that enabled the nobility to protect their private property from the powers of the state

(1995). The nobility and other property owners then set up media outlets to propagate their views and challenge the idiotic idea of “the divine right of kings” as God’s representatives on earth.

How and with what consequences are the mass media involved at each stage of the public policy formulation process in a democracy? According to Dolny, the combination of policy expertise, media visibility, and the failure of the press to identify their ideological leanings, reinforce the legitimacy of think tanks. For instance, the powerful political and corporate interests have so emasculated the media in Nigeria’s democracy today that many journalists now depend on “official sources.” “think tanks.” “protocol journalism” and “news agencies” to generate their news peg. Good old investigative journalism has become a “risky” enterprise for journalists who “have a family to feed,” especially in the absence of insurance policy, and those who depend on adverts to stay afloat in the age of social media in which information is available at the click of a button.

Media content reinforces or undermines public policy sub-systems and affect such policies. It therefore, follows that media content is policy-related, while public officials and those seeking to influence them strive to advance their policy perspectives and preferences through the media (Linsky, 1986; O’Hefferman, 1991; Spitzer, 1993). Anthony Downs refers to it as “issue-attention cycle” –or the familiar “short shift” aimed at achieving a stated or hidden agenda, before moving on to the next topic.

In this Information Age, the age of vulgar culture and cultural homogenisation on a global scale, journalists are under enormous pressure to stay on their lane and deliver on their core mandate of gathering, processing and disseminating harmless information to the public. For instance, citizens depend on the mass media as their principal source of information on governance, politics, economics, education, culture, health care, environmental improvement and sundry social activities that are of interest to them (Graber *et al.*, 1998). As Graber *et al.* point out, to maintain the essence of democracy, participants in the political dialogue featured by the news media are expected to adhere to certain professional rules of behaviour. Some journalists initiate news content, while others merely take their cues largely from other actors in the political system or corporate world. They recommend that communication should be open so that all political interests can enjoy an opportunity to advance their causes, regardless of the popularity of their views. Journalists, according to them, should be free from political coercion in choosing stories to be covered and how to frame such narratives, provided they have credible evidence to support the accuracy and factual information they present to the public.

Who then determines what is to be reported and how it should be reported? Deciding what stories to be covered, along with the content and how to frame the narrative, is a daily contest of will among editors and their reporters, the political and

business classes, the religious estate and other sundry interests that desperately seek to influence opinion and shape public policy in a democracy. Where the state previously controlled information flow in the past, the sources of information flow are as diverse as social media outlets available today, thus weakening the power and reach of the traditional media. As Naim observes, the boundaries of journalism as a profession have fallen, as one after another, upstart venture has shown itself able to compete with, if not surpass, established journalistic outlets.

The mass media sustain and deepen democratic culture by acting as the intermediary between the diverse interest groups that jostle to be heard in the public space. With the arrival of digital communication, social media warriors, *netizens* (Gen Z), and “citizen journalists,” in fact, anybody with an android phone or laptop or any other magical communication gadget, can place “information” in the public space with pleasant or disastrous consequences for society. Welcome to the era of “alternative media”—which equals *alternative truth*. This reminds of the case of Donald Trump, who once emblazoned his picture on a self-manufactured edition of *Time*, after waiting impatiently for the famous magazine to declare him *Man of the Year*. The bemused editors of *Time* were compelled to issue a rebuttal of the monumental fraud. Trump was finally named *Man of the Year* in 2024 on account of his second presidential victory.

The era of the “professional journalist” or investigative reporter appears to now belong to the “Flat-Earth Society” or “Pythagorean antiquity thinking.” Official source information, TV pundits, wire networks, and think tanks now form cheap news pegs for many journalists. Since the Internet was invented in 1969 to serve as a decentralised network and the emergence of online news in the 1990s, a wide-ranging—and-at times, acrimonious—array of debates has transpired over its status as provider of quality and reliable reporting. To date, there has yet to emerge anything resembling a consensus about the present, let alone potential impact of new media technologies in shaping journalistic forms and practices (Zelizer and Allan, 2002). For instance, millions of devices were shut down in 2024 by a puzzling digital glitch occasioned by the cybersecurity firm called CrossStrike, which mistakenly mailed malware to customers. In fact, Microsoft estimated that 8.5 million devices were hit by the disruptive CrossStrike software. The puzzling ease with which anybody can publish anything on the Internet has turned blogs from electoral politics to fiscal policy, music, business and travel into credible and revenue-earning specialty sources that often outperform regular beat reporters and analysts (Naim, 2017: 214).

For those who are still trapped in the “Old School” analogue space, there is no longer any option about whether to participate in the “e-society” or not. It is all mandatory if we hope to actively participate in public life (McChesney, 2000). To be candid, the rising cases of deliberate disinformation, disunity and unverified sources, have

led to erosion of trust in the media space and made the job of the conventional media practitioner a daunting task. The traditional role of a journalist in safeguarding the true values of democracy has taken a bruising knock. Obnoxious legislation and hidden interests have combined with other social pressures to undermine the media's ability to sustain democratic principles in a free society. The time-honoured tradition of free, independent, courageous and impartial media that are essential ingredients in upholding a truly democratic society is under serious threat in Nigeria, and around the world today.

Most media critics are in agreement that the "Fourth Estate of the Realm" has gradually lost its once dreaded "efficacious weapon" of empowering the people to make informed decisions for themselves, and hold the powerful to account. Today, media practitioners who insist on holding powerful public officers and corporate business moguls to account and fostering a culture of transparency do so at their peril. So, what are some of those daunting challenges media practitioners face in the discharge of their core mandate today upholding democratic tenets and defending public interest? How can media practitioners themselves and other stakeholders join forces to strengthen this critical public institution that is so central to the sustenance of democracy in the face of anti-democratic forces in Nigeria?

Media Ownership and Public Interest

According to Iyengar and McGrandy (2007), the structure of the media industry—in particular, whether media are owned and operated by government organisation or by private enterprises—has a major impact on the supply of news because government-subsidised media outlets are typically required (by statute) to provide minimal levels of public content, whereas privately-owned outlets are generally free to do as they please—subject, of course, to general regulations that apply to all forms of media. There is a general chorus of concern about the democratic deficit in Nigeria and many parts of the world today. Dictatorships and right-wing populist nationalist movements are on the rise, once again, as was the case in the build-up to World War II. Unfortunately, the mass media are under so much attack that undermines the necessary conditions that ought to position them to meaningfully contribute to proper democratic practices. There is no disputing the fact that the media system is in the midst of turbulent changes. Most of the media serve political and corporate interests, rather than the interest of the masses (McChesney, 2000). For instance, nearly every media establishment in Nigeria today, especially those owned by politicians and business people, reflect partisan interests that are injurious to the entrenchment of true democratic principles and public interest, which undermine the practice of true democracy.

The first place to start is the pattern of media ownership that panders to the interest of the owners who place profit over people. If the owner of a media establishment is a practising politician or a corporate mogul, then the media organisation

must quietly reflect such pecuniary interests. If a courageous journalist decides to throw caution to the wind and goes after powerful political and corporate interests, then he or she must prepare to face the dire consequences. It is like a *Catch 22* situation in *The Godfather II*, where mobster Frank Pentangeli is planning to give evidence against the deadly Corleone family, but abruptly decides not to do so in court, after the Corleone foot soldiers drag his helpless brother from Sicily to the trial room. Pentangeli does not need any explicit threat to drop the idea, because the message is clear: “talk and your brother is dead” (McChesney, 2000).

For instance, courageous journalists who decide to investigate powerful politicians, corporate moguls or even prayer contractors, stand the existential risk of losing lucrative adverts placements, may even face arrest on trumped-up charges; or in extreme cases may be hit by a “wheelbarrow” (e.g. Dele Giwa, Daniel Ojukwu, Salihu Ayatollah, Segun Olatunji). Such political or corporate threats undermine investigative journalism, which leads to the decline of democracy. The collapse of public service media and the rise of profit-minded private media have also contributed to the erosion of democratic values in Nigeria. While mega-mergers of big media organisations have not yet happened in Nigeria, hyper-commercialisation of news and opinion articles and advertising, including identical class interest of media owners, have undermined Nigeria’s democratic principles. If the media owner does not want the news published or broadcast, then, the journalist must practise self-censorship or be prepared to return to the long unemployment queue. The latest victim is Pulitzer-prize winning cartoonist who resigned from *Washington Post* because the paper refused to publish her satirical depiction of its billionaire owner Jeff Bezos on bended knee in front of then President-elect Donald Trump. Bezos may have called the editors of *Washington Post* to remove the carton. These unnerving examples show that the *nouveau rich* and their political allies are major threats to media freedom, and by extension, democratic norms. They know that the media constitute the arena for the battle for human souls, hearts and brains; and we see the interplay of new forces and the fragmentation and polarisation that are remaking societies at all levels.

Currently bereft of unique selling identities, the Nigerian media system has been soaked in the same ideological bracket that is profit-driven, advertising-supporting and panders to the narrow interests of powerful politicians and their allies in the dark recesses of corporate boardrooms. It is inescapable for the discerning observer to establish the symbiotic relationship between the shortcomings of the political and corporate-controlled media, and the decline of democratic culture in Nigeria today; and there is, unfortunately, little hope in the foreseeable future. There is also an inbuilt deficiency in the professional practice of journalism. Many journalists today rely on “official sources” to find their news peg (event), which benefits the status quo, rather than defend public

interest. Additionally, owners view journalism as a source of profit, rather than a source of defending democracy by affording the people informed choices.

News is increasingly what appeals to the upper and middle classes, and not what serves the common good. While the media exist to offer alternative viewpoints to the audience an open society, those who seek to destroy the core values of democratic societies employ what Hannah Arendt fittingly describes as “nihilistic relativism” in which facts are manipulated and lies become truth (in Chris Hedges, 2007: 116). The German Nazi propaganda machinery will gleefully applaud the gradual demise of critical thinking and the emergence of chorus journalism that is injurious to democratic values in this era. A further threat to democracy has emerged with the X (formally Twitter) disbanding its Safety Council that guided it on issues pertaining to misinformation and online harassment; Meta also announced that it would no longer practise “fact-checking” on its Facebook and Instagram platforms. Users of these platforms can no longer escape political exposure; especially to manipulative posts. Welcome to the Orwellian era of *post truth*. These moves by Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg are meant to please Donald Trump who has repeatedly complained about online “censorship” of his unpresidential/unstatesmanlike and wayward posts. These moves pose grave threat to democracy in America.

Following the demise of investigative journalism, so many media practitioners appear to sheepishly obey the “Eleventh Commandment”: Thou shall not cover big companies and billionaires critically (McChesney, 2000). These days, editors are very reluctant to incur the anger of corporate advertisers or politician *patron saints*. For instance, columnist Robin Washington of the *Boston Herald* was suspended in 2000 for writing a series of articles about FleetBoston Corporation. They ignored him, and promptly contacted the owner of *Boston Herald* to complain about the columnist, rather than the accuracy of the reporter’s investigation. Washington’s suspension was reversed only after sustained public outcry and protest against the management of *Boston Herald*. Politicians who provide favourable subsidies and legislative framework enjoy good press, which undermines ethical and professional journalism practice, and democracy. For instance, Richard Nixon infamously promised to support the Newspaper Preservation Act in return for favourable media coverage in the build-up to the 1972 presidential election. The Watergate scandal later destroyed his political career. Media Monopoly relied on the Freedom of Information Act to uncover the scandal. What this scandal shows is that the odds are against journalists, because as McChesney notes, “...the policies that put the system (i.e., Media laws) in place in our name and with our monies have been made in secret, without our informed consent” (xxiii). These anti-media practices are protected by powerful lobbies that easily lubricate their way through the legislative and executive arms of government. As Barbara Ehrenreich aptly notes, “The poor have vanished from the

view of the affluent; they have all but disappeared from the media" (2012). This is bad for democratic practice, and has negative consequences for politics, culture and the whole of society.

Media Reform and Democracy

It is important that the media system be reformed to reconnect with the citizens who are the real reason for the existence of government and democracy in the post Hobbesian era. Hobbes held a very grim view of human nature, arguing that humans are inherently selfish, competitive and violent. He believed that human life would be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" without a strong central authority to regulate the conduct of citizens and levy punishments for infractions. To prevent this "central authority" from turning dictatorial in modern times, the exercise of political power must shift from the powerful to the masses who are recognised by Plato and Aristotle as the real decision-makers in the Greek *polis* (or city-state). According to McChesney (2000), media reform provides the groundwork for a democratic political culture, and a canon for liberal democracy. Without such a media system, the promise of democracy becomes very hollow, very quickly. Beyond the mass media, many more citizens must rally to the barricade to defend and protect democracy. Despite all their shortcomings outlined above, the media cannot transform into an opposition political party to the government of the day. The citizens must come out to fight for the survival of democracy in Nigeria, as is the case in other parts of the world.

Yes, we are in very precipitous times, in which the unholy alliance between powerful political interests and corporate money has "depoliticised society" in such a manner that few care to vote, while even fewer citizens participate in party politics these days. But the Nigerian media must lead a new anti-corporate, pro-democracy movement that should challenge anti-media laws and think tank-based sources for determining news pegs that side-line the citizens.

Media and the Paradox of Democracy in Nigeria

The media are responsible for sourcing and disseminating information and entertainment to the people of the world. The consumption of media products and messages by the average adult is staggering and growing (Consoli, 1998). The advent of the digital media has expanded the role of the media in people's daily activities (Merli, 1998). Turnout in elections has plummeted so much that voter apathy has become the norm. Yet, we cannot run a democracy without the people. It would be totally unconscionable to blame the mass media as the primary cause of the "democratic recession" Nigeria is facing. The media are, however, a major part of the travails of democracy, and they cannot distance themselves from the other complex factors at play.

Unfortunately, most of the media practitioners are either partisan or annoyingly lukewarm in the face of the challenges facing Nigeria's democratic evolution today. Many of them are profit-driven and advertisement-supported and thrive on hyper-commercialisation of news and opinion writings, which McChesney aptly describes as "a poisoned pill for democracy." The Nigerian media system is too uncomfortably allied to the capitalist system, which does not want the people to fully participate in the democratic process (McChesney refers to it as the "depoliticisation" of the people). In the near-absence of investigative journalism, today's mass media inadvertently thrive on spreading information that suits the status quo. The bad news for the oligarchs is that, like in Tudor monarchy in England, as political centralisation and deception grow, there will certainly be increased demand by the alienated masses to be heard and more agitation for representation in national political institutions to regain political power (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2013).

Concluding Remarks

I return to my thesis above: there cannot be true democracy without the people; and the people cannot make informed choices without a robust, free and independent media that are devoid of pecuniary interests. For the mass media to be in the vanguard of sustainable democracy and for the media to rephrase the narrative, they must return to the era of combative investigative journalism that light fires under the feet of public office holders and their business allies. Journalists must get free from clownish election campaigns and packaged public relations spins, to expose the real manifesto (or the lack thereof) of public officials beyond all those lubricated self-advertisements and flowery declarations that do not frontally address the real thematic concerns of the average voter. To give room to a plurality of voices, editors and reporters must discourage the distasteful practice of commercialising news and opinion articles meant to inform the public to make the right choices.

Journalists must expose the inconsistencies between political rhetoric and candidates' previous performance record in real time. To accomplish this mission, journalists must be proactive and ignore all those laughable exaggerations and dishonesty that rule public office. Journalists ought to join forces with civil society groups to compel politicians to take personal responsibility for their actions and inaction, by going back to the archives to cross-check what a politician said a decade ago and what he or she is saying today (e.g. statements made by Donald Trump's vice-presidential candidate, Senator James D. Vance a long time ago have been dug out by journalists and used against him as a "flip flopper"). Journalists must go beyond official/think-tank sources and TV punditry to investigate and follow the lead wherever it may take them, while intentionally staying out of danger in the line of duty. The media must help citizens to become more interested in participatory democracy by helping them vote for the right candidates, not

necessarily those who get better media exposure. The media must rip the pretentious veil off the powerful and compel them to account to the people who are the true *sovereigns* in a democracy.

As former American President, Barack Obama, aptly told Christie Amanpour of CNN: "Democracy will win, if we fight for it." The mass media must lead the fight to sustain and deepen democratic values in Nigeria, not as an opposition party, but as the conscience of society—the Fourth Estate of the Realm. This is the only way to checkmate the deliberate "depoliticisation" of society. In the final analysis, the mass media should serve as a platform that provides feedback loops that challenge the hidden agenda of the elite to undermine democracy in Nigeria. As Franklin Roosevelt declared: "If American democracy ceases to move forward as a living force, seeking and night by peaceful means to better the lot of our citizens, fascism will grow in strength in our land."

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**SOCIAL MEDIA POSTAGE OF SENSATIONALISM AND ITS EFFECTS ON
PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE**

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Introduction

Information dissemination before the second generation was through the traditional mass media, which could perform gatekeeping and censorship. Fact-finding, verification and investigative journalism played crucial roles in gathering and disseminating information to the public. People trust the media and whatever information or news comes from them. The trust is based on the fact the media is vested with the responsibility of building a virile democracy by holding those in power accountable, as empowered by the *1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as Amended*. Section 22 of the *1999 Constitution* clearly states that the press, radio, television and other agencies (which could be classified to include the Internet and other digital-generated communications) of the mass media should, at all times, be free to uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people. But today, information generation and consumption are characterized by several revolutions using social media or digital dominance platforms (Ogoshi, 2024) to close the gap created by the delays in information dissemination and the gatekeeping processes. This generation is characterized by providing voices to the voiceless in any society, overcoming the methodology of control, gatekeeping and censorship.

Digital-mediated methodology has altered the pattern of communication, information generation and dissemination with the emergence and popularity of social media. This has also revolutionized the processes of interactions between the sender and the receiver, has expanded the frontiers of engagement in discussion (Okoro & Santas, 2016) and caused a draft from the dependence on radio, television and newspapers for much of their up-to-date information on the happenings within the state, nation and the global community. People now interact, sell products and brands, broadcast events, share knowledge, ideas and innovations, inspire social discussion, and react to comments and activities of others as it is issued instantaneously (Onah, 2016), giving room for instance feedback from the audience.

Social media and digital enabling have changed the world, as people work and communicate with the speed of light, generating information and disseminating as well as getting to know about events and activities that are ongoing or about to with real live broadcasting at different locations across the globe. These live events share audio-visual and comments as the events unfold. Creating interactivity with a vibrant space for all manner of discussions, activism and advocacy, also enables a direct impact on the people, generating or empowering opinions and views on a given issue in society. This has made it possible for citizens, political officeholders and the government in general, to get feedback from the audience on a variety of issues and to respond accordingly, creating quick and efficient responses to the yearnings of the people they represent.

Ordinarily, social media should give direct communications that should build a sense of connection between the government and the people, reduce information asymmetry and dispel rumours or misinformation. This means of communication also serves as a check on the performance index of government officials and public office holders as the need to maintain a certain public image. This is as a result of the knowledge that the people they are serving have direct access to them via their social media page. As such, any information that come from their page has the power to go viral, which can lead to peaceful, developmental and encouragement on issues of development within society rather than causing confusion, distrust and even civil unrest (Ede-Chima, 2014). However, malicious actors also exploit their platforms to manipulate public opinion, creating a hostile environment between the government and the people. This consequently sets a public agenda, creates different public opinions and spreads higher distrust and manipulative comments. These postages' likes and comments spread more than the facts when even the mainstream media airs them.

In the cause of socialisation, political actors, influencers, opinion leaders, etc. use social media platforms and other media channels for various reasons. They never check their comments or statements, not knowing that most times the things they say have negative effects that may affect society, their fans and their followers. They believe that they are making their stands known on a particular issue, forgetting that they are spreading their political ideology and voicing their concerns on issues of governance in the state or nation. These concerns are in some cases derived from the concepts of motivation, knowledge and technical skills. Based on this fact, they think that society should be improved to achieve specific objectives and developmental goals. When the level of development they expected is not seen, sensationalism becomes the order of the day, leading to conflicts.

Sensationalism in News and What Makes News

Sensationalism refers to the practice of using overblown, provocative or emotional appeals to capture the audience's attention and drive engagement, often at the expense

of accuracy, fairness and balance. These words or comments influence public opinions, shape political discourse and, sometimes, give political advantage (to the opposition) that may lead to conflicts. Over-exaggeration of comments and opinions could lead to hate speech, ethnic conflict, tribal war and political instability if members do not do a proper check of words and their emotional predisposition to such content.

Over the years, in the traditional setting, some elements have been classified with what should be called news. The following element make an item to be newsworthy:

- **Timeliness:** Is this a recent development or is it old news (stale news). This is based on how the reporter sorts and prioritizes information and helps the readers, viewers or listeners to distinguish between what is relevant, what they need to know, and what is less important even though they may be interested in the other subject (Osinuga & Ogbonna, 2015). News is a perishable commodity, treated and packaged differently by the reporter and editor, therefore time is of utmost importance (Ochonogor and Daniel, 2019), without which it becomes old or stale. Breaking news stories makes news to be timely.
- **Proximity:** Is the story relevant to the people at the local or state level. Proximity is viewed in relationship to time as to when the event occurs. The geographical dimension talks about how close or nearer the news and the individual is to the audience; the location of the news event plays a crucial role in what makes it news in society. When events happen within the state of residence (Osinuga & Ogbonna, 2015), it draws attention to the audience more than events or news of happenings that are far away. Psychological proximity has to do with the emotional attachment between the audience and the individual that the media gives prominence.
- **Conflict:** Are the issues developing, has it been resolved or does anybody care? Does it involve the government of the state or nation; does it relate to some set of highly placed individuals within the society or institution? Will such news create room for more problems? Can the issue save society from or create more conflict and how can it be solved? (Nwala, Daniel & Odum, 2020). News that is of significance would involve drama, surprise, personalities, sex, scandal, crime, murder, etc. These events happen around the elite, celebrities, entertainers and those in positions of trust.
- **Eminence and prominence:** Are noteworthy people involved? If so, that makes the story more important. What makes news eminence and prominence is based on the actors involved in the news. Every action of prominent individuals in society makes news headlines based on their social status. From their office life down to their private life, which could be positive or negative, based on wealth and position of trust.

- **Consequence and impact:** What effect will the story have on readers? The relevance of the event to the audience and the environment in which the event occurred has a way of impacting the people and the community. Every story or news item that has a direct bearing on the people has a consequence on how it affects members of society. The attachment given to the news sustains audience's attention, which may lead to positive or negative feedback. The impact of the story looks at how people will be affected and how bad the news will be to the development of society in general.
- **Human interest:** Even though it might not be an earth-shattering event, does it contain unique, interesting element? Itule and Anderson (2008) note that every news is not just news but the actors and the prominence that is placed by an individual either by the media or social status give a news item the value that is placed on it and the audience's attention to such news. This is viewed in the sense of emotional attachment to the individual that the society has a status conferred based on politics, wealth or media conferred.

In every news beat from the media stations, all these elements are considered before news is aired. In addition to these classic criteria, news treatment also plays a critical role in the production and airing of news. But with social media, individuals can generate news and consume the same. While there are innovative uses of social media platforms such as Facebook, X and WhatsApp, by the Nigerian youth and other individuals (Uwalaka, 2020), supporters of political leaders and leaders as well use social media for sensationalism. With alternative measures of information gathering and dissemination with the presence of Web 2.0, individuals now use social media more outside of the mainstream or traditional media based on the theory of content generation and sharing.

There are schools of thought that believe that the traditional media is not living up to the expectations of the present generation; as such, they still blame the mass media, government agencies and the regulatory bodies for sensationalism experienced with the use of social media. As noted by Nwala, Daniel, and Odum (2020), initially, news was not a payable commodity. When people started to pay for news to be aired, there came separation of the mainstream media from the social media or Internet technologies. This fact helped in rekindling the interest of the people toward social media because it was as low as nothing, and gave them the choice of selection from the multiple channels that were available for them to participate without censorship. Owing to the level of freedom, sensationalism emerged because it was based on personal views and opinions, not minding how it would affect the next person. Today, everyone is involved in the use of social media as well as sensational comments.

Effects of Sensationalism

When there is no balance in the reporting or making of comments, giving the audience the choice of multiple perspectives and facts to the issues discussed to create a comprehensive understanding of the issues, there is bound to be conflict in society or with the system. Similarly, when there is constructive journalism, which should focus on solutions, progress and positive development, conflict and war, which could be internal (within the system) or external (within the state and the nation) will be the order of the day. Generally, sensationalism can often hinder peaceful co-existence in different ways. Some of such ways are as follows:

Amplifies Conflicts

Everyone now is a press officer because of the transformation brought by the Internet and the availability of digital technologies, which have given birth to new media of communication; many people are now content and producer of information and news. Individuals now have the freedom to freely access, send, forward and share information anytime and from any location across the global community. The shift from the traditional method of information generation and dissemination to the Internet has completely eradicated the old ways and the barriers in information dissemination and given room for interaction and networking among individuals of like minds and ideologies.

This freedom of expression, as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution, and the availability of digital devices have created room for the full manifestation of the right to information sharing and gathering without the gatekeeping processes. The expression of feelings and opinions brings both positive and negative experience. These expressions, which started online to the global audience, have taken a new method, from online social communication to interpersonal and violence-driven positions and then to a group of individuals. Arguments between individuals could generate rival crews, factions or gangs posting comments using social media platforms. The escalation of such back-and-forth conversations could turn to civil war. This war is formed and fired up by the actions of leaders without checks by the relevant authorities due to their social status.

Today social media is used to assemble a digital communicative battleground. Creating both online and offline social and physical battles between groups and individuals through hate speech, blackmail, propaganda, etc. from a top-down and bottom-up approach necessarily enforces war-based responsibility and builds the capacity of hate among individuals in society. This is enabled by the ill-mannered words of leaders and spread using social media.

Perpetuates Stereotypes

When an individual or a group has the feeling of perpetuating stereotypes, issues of supremacy come into play, with the overgeneralized beliefs about one group of people

against the other, making the other group or individual feel unwelcome and unfairly judged. This comes in verbal or written communication and the use of social media platforms. Stereotypes can be extremely destructive. They reduce the identity of individuals to generalized concepts that are characterised by facts that are often based on misinformation, bias or misconception.

In Rivers State, social has been used for perpetuating stereotypes that have oversimplified ideas about certain groups of people. Social media is often used to spread negative and very offensive comments, leading to the breaking down of law, peace and order. This gives room for violence and hate speech, discrimination among members, social exclusion of some groups, limited opportunities and mental health issues.

Emotional Manipulation

Emotional manipulators, in most cases, are the elite and opinion leaders who could be political or social and have the will and trust of the people. They use the trust the people have in them to create division within a group by popularizing the us vs. them mentality, thereby creating segregation, which can quickly lead to conflict. When a group of people feels that they are being manipulated and segregated, they are likely to fight to get their place back. This is done by exploiting their emotions to create reactions and drive engagement. This is done using fear-mongering through alarming language. This is to create anxiety and uncertainty, emotional appeals (such as vivid imagery), and sensationalised headlines that exaggerate or distort the truth. The goal is to create a strong emotional response that will focus on setting aspects while omitting important context or balanced perspectives.

Using social media to post unverified content due to affiliation creates overexposure to emotionally manipulative content. This can lead to desensitization, making people less responsive to important issues, and impairing critical thinking and sound logic, thereby leading to misinformation and manipulation. This ideology affects social peace, equity and peaceful co-existence, as the actors keep on moving the goalpost. Overgeneralization or accusing some groups of individuals of certain behaviours which are found in them change subjects on issues that have to do with their personality, thereby making the victim not know or have full knowledge and understanding that they are actually the victim. When the victim comes to know the truth, there is bound to be conflict that leads to social conflict.

Misinformation and Disinformation

Social media plays a significant role in the spread of misinformation and disinformation. This is done through the amplification of posting, reposting and continuous posting of unverified information based on affiliations, making the unverified have a wider audience coverage and reach quickly. This methodology creates echo chambers, where users are

exposed to information that confirms their existing biases, making them more susceptible to misinformation due to lack of fact-checking.

Scholars have noted that, although social media has helped with the modernization of activities within the media industries, if not checked, it will erode trust, polarize by reinforcing existing biases, and deepen division between individuals, groups and communities, thereby inciting violence and undermining peaceful co-existence.

Polarisation and Conflict

Polarisation and conflict are critical aspects of sensationalism.

Polarization: reinforces existing biases and calls for questioning of some concepts and positions about the legitimacy of people's existence and their beliefs. It also questions trust and loyalty, which sometimes creates disunity and insubordination, thereby making people less likely to consider alternative perspectives in demand of what they think is their right. There are schools of thought that believe that polarisation actors create the "us vs. them" mentality, pinning groups and individuals against each other, and fostering a sense of division and conflict. These actors amplify extremism by giving disproportionate attention to extremist or fringe views, making them seem more majority than they actually are.

Conflict: provokes violent or hateful responses, particularly if it perpetuates harmful stereotypes or blames certain individuals. This act is most times carried out through harsh public debate, to form opinions in a non-dialogue environment, making it more difficult to engage in respectful and constructive dialogue. This aggravates social divisions, making it harder to build bridges between different communities. Users of social media must be mindful of what they generate and post, comment critically, evaluate information and recognize the true position before posting to the global community.

Desensitisation

Desensitisation in sensationalism occurs when members of society are continually exposed to sensationalized content. If this desensitisation is coming from the people toward the government, it closes their openness toward the developmental activities on the part of the government and diminishes their ability to understand the government on issues of development and the goodwill the government has for the people.

As such, it decreases moral courage or concern for the well-being of the government, leading to a more apathetic or sarcastic attitude toward all plans of the government. This state makes people lose trust in government.

Hate Speech and Sensationalism

Public awareness of issues is part of the fundamental rights that the media owe members of society as the fourth estate. Every individual has the right to express and characterize the concept of the kind of democracy in their society based on the principles of discussion at all levels and underpinned by universal human rights for information. These rights are socially accorded and should be considered as a right to hold on to at all times. Understanding such right is important for the media and members of the society. Some people may feel that they are denied certain rights, but the ways of expressing such rights or displeasure are critical in order not to cause internal war.

Wars in most societies start with words. Words have the power to enforce and shape people's perceptions, attitudes and actions. Words play a significant role in foresting peace or fuelling tensions, spreading misinformation and inciting violence when the speaker makes provocative utterances. The language used by individuals may be inflammatory, which may mobilize their supporters for war, demonize opponents, or create a sense of urgency, leading to hate speech and dehumanization of certain groups.

Hate speech and sensationalism can overlap based on context. Hate speech is any comment that categorically expresses hatred, intolerance, or discrimination towards individual(s) or group(s) people based on their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or other characteristics. The sole intent of hate speech consciously or unconsciously is to primarily harm, intimidate or incite violence against the targeted group. This is done through the use of derogatory language, slurs or threats, which leads to real-world harm, including violence, harassment and marginalization of the targeted group.

Pukallus and Arthur (2024) note that hate speech is associated with the aspiration to harm the outgroup as much as possible, and it can lead people to desire total elimination of the hated outgroup. Furthermore, any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor, is classified as hate speech.

Sensationalism refers to the use of exaggerated, provocative or emotional appeals to capture attention, create a reaction and drive engagement. The primary intent of sensationalism is to attract attention, increase engagement and drive traffic or sale of ideology. The contents often involve exaggerated or distorted information, provocative headlines or emotional appeals to misinformation, decreased trust in a given system or individual, and a distorted public discourse.

Social Media and Sensationalism

Web 2.0 is a powerful tool that has transformed the world and broken barriers of conventional media. The use of social media platforms, like Facebook, WhatsApp, Pinterest, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, and X is in the process of changing (if it has not already) how information or news is produced, disseminated and discussed. They are now important sources of news. Social media has made the mainstream media more participatory forms of news and information generation and dissemination both in developed and underdeveloped countries. In some countries, it is used to drive development and demand rights, and as the medium for protest, like the “The Not Too Young to Run Bill” that was signed into law 31st of May 2018 (Uwalaka, 2020). It is used to carry out a comparable level of technological development, such as the use of TikTok in China.

While there are indications that the medium has transformed greatly so many areas of the economy and development, it also amplifies sensationalism, which can hinder peaceful coexistence. Social media platforms have spread false or misleading information quickly, fuelling tensions and conflicts. The overuse of social media handles by non-professionals has violated the basic human rights of various individuals and social groups and spread hate speech, stereotyping and prejudice. This abuse of social media has created opportunities for various abuses, information gathering and dissemination, and the communication flow pattern itself.

Challenges of Social Media and Sensationalism

Various challenges are associated with the use of social media information with regard to sensationalism. Presently, social media is used to amplify sensationalism. Almost everyone has one or more social media accounts in which they like, comment on, and post news. Some are true while the majority are unverified news without a source. This leads to an increase in polarization, reinforcing existing biases and dividing audiences, making it difficult to discern fact from fiction and leading to confusion and mistrust.

Social Media Challenges

There are challenges that come with use of information that is generated through social media that could lead to social unrest. Some of these challenges are examined below:

- *Misinformation*: Spread of false or inaccurate information.
- *Disinformation*: Deliberate spread of false information to manipulate public opinion.
- *Lack of fact-checking*: Insufficient verification of information before sharing.
- *Echo chambers*: Algorithms create echo chambers, where users only see information that confirms their existing biases.

- *Addiction*: Social media can be addictive, leading to decreased productivity and increased stress.

Sensationalism Challenges

When people listen to information that is sensationalized, there are various effects that come with such. The basic ones are as follows:

- *Emotional Manipulation*: Sensationalized content can manipulate emotions, creating a reaction rather than encouraging critical thinking.
- *Distortion of Reality*: Sensationalism can distort reality, creating a skewed perception of events or issues.
- *Lack of Nuance*: Sensationalized content often lacks nuance, oversimplifying complex issues.
- *Clickbait and Headlines*: Sensationalized headlines can be misleading, prioritizing clicks over accuracy.
- *Polarization*: Sensationalism can contribute to polarization, reinforcing existing biases and dividing audiences.

Theoretical Backup on Sensationalism

Theories are synthesizing and integrating observed data for all-out clarification and unification. These are statements of facts that attempt to provide explanations for a given study. There are a few theories that can be used to justify sensationalism in media studies; they are essential to understanding its underlying mechanisms, causes and effects. These theories help in appreciating why some things happen and why it looks like the media or social media support such things. These are some of the theories:

1. Agenda-setting Theory
2. Framing Theory
3. Cultivation Theory

Agenda-setting Theory

Sensationalism can influence the public agenda by highlighting certain issues or topics over others. The Agenda-setting Theory was propounded by Walter Lippmann in 1922. Lippmann argued that the mass media primarily has a connection between events and the images that are presented in the minds of the public. Cohen (1963) observes that the press “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about. It therefore means that individuals will view, like, and comment on things differently as it regards issues with different people, depending on the style or the position of those who are posting.”

As noted by Max McCombs and Donald Shaw, who formally developed the theory to the level it is today, it is what the media reports that is seen as the most important

issue that the people follow. The theory holds that most of the pictures people store in their heads, most of the things they think or worry about, and most of the issues they discuss are based on what they have read, listened to, or watched in different mass media. The media make people think about certain issues, they make them think or feel that certain issues are more important than others. The theory argues that the media may not tell people what to think, but the media may tell them what to think about (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017).

In the view of Wimmer and Dominick (2000), the media propose the agenda to the public on what kinds of things to discuss, think and worry about, and by so doing, they shape and direct the people on the choices of things to publicise. The foregoing implies that the media "play drums and when they play their drums," people begin to dance to the tune of their music. It is, however, worthy to note that the issues raised by the media change from time to time, because society is dynamic.

When people use the social media to post all manner of things, events and issues-based discussions, the attention of all is drawn into the social space to know what is going on in the state. Some misleading information is spread as well. This will raise affect peaceful co-existence. Therefore, people who use social media to generate content should be guided in order not to spread issues that will destroy societal peace.

Framing Theory

Sensationalism can shape public perceptions by framing issues in a particular way, emphasizing certain aspects over others. This is based on the concept of framing, which focuses on the issues at hand rather than on a particular topic. When people post, share, like, and comment on the issue at hand, giving more attention to some particular events makes it look like that is the most important. This gives different interpretations that make people locate, perceive, identify and label it as it keeps being repeated almost every day or week.

When issues are constantly posted on various social media platforms, the choices people make about the information they are exposed to are influenced. Agenda-setting tells the audience what to think about but framing theory tells how to think about the issues, because it influences how people perceive, interpret and respond to it. When sensationalism takes place, it frames the audience emotionally and creates human interest, scandal and conflicts. This increases attention on such comments that are posted, arouses emotional alignments, and creates biased perception and desensitisation.

Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory, as developed by George Gerbner, acknowledges that constant or long-time exposure to sensational content can shape people's perceptions of reality,

influencing their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. This theory contends that human experience in life reality is continuous exposure based on social construction. Asemah et al. (2017) assert that the audience are passive to information that they receive, they reshape it and interpret it the way they understand, then store only those that have to do with their cultural needs.

When there are repetitions of content posted using the social media, such content re-inform a twisted view of reality, based on the emphasis that such posts received. important context or information is often omitted to create a more sensationalized narrative. This leads to fear, mistrust or belittling, creating tension that will later destroy peaceful co-existence.

Conclusion

Sensationalism on social media or the mainstream media as regards information gathering and dissemination always encourages bias or is passionately encumbered with negative impressions of events rather than neutrality. This kind of mindset always causes manipulation of the truth, leaving the audience with a wrong sense of judgment. Moreover, exposure to biased information creates mistrust among a group and leads to negative societal outcomes, including individual or group or social polarization, intolerance of dissent and political segregation. It can also affect the collective decision-making of the people and lead to breakdown of law and order and distortion of peaceful co-existence.

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78**THE TAPESTRY OF IDENTITY: PROMOTING CULTURAL DIVERSITY
WITHIN A UNIFIED NATION**

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Introduction

In the aftermath of the devastating 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand, the rebuilding effort became a powerful symbol of intercultural collaboration. Skilled tradespeople from diverse backgrounds—Maori, Pasifika, European, and Asian—worked side by side, sharing knowledge, adapting techniques, and forging bonds across cultural divides. This shared experience of rebuilding their city not only strengthened the physical infrastructure but also fostered a deeper sense of shared national identity rooted in resilience and mutual respect.

Global and local trends about cultural diversity, migration, identity politics and building a nation are complicated and have many sides. This is because these factors interact in many different ways in different situations. Historical, political and social factors shape these trends, which manifest differently across regions. Indonesia's transmigration programme serves as an example of leveraging cultural diversity for nation-building. By relocating diverse ethnic groups, the programme aimed to foster integration and a shared national identity, demonstrating that diversity can enhance social cohesion when managed effectively (Bazzi et al., 2019; Dunaev et al., 2019). The development of a common Kazakhstani culture in Kazakhstan exemplifies the delicate balance between ethno-cultural and civic identities, underscoring the crucial role of dynamic identity politics in nation-building (Popova, 2022).

Singapore's experience with migration-led diversification highlights the challenges of integrating diverse populations while maintaining a cohesive national identity. Policy responses have included recalibrating citizenship privileges and encouraging selective acculturation (Yeoh & Lam, 2024). In Europe, identity politics are evolving in response to increased migration and the reaffirmation of ethnic identities. This has led to

transformations in civic identity formation and the need for innovative approaches to managing inter-ethnic tensions (Wilmers, 2023).

Globalisation has significantly impacted national identities, with transnationalism challenging traditional notions of nationhood. The interplay between cultural and political definitions of nationhood is increasingly relevant in a globalised world (Bazzi et al., 2019). In Russia, local identity politics plays a crucial role in nation-building, with meso-level actors using local symbols to anchor national identity. This highlights the complexity of integrating local and national identities in a global context (Czepczyński, 2021).

This chapter investigates how cultural diversity can be a source of national strength and enrichment, exploring how nations can leverage their diverse populations to foster innovation, creativity, and social progress while maintaining a strong sense of national identity.

Objectives

This chapter specifically focuses on the role of education in promoting both diversity and national identity:

1. Education plays a crucial role in promoting cultural understanding and building a shared national narrative. Multicultural education curricula should be implemented in schools to teach about different cultures, histories and perspectives.
2. Intercultural dialogue and exchange are essential for building bridges between different cultural groups. These initiatives promote mutual understanding, empathy and respect, reducing prejudice and fostering social cohesion.
3. Shared national symbols and narratives should be inclusive and representative of the nation's diversity. These symbols should not privilege one cultural group over others, but rather reflect the shared history and values of all citizens.

Road Map

This chapter argues that education plays a crucial role in reconciling cultural diversity and national identity. It will begin by defining key concepts and establishing the link between education and social cohesion. It will then examine specific strategies within education, including multicultural curricula, intercultural exchange programmes and the creation of inclusive national narratives. Finally, it will address challenges in implementing these strategies and conclude by highlighting the long-term benefits of an education system that embraces diversity.

Literature Review/Theoretical Framework

Key Concepts

Cultural Diversity (Including Various Dimensions, Like Ethnicity, Religion, and Language)

Cultural diversity refers to the variety of cultural differences that exist among people, encompassing dimensions such as ethnicity, religion, language and more. It is a natural phenomenon resulting from the interaction of various cultures and individuals, each with distinct ways of life. This diversity is evident in many societies, including Indonesia and Iraq, where multiple ethnic groups, languages and religious sects coexist, sometimes leading to conflicts but also offering opportunities for cultural exchange and creativity (Goclowsek et al., 2020; Chudzaifah & Hikmah, 2022). The concept of cultural diversity is crucial in various fields, including education, healthcare and organisational management, where it influences practices and policies.

Ethnicity involves belonging to a group with common historical, geographic, linguistic or religious roots. It is a socio-psychobiological aspect of cultural diversity, influencing identity and social interactions (Al-Obaydi, 2019). Religious diversity is a significant component of cultural diversity, often leading to both harmony and conflict within societies. Efforts to promote religious moderation and understanding are essential to maintaining peace (Balamurugan & Santhiya, 2020; Chudzaifah & Hikmah, 2022). Culture and language intertwine intricately, each exerting a profound influence on the other. In educational contexts, understanding this relationship is vital for effective cross-cultural communication and teaching (Goclowsek et al., 2020). Cultural diversity also includes variations in customs, traditions and social norms, which can impact creativity and innovation in group settings (Gupta, 2018).

Cultural diversity can enhance creativity by bringing together different perspectives and ideas. However, it can also pose challenges in group dynamics, requiring careful management to harness its potential (Gupta, 2018). Culturally responsive pedagogy emphasises the importance of integrating cultural diversity into educational practices to promote understanding and respect among students (Đorđić, 2019). In multicultural healthcare settings, cultural diversity affects the delivery of care, necessitating culturally competent practices to meet the needs of diverse patient populations (Holland, 2017).

While cultural diversity offers numerous benefits, such as fostering creativity and enriching societies, it also presents challenges, including potential conflicts and misunderstandings. Effective management and education strategies are crucial to leveraging the positive aspects of cultural diversity while mitigating its challenges. This balance is essential for sustainable development and harmonious coexistence in increasingly globalised societies (Đorđić, 2019; Gumati, 2020).

National Identity (Civic vs. Ethnic Nationalism, Its Symbols and Expressions)

National identity is a complex construct that encompasses the shared sense of belonging to a nation, often expressed through cultural values, symbols and ideologies. It is shaped by both civic and ethnic nationalism, which represent different approaches to defining national membership.

Civic Nationalism: This form of nationalism is inclusive, focusing on shared political values, citizenship, and participation in civic life. It is often seen in societies that emphasise democratic values and individual rights, such as the United States and Canada, where national identity is defined by adherence to constitutional principles and civic participation (Alimukhamedova & Izoria, 2022; Salsabila et al., 2023).

Ethnic Nationalism: In contrast, ethnic nationalism is exclusive, rooted in common ancestry, language and cultural heritage. It is prevalent in societies where national identity is closely tied to ethnic identity, as seen in some post-Yugoslav states, where ethnic identity can overshadow civic identity in constitutional frameworks (Alimukhamedova & Izoria, 2022; Byrd, 2023).

National Symbols: Symbols such as flags, anthems and monuments play a crucial role in expressing and reinforcing national identity. They serve as tangible representations of a nation's history, values and unity (Trlin, 2022). Cultural expressions (literature, poetry and other cultural artefacts) are powerful tools for expressing national identity. They encapsulate national values and historical narratives, as seen in the works of poets like Nima Yushij and Sohrab Sepehri, who used their art to strengthen Iranian national identity (Urys et al., 2021; Tribl, 2023).

Civic Education: Educational initiatives aimed at fostering civic identity can strengthen national identity by promoting shared values and encouraging active citizenship (Lindstam et al., 2021).

Although people often view national identity as a stabilising force, it can also cause ambivalence and conflict, especially when civic and ethnic conceptions collide. This is evident in the context of immigration, where individuals with mixed national identity conceptions may experience conflicting attitudes towards newcomers (Sahraee & Khayatan, 2019). Additionally, globalisation poses challenges to traditional notions of national identity, as it can blur cultural boundaries and necessitate a re-evaluation of what constitutes national belonging (Pehrson, 2019; Lolaeva & Sanakoeva, 2020).

Multiculturalism (Different Models and Their Critiques)

Multiculturalism is a complex and multifaceted concept that encompasses various models and theories aimed at managing cultural diversity within societies. It is often seen as both a political ideology and a social practice that advocates equal recognition and coexistence

of diverse cultural groups. It is often critiqued for potentially leading to cultural isolation rather than integration (Paleczny, 2019; Li, 2023).

Multicultural Citizenship: This model focuses on the rights of minority groups and the importance of cultural identity, aiming to balance ethnic identity with national unity. It emphasises the need for special rights for minority groups to maintain their cultural identity while fostering a unified national identity (Khalifa, 2022).

Cultural Integration: This model seeks to integrate diverse cultural groups into a cohesive society while respecting cultural differences. It is often seen as a step towards interculturalism, which promotes mutual social cohesion and dialogue between cultures (Lungulov & Gajić, 2022).

Transculturalism: Also known as cosmopolitanism, this model advocates a more fluid interaction between cultures, promoting a shared cultural space rather than distinct cultural boundaries. It is seen as a potential route to harmonious cultural interaction (Murphy, 2013).

Threat to Liberal Democracy: Critics argue that multiculturalism can undermine the principles of liberal democracy by prioritising collective rights over individual rights, potentially leading to cultural isolation and conflict (Mishra, 2012; Li, 2023).

Cultural Relativism: Some critiques focus on the risk of cultural relativism, where the emphasis on cultural differences may lead to the acceptance of practices that conflict with universal human rights (Mishra, 2012).

Economic and Social Challenges: Multiculturalism can also pose economic and social challenges, such as increased social tensions and the difficulty of achieving true equality among diverse cultural groups (Grosu, 2012). While multiculturalism aims to promote cultural diversity and equality, it faces significant challenges and criticism. The balance between cultural recognition and social cohesion remains a central issue, with some advocating a shift towards interculturalism to foster more meaningful cultural exchanges and integration (Noor & Leong, 2013; Lungulov & Gajić, 2022).

Interculturalism (as an Alternative or Complementary Approach)

Interculturalism is a framework for managing cultural diversity that emphasises interactions and dialogue between different cultural groups. It emerged as a response to perceived limitations of multiculturalism, aiming to foster social integration and cohesion in increasingly diverse societies. People view interculturalism as an integration model that prioritises intercultural dialogue and positive interaction among diverse groups. Organisations such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe support it as a primary model for social integration in diverse contexts (Modood, 2021). The approach focusses on the

crucial role of interaction among people from diverse backgrounds. It involves managing diversity through exchange and interpersonal relations, aiming to create a cohesive society (Kuropjatnik & Kuropjatnik, 2018). Various theoretical strands, including contractual, cohesion and constructivist approaches, underpin interculturalism. These strands highlight the importance of balancing different policy drivers to manage diversity effectively (Kuropjatnik & Kuropjatnik, 2018). People also view interculturalism as a tool for emancipating marginalised groups, acknowledging and incorporating their knowledge and perspectives into mainstream discourse. This involves rethinking traditional power dynamics and fostering a more inclusive understanding of cultural diversity (Añazco, 2019).

Although interculturalism criticises multiculturalism, people often view it as a complementary approach rather than a complete replacement. It can enhance multicultural frameworks by focussing on micro-level interactions and the normative significance of the majority while not abandoning multiculturalism's core principles (Modood, 2017). Interculturalism, while offering a fresh perspective on cultural diversity management, also faces challenges. Its theoretical heterogeneity and the ambivalence of its concepts can pose difficulties for national and international structures that rely on it (Modood, 2021). Furthermore, we must carefully consider the integration of interculturalism into existing multicultural frameworks to preserve and effectively utilise the valuable aspects of both approaches.

Relevant Theories

To understand the connection between cultural diversity and national identity, we need to look at how different theories explain how national identity is formed and changes over time in diverse societies. Theories such as Social Identity Theory, Contact Hypothesis, Imagined Communities, and Transnationalism provide valuable insights into this complex relationship. Benedict Anderson's concept of "Imagined Communities" suggests that national identity is a socially constructed phenomenon, where members of a nation imagine themselves as part of a larger community. This shared imagination is often facilitated by mass media, which plays a crucial role in creating a sense of commonality among diverse groups within a nation (Muhlisian et al., 2022). In multicultural contexts, such as Latin America, the recognition of multinational states and intercultural dialogue are essential for managing diversity and constructing a cohesive national identity (Balogun & Obosi, 2018).

Social Identity Theory posits that individuals derive part of their identity from the social groups to which they belong. In culturally diverse societies, this can lead to both positive self-esteem and potential conflicts, as individuals navigate multiple identities (Andreouli & Chryssochoou, 2015). The theory also suggests that strong

identification with a national group can enhance collective self-esteem but may also lead to exclusionary practices against perceived out-groups (García-Segura, 2022).

The concept of transnationalism highlights the fluidity of national identity in a globalised world, where individuals often maintain connections across national borders. This can lead to multiple and overlapping identities, challenging traditional notions of a singular national identity (Putri et al., 2017). Cosmopolitanism, as a response to globalisation (Putri et al., 2017), encourages the development of a global civil society where national identity is redefined to accommodate diverse cultural influences.

In countries like Nigeria, cultural diversity poses challenges to social cohesion and national development. Emphasising common cultural practices and principles of fairness and justice can help foster a unified national identity despite ethnic diversity (Sălăjan, 2016). The integration of diverse cultural identities into a cohesive national identity is crucial for national development and social stability (Sălăjan, 2016).

While these theories provide frameworks for understanding the relationship between cultural diversity and national identity, they also highlight the potential for conflict and ambivalence. For instance, mixed conceptions of national identity can lead to ambivalence towards immigration, as seen in Germany during the European refugee crisis (Mavrić, 2014). This underscores the need for policies that balance cultural diversity with the construction of a cohesive national identity.

Existing Research

Various studies explore the multifaceted topic of the impact of diversity on social cohesion, national identity formation, multicultural policies and intercultural dialogue. These studies highlight both the challenges and opportunities presented by diversity in fostering social cohesion and national identity. The research underscores the importance of inclusive policies and intercultural dialogue in managing diversity effectively. Prioritising inclusivity, particularly in developed countries, can enhance social cohesion through diversity. However, it can also pose challenges, especially in contexts with significant income inequality and globalisation pressures, which tend to undermine cohesion (Miller et al., 2020; Cheema, 2021). In diverse neighbourhoods, such as Jane-Finch in Toronto, perceptions of inequality and discrimination can negatively impact social cohesion, highlighting the need to address these issues alongside diversity (Miller et al., 2020). In Britain, the challenge of achieving “unity within diversity” is evident, with historical events like race riots underscoring the complexities of social cohesion in multicultural societies (Balogun & Obosi, 2018).

In Nigeria, the multitude of ethnic groups complicates the formation of a unified national identity, suggesting that national development is contingent on fostering a common identity through fairness and equality (Szewior, 2019). In Latin America, the

recognition of multinational states and intercultural dialogue is crucial for managing diversity and constructing a cohesive national identity (Arant et al., 2021).

Multicultural policies in Europe and North America face scepticism due to concerns about ethnic diversity threatening social cohesion. However, some studies refute these concerns, emphasising that diversity can coexist with social cohesion when managed effectively (Ahmadi, 2018). The role of economic development and socio-political consensus is highlighted as more critical than national social policies in achieving social cohesion (Zriba, 2019).

Intercultural dialogue is essential for fostering social cohesion, as it provides a platform for cultural exchange and understanding, which is vital in diverse societies (Arant et al., 2021). Positive interactions between groups can lessen perceived threats and boost social cohesion, which means that making it easier for these kinds of interactions to happen is very important in diverse communities (García-Segura, 2022).

Promoting Cultural Diversity and National Identity: Strategies and Approaches

Education:

- Multicultural education curricula in schools
- Promoting intercultural understanding in higher education
- Language learning and linguistic diversity
- Media literacy and representation

Public Policy and Institutions:

- Anti-discrimination laws and policies
- Immigration and integration policies
- Support for cultural organisations and initiatives
- National museums and cultural heritage preservation
- Public holidays and celebrations that reflect diversity

Community Engagement and Civil Society:

- Intercultural dialogue and exchange programmes
- Community festivals and cultural events
- Promoting social cohesion and civic participation
- Role of media and arts in fostering understanding

Economic Empowerment:

- Addressing economic inequalities among diverse groups
- Supporting minority-owned businesses
- Promoting diversity in the workplace

Promoting cultural diversity while maintaining national identity involves a multifaceted approach that integrates education, public policy, community engagement and economic empowerment. These strategies aim to foster an inclusive society that values both the unique cultural contributions of diverse groups and the shared identity of the nation. The following sections outline key strategies and approaches based on the provided research papers.

Multicultural Education Curricula: Incorporating multicultural education in schools can strengthen national identity by teaching students about the diverse cultural values that contribute to the nation's identity. This approach helps students appreciate their own culture and those of others, fostering a sense of belonging and national pride (Salsabila et al., 2023; Saaida, 2023).

Intercultural Understanding in Higher Education: Higher education institutions can promote intercultural understanding by offering courses in cross-cultural communication and cultural diplomacy, which enhance students' cultural competence and sensitivity (García-Segura, 2022; Cristian, 2023).

Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: Language education can play a dual role in promoting global identity and reinforcing national identity by including national symbols and cultural narratives in language curricula (Hadj et al., 2022).

Anti-discrimination Laws and Policies: Implementing robust anti-discrimination laws ensures equal opportunities for all cultural groups, fostering a sense of inclusion and national unity (Vikulova et al., 2021).

Immigration and Integration Policies: Policies that support the integration of immigrants while respecting their cultural identities can enhance social cohesion and national identity (Vasiljević et al., 2022).

Support for Cultural Organisations: Government support for cultural organisations and initiatives can help preserve and promote cultural heritage, contributing to a shared national identity (Putra, 2017).

Intercultural Dialogue and Exchange Programs: Facilitating dialogue and exchange programmes can bridge cultural divides and promote mutual understanding among diverse communities (Vikulova et al., 2021).

Community Festivals and Cultural Events: Organising festivals and events that celebrate cultural diversity can strengthen community bonds and national identity (Saaida, 2023).

Role of Media and Arts: Media and arts play a crucial role in representing diverse cultures and fostering understanding, which can counterbalance the effects of globalization on national identity (Awagu, 2020; Salam, 2020).

Supporting Minority-owned Businesses: Economic policies that support minority-owned businesses can reduce economic inequalities and promote diversity in the workplace, contributing to a more inclusive national identity (Putra, 2017).

While these strategies are effective in promoting cultural diversity and national identity, challenges remain, such as the potential for cultural imperialism and the impact of globalization on local cultures. Policymakers must navigate these complexities with sensitivity to ensure that cultural diversity is celebrated without compromising national unity (Salam, 2020; Cristian, 2023).

Case Studies/Examples

Promoting cultural diversity while maintaining a cohesive national identity is a complex challenge faced by many countries. Successful strategies often involve a balance between recognizing diverse cultural identities and fostering a shared sense of nationhood. This section explores examples from Kazakhstan, France, Ireland and Latin America, highlighting their strategies, strengths and weaknesses.

- Kazakhstan has navigated its post-independence identity by addressing its diverse linguistic landscape. The country has implemented policies to promote the Kazakh language while accommodating Russian speakers, reflecting a dual identity approach.

Strength: This strategy has allowed for the inclusion of various ethnic groups, fostering a sense of unity without erasing cultural differences (Zhumadilova & Koptileuova, 2022; Sautereau & Faas, 2023).

Weakness: The challenge remains in balancing the dominance of Russian with the promotion of Kazakh, which can lead to tensions between ethnic groups (Zhumadilova & Koptileuova, 2022).

- France emphasises national identity in its educational curricula, focusing on history and civic education to instil a sense of French nationhood (García-Segura, 2022).

Ireland, on the contrary, incorporates national, European and global perspectives, reflecting its complex identity within the EU (García-Segura, 2022).

Strength: France's approach strengthens national cohesion, while Ireland's promotes a broader, inclusive identity.

Weaknesses: France's focus may limit global awareness, whereas Ireland's approach might dilute national identity in favour of broader affiliations (García-Segura, 2022).

- Latin American countries have adopted intercultural policies to manage cultural diversity, recognise the rights of national minorities and promote cultural exchange (Ariely et al., 2023).

Strength: These policies foster coexistence and mutual respect among diverse cultural groups.

Weakness: Implementation can be inconsistent, and there is a risk of superficial recognition without substantial integration (Ariely et al., 2023).

Successful promotion of cultural diversity and national identity requires policies that are inclusive and adaptable to changing demographics. Education plays a crucial role in shaping national identity, and curricula should balance national pride with global awareness. Intercultural dialogue and policies that recognise minority rights can enhance social cohesion and prevent cultural erasure.

Challenges and Future Directions

Challenges:

1. Rise of nationalism and xenophobia
2. Integration difficulties and social segregation
3. Cultural conflicts and identity politics
4. Balancing individual rights with collective identity

Promoting cultural diversity while maintaining national identity presents a complex set of challenges and tensions. The rise of nationalism and xenophobia, difficulties in integration, cultural conflicts, and the delicate balance between individual rights and collective identity often form the foundation of these challenges.

Nationalism can lead to xenophobia, where cultural diversity is perceived as a threat to national identity. This is evident in the digital age, where social media platforms can amplify extremist views and create echo chambers that foster xenophobic sentiments (Mahaman et al., 2025). In Côte d'Ivoire, while cultural diversity strengthens social cohesion, it can also lead to tensions and divisions if not managed inclusively.

Integration of diverse cultural groups can be challenging, leading to social segregation if not addressed through inclusive policies. In Indonesia, the lack of clear definitions and criteria for traditional cultural expressions complicates their integration into national identity frameworks (Maddusila, 2024). Educational institutions play a crucial role in promoting integration by incorporating diverse lived experiences and identities, as seen in the Community College of Allegheny County's approach to sustainability education (Maddusila, 2024).

Cultural conflicts often arise from identity politics, where different groups vie for recognition and rights. Morocco's use of higher education to promote cultural

understanding demonstrates how cultural diplomacy and intercultural dialogue can mitigate this (Saaïda, 2023). In international relations, cultural competence and sensitivity are essential to prevent conflicts arising from cultural differences (Nguyen, 2024).

Balancing individual rights with collective identity involves recognising and respecting the rights of all cultural groups. This is crucial in preserving cultural identity among refugees and migrants while promoting social cohesion (Pizolati, 2024). In Vietnam, promoting national cultural identity in an international educational environment requires raising awareness among students about their cultural heritage (Onyema, 2024).

Future Directions

- Developing more nuanced and inclusive approaches to national identity
- Promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding in the digital age
- Addressing the root causes of social inequality and discrimination
- Building more resilient and cohesive societies in the face of globalization

The exploration of national identity in the context of globalization, digitalization and social cohesion presents a multifaceted challenge that requires nuanced research and policy development. Future research should focus on understanding the complex interplay between national identity and global influences, while policy development should aim to foster inclusive and resilient societies.

The following recommendations are derived from the analysis of this paper:

- Research should explore how national identity can coexist with global identity, particularly in educational contexts where foreign language learning can either dilute or reinforce national identity (Zulkifli et al., 2023).
- Investigate how multinational corporations navigate national identity politics and the implications for organisational culture and international relations (van Bavel et al., 2022).
- Develop secure and inclusive national digital identity systems that respect cultural diversity and promote access to digital services for all citizens (van Bavel et al., 2022).
- Examine the role of digital learning environments in shaping national self-identity, ensuring that educational technologies support cultural understanding and citizenship (Vaara et al., 2021).
- Research should focus on how different forms of national identity (e.g. civic vs. ethnic) affect social cohesion and address issues of inequality and discrimination (Lolaeva & Sanakoeva, 2020).
- Investigate the role of national identity in public health support and policy compliance, particularly during global crises, like pandemics (Varlamova, 2022).

- Study the effectiveness of nation-building policies in promoting a shared national identity, considering historical and cultural contexts (Schmidt & Quandt, 2018).
- Explore the relationship between national identity, nationalism and attitudes toward migrants, focusing on how these dynamics influence social cohesion and integration policies (Richards, 2013; Aparicio & Tornos, 2017).

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the intricate relationship between cultural diversity and national identity, emphasising the crucial role of education in navigating this complex interaction. It has explained important ideas like cultural diversity (which includes things like race, religion, language and traditions), national identity (which includes the difference between civic and ethnic nationalism), multiculturalism (which looks at different models and criticisms), and interculturalism (which can be used instead of or along with multiculturalism). The chapter has also reviewed relevant theories, including Social Identity theory, contact hypothesis, imagined communities and transnationalism, to understand how national identity is formed and evolves in diverse societies.

Education presents a powerful tool for reconciling cultural diversity and national identity. This can be achieved through several strategies: implementing multicultural education curricula that teach about different cultures and perspectives; fostering intercultural dialogue and exchange programmes to build bridges between cultural groups; and creating inclusive national symbols and narratives that represent the shared history and values of all citizens. The chapter has examined various approaches to promoting cultural diversity and national identity, including education, public policy and institutions, community engagement and economic empowerment. It equally analysed case studies from countries like Kazakhstan, France and Ireland, as well as those in Latin America to illustrate the challenges and successes of different strategies.

The chapter also talked about the problems that come with trying to balance cultural diversity and national identity. These problems include the rise of nationalism and xenophobia, problems with integration, cultural conflicts and the conflict between individual rights and collective identity. It offered future directions for research and policy development, including the need for more nuanced approaches to national identity, promoting intercultural dialogue in the digital age, addressing social inequality and building resilient societies in a globalised world.

In a globalised world characterised by increased interconnectedness and migration, promoting cultural diversity and national identity is not merely an idealistic pursuit but a pragmatic necessity. Embracing diversity can enrich societies, fostering innovation, creativity and social progress. However, this potential can only be realised if humans actively work towards building inclusive national identities that accommodate

and celebrate cultural differences while maintaining a shared sense of belonging and purpose. Education is the cornerstone of this endeavour, as highlighted throughout this chapter. By equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to navigate a diverse world, humans can create societies that are both culturally vibrant and nationally cohesive. The challenge lies in finding the delicate balance between respecting particularities and forging commonalities, ensuring that the tapestry of identity strengthens the fabric of nations.

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79**FEMINISM DISCOURSE ON TWITTERSPHERE: THE DIGITAL DIVIDE AND
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISPARITIES IN THE SOCIAL SYSTEMS OF
NIGERIAN WOMEN****By****Kelechi Belinda Udeogu**

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Abstract

Feminists aim to create a more equitable society by addressing systemic gender-based inequalities, advocating gender rights and opportunities, and ultimately eliminating gender-based discrimination. A crucial aspect of achieving this goal involves narrowing the information and knowledge gap and bridging the digital divide in societies. Creating a more just and equitable society for women will reduce the socio-economic and social system disparities between men and women and create a more egalitarian society. While social media plays a significant role in advancing these efforts, it remains unclear how many issues raised and discussed on Twitter (now X) are categorised as feminist discourse, and which are perceived as casual banter by users. Therefore, the primary objective of this paper is to investigate the information and knowledge gap and the associated digital divide, as evidenced by feminism discourse on Twitter. This paper, grounded in both Feminist Theory and the Knowledge Gap theory, delves into Twitter discourse related to feminism. Data for this research were collated using simple random sampling and constructed weak sampling, involving content analysis of tweets. In conclusion, this paper explores how the digital divide impacts Nigerian women's participation in feminist discourse on Twitter. Additionally, it shows that socio-economic disparities also shapes their online involvements, viewpoints and the general value of feminist engagement. Therefore, reducing these societal divides can significantly improve feminist activities and enhance women's socio-economic status in Nigeria.

Keywords: Feminism, digital divide, knowledge gap, socio-economic status, social systems

Introduction

Media and communication technologies are constantly advancing, improving humanity's general knowledge of international conditions and processes. According to Kaul (2012), the media is characterised as being at the heart of cultural, social, political and economic events all over the world, and no dimension of human life has been unaffected by

developments in communication; all dimensions have been influenced by the capabilities that the media provides. However, despite the seeming diffusion of new information devices, there seems to be a startling disparity in ownership, access and use among people the world over (Udeze and Oko, 2014). This disparity in ownership is more prominent amongst women, especially disadvantaged women. These disadvantages women encounter and suffer in their societies have been the driving force behind the feminist movement. Freedman (2001) explains that feminists are at the forefront of calling for social, economic, political or cultural changes to reduce and eventually overcome discrimination against women.

The push for gender equality and liberation of women by gender advocates and activists for centuries have been the backdrop of the feminist movement. This paper, therefore, seeks to throw light on the disparities in the socio-economic status of women and social systems in Nigeria and how they impact the persistent problem of the digital divide and the knowledge gap between the different sexes and between affluent and poorer women, with a look at discourse on Twittersphere (drawing parallels with Twitter as a public sphere) and why it is important to reduce these disparities.

Statement of the Problem

The feminist movement is a worldwide movement that seeks to create a social, economic and politically equal world for both sexes and advance women's cause in all aspects and every society. The disparities in the socio-economic status of women and the social systems in Nigeria is one aspect where these inequalities have been most prominent. These disparities are partly fuelled by the information and knowledge gap powered by the digital divide. This study examines feminist discourse on Twitter and seeks to understand how these disparities are discussed and confronted.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- 1) Ascertain the responses/contributions to feminism and feminist discourse on Twitter in Nigeria;
- 2) Sample the different perceptions of feminists and feminism on Twitter in Nigeria; and
- 3) Ascertain the level of disparities that exist concerning information and knowledge gap and about feminism issues fuelled by the existence of a digital divide.

Conceptual Review

Feminism and Feminists

"Who is a feminist?" is a frequently asked question today; people want to know who feminists are and why they matter. A feminist is essentially a person who believes men

and women should be equal politically, economically and socially (www.amazoncastle.com). Delmar (2001) explains that a feminist is someone who believes that women suffer discrimination because of their sex, that they have specific needs which remain negated and unsatisfied, and that the fulfilment of these needs would require a radical change in the social, economic and political order. Freedman (2001) argues that the debates over equality, its meaning and how or if it may be achieved, and its significance to women's liberation are central to feminist analysis and discussion.

The second essential question people always ask is, "Why do we need feminism?" Brunell and Burkett (2019) explain that feminist activities have led to a better world for women. Today's women play an important role in society, are no longer usually left behind, are seen, are empowered, are heard, and have the right to vote and hold property in most countries, and all of these were made possible by the coming of feminism and the women's right movement (Brunell & Burkett, 2019). In some parts of the world, women are liberated and have rights and constitutional protections that they did not always have. However, some discrimination and restrictions still linger in other countries; Nigeria is one such place where visible discrimination and restrictions against women are still prevalent. Segal (1999), cited in (Freedman, 2001) asks the question, "Why feminism?" and notes that its most radical goal, both personal and collective, has yet to be realised –a world which is a better place, not just for some women, but for all women –noting that the world would be better not just for women but also for men.

The Digital Divide

McQuail (2005), quoted in Udeze & Oko (2014), describes the digital divide as the various inequalities opened up by the development of computer-based digital communication. The high equipment costs, dependence on advanced infrastructure and higher skills needed to communicate are factors that breed this digital divide. Gaziano (2016) explains that the differential Internet use brings about the digital divide; even if Internet access increases, other knowledge hurdles may not decrease. Wei and Handman (2011), cited in Gaziano, (2016), refer to the digital divide as inequalities in the meaningful use of information and communication technologies; panel data revealed that digital inequality matters more than its analogue counterpart, leading to a more significant knowledge gap.

Bonfadelli (2002) asserts that critics of the new information society and the new media fear an increasing digital divide, meaning a social gap between the information rich and the information poor, those without access to the computer and the Internet, or between the users and the losers. The critics predict that the Internet will try to divide society into two classes: the information elite and those not linked to the Internet (Rosenthal, 1999, cited in Bonfadelli, 2002). Keniston and Kumar (2003), cited in Udeze & Oko, (2014), list the notable dividers: income, linguistic and cultural differences, the

growing digital gap between the wealthy and low-income nations, and the emergence of elite groups.

Jeffres et al. (2011) aver that differences, such as age and education, play a prominent role in understanding technological knowledge gaps. They opine that technology is sometimes viewed as the practical application of scientific knowledge, but it can also be considered as the human ability to control the environment. Just as much scientific knowledge can be complex and reside beyond the reach of the general public, so too can much technological information (Jeffres et al., 2011). Kaul (2012) challenges the gap between the Global North and the Global South. This gap, viewed as a gap between the rich and the poor, still prevails due to disparities in access to resources, knowledge and technology, especially in rural areas. Nevertheless, this divide is reproduced within virtually every country and often reflects other socio-economic and social system gaps, such as the gaps between income groups, sexes and ethnic groups.

Socio-economic and Social System Disparities

Imbalances in socio-economic status, which characterise all modern society, are induced by the uneven distribution of economic power between individuals; such disparities are among the fundamental forces behind the emergence of social inequalities. These inequalities, in turn, lead to social stratification and spatial segregation in social structures characterised by the correlation between the social network, living environment and socio-economic status of people (Leo et al., 2016). According to The World Bank Social Development Department (2006), the distribution of public goods and resources in most countries is unequal; therefore, some social groups experience inequality by their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, family/clan affiliation, political views and so on. This distribution is unequal and inequitable when it deprives excluded groups of the opportunity to access civil, political and economic mechanisms to improve their status (World Bank 2005a, cited in The World Bank Social Development Department, 2006). Social structures, norms and values, which groups internalise to sustain existing arrangements, provide a framework in which inequitable systems persist and inequality traps are perpetuated (Keizer, 2005; Govender, 2005, cited in The World Bank Social Development Department, 2006).

Twitter as a Microcosm of Society

According to Weller et al. (2014), since the launch of Twitter in 2006 (now rebranded as X but for this paper will still be referred to as Twitter), it has transformed from a niche service to a mass phenomenon, combined with the interpersonal nature of its communication. Twitter is increasingly used as a source of real-time information and a place for debate in news, politics, business and entertainment. Twitter provides a communicative space affording the emergence of a new type of publicness: the “personal

public.” This personal public is seen as an ideal type of communicative space, defined and placed in contrast to the traditional publics afforded by journalistic mass media and framed by the three structural dimensions of technological affordance, social and textual relationships, and shared rules and expectations (Weller et al., 2014). The success of Twitter has made it a rich research site for scholars interested in online interactions, information dissemination, activism and a plethora of other subjects. The sheer volume of its users, tweets and hashtags has made the site a favourite for quantitative data analysis (Weller et al., 2014).

The Internet and Bridging the Gap

Much of the recent explosion in the breadth and width of human knowledge is linked to media and communication technology development. According to Kaul (2012), over the years, the world has witnessed the fastest transformation brought about by advancements in communication technology. People are increasingly mobile and urban; geographical, political and social landscapes are changing. All these impact how people communicate; however, a division in sharing and accessing information still persists. For the Internet, which blends images and prints, images are potentially more straightforward for people to decode and interpret. Still, the print may be more difficult to decode and interpret due to educational, psychological, physiological or sociological issues (Gaziano, 2016).

Scholars like Barker and Dun (1972), quoted in Udeze and Oko (2014), argue that, until access to information services is universally available, those already rich in information will continue to be at an advantage over the information poor. They opine, however, that information services cannot be universally available to all, meaning that these gaps will still and always persist. Gaziano (2016) explains that perhaps knowledge inequality will decrease because of the introduction of the Internet and educational institutions’ teaching of computer skills and information search will become universal.

Theoretical Framework

Feminism and Feminist Theory

According to Ropers-Huilman (2000), cited in Pasque & Wimmer (2001), Feminist Theory is generally founded on three principles: that women have something valuable to contribute to every aspect of the world; as an oppressed group, women have been unable to achieve their potential, receive rewards or gain full participation in society; and, feminist research should do more than critique, but should work toward social transformation. Lober (1997) argues that, over the past thirty-five years, feminist ideas have changed, as the limitations of one set of ideas are critiqued and addressed by what was felt to be a better set of ideas about why women and men were so unequal. There

has not been a clear progression because many debates went on simultaneously and are still ongoing. Therefore, there are continuity and convergence, coupled with sharp disagreements among the different branches of feminism. Delmar (2001) opines that the various meanings of feminism for different feminists have manifested themselves as a sort of sclerosis of the movement, segments of which have become separated and hardened against one another.

In the view of Delmar (2001), the fragmentation of contemporary feminism bears witness to the impracticability of constructing modern feminism as a simple unity in the present or of arriving at a shared feminist definition of feminism. The differing explanations, with various emphases in practical campaigns, such widely varying interpretations of their results, have emerged. It now makes sense to speak of a plurality of feminism than of one. Delmar (2001) further explains that, in certain circles, the quest for equal rights for a woman's autonomy and self-reliance asserted rhetorically as a self-contained ideal, without reference to societal purpose or relationship to others, provoked widespread controversy and dissent. Critics of individualist feminists filed charges of egoism against women they thought to have adopted a male model as a human form (Delmar, 2001).

This branch of feminism that deals with individualism and which is heavily criticised seems to be a significant issue in the discourse on Nigerian Twitter, with users constantly arguing about the place of a woman in a traditional home and a conservative society, with rules about what women should and should not do, forgetting that an equal society, that does not impose roles on the sexes, is as advantageous to women as it is to men.

This theory is employed in this study to shed light on the ways in which Nigerian women use the Twittersphere to form support groups and express solidarity in their feminist pursuits. Understanding these dynamics can foster stronger connections within the feminist undertaking, creating a sense of shared purpose and support among women from diverse backgrounds.

Knowledge Gap Hypothesis

As noted by Gaziano (2016), the knowledge gap hypothesis proposes that, as more and more information is disseminated into a social system, such as a community or a nation, the wealthy gain more knowledge faster than those who are not rich. This leads to a relative differential in the knowledge increase between both groups, at one point in time and over time. Gaziano (2016) gives the reasons for developing knowledge gaps, including characteristics of more advantaged socio-economic groups and mass media information-delivery systems. Tichenor et al. (1970), cited in Gaziano (2016), opine that the less advantaged would gain more knowledge, but the more advantaged would gain more knowledge faster. Gaziano (1997), quoted in Gaziano (2016) defines this knowledge as information gained and remembered through a learning process, whereas information

gaps are disparities in data available to be learned. This knowledge can be measured as simple awareness of an issue (a dichotomous measure) and in-depth information (a continuous variable).

According to Bonfadelli (2002), the knowledge gap hypothesis is often mentioned in the public debate on the social consequences of the information society. Udeze and Oko (2014) argue that these social consequences imply that the information gap and knowledge gap between the information rich and the information poor is getting wider daily. However, to some scholars, the knowledge gap proposition is deterministic, biased and overlooked the abilities of the less advantaged (Gaziano, 2016). Rogers (2003), cited in Gaziano (2016), claims that it is due to communication activities and renames it the communication effect gap hypothesis, citing the cause in information sources rather than receivers. According to Tichenor et al. (1970), as found in Gaziano (2016), there exist some conditions under which knowledge gaps on the level of the community do not always occur. How active organised groups are on issues with the community is significant here. This is because of their ability to control information flow and stimulate conflict.

Jeffres et al. (2011) opine that the knowledge gap hypothesis is a perspective that is rooted in studies of traditional new media during the postmodern era; however, as media convergence continues to grow, these gaps in audience information now apply to new media. As observed by Kaul (2012), the advent of new media with different practical and ideological changes from traditional media has impacted social change and transformed the global communication landscape. Most technology described as new media are digital, often characterised by being manipulated, networkable, dense, compressible, impartial and interactive.

Gaziano (2016) opines that introducing new media has held promise and discouragement for closing knowledge gaps. When access to Internet use depends on socio-economic status, knowledge differentials may increase. This is why feminists have strived to improve the status of women, especially the economic status of women, because they are most affected by these gaps and bear the brunt of poverty and discrimination in their societies. Women's ability to bridge the digital divide and improve their socio-economic status will benefit them and their societies.

Methods

Kim et al. (2018) adjudged simple random sampling to be more efficient in obtaining a more efficient and representative sample of Twitter data because it assumes that each item in a specific population is given an equal chance to be selected in the sample. Using a keyword search as demonstrated by Cavazos-Rehg et al. (2016), cited in Kim et al. (2018), this researcher content-analysed tweets on the subject of study. About 2,000 tweets were randomly selected between the 3rd and 30th of April, 2023. They were

collected from 20,000 tweets from a pool of identified feminism-related tweets, checking their geotags and geolocation to ensure users are in Nigeria.

The tweets were coded into five categories: personal opinion on feminism, identification as a feminist, opposition to feminism, support for feminism, and issues about feminism. On personal opinion on feminism, tweets were examined and coded on whether a tweet was tweeted/retweeted, if the tweet was in response to another tweet or response to a published article (3 variables). On identification as a feminist, tweets were examined and coded based on users identifying as feminists, refusing to identify as feminists, or wanting to identify as feminists but having certain constraints (3 variables). In opposition to feminism, tweets were coded based on showing negativity towards feminism (1 variable). In support for feminism, tweets that were favourable towards feminism were coded (1 variable). On issues about feminism, tweets were examined and coded based on issues relating to feminism that were discussed, the knowledge and information gap fuelling a disparity in realities of women, real world and online feminism realities, and the problem they have with feminism (3 variables). The inter-coder reliability calculated using Holst's formula was $r = 88\%$, and the data were presented using simple percentages.

Data Presentation

Research Question 1: What are the responses/contributions to feminism and feminists discourse on Twitter in Nigeria?

Variables for coded tweets	Simple Percentage (%)
Users who contributed to tweets on feminism from other users	72
Users who responded to tweets on articles about feminism	58
Users who have issues with the concept but aren't against or for feminism	51

Research Question 2: What are the different perceptions of feminists and feminism on Twitter in Nigeria?

Variables for coded tweets	Simple Percentage (%)
Users favourably disposed to feminism	21
Users who are against feminism	38
Users who identify as feminists	17
Users who don't identify as feminists	50

Research Question 3: What are the levels of disparities that exist concerning information and knowledge gaps about feminism issues fuelled by the existence of a digital divide?

Variables for coded tweets	Simple Percentage (%)
Users' tweets on the knowledge and information gap fuelling a disparity in the realities of women	22
Users tweet on real-world and online feminist realities	67
Users tweet about the problem they have with feminism	75

Discussion of findings

Research Question 1: What are the responses/contributions to feminism and feminist discourse on Twitter in Nigeria? Conversations on feminism and feminist issues are usually very heated on Twitter and garner significant engagement; and Twitter users frequently contribute to these discussions and generally have opinions on these issues. This shows that educated Nigerians who can use social media technologies to communicate are quite up-to-date with issues relating to feminist activities in Nigeria and the problems Nigerian women face.

Research Question 2: What are the different perceptions of feminists and feminism on Twitter in Nigeria? The data showed that, generally, there are more negative tweets, views and perceptions about feminism and feminists on Twitter than positive views. This means that a good number of Nigerians on Twitter are not favourably disposed to the concept of feminism, despite their seemingly high level of education and considering the issues that women face in the Nigerian society. According to Offen (1988), to many people, the word feminism continues to inspire controversy, arouse a visceral response, and even evoke fear among a sizeable portion of the general public. Understanding what feminism stands for and a proper education of who feminists are will be a crucial step in changing these negative perceptions about people who fight for the equality of the sexes and the advancement of women.

Research Question 3: What are the levels of disparities that exist concerning information and knowledge gaps about feminism issues fuelled by the existence of a digital divide? The data indicated that Twitter users do not trust the conversations had on feminism on the site; a good number of the users do not feel that the conversations on Twitter are representative of the realities on the ground; and they feel that there is a gap in how online feminists deal with women issues that is quite different from the significant issues affecting women in Nigeria. They also feel that feminism is a Western-world concept and

most of the conversations are not the reality of what Nigerian women face offline. The women (poor rural women who do not have access to social media and the technologies that power them or have the means to afford them) who need feminism most are not a part of these conversations and do not even understand the importance of their rights or know the rights they have. Therein lies the knowledge and information gap fuelled by their socio-economic status and social system disparities.

The socio-economic and the social system realities of women in Nigeria are reflected in these conversations. Obijiofor (2012), cited in Udeze & Oko (2014), emphasises that the use of new media in poor continents, such as Africa, is limited to the middle and upper classes that have got a lot of technological savvy. This divide is very prominent when looking at advocacy for women's rights and the equality of the sexes discussions on social media, especially on Twitter. Proponents and opponents of feminism continue to have arguments on the elements of feminism; a lot of the women who suffer the most from this inequality are not a party to these discussions because they do not have access to the technologies that will enable them to be part of them.

To further bridge the gap between these classes of women, Internet and technology use, focused on the advancement of women and the activities that help improve their equality in society, should be advocated. However, Kumar and Choudhury (2022) claim that, in a technologically advanced world, gender imbalance is a critical issue. Because women make up such a small percentage of the technological workforce, technology may become the tangible incarnation of male power in the coming years, if the gender imbalance is left unchecked. This would, in turn, deny women the opportunities to access technologies that would make their lives easier, give women access to critical infrastructure that will help eliminate the information and knowledge gap, reduce the digital divide and improve the socio-economic status of women in their societies.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has discussed the subject of feminism and its importance to women and society as a whole. The paper also discussed the socio-economic and social system disparities that lead to persistent gaps in information and knowledge and an increase in the digital divide between different groups of women: the haves and the have-nots. The concepts and research reviewed in this paper can lead to a more comprehensive representation of feminist efforts that reflects the connections of gender and digital access. The awareness gained from this investigation can aid advocacy efforts that support digital inclusion to improve the socio-economic status of women in Nigeria, as well as contribute immensely to scholarship on women issues in Nigeria. If the persistent inequalities that plague different women in society are not properly addressed, the socio-economic problems that cause the knowledge gap and digital divide will continue to

persist. Until humans live in a world where socio-economic and social system disparities do not exist, irrespective of the advances achieved in technology, media and communication, the problem of the knowledge and information gap and the digital divide will continue to persist. Issues relating to women's rights, which are mostly fuelled by poverty and lack of information, will also continue to persist.

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