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A CRITIQUE OF SYMBOLISM IN AFRICAN RELIGION AND SOCIO-CULTURAL WORLDVIEW: THE SOUTHWEST NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract
African religion is replete with symbolism. This can be observed in the daily usage of both religious and common languages. Notably, symbolism in this context is comprehensive and conveys more than its basic meaning. It encompasses the use of religious language in a highly symbolic manner. This study explores the reality of symbolism and its profound role in the socio-cultural existence of southwestern Nigerians. To achieve factual accuracy, the study delves into the cosmological conception of the Yoruba people. Philosophical critique serves as the research tool, allowing for a rigorous analysis of the reality and application of symbolism within the community. Secondary data were sourced from archival materials, journals, and other scholarly works to reinforce the study's intent. Findings reveal that the African, particularly Yoruba, religious worldview is deeply entrenched in symbolism, which holds significant value for the people's existence. Furthermore, symbolism in Yoruba religious practices and socio-cultural worldviews is well established. The study also addresses critiques from some Western scholars who argue that Africans lack an understanding of religious symbolism. Contrary to these claims, findings highlight that religious language, artistic representations, and communal beliefs function as vital mediums for preserving historical continuity, moral values, and spiritual connectivity. This research contributes to a broader understanding of African religious epistemology and underscores the intellectual depth of Yoruba religious traditions.

Keywords: Symbolism, Religious Language, Social Life And Culture

Introduction

This study examines symbolism and the use in the religion, particularly the religious language of the Yoruba of southwest Nigeria and also in the changing socio-cultural world-view of the people. Hence, the indigenous religion of the Yoruba and their social lives were subjected to critical examination in the context of their use of symbolism. The essence is to evaluate the great value of symbolism to the Yoruba with intent of showcasing it for possible global acceptance. This study further seeks to contribute to the existing study on symbolism. The various use of symbols in religion and in the social lives of the people were interrogated for a vivid conception of their thinking on symbolism. The research method adopted in this study is basically philosophical, hence issues were raised and critically examined. Scholarly materials, mostly journals that are relevant were consulted. The study comes up with the finding that symbolism and its use is germane to socio-cultural existence of the Yoruba. The study further discovers that the use of symbol tends to capsuilize information – make them vivid and concise, the very reason why the use is rampart among the people.

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Background to the Study

One cannot but confess to the fact that the inspiration to research in this area of African scholarship is drawn from Matthew Schoffeleers (1928-2011). His astuteness in decades of scholarly historical presentation of the Malawian and South African religions and cults, especially in a very symbolic panorama, is splendid. The most impressive aspect of Schoffeleers is his orthodox Catholic background, a tradition which he is inclined to, and in spite of which he endeavoured to consistently research into African religion and cults which normally would be considered as sacrilegious to Catholics. As a religious anthropologist, he actually brought to bear, his training on the scientific study of people, their societies,   and cultures in the discourse of African religion. The inspiration from Schoffeleers, to a very large extent, eliminates the age-long fear of criticism of a professing clergyman such as the researcher, meandering about African religion. Van Binsbergen, in his 'In memoriam: Matthew Schoffeleers, (2011: 255-258), has it that in the beginning of Schoffeleers's missionary career, he explored, with painful but productive results, the extent to which one could identify with the African form of religion with the attendant symbols and still remain within the Roman Catholic Orthodoxy and Church hierarchy.

This study on Symbolism in African religion, therefore, in following Schoffeleers, endeavours to make a scholarly and historical investigation of perceivable objects of symbolism in African religion, even in an esperiential manner, not minding the religious commitment of the scholar. It is important to also note that this endeavour is necessitated by the changing world-view of the Yoruba environment in terms of religious belief and value. In the pre-colonial era, the Yoruba world-view was permeated by purely indigenous ritual practices, worship and the belief in the reality of metaphysical entities. The era of colonialism however came with the emergence of Christianity and the introduction of Pentecostalism in the early 19th century, a period which is adjudged to have a profound impact on the cosmology, religion and the entire socio-cultural world-view of the Yoruba race as attested to by Osun, (2012: 27-38). Christianity actually began to have its root in the Nigerian shore as from the mid-18[th]century. The Methodist mission was the first to come to Nigeria in the year 1842, through Thomas Birch Freeman. Next was the arrival of the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) in 1943, led by Rev. Henry Townsend and Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther. The year 1846 witnessed the emergence of the Baptist mission in Nigeria, under the leadership of Rev. Bowen. The Presbyterian Church of Scotland also came to Nigeria in 1846 through Rev. Hope Waddel, (cf Alokan, 2010:6-9 and Ademakinwa, 1971: 15-28). The impact of these mission groups on the indigenous religious outlook of the Yoruba society was minimal, because of their cold liturgy and form of worship, until the introduction of Pentecostalism in Nigeria.

The year 1918 marked the emergence of Pentecostalism with its radical innovation to the practice of Christianity. The emphasis of the advocates of Pentecostalism is the efficacy of the power of prayer to solve diverse problems. This, in the context of a very aggressive attack of the Pentecostal Christians during this era, on the native religion marks the period out as a time of uncomfortable confluence of religious traditions, more so that at a period earlier, Islam, which was also very much unfriendly to the indigenous religion had been introduced to the Yoruba area of Nigeria. The religion and the sociocultural existence of the Yoruba which constitute the data upon which this study is based upon is, therefore, one that has be influenced by the existence of the emerging Pentecostalism and Islamiccsm.

Symbolism in African Religious Language

A thorough examination of language and religion in the context of symbolism remains the focus of study at this stage. One may necessarily call to mind the various theoretical approaches of religious language. In this regard, A. J. Ayer and other scholars of logical positivism posit verification of religious languages – that religious languages could not be sustained under verification theory. Anthony Flew maintains the position that religious languages are false. Ludwig Wittgenstein however, believe in the úse theory', that the meaning of religious words or language are sustainable in their use. This study follows the theory of Wittgenstein. An instance could be made out of the word 'God'. The word God is a mere symbolic representation. Take for example, the use of the letters G-O-D used to represent the conception of a Supreme Being, and how the meaning of the word 'God' is now subsumed in the usage. To a logical positivist like A. J. Ayer, (Evans, 1985: 141-144), the three lettered word 'G-O-D is meaningless, but by convetional useage, the word has assumed the meaning Supreme Being – the 'Being than which nothing greater can be conceived'; the Being which has come to be known as the Supreme Being. Across the ages, the problem of meaning has been the most outstanding issue in religious language. Ludwig Wittgenstein, in Onimhavo (2006) has it that the meaning of a word subsists in the use of that particular word. Oshitelu (2002: 53) also succinctly subscribes to Wittgenstein's submission. This has been the power behind the use of religious language among the Yoruba. The very crucial question here is, to what extent could it be adjudged that religious languages assumes the dimension of symbolism among the Yoruba? It is, in this context, argued that in a situation wherein a word or group of words that supposedly should be meaningless now assume meaning in the hearth of the majority of the people, the function of symbolism could not be underestimated.

It is interesting to note through this study that religious language, particularly African religious language is replete with verbal or audio symbolic representations. There are a lot of words with exoteric use and which are highly symbolic in the African traditional religion, the meanings of which remain in the circle of the respective religious groups. Take for examples, words such as *awo* and *ògbèrì*. *Awo* means secret in its literary use but it conveys a deeper meaning to insiders of secret societies. Among some metaphysical groups, for example, the *Ògbóni* fraternity, it is used to refer to members of the particular group. Members of the group are called *awo* and outsiders are called *ògbèrì*, meaning ordinary or common people. *Ògbèrì,* to cult members, connotes more than a mere common man. It means people who lack visionary ability; people who could not see beyond the ordinary; people that are beclouded with ignorance. More than being mere ordinary people, the use of the word *ògbèrì* connotes that such people are even powerless and unprotected and are vulnerable to attack by metaphysical entities.

Another word is *èbùré* which literarlly means plea. Among the Yoruba of southwest Nigeria, the word is also commonly used within the cultic circle. The common words for plea among the people are *èbè* and *èbùré* but *èbùré* is often reserved for cultic use. They say '*jèbùré awo olùgbebè*'. By interpretation, it means 'we are beging you in the name of the cultic cord that binds us together, please forgive'. Plea in this world-view carries a deeper meaning than the usage of *èbè* which also means plea in the ordinary sense. Here, the image and symbol of the cultic cord of unity are at the fore. It must, however, be mentioned that in some very rare occasions, the plea might not be productive. This is especially so when terrible metaphysical beings such as witches are involved. The foregoing discussion on religious language could be advanced further that religious languages carry certain measure

of supernatural power. This is made sure through the verbal use of words, imagery and symbols, carefully selected and combined together to achieve a particular speech rhythm in a way to invoke a particular reaction. Language in the context of religion is used as a means to control nature. Human language is derived from human experience. When it is, however, used to talk about things or objects that are outside the scope of human experience, there arises the question that 'is religious language still meaningful'? At this point, to a religious man, it is not the meaning of religious language that matters, but its potency and value.

In this perspective, Mbiti (1969: 179), in his *African Religion and Philosophy* has it that 'there is a mystical power in words, especially, those of a senior to a junior one, in terms of age, socio status, or that of official position'. Mbiti has it further that 'the words of parents, for example, carry power when spoken to children'. Such words, to Mbiti, could cause good fortune, success, peace, sorrow or blessing, especially when spoken in a moment of crisis. It is important to note that religious language is often used among the Yoruba of southwest Nigeria in a manner that evokes potency and efficacy in a way to bring about the desired results. It has to do with the use of words in a special circumstance that man's ego in manipulating nature, or change the course of nature to a desired dimension would be achieved. In this world-view, it is expedient to mention such concepts as *èpè* (curse), *ìre* (blessing), *àyájó* (a kind of curse that traces the antecedents of issues in the distant past to make it effective), *àdàbì* (it literally means 'except'). An instance is the pronouncement of an aggrieved mother to her child that 'the child will only prosper in life except the child did not suck her breast when the child was young).

In the frame-work of the foregoing discussion, Oduyoye (1983: 203) in her 'Potent Speech' quotes Maquet that 'by means of certain words… Man believes that he can acquire a larger share of the power that permeates the universe and can use it for his own end'. Such words are effective because they are charged with power. In this panorama, Oduyoye, in a very symbolic manner, coveys powerfully, the meaning of the Yoruba word *dandan which* literally means it has to be. She made use of three words to drive home the meaning of *dandan*. The words are: *ofo* which connotes authority among the Igbo of Southeast Nigeria, *àse* which also connotes authority among the Yoruba of Southwest of Nigeria and the *edon* with the same connotation of authority among the Yoruba Ogboni/Osugbo secret society groups.

Oduoye has it that the same undertone of 'power of compulsion' dominates the use of the three words – *ofo*, *àse* and *edon*. They essentially imply that the request or prayer, in the context of their use, even if such request is negative, as a matter of compulsion, must be granted. *Ofo,* to an Igbo man, is a symbol of ritual authority and also the emblem of both political and religious authorities. Whoever holds the *ofo* among the Igbo symbolically represents a continuation of the authority of the ancestors and the deities. If the holder, in a moment of crisis, invokes a curse on an erring member of the society or group, it is believed that the curse is potent and will achieve the desired devastating result. Political and headship authority across the grades and hierarchies among the Igbo of Southeast Nigeria are made sure and are accorded the desired obedience and respect through the use of *ofo*. This is because people know that whoever holds the *ofo* holds the judicial and the administrative power in trust as a representative of the ancestors, deities and even *Chukwu* the Supreme Deity.

The same way, it is believed that *àse* which is the power of the spoken word among the Yoruba is highly potent and could produce a very devastating result. To curse among the Yoruba is *sé èpè.* The phrase '*sé èpè',* however, has its root in the word *àse* which is

interpreted as *dandan*. *Edon,* the anthropomorphic brass of the *ògbóni* cult with a symbols of pair of tongs… the handle of which bears a human image is also, essentially the symbol of *dandan* 'compulsion' (Oduoye:1983). In essence, whatever pronouncement made by the group becomes authority. In that regard, the ogboni fraternity is a symbol of dread and respect among the Yoruba. In that world-view, the members occupy the exulted position of leadership in the society and they do act as check on the entire leadership of the community.

This study is a model or template for further research work, especially in the areas of spoken words in the context of power. Scholars of African religion such as Mbiti (1969: 97), Idowu (1973: 189-190), and Awolalu and Dopamu (1979: 240-246) admit the belief that there is power in words. The submission of this study is that if the concept of power in the spoken words is a believable notion, then it must be further investigated and implored for the good of mankind. There are many socio-cultural problems besetting a country like Nigeria. Such problems should be tackled even if it has to be by metaphysical means (an effective use of religious language).

Symbolism in the Context of Yoruba Religious Practice and Socio-cultural World-view
Religious language is not the only habitat of symbolism among the Yoruba of southwest Nigeria. It appears that many African writers are of the opinion that the whole religious world-view of Africans is replete with symbolism. Nwako's work, in *Traditional Religion in West Africa* (1983: 198), appears to corroborate this assertion. He writes in his 'Art in Traditional African Religion' that 'the tendency to use art and art objects in his worship is not peculiar to the African. It is the natural human urge to give the best to the gods'. He has the opinion further that that is the reason why worked objects in varying forms, including masks are used in public shrines, family and personal shrines and in cults and secret societies.

Based on the fore-going, it is considered right by this study to affirm that a scholarly use of symbolism to dig deep into the history and anthropology of a people, particularly when it has to do with their religious world-view and value is just appropriate. This is because symbolism has the propensity to bridge the gap between two different worlds, in this context, the present contemporary world and the past, ancient world of the Yoruba of Southwest Nigeria. Recent scholarship further explores the symbolic dimensions of African religious practices. Olupona (2014) argues that African religious symbolism is not merely aesthetic but deeply theological and existential, serving as a bridge between the metaphysical and the material worlds. Peel (2016) critiques early Western anthropological interpretations, which often misunderstood African religious expressions as primitive or lacking abstract theological depth. He asserts that Yoruba religious symbolism, particularly in the context of Egúngún (masquerade), reflects a sophisticated engagement with ancestral presence and metaphysical reality

It is pertinent at this point to examine the concept of *egúngún* (masquerade) in the Yoruba anthropological world-view. Masquerades are masked and appear in a kind of special regalia that cover their whole bodies. They constitute dance and entertaining religious cum cultural groups. There is, however, more to the concept of *egúngún* than mere dance and entertainment. The concept of *egúngún* has a very deep religious connotation. *Egúngún* connotes the ancestral veneration. The notion of masquerade is believed by the Yoruba to represent the presence of the departed ancestors. When the masquerades dance about and entertain people, more than a mere entertainment, the Yoruba believes that such masquerades represent the presence of their departed fore-fathers. As a result of that

thinking, the people will make their requests, which they believe that their fore-fathers will attend to.

The discussion above could be supported by the opinion of Adedeji (1983: 117) when he writes that the worship of the ancestors by the Yoruba is based on a firm belief that the spirit of human beings never dies, it will continue to influence the life of the community from another sphere after it has left the physical body. This is the fact that Idowu (1967: 237) states in respect of the 'masquerade', when he writes that by creating the masquerade of his late father and setting him up as an *Òrìsà* to be worshipped, *Aláàfin Sàngo* reformed the Yorùbá funeral ceremony with a firm belief that the dead still lives. He thereby introduces a new element into ancestral worship, namely: the concept of reincarnation in a materialized form – a robed figure or masquerade[5]. This same fact has earlier been expressed by Lucas (1948: 378) in his concept of *ìsèkú* – bringing the spirit of the deceased to the homestead.

A symbolic use of the concept of community in African religion and socio-cultural phenomena is very important to this study. The sense of community and humane living are highly cherished values of traditional African life. For traditional Africans, the community is basically sacred with a deep religious undertone. The community, in its sacred phenomenon, is surrounded by several religious forms and symbols.In modern African urban cities, community loyalty of one's extended family and village continues to exert a solid hold over people who live away from the communities of their home towns.

Mbiti (1969) underscores the importance of the community among traditional Africans. In his words, the individual in Africa does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He owes existence to other people, including those of the past generations and his contemporaries. Whatever happens to the individual is believed to happen to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am". This, to Mbiti is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man as revealed through the symbol of community. Within the concept of community, everyone, male and female, young and old, able body and disabled is relevant. Everyone is sure of love, protection, care and sense of belonging. Whatever happens to one happens to all.

Perhaps, it is relevant within the context of the discussions on the African concept of community to discuss the notion of the Yoruba word called *àkòdì* – a form of African communal living, which symbolizes love, peace, togetherness and peaceful co-existence. *Àkòdì* is a Yoruba word that depicts a people's practical living of total acceptance. The word, in itself, does not seem to be of much value until the concept it stands for is adequately examined and exposed. This is, therefore, an attempt to show the concept embedded by the *àkòdì* system and to recommend the principle of total acceptance that it stands for, as a necessary and possible in-road to peace. The spirit behind the Yoruba system of *àkòdì* is, therefore, that of love, unity, tolerance, acceptability and mutual peace.

To trace the etymology or root meaning of the word *àkòdì*, the word has to be broken into *ako* and *odi*. *Ako* means 'hard' or 'male' and *odi* means wall or boundary. Thus, the two syllables *ako* and *odi* when joined together becomes *àkòdì* which could literarily be interpreted as tough and sturdy, as to be able to stand the strain of weather and the test of time. From the concept representation, the meanings portrayed by *ako* and *odi* are all contained in what *àkòdì* stands for. The physical structure of *àkòdì* and its architectural configuration shows that the concepts represented by the component words, *ako* and *odi* are well grounded in *àkòdì*. The thinking of the Yoruba is evidently portrayed in the meaning

of *àkòdì*. That is, there are strength and enduring abilities in mutual relationship (Jemiriye 2009: 51-59).

Àkòdì, among the Yoruba, is the place of abode for all the members in a family clan. The good, the bad, the ugly, the beautiful, the lazy, the hardworking, the super lazy, and the workaholic all live together in the same *àkòdì*. Even the mad – insane person is accommodated in the *àkòdì*. Thus, in the *àkòdì*, all kinds of people are fully accommodated, known, noted, and accepted for whatever the individual is and is encouraged to fulfil him / herself as best in the common interest of all within the *àkòdì*. The words community and *àkòdì,* as conceived by the Yoruba are highly symbolic and connote the spirit of love and togetherness among the people. More than that, in a deep religious sense, the conception of the words intrinsically invokes sacredness.

It is essential to further see the African community from a much deeper perspective. For traditional Africans, community is much more than simply a social grouping of people bound together by reasons of natural origin and / or deep common interests and values. It is both a society as well as a unity of the visible and invisible worlds; the world of the physically living on the one hand, and the world of the ancestors, divinities and souls of children yet to be born to individual kin groups on the other hand. In a wider sense, African traditional community comprehends the totality of the world of African experience including the physical environment, as well as all spirit beings acknowledged by a given group.

This perception of community among the Africans and the Yoruba in particular is highly symbolic of unity, power, mutual economic force, and in a subtle way, it invigorates the notion of good moral standard. The connotation of moral standard is important here because, in the African religious thought, a sin or *taboo* committed by an individual affects the unity of the whole community structure. It has to be stressed that this notion is all-encompassing and that a breach in that regard affects the unity of both the living and the living dead. It is, therefore, imperative to note that whenever there is a breach of community ethical code, the unity of the cosmological structure which has been hitherto hampered through such a breach must be restored through the appropriate sacrifice. In this world-view, people become extra-cautious in their behavioural attitudes and disposition to issues of life.

Another concept of symbolic value in Africa, particularly among the Yoruba is the position of the crown. The Yoruba are monarchical in their administrative-cum-political structures. This political structure is most often represented or symbolized by the crown. The crowned kings among the Yoruba could be very powerful. They are often considered to be next to Divinity. Hence the expression *aláse èkejì Òrìsà* (roughly meaning the authoritative one) next only to Divinity. The crown is the symbol of both political and divine power incorporated in whoever wears it. In this regards, the king (*Oba*) operates both at the levels of humans and divinity. He is the chief custodian of the religious, ethical and social structures of his community. In that context, he is believed to be relating at will with all the priests of the respective gods and also all the terrestrial powers in his community. Law (1977) has argued that Yoruba kingship blends spiritual and political power, making the *Oba* both a religious figure and a political leader.

This notion makes the Yoruba to see their kings as direct symbol of divinity and derivatively, to them, the king is divine. Further, in the Yoruba cosmological thought, the kings are repositories of ritual powers. To this effect, the kings have to maintain harmony and concord between society and its natural environment by means of natural ritual actions of a regular kind which they (the kings) alone can take. This responsibility is believed to be

inherently deposited in the persons of the kings by the gods and the Supreme Being; as a result, the persons of the kings and the crowns they wear connote the sense of awe.

Perhaps, of equal importance in symbolic value is the idea of succession of Yoruba kings recorded by Johnson (1921: 43-47). A very important ritual in the process of succession in Johnson's account is a sacred meal prepared with the heart of the deceased king which the next, incumbent king must, as a matter of tradition, eat. It is only after eating this meal that the Yoruba will say concerning the new king that '*ó tí joba*', this phrase, literarily means he has eaten the king, but by conventional use, the phrase means he has become the king. This ritual, symbolically represents a succession tradition which has a linkage with the first king in that community and the deities and the terrestrial powers within that environment. The new king,in that context, is therefore seen as a representative of the ancestors, the powers that be in that environment and, as a matter of fact, by inclination, a divinity among human beings. This ritual symbolically means that the king has officially ascended the stool of his ancestors and whatever he does henceforth he is acting in the capacity of the powers that be in that community. This, perhaps, is the hallmark of the sense of awe, reverence and obedience which the Yoruba reserves for the crown and whoever wears it. Recent critiques, such as Oluwaseun (2020), argue that such symbolic acts are not merely ritualistic but serve as instruments of political continuity and social cohesion. However, critics like Ranger (1993) caution against romanticizing African kingship traditions, arguing that contemporary political dynamics sometimes manipulate these symbols for legitimacy

It is important also to mention here that the king's staff of office is highly symbolic of the presence of the king. Any function that the king cannot attend personally, he can send his chiefs with the staff of office to such a place. In such circumstance the same respect which is usually accorded the king will be given even in his absence. The staff of office is a symbol of the presence of the king. It represents the authority of the king. It further symbolise the truth that the people do not merely do obeisance to the human representative of the stool of office, but more than that, they have a high reverence for the tradition and office of kingship which symbolically represents the presence of the great progenitors of the community.

It will be inappropriate to conclude this aspect of the study without a vivid discussion of the 'earth' in the world-view of symbolism. The earth means much to the Africans, particularly the Yoruba. The Yoruba calls it *ilè.* To the people, earth symbolizes life and total existence. They call it the Mother Earth. This is because it gives succour in terms of agricultural products to man. Most of the things they need for existence come from the earth. The water they drink and use for other domestic purposes is from the earth. The bricks and planks they use for the construction of their houses come from the earth. When they die, the earth receives their corpses. To the Yoruba, the earth is not ordinary earth, it is divine and as a result, it is being venerated. This notion is supported by Mbiti (1975), who asserts that African cosmology integrates the natural and spiritual realms, making the earth both a material and a metaphysical entity. However, Western critiques, such as Evans-Pritchard (1965), often interpret such veneration as animistic rather than theological. More recent studies, such as Olupona (2011), challenge this view, arguing that African religious thought possesses a complex and coherent theological structure that integrates nature and divinity. The earth, to the Yoruba, is a figure of a divine modality that owns every living thing. It is in this perspective that the Yoruba say that '*bíorobárújúká bi ilèléèrè'*. (When there is confusion on any issue, the earth should be consulted). This is to say that the earth serves the purpose of an oracle to the Yoruba.

Conclusion

This study affirms that African religious thought, particularly Yoruba religious symbolism, is deeply sophisticated and reflective. Contrary to early Western anthropological critiques that dismissed African religious expressions as simplistic, contemporary scholarship has demonstrated their theological and philosophical depth. Yoruba religious symbolism bridges the past and present, the physical and metaphysical, and the individual and the community. Going by this study, it could be deduced that African religion is replete with symbolism. Emphasis is laid on three specific areas of religion and social life of the Yoruba of Southwest Nigeria in particular. The areas, as it has been earlier discussed under introduction, are religious language, religious thought of the people and their socio-cultural existence. The study has attempted to show that these areas as reiterated above are deeply replete with symbolism.

Findings

A very critical question that one may necessarily ask is that 'does the religious language not serve the purpose of economy of words'? Many words in Africa have symbolic use. A mere mention of such a word would covey a lot of meaning which ordinarily will take pages to express to the hearer. Take for example, the word *jèbùré* as used in this study conveys more than the connotation of *èbè* which also mean plea. A compendium of such words, if developed, will go a long way to enhance the literary prowess of African languages. It could be affirmed that symbolism in African religion, especially as demonstrated in this study has the assumption that images and symbols respond to human needs and fulfil a function – that of bringing to light the most hidden modalities of being – the inner self, in his or her divine capability which may hitherto lie in obscurity. The value of this inner potentials of man cannot be overemphasized.

In the context of the aforementioned, the study on the use of symbolism enable one to reach a better understanding of man – man as he is in his mode of being, especially before he comes to terms with the prevailing circumstance of his formation as revealed by history, knowing fully that he carries within himself a great deal of prehistoric humanity. His thinking in his innermost being, his notions and his ideas which length of words may not suffice to lay bare are brought out by his use of symbolic representations and images. symbolism in Yoruba religious thought is an essential tool for understanding identity, continuity, and the human-divine relationship. Contemporary African scholars continue to challenge outdated perspectives, asserting that African religious traditions possess deep intellectual and philosophical foundations.

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BROADCASTING, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA AND THE PRIMACY OF THE SOFTWARE

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Abstract
The issue with Nigeria today is not just development but that which endures over time with its consequential benefits for Nigerians individually and the nation as a whole. For this to be achieved, there must be strategic planning that incorporates the potentials in all sectors in the nation's life, including broadcasting. Thus, this paper holds that the software of broadcasting – the content – can be used to mobilise and harness the different potentials in the country to participate in national development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It argues that in broadcasting, content is king; it is paramount in energising the people and creating the capacity among the citizens to engage in activities which can ensure sustainable development. It is recommended that for this to be achieved, programmers should create programmes whose contents target meeting the development imperatives of the nation to ensure a prosperous and environmentally conscious future.

Introduction
From the earliest of times, the society has been interconnected and interdependent. Occurrences, actions, inactions and decisions in one sector have always seriously impacted on other sectors. This is true of development: the decision or indecision in a sector or occurrences – man-made and natural – can and do bring concerns (and some times overbearing impact) on other sectors of the society. And given that development is the outcome of conscious decisions, it is safe to say that it is the totality of the conscious decisions and actions of different players in the polity that brings about development. According to Byju (2024), "Development is a process that creates growth, brings in progress and positive change. Development is a healthy sign. It is healthy because development ushers in a reasonable measure of wellbeing into the society. Yet, development is not a haphazard process. It is change that is ordered, a process concerned with the people's capacity to induce and manage change. That is, to predict, plan, understand and monitor change and reduce or eliminate unwanted change (Udoakah, 1998).

The foregoing suggests that a condition precedent for development is diligent attention to the process which leads to it. The diligence involves visualizing the development end, and then planning and putting in place the steps (actions) that will ultimately deliver the manifestations of development. An important allusion by Udoakah is that change must be monitored to ensure that what has been achieved is not derailed through change that is not desirable – change that is unwanted. Development that is desirable is positive change, change that creates growth and brings progress to the society. For a country to achieve development, it must have the capacity to cause and create growth to raise the standard of

living of its residents through the provision of basic livelihood requirements (Byju, 2024). He explains national development as encompassing all facets of an individual's life and the life of a nation: "It encompasses the whole growth as well as the expansion of our societal, religious and cultural institutions as well as our agricultural and manufacturing sectors …. The term 'national development' refers to the improvement of a country in all areas, including the political, economic, social, cultural, scientific and material spheres" (Byju, 2024). National development takes a holistic approach to a problem, and involves both the reconstruction and development of numerous aspects of a nation as well as the development of individuals.

It is already stated that the quest for development should be planned and ordered. This does not only ensure that unwanted change does not take place; it ensures that the development is sustainable. In the quest for development, some heavy price is often inadvertently paid, particularly in the form of land degradation, soil erosion, air and water pollution, deforestation, resettlement etc. to the extent that the damage may outweigh the immediate advantages of having more quality output of goods and services. Therefore, development should be sustainable, defined as "an approach to the economic development of a country without compromising with the quality of the environment for future generations". Development that is sustainable minimizes environmental problems; meets the needs of the existing generation without compromising with the quality of the environment for future generations (United Nations, 2024).

Development that is sustainable is an outcome of many individual and collective actions in the different sectors of the polity. One of such sectors is broadcasting, which is here explained as the use of the electromagnetic waves through the electromagnetic spectrum to send information to a mass, dispersed, heterogeneous audience through the media of radio and television. Radio and television, as channels of information dissemination, are central to the communication process of the society. Since their inception in Nigeria, radio (1932) and television (1959) have taken up a commanding position in the information dissemination space in Nigeria. They have, with consistency, brought to our attention frame the daily intelligence which is always outside our individual purview, and have effectively played the mediation role - standing between the news makers and the audience. The characteristics – or peculiarities of the medium of broadcasting – have made broadcasting the medium for all. That they overcome the barriers of language as well as physical and natural barriers – even man-made barriers (Head, 1985) – have made radio and television primary channels of communication among Nigerians. The combination of audio, text, graphics and video gives television an immeasurable advantage that no other medium has been able to enjoy or offer.

It is important to note that broadcast signals penetrate the homes of the audience in such a way that no other medium does. Above all, broadcasting caters for all categories of persons during a day's broadcast through programming that meets the different needs of different audience members. Programming, as defined by Eastman and Ferguson (2009, p. 2), "is the act of choosing and scheduling programs on a broadcast station, a subscription channel, the web or portable devices... The processes of selecting, scheduling, promoting and evaluating programs…" The programmes contain what is known as the "software" – the "content" – which is the ultimate product of broadcasting. In the business of broadcasting, it is the software – the content – which gives the "hardware" – the equipment – the reason to be.

Members of the audience are not in the least interested in whatever equipment a station is able to accumulate. The audience are interested in the content which a station is able to feed into the homes of the audience. While the hardware would enable or enhance the delivery of the software, with high fidelity, it is the software that attracts and sustains the audience. And without the software the hardware has no reason for existence. Put differently, the software gives the hardware the reason for existence (Eastman and Ferguson, 2009). Therefore the software – the content of programmes – has the primacy of place in contributing to sustainable development in Nigeria.

The Concept of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is an extension of development. It is concerned with how the present generation should live their lives in such a way that the lives of future generations are not jeopardised. According to the United Nations (2024): "Sustainable development is how we must live today if we want a better tomorrow, by meeting present needs without compromising the chances of future generations to meet their needs". This is because the survival of the present societies which belong to the planet shared by all depends on a sustainable world. The United Nations (2004) further opines that: "Where development is sustainable, everyone has access to decent work, quality health care and education. National resource use avoids pollution and permanent losses to the environment. Public policy choices ensure that no one is left behind due to disadvantages or discrimination".

Sustainable development is altruistic – the wellbeing of future generations is taken into consideration in the actions, behaviours and attitudes of the present generation. Thus, for there to be sustainable development, the present generation should pursue and balance immediate rewards with possible harms to the planet and future generations. Short-term goals should not override or overshadow long term interests. United Nations Member States, in 2015, after reviewing the implementation and subsequent achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), translated their vision of sustainable development into a blueprint for achieving the goal. They provided 17 Sustainable Development Goals – with ambitious targets to be attained by 2030. The 17 goals are spread across three facets of sustainable development, namely the economy, social development, and the environment.

The pursuit of the attainment of the 17 SDGs by 2030 is not without global challenges, including, but not limited to, the climate change crisis; weak global economy in which just a few countries are living comfortably while many others are sinking into or have already attained poverty level; armed conflicts around the world; and the lingering impact of COVID-19 which has stultified economic and social recovery in many a country. The United Nations is optimistic despite the teething problems listed above. According to the UN SDGs Report 2023: Special Edition, "It is not too late to reset efforts to reach them (the SDGs), however. To advance the sustainable development agenda, governments are integrating the Goals into national plans. However, a fundamental shift is needed to put the world on a better path. And with seven years left to achieve the 2030 Agenda, it is needed now".

The United Nations, wholly and through its organs, holds a periodic review of the sustainable development race towards 2030. For example, the SDG Summit, held at the headquarters of the United Nations in New York, United States of America, was a defining moment for world leaders to renew their commitments to the cause of SDGs, and deliver on their past promises. The summit was a rare opportunity for world leaders to engage in conversations on sustainable development, review progress and gaps in achieving the SDGs as well as "provide high-level political guidance on transformative, accelerated actions to

reach the goals by their 2030 endpoint" (United Nations, 2023). It is important that governments set policies and frameworks to drive sustainable development. Every sector, both public and private, should be involved. This being so, broadcasting, as a major vehicle in development, has a role to play in the attainment of sustainable development. This can be achieved through broadcasting's exercise of its normative functions. The normative functions find expression in the contents of broadcasting – the software – that are creatively designed to contribute to national development and by extension sustainable development.

The Concept of Software

As we have noted earlier, software in broadcasting refers to the content of broadcasting. It is the engine of broadcasting. It is what a station uses to showcase itself to the audience, and, more importantly, the advertisers. It is content –the quality, quantity and variety – that distinguishes one broadcast station from another, and even makes a station an award-winner among other stations. It is content that is used to satisfy the needs of the audience.

What draws an audience to a station is the content that it provides. In today's hypercompetitive world of broadcasting (Emwinromwankhoe and Akpan, 2022), what appeals to viewers or listeners or online users? Eastman and Ferguson (2009, p.6) provide the answer: "Quite simply, audiences want to be entertained, and they want to be informed. Speaking very generally, these two elements comprise the whole of programming content". It is in the content of different programmes (or individual shows) that the wants and needs of the audiences are addressed and satisfied. As Akpan (2018, p.199) has aptly noted, "The primary pre-occupation of radio and television is to provide information and entertainment from across the world, and at the speed of light. They do this with the assumption that the messages they disseminate are being watched or listened to, and that the audience actually prefer or like such messages which come by way of programmes or shows".

Interestingly, it is the software that broadcast stations use to target the advertisers. It should be noted that radio and television stations are in business to make profit, which comes mostly from revenue from patronage by advertisers. A media outlet will become financially self-sufficient or profitable only if it attracts an audience desired by advertisers. This can only be achieved through content delivered to the audience. Akpan (2023) takes the point further by stating that broadcast stations are not working for the audiences but the advertisers by creating programmes that will attract the audience for the station for advertisers to do business with them. Of course, advertisers want to reach the highest number of potential consumers at a minimum cost.

It needs be emphasised that despite all the technology at the disposal of the audience to choose programmes from a variety of sources, the audience typically expect the broadcaster to do the programming chore. Hence, Eastman and Ferguson (2009, p.3) emphasise that "viewers tend to choose channels, but expect someone else to have filled those channels in an expected way". Akpan (2018, p.208) explains that "the expected way is both the contents and the time that such contents are placed before the audience …. To have good contents costs money, but bad ones are produced at a cost too. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that money be spent wisely – on contents that meet the tastes and needs of the target audience – especially as broadcasters are not in the business of merely creating programmes, but are in the business of creating audience, through programmes that advertisers want to reach". This underscores why Eastman and Ferguson (2009, p.2) state unequivocally: "In the media world, programming is the software that gives the

hardware a reason for existing. Both are necessary for the system to work, but without programming no broadcast or wired services would exist. Programmers sincerely believe that 'content is king'". From the discourse so far, it can be established that the software has primacy regarding the attainment of the goals of broadcasting. Contents should be such that can maximize an audience. Owuamalam (2008) argues that content guarantees the viability or prosperity of any broadcast station. Akpan (2018, p.208) elaborates on this:

> The only way to achieve this goal is to satisfy the needs and wants of the audience through programming – i.e. through contents in the first instance and through type of contents selected for airing at a particular time, through the way the contents are promoted and through a periodic evaluation of such contents *vis-à-vis* the audience. Thus, stations whose programmes are weak – i.e. contents do not appeal to the audiences – stand the chance of going under because stations typically seek large audiences for their advertisers.

In these circumstances, the stations must re-invent themselves with new programmes that appeal to their audiences more than the old contents did. Emwinromwankhoe and Akpan (2022), remark that broadcast organisations achieve competitive advantage by providing their customers with what they want or need, better or even more effective than their competitors and in ways which competitors find difficult to imitate. Competition in broadcasting, many a time, translates into creativity in content. Emwinromwankhoe and Akpan (2022, p. 36-37) highlight four strategies woven in the formular AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire and Action) developed by an American, E. St. Elmo Lewis. The content should arouse or capture the attention of the audience. Of course, as Akpan and Senam (2012, p.102) have said: "If the content does not attract attention, then it is not worth it. Attention motivates interest. Hence, content should sustain the interest of the audience whose attention has been grabbed. How sad if the attention captured cannot be turned into sustained interest". Such interest should push the audience to desire the programme. And then the content should lead the audience into the action envisaged by the content creator. While quality content needs innovation and - creativity, which are not products of happenstance but require hard work, discipline and patience –content creators should think outside the box. Emwinromwankhoe and Akpan (2022) give three imperatives for quality content creation, namely:

1. Content must be interactive: The audience should have opportunity to engage with the TV or radio programmes in real-time, beyond the traditional passive viewing or listening experience.
2. Content must be multimedia in nature: Content should incorporate multiple forms of media such as audio, video, text, images, graphics and interactive elements.
3. Content must be easily accessible: This means that broadcast content can be easily understood, navigated and consumed by a diverse range of audiences, including those with disabilities, language barriers or technical limitations.

Theoretical Framework
This work is anchored on the Development Media Theory propounded by Denis McQuail in 1987. This theory was formulated to suit the needs of developing countries; that the media should attend to the most pressing need of the developing countries which is development. The theory canvasses media support for government and its initiatives to bring about socio-

economic development; that the media should be a partner in driving the socio-economic development process. In particular, the theory envisages the use of communication to facilitate social development in developing countries; that the media should exist for nation building, or as a support to national development programmes. Given the state of development in the developing countries, the media must accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with national established policy. Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2008, p.63) list additional assumptions of the Development Media Theory as follows: "Freedom of the media should be open to economic priorities and development needs of the society… Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedoms in their information gathering and dissemination tasks". The theory holds that the media are partners in progress and are expected to sing the tunes of national integration, unity and progress. The Development Media Theory wholly supports this work which focuses on how broadcast contents can be deployed to drive sustainable development in Nigeria. The theory finds relevance in the fact that the mass media being agents of development can, by their contents, direct the minds of the citizens to issues on sustainable development and provide the motivation for the citizens to actively participate in the process of achieving sustainable development in the society.

The Software and Sustainable Development in Nigeria
The mass media generally are a lens and a mirror. They provide the binoculars through which the world is seen and they also serve as a mirror to reflect the world, as events unfold daily, to the people. The concepts of lens and mirror have been amplified by the fact that the world is gradually becoming media-dependent, a situation in which many, if not most, people in the world depend on the mass media for their daily information needs. As a result of this, many people look up to the media for a cue on how to attend to issues that are daily becoming complex and complicated, and therefore difficult to comprehend, and react to appropriately, particularly on issues bordering on sustainable development. It is on the above grounds that the mass media generally, and the broadcast media in this circumstance, are primed to drive and contribute to sustainable development in Nigeria, given the acceptable fact that the future of the world rests on sustainable development – human development situation in which the needs of the present are met without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. As a result of their centrality in the lives of the people, the broadcast media come in handy to play a pivotal role in the global efforts to attain sustainable development. As it has been previously stated in this work, the broadcast media can contribute to the attainment of sustainable development through their programme content – appropriately called software – that they offer daily to the public in their programming. In what ways can the broadcast media significantly drive sustainable development?

Raising Awareness
Awareness creation is at the core of media duty and obligation to the society. This is the information and surveillance function (McQuail, 2010; Watson and Hill, 2015; Kumar, 2023). Sustainable development on its own could be a complex, difficult-to-understand issue. Yet the broadcast media, through awareness creation, break seemingly complex issues and demands upon both the citizens (individual and corporate) and policy makers into simpler variables and relatable and digestible content for easy comprehension and consequent action. The media have profound impact on the understanding of the environment. Kumar

(2023) underscores this point when he states that: 'It's not just about breaking news or the latest documentary; it's a comprehensive network influencing how we perceive, react to, and engage with environmental issues. In the intricate dance between media and environmental awareness, every article, broadcast and tweet can be a step towards a more informed and pro-active society". The journey to creating awareness starts with the broadcast outfits fulfilling their responsibility to present facts accurately; facts obtained from researched information. As Kumar (2023) further states:

> Investigative reports on environmental degradation, scientific studies on air quality and in-depth analysis of energy consumption patterns – all of these serve as building blocks for public knowledge. They shape our understanding of the world and our place within it…The ripple effect of media coverage can be substantial. A well timed documentary or a viral social media campaign can shift public opinion, spark conversations, and even influence policy decisions. When (the) media put the spotlight on environmental crises, it can catalyze activism, drive donations to conversation groups and pressure government to take action. The power of the press, in this case, extends beyond information it can be a catalyst for change.

Bridge between Policymakers and the Public

The media naturally serve as a bridge (a mediator) between the source and the information-consuming public. Hence, the broadcast media serve as an intermediary, and convey the public's concern to policy makers and, conversely, explain government initiatives to the citizens. This two-way process is vital to ensure that environmental policies reflect the will and the needs of the citizens. Radio and television, broadcasting firsthand the beauty of nature and the stark reality of its destruction, have the ability to evoke emotional responses that can inspire immediate action. In the words of Kumar (2023): "The media can be a formidable ally in the fight for a sustainable future. By continuing to spotlight environmental issues, fostering dialogue, and advocating positive change, the media truly have the power to shape a greener, more conscious world".

Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles

To a great extent, sustainable development rests on the lifestyles that citizens elect for themselves. This is particularly so as the aggregate of individual citizens' actions and inactions impacts heavily on the environment and by extension sustainable development. Therefore, the broadcast media, using the contents of their programmes and through programming, have the power to present to the public the merits and demerits of their actions and inactions, and how they consequently impact on the ecosystem. Much of the action of the citizens derives from culture. Hence, the broadcast media can help to explain cultural norms and values with the use of their content in a way that will focus the audience's attention on the importance of sustainable development and how cultural values can drive sustainable development (Chawla, 2024).

Economic Empowerment

Much of the infraction on the environment is traceable to the relative poverty of citizens who, in the face of economic deprivations, are only focused on and interested in what can keep their lives going, unmindful and disinterested in the consequences of their actions. It is important, therefore, that the drive towards sustainable development should include the

economic empowerment of the citizens to place them on a pedestal that they can take actions that promote sustainable development. Economic empowerment "is the ability to make and act on decisions that involve the control over and allocation of financial resources" (High Impact Practice, 2011). The broadcast media can and do draw the citizens' attention to those activities that are not only economically viable but are also environmentally friendly. It is common knowledge that one of the reasons for the prevalence of poverty in Nigeria is corruption which turns community wealth into a private estate. Thus, as the World Bank (2002) has stated: "The media can expose corruption. They can keep a check on public policy by throwing a spotlight on government action. They let people voice diverse opinions in governance and reform, and help build public consensus to bring about change ."

International Co-operation

In an increasingly interconnected world faced with many complex issues which seem to impinge on the efforts to attain sustainable development, international cooperation holds part of the key to resolving the multifaceted issues. An integral part of that key is the role that the content of the broadcast media plays in setting the agenda for global discussion on international cooperation on addressing sustainable development, particularly in the relatively poor countries such as Nigeria. It is encouraging that, globally, countries have acknowledged the power and necessity of working together. Alajmi (2023) stresses this point: "International cooperation provides an essential framework for addressing global challenges that transcend borders. Issues like climate change, infectious diseases, and terrorism require a collective effort from nations worldwide. Collaborative initiatives such as the Paris Agreement, the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the United Nations (UN) serve as platforms for countries to pool resources, knowledge, and expertise to combat these pressing issues."

It is therefore critical that broadcast stations in Nigeria should use their programmes to emphasise global cooperation in promoting sustainable development. This is more so as sustainable development is a global imperative, and international cooperation is crucial in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Alajmi, 2023). The SDGs encompass various aspects of human wellbeing, from eradicating poverty and hunger to ensuring clean water and affordable energy access. It is essential that broadcast content is used to drive international partnerships towards realising these ambitious goals. In an increasingly interconnected world, nations should be made to recognize and appreciate the fact that the challenges of sustainable development are global in nature and thus require collective solutions. International coooporation is the corner stone of progress.

Community Engagement

According to GRANICUS (2024): "Community engagement is based on the democratic idea that everyone who is affected by an issue that impacts their community should have a say in the decision making around it. It, moreover, holds the promise that public participation can influence decisions that affect the provision of services, future visions and sustainability of our communities". Community engagement is about consultation, participation, collaboration and empowerment, and finds strength in mutual decision making. People, governments and organisations look collaboratively to create – and realize – sustainable visions for their community's future (GRANICUS, 2024).

For broadcast stations, their interactive programming can encourage public debate, foster community engagement and facilitate public participation in sustainable development initiatives. Such programming seeks to engage the community to achieve sustainable outcomes, equitable decision-making processes, and deepen relationships and trust between government organisations and communities. There should be intentional interactions between communities and public decision makers. Through these intentional interactions, community members can –and do – influence policy making. Through the contents of their programmes, broadcast stations provide participants in community engagement with information that they need in order to engage in a meaningful way with policy issues, and communicate, via feedback, how their input affects public decisions on policies regarding sustainable development.

Monitoring Progress

One of the ways that the broadcast media, through their content, can make sustainable development a reality is for them to track and report on sustainable development progress and to hold stakeholders accountable (World Bank, 2002). It is important that change be monitored to prevent unwanted change that can erode the gains that have been achieved in ensuring sustainable development. The tracking and reporting should be periodic to ensure that development goes as planned. When this happens, the progress made towards achieving sustainable development would be enduring.

Final Word

In the light of the interdependency in the world in which activities in one sector may have consequential impact on other sectors, the discourse above has shed some light on and drawn attention to the nexus between mass media content and sustainable development. This in itself demonstrates the fact that the task of achieving sustainable development is multisectoral and therefore demands the involvement of stakeholders in different sectors, including broadcasting. As the discourse above indicates, broadcast stations can, by their contents, be partners in the drive to attain sustainable development. They can raise awareness on the imperative of sustainable development, articulate the issues surrounding it, engage policy makers, drive economic empowerment and promote sustainable lifestyles among the citizens, encourage community engagement and track the level of attainment of sustainable development in the country. The ultimate goal is to assist in enthroning a society in which the present generation is conscious enough to pursue immediate rewards, and in doing so balance same with possible harms to the planet and the future generations. Truly, sustainable development is achievable if all relevant hands are on the deck. Hence, broadcast programmers should create contents that target meeting the development imperatives of the nation to ensure a prosperous and environmentally conscious future.

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FOLK MEDIA AND THE CHALLENGE OF CULTURAL PRESERVATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study explores the role of folk media in promoting social change in Nigeria, highlighting its dual function in preserving cultural heritage and stimulating social change. Anchored in Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory, it examines how folk media transmits values, norms, and innovations through storytelling, music, drama, and other indigenous communication forms. A survey of 400 respondents, including journalists, teachers, traditional leaders, and religious leaders, provided insights into its relevance, integration, and challenges in contemporary Nigeria. Findings indicate a strong awareness of the role of folk media, with 53.9% agreeing and 46.1% strongly agreeing that folk media preserves cultural values and promotes social development. Additionally, 72.2% of respondents recognised its integration into mass media as a means of encouraging social change. However, challenges such as cultural imperialism (66.9% agreement) and generational disengagement (56.4%) threaten its sustainability, as younger generations are less engaged in preserving folk traditions. The study underscores the continued relevance of folk media in addressing Nigeria's developmental challenges, particularly in rural and marginalised communities. It calls for institutional interventions, including integrating folk media into educational curricula, funding preservation projects, and digitising indigenous communication practices. These strategies are essential to counter cultural erosion and sustain folk media as a tool for social transformation. The findings contribute to debates on cultural preservation and development communication, offering practical recommendations for policymakers, cultural institutions, and media practitioners.

Keywords: Folk Media, Social Change, Cultural Preservation, Development Communication, Indigenous Communication Systems

Introduction
Social change is a dynamic and ongoing process that redefines societal norms, structures, and values, influencing both the present and future direction of communities. It plays a pivotal role in addressing societal challenges, improving quality of life, and promoting development by confronting deep-rooted behavioural issues that stem from cultural and systemic factors. As Mumtaz, Hijazi, and Waris (2024) note, social change can be both a rapid, transformative process affecting social, economic, and political structures or a more gradual evolution of new lifestyles and practices. In the context of Nigeria, a country

grappling with various socio-economic challenges, social change is crucial for progress, particularly when efforts are made to engage the population in culturally sensitive and inclusive development strategies. At the heart of social transformation in many cultures, including Nigeria, is folk media, an indigenous communication system rooted in cultural traditions. Folk media have historically been powerful tools for the transmission of knowledge, preservation of cultural heritage, and promotion of social change. According to Kumar and Alam (2023), folk media includes traditional methods of disseminating information, such as songs, dances, plays, stories, myths, and symbols, all of which are performed in a visually appealing and entertaining manner. These expressions engage local audiences who are deeply familiar with the context and background of these performance arts. Iyyanar and Jebakumar (2020) further argue that folk media serve as a mirror to cultural identity, while Kumar (2012) highlights its participatory, cost-effective, and culturally relevant characteristics, which make it especially valuable in rural communities. Despite misconceptions about the prevalence of digital media, rural populations in Nigeria continue to rely heavily on traditional communication methods for information dissemination, as noted by Adekaa, Igyuve, and Akase (2024).

The theoretical foundation for understanding the role of folk media in social change is anchored in Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory. Bandura's theory posits that individuals learn behaviours through observation and imitation of role models, making folk media an effective tool for demonstrating positive behaviour and promoting social change (Panford et al., 2001; Koutroubas and Galanakis, 2022; Khozin, Tobroni, and Rozza, 2024). Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory, on the other hand, explores how new ideas and practices spread within a community, with folk media facilitating the adoption of innovative practices by communicating them in culturally familiar formats (Rogers, 2003). However, the effectiveness and sustainability of folk media are increasingly challenged by the forces of globalisation, which impose external cultural norms and communication systems. Kargbo (2022) observes that the erosion of African languages and the dominance of colonial languages as official languages pose a threat to traditional media systems. Furthermore, the digital age, characterised by the rise of the internet and social media, continues to challenge the viability of folk media (Kargbo, 2022). In Nigeria, this problem is compounded by cultural imperialism and the disengagement of younger generations from traditional cultural practices (Ekeanyanwu, 2015). To ensure that folk media continue to play a role in promoting social change, it must evolve and be integrated into contemporary communication strategies that appeal to modern audiences while retaining its cultural significance. This study explores the vital role of folk media in promoting social change in Nigeria, using Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory to assess its effectiveness in driving behavioural transformation and addressing societal challenges. By examining the application of folk media and identifying the barriers to its wider use, the study aims to provide actionable insights that will help revitalise folk media as a sustainable and impactful tool for communication in contemporary Nigerian society.

Statement of the Problem
The rapid advancement of globalisation and the proliferation of modern communication technologies have had a profound impact on indigenous media, including folk media, which have historically been essential tools for cultural preservation and social transformation. Rooted in the cultural heritage of Nigerian communities, folk media have played a pivotal

role in addressing societal issues through storytelling, drama, music, and other indigenous practices. However, these rich cultural expressions are increasingly being marginalised, as global media trends, often promoting homogenised cultural narratives, overshadow them. This decline threatens the preservation of Nigeria's unique cultural identity and diminishes the potential of folk media to promote positive behavioural and social changes. The problem is further exacerbated by the growing disengagement of younger generations from many indigenous practices, resulting in a loss of custodianship and a reduced capacity to utilise these indigenous platforms for critical social issues such as health awareness, education, and human rights advocacy. Additionally, the limited integration of folk media into contemporary communication strategies, despite its proven effectiveness in engaging rural and marginalised communities, hinders its potential impact. Without concerted efforts to revitalise and adapt folk media to modern contexts, Nigeria risks losing a valuable tool for promoting social cohesion, supporting sustainable development, and addressing emerging societal challenges. This study seeks to explore the role of folk media in driving social change, identify barriers to its effective use, and recommend strategies for its revitalisation and integration into contemporary media programmes.

Objectives of the Study
The study aimed to:
1. Investigate the extent to which folk media influences behavioural transformation and social development in Nigeria.
2. Examine the methods by which media professionals integrate folk media into modern communication strategies for social change.
3. Assess public and professional perceptions of the relevance and effectiveness of folk media in contemporary Nigerian society.
4. Identify the challenges and barriers to the sustainability and utilisation of folk media for social transformation.
5. Propose actionable strategies for revitalising and integrating folk media into modern communication frameworks to address societal issues.

Research Questions
1. To what extent does folk media influence behavioural and social change in Nigeria?
2. How do media professionals incorporate folk media into contemporary communication strategies for promoting social change?
3. What are the public and professional perceptions of the relevance and effectiveness of folk media in Nigerian society today?
4. What challenges hinder the effective utilisation and sustainability of folk media for social transformation?
5. What strategies can be adopted to revitalise and integrate folk media into modern media frameworks for addressing social issues?

Literature Review

Concept of Social Change: Social change is a multifaceted process involving the transformation of societal structures, cultural norms, and collective behaviours over time. It is driven by factors such as technological advancements, cultural diffusion, economic shifts, and political reform. According to Saputra, Ibrahim, Sukmana and Rudianto (2023), social

change refers to the transformation of culture, behaviour, social institutions and social structures over time. Similarly, Wagoner and Power (2021) describe social change as the transformations of a society in terms of values systems, social organisation, and practices.

Oludele (2020) explains that social change has a significant impact on a society's social, economic, environmental, and political conditions. It alters key social elements such as norms, values, culture, and behaviour patterns, as well as social structures, including roles, status, institutions, and overall societal arrangements. However, the globalised world has amplified the pace and impact of social change. Maiteny and Parker (2004) argue that globalisation introduces new economic and cultural paradigms that redefine social expectations and disrupt traditional practices. While such changes may encourage innovation and inclusivity, they could also lead to the erosion of indigenous practices, underscoring the need for deliberate efforts to preserve cultural heritage amidst evolving societal dynamics.

Folk Media: An Indigenous Communication System
Folk media refers to indigenous communication systems that leverage cultural symbols, idioms, and traditions to convey messages and encourage community engagement. In many African contexts, folk media encompass various traditional forms of communication, including drum beating, dramatic performances, songs, dances, village criers, folktales, proverbs, riddles, and ceremonial events such as initiations, funerals, and weddings (Abdulla, 2016; Chinyowa, 2005, as cited in Abdulla, 2024). Sefhera (2024) notes that folk media serve as a communication tool for the dissemination of information and enhancing development.

These forms are participatory, culturally resonant, and inherently engaging, distinguishing them from modern mass media that often lacks cultural specificity. The participatory nature of folk media enables it to act as a bridge between tradition and modernity. Panford et al. (2001) highlight its role in creating relatable narratives that promote community involvement and behavioural transformation. Kumar (2012) emphasises its cost-effectiveness and accessibility, noting that it remains a vital tool for engaging grassroots audiences, especially in rural and marginalised communities.

Folk Media in the Context of Social Change
Folk media have historically been instrumental in addressing societal challenges and encouraging development. Pathak et al. (2020) note that it serves as a platform for promoting health awareness, gender equality, and environmental sustainability, among other issues. For example, in rural Nigeria, storytelling and music have been used to disseminate messages about HIV/AIDS prevention and maternal health, leveraging their cultural familiarity and accessibility to engage diverse audiences (Panford et al., 2001). A study by Abdulla (2024) in Malawi highlights the potential of folk media as a culturally grounded research methodology in HIV and AIDS interventions. The study critiques the dominance of Global North perspectives, which often overlook local worldviews, and explores how folk media can integrate research within indigenous cultural paradigms

However, the impact of globalisation has posed significant challenges to the sustainability of folk media. Ekeanyanwu (2015) argues that global media systems often overshadow traditional practices, promoting homogenised cultural narratives that marginalise indigenous forms of communication. Younger generations, influenced by modern media and consumerist globalisation, are increasingly disengaged from folk media, resulting in a decline in its practice and custodianship. Maiteny and Parker (2004) further

highlight that the commodification of culture exacerbates this decline, distorting traditional values and diminishing the relevance of folk media in addressing contemporary challenges.

Preservation and Integration of Folk Media
Despite its challenges, folk media remain valuable for social transformation. Its ability to resonate with local audiences, encourage community participation, and address pressing social issues emphasises its importance in ensuring sustainable development. Umoren (2022) advocates for the integration of indigenous communication systems into modern development initiatives, emphasising the need for local ownership and participation. To ensure its sustainability, deliberate efforts must be made to adapt folk media to modern communication frameworks. Similarly, Abdulai, Ibrahim, and Anas (2023) argue for the refinement, transmission, and preservation of indigenous communication systems. Their study highlights that indigenous knowledge communication methods, such as storytelling, dance, festivals, and folk music, offer a platform for the general population to share indigenous knowledge with community members in a language and idiomatic expressions that are easily understood by the local people. By integrating traditional practices with modern media, Nigeria can leverage folk media to bridge the gap between cultural preservation and behavioural transformation, ensuring its relevance in an increasingly globalised world.

Theoretical Frameworks: Social Learning and Diffusion of Innovations
In this study, the relevance of folk media in promoting social change is grounded in two key theoretical frameworks: Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory. Bandura's Social Learning Theory posits that individuals acquire new behaviours through observation, imitation, and modelling. Folk media aligns closely with this theory, as traditional performances often depict relatable scenarios and role models that audiences can emulate (Panford et al., 2001). For instance, a folk drama addressing health issues might illustrate characters adopting positive practices, thereby influencing audience behaviour through observational learning.

Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory examines how new ideas and practices spread within a social system. It emphasises the role of compatibility, communication channels, and opinion leaders in determining the adoption of innovations (Rogers, 2003). Folk media serve as effective channels for information diffusion by presenting innovations in culturally resonant formats, making them more acceptable and relatable to target audiences. Opinion leaders within communities, such as storytellers and performers, further enhance this process by acting as credible sources of information and advocates for change.

Research Method
The study employed a survey research method to gather quantitative data on the role of folk media in promoting social change. A structured online questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument, disseminated via digital platforms such as email and social media to ensure extensive participation and maximise response rates. The target population included journalists, teachers, traditional leaders, and religious leaders, selected due to their influential roles in community engagement and knowledge dissemination. To achieve a balanced representation, a total of 400 respondents were purposively selected, comprising 100 individuals from each category. Within each group, a simple random sampling technique was applied to enhance inclusivity and minimise selection bias. Data were analysed using

descriptive statistics, specifically simple percentages, and presented in visual charts to facilitate clarity and interpretation.

Data Analysis and Interpretation
This section presents the analysis of data collected from respondents using descriptive statistics and visual aids to facilitate understanding.

Chart 1: Understanding of Folk Media and Social Change
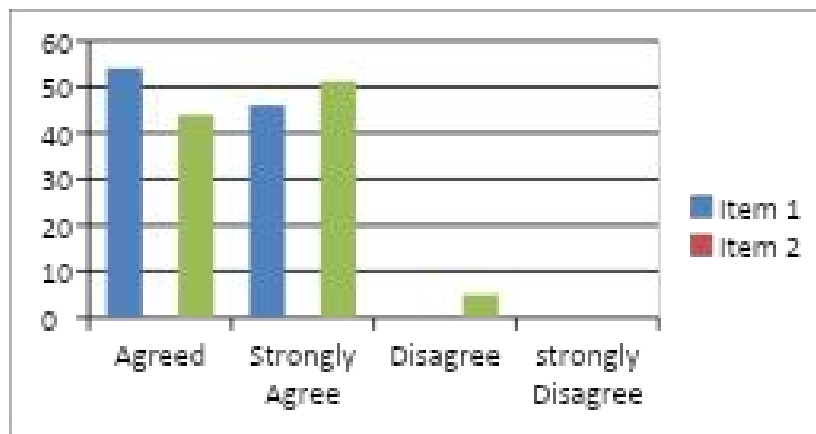
Source: Field Survey, 2024

Chart 1 reveals a strong awareness of the link between folk media and social change. A majority of respondents (53.9% agreed, 46.1% strongly agreed) acknowledged folk media's role in preserving and transmitting cultural values across generations. The same distribution applied to social change, emphasising its influence on societal structures and norms. These findings highlight a broad understanding of folk media's role in promoting cultural continuity and social change.

Chart 2: Importance of Folk Media for Social Change
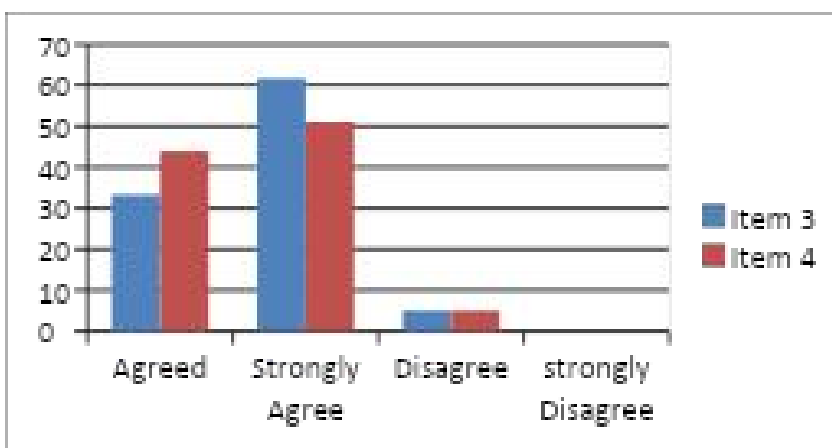
Source: Field Survey, 2024

Chart 2 highlights the strong recognition of folk media's importance in driving social change in Nigeria. A majority (61.7%) strongly agreed, and 33.3% agreed that folk media remains essential despite modernisation, while only 5.0% disagreed. Additionally, 56.1% strongly agreed and 43.9% agreed that folk media effectively educates, reflects, and entertains

through culturally relevant content. These findings affirm folk media's continued relevance in cultural preservation and social transformation.

Chart 3: Utilisation of Folk Media in Media Profession
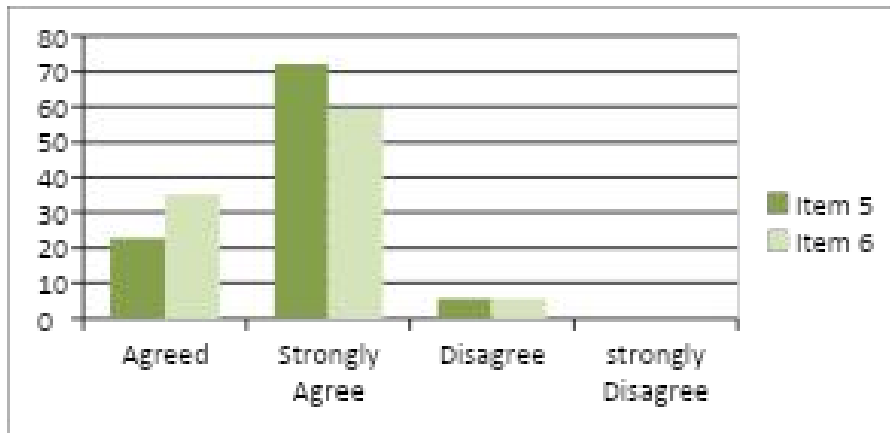
Source: Field Survey, 2024

Chart 3 highlights the strong integration of folk media into Nigerian mass media to promote social change. A majority (72.2% strongly agreed, 22.8% agreed) affirmed its inclusion in media programming, with only 5.0% disagreeing. Additionally, 59.4% strongly agreed, and 35.1% agreed that while folk media has historically driven social change, it is now gradually fading. These findings emphasise both its continued relevance and the growing concern over its decline.

Chat 4: Challenges of Folk Media in Promoting Social Change
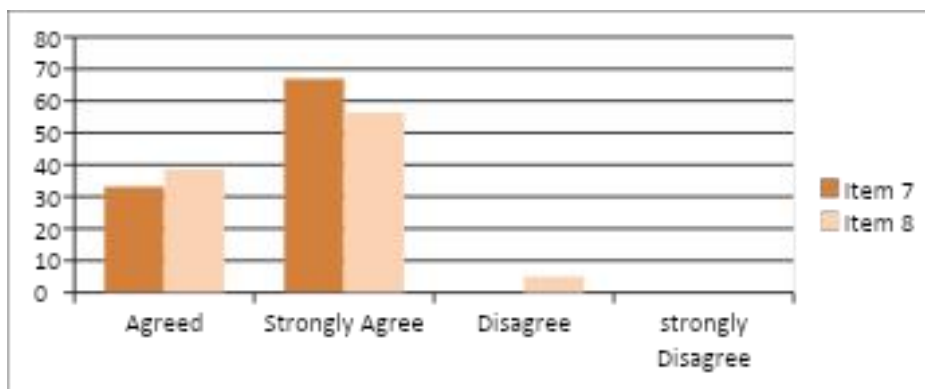
Source: Field Survey, 2024

The data highlights key challenges to folk media's role in social change, particularly cultural imperialism and the generational gap in custodianship. A significant 66.9% strongly agreed, and 33.1% agreed that cultural imperialism has negatively impacted folk media. Additionally, 56.4% strongly agreed, and 38.6% agreed that younger generations are less engaged, leading to fewer custodians of these traditions. Only 5.0% disagreed, underscoring widespread concern about the decline of folk media due to reduced generational transmission.

Chart 5: Recommendations for sustainability of folk media in evoking social change
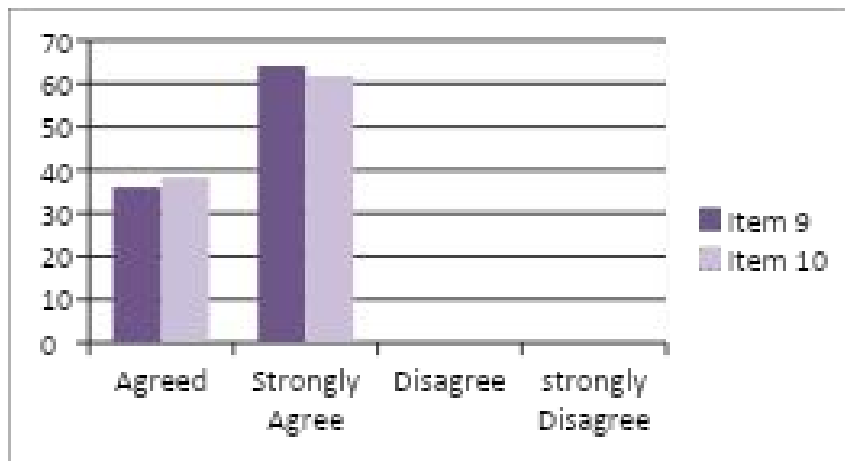
Source: Field Survey, 2024

The data in Chart 5 show strong support for institutional involvement in sustaining folk media's role in social change. A significant 63.9% strongly agreed, and 36.1% agreed that the Ministry of Arts and Culture and media organisations should actively promote folk media. Additionally, 61.7% strongly agreed, and 38.3% agreed that traditional, religious, and educational institutions should encourage its use. These findings emphasise the need for collaborative efforts to preserve and integrate folk media into contemporary society.

Discussion of Findings
The survey findings provide valuable insights into the enduring relevance of folk media and the challenges it faces in promoting social change in Nigeria. Respondents overwhelmingly acknowledged its dual role in preserving cultural heritage and stimulating social change, a perspective that aligns with the theoretical frameworks of Social Learning Theory and Diffusion of Innovation Theory. The data suggests a strong understanding of the role folk media play in shaping societal values, with all respondents agreeing that folk media are agents of social change. This supports the argument put forward by scholars such as Gerbner et al. (2001), Adegboyega (2020), and Biswas and Shukla (2022), who emphasise the role media play in influencing social behaviour. Albert Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory further explains how individuals absorb and internalise cultural norms through observation, making folk media crucial channels for socialisation and the reinforcement of shared values. Despite rapid modernisation and technological advancement, a significant proportion of respondents strongly affirmed the continued importance of folk media in Nigeria's development. This echoes Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovation Theory, which asserts that for an innovation to be widely adopted, it must retain cultural relevance. The enduring appeal of folk media lies in its deep-rooted connection to communal experiences, ensuring its effectiveness in addressing contemporary issues. This perspective is further reinforced by the idea that the form of folk media itself contributes to its impact, as suggested by McLuhan's (1964) notion that "the medium is the message." Respondents recognised that the ability for folk media to be used to communicate in culturally meaningful ways enhances its potential to drive social transformation. Furthermore, the integration of folk media into mass media programming, as acknowledged by a substantial majority, demonstrates its ability to bridge traditional narratives with modern media platforms, ensuring its continued influence on public discourse.

However, the findings also highlight considerable challenges that threaten the viability of folk media as a vehicle for social change. Cultural imperialism emerged as a significant concern, with most respondents acknowledging its negative impact. This aligns with Tomlinson's (2012) argument that the dominance of global media, shaped by Western ideologies, has the effect of displacing indigenous communication forms, thereby weakening local cultural expressions. It also aligns with the submission of Okocha, Elele, and Okujeni (2024) that the influence of global media, technology, and urbanisation has contributed to the widespread adoption of Westernised communication patterns, which has led to the erosion of traditional communication methods. As a result, indigenous communication practices have become less common, particularly among the younger generation. The generational gap in the custodianship of folk media presents another critical challenge. This observation aligns with the findings of Nwammuo, Ezeonyejiaku, and Ekwugha (2020), who note that the preference for digital media and Western culture by the younger generation has contributed to the decline in the use of traditional communication practices. Without deliberate efforts to bridge this gap, the capacity for folk media to influence social change may diminish over time.

The data also emphasise the importance of institutional intervention in ensuring the survival and effectiveness of folk media. A strong majority of respondents expressed support for the active involvement of the Ministry of Arts and Culture, alongside media organisations, in revitalising folk media tools for social change. This suggests that a combined effort from government, educational institutions, and media stakeholders is essential for sustaining folk media in an era of globalisation. Through targeted policies, digital preservation, and integration into formal education, folk media can continue to thrive and serve as an enduring instrument for cultural transmission and social change. Ultimately, the findings of this study reinforce the theoretical perspectives that position folk media as powerful agents of socialisation and innovation diffusion. Despite the challenges posed by cultural imperialism and generational disengagement, its potential to effect social change remains significant, provided that strategic efforts are made to safeguard its relevance. The sustained influence of folk media will depend on the willingness of institutions and communities to adapt it to contemporary contexts, ensuring that it continues to serve as a bridge between tradition and modernity in the evolving social landscape.

Conclusion

Folk media remain a vital catalyst for social change in Nigeria, preserving cultural identity and fostering transformative communication. Despite the dominance of modern media and cultural globalisation, its deep resonance with local audiences sustains its relevance. Anchored in Social Learning and Diffusion of Innovation theories, this study highlights folk media's role in educating and inspiring action. While integration with contemporary media has expanded its reach, threats like cultural imperialism and generational disengagement persist. To sustain its impact, stakeholders must support policy initiatives, intergenerational education, and digital adaptation. By addressing challenges and leveraging its strengths, folk media can continue driving social cohesion and national development.

Recommendations

To sustain and enhance social change in Nigeria, the following steps should be taken:
1. Folk media should be incorporated into school curricula to expose younger generations to traditional communication methods and bridge the generational gap.

2. Funding mechanisms and policies should be established to revitalise folk media, including grants for community projects and subsidies for cultural custodians.
3. A national digital repository should be created to document and safeguard folk media traditions for research, education, and cultural promotion.
4. Collaboration between the government, media organisations, and traditional institutions should ensure folk media is used to address social issues like health, education, and societal cohesion.
5. Regular festivals, workshops, and exhibitions should be organised to encourage intergenerational engagement in folk media.

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NONVERBAL CODES AND FILMIC PORTRAYAL OF AFRICAN CONCEPTION OF CULTURAL TABOOS IN *AKPAN EKWONG*

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Abstract
This study was undertaken to ascertain how non-verbal codes are deployed to enforce cultural taboos in African societies. Propounding taboos was a strategy by African societies to assist them maintain, peace, security and social order in running their communities. Using qualitative method, based on Kewsi Wiredu's theory of "Ethical Consensus", this study examines the use of nonverbal codes in *Akpan Ekwong* to enunciate taboos in the traditional African context. There is an indication that nonverbal codes are the filmic codes to enunciate cultural practices that are detestable and detrimental to the citizens and the society. Morality can be instilled through the imposition of injunctions by coding certain human practices abominable in the society. The nonverbal representations of these symbols serve as the indicators for acknowledging the creative representations of these practices. The paper concludes that signs used in communication should be purposeful, unified and didactic to persuade the society to comply with the creative purpose for which in information was coded. Nonverbal communication systems, namely use of artifacts, gestures, sign languages, symbols among others can be developed into a formal model and utilized for information dissemination and reception for effective management of the human society.

Keywords: Culture, Film, Nonverbal-Codes, Society, Taboos.

Introduction

Digging into the pre-literate and pre-Christian African traditional society, one discovers that the people, whether constituted as social groups in terms of clans or villages, have been conscious of the essence of living a moral oriented life. The African Society frowned seriously at anybody who lived immorally and such persons are usually treated as social misfits. This ethical concept practically permeates the African society. It is interesting to observe further that, "as in all societies of the world, social order and peace are recognized by African people as essential and sacred… Where the sense of corporate life is deep, it is inevitable that the solidarity of the community must be maintained otherwise there is disintegration and destruction" (56).

Before the advent of the Europeans, the use of codes to impart information was the unique model in Africa. In *Sociology of the Ibibio a Study of Social Organisation and Change,* Ekong Ekong acknowledges that the African societies, like some other pre-Christian cultures had no written record, but rather traditions. This means that, they depend on oral traditions for the transmission of tribal wisdom, morality, knowledge, history and culture from generation to generation (142-144). This oral transmission seemingly accounts for the reason there exist impediments to effective communication of traditions and history, with African communities having striking dissimilarities in terms of taboos and superstitions in their current applications. Intrinsic to the African society are the core values that define her

cosmology, making the society a more communal milieu as realized in human brotherhood, economics, orality, the marriage institution, human rights and religion, chieftaincy and politics among others. According to Nana,

> The value… is expressed in the sharing of a common social life, commitment to the social common good of the community, appreciation of mutual obligations, caring for others, inter-dependence and solidarity. At the same time, the claims of individuality are recognized. African ethic, however, urges avoidance of extreme individualism, which is seen as potentially destructive of human values and of the whole meaning and essence of human society. Attempts are therefore made to balance communalism and individualism so they can co-exist (475).

There are human practices that are viewed as taboos African communities. Some of these practices have a universal undertone making them condemnable virtually in nation. Such practices include witchcraft, manslaughter, incest, money-ritual, love-portion, cruelty livestock, shifting of ancient boundary, unpinning an injunction, sleeping with someone's spouse, unmasking a masquerade, shooting of arrows into the market and many others. However, this culture is imperative in the cause-and-effect propensity representation they are given in the nonverbally coded in contemporary films. This is an indication that social good presupposes that cultural values would entail those healthy attitudes, accepted norms, praiseworthy standard of behaviour, unswerving fidelity to the object of belief, and actions that endear one to the society, making one to live in harmony with others. On the contrary, practices that stir shame, grief and death values are looked upon as taboos. This study evaluates the filmic portrayal of these nonverbal codes for taboos and their imperatives within Akwa Ibom setting in *Akpan Ekwong*.

Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on Kewsi Wiredu's theory of "Ethical Consensus" as a resolution of all moral conflicts. Wiredu is a renowned Ghanaian author and scholar in African Philosophy. As he conceptualises, ethical consensus emphasised that based on the differences in values, belief systems and attitudes, conflicts become inevitable consequences of those diversities in the society. The tenet of the theory is that polarity in the society springs from conflicting attitude human beings project toward materializing their wishes. As Joseph Rishante puts, in the circumstance of human practices, "it is aimed at building a violent-free society… (and) it allows for the promotion of ethical values" (226). Thus, cultural issues need to be resolved from consensus of opinion than imposition of values.

Wiredu believes that situating common values with an African socio-cultural paradigm in the face of the cultural flux of today's society, occasioned by the intrusion of foreign cultural interferences with the traditional culture of Africans, holds the ace of preserving the African cultural values and identity. As Thad Metz puts, "a greater percentage of Africans think that one is morally obligated to help others, roughly to the extent that one can and others need, with rights not figuring into the analysis of how one ought to transfer wealth, time or labour" (326). This thought closely aligns with Wiredu's thought of ethical consensus as the driving force of African value system. It is by simple inference that one can say, this same ethical consensus is what designates some actions as immoral and forbids them as taboos. However, concretising the symbols in a creative arts like visual art, songs,

drama, and film is a way of showcasing the extent to which these abhorrence are repudiated as taboos in Africa.

Background/Synopsis of *Akpan Ekwong*
Akpan Ekwong is one of the Nigerian subgenres of Nollywood film produced by Ngozi Ojuluchukwu and directed by Moses Eskor. The film portrayed witchcraft, as a African practice in Africa that evokes revulsion whenever it is mentioned. The portrayal of this theme is the reflection of the African tradition. On unwanted human practice considered as taboos. Ikot Akabom has witnessed many unexplainable deaths of mostly youths but no substantial enquiry is made to unravel the causes of these deaths. Uko, Akpan Ekwong, younger brother is captured in spirit by the coven and eaten, which results in his death physically. The death raise the citizens' eyebrow to have been the work of witches/wizard. Akpan Ekwong swears to expose the killer of his brother and he goes ahead by crossing to another domain to fortify himself for the task. His mission yields a positive response and he did not only expose the killer of his brother but begins to expose and exorcise witchcraft in the land. This becomes threat to the coven. They seek alliance with the river goddess and seal the tie by offering a virgin. In Akpan Ekwong's home, Ekanem, his wife, is sex starved. She seduces Akpama, her husband's bosom friend, to have sex with her. Akpan Ekwong discovers and kill Akpama, which lead to his arrest and prosecution for possession of fire arm and for murder.

Taboo in View
The word taboo conveys two ideas: law and attitude towards the law. This makes various scholars to view it in various ways. For instance, in *West African Traditional Religion* Omosade Awolalu acknowledges that taboos and laws are not easily differentiated from one another; that it is safe to say that laws deal with a person's conduct towards his fellow men, while taboos are concerned with one's conduct towards what is sacred and the ancestors in the African context (212). To Francis Etim, in his *Metaphysics of African Medicine: A Discuss on Philosophy of Medicine,* expresses that witchcraft is a practice that repudiates globally. As the practice can result in ostracism, banishment out outright death to the person practicing it, it is a taboo (171-172). This means, a taboo is an antisocial activity.

Taboos are the checks and balances guiding religious and social practices and behaviours they are carried out. According to Edet Udo taboo is, "the system or practice or act whereby things are set apart as sacred and forbidden to general use or placed under prohibition or interdiction" (272). To Christian Clerk, "taboo is a powerful restriction or prohibition that regulates contracts between specific categories of individuals and things in particular circumstances. (Clerk 5). Meanwhile, Patrick Ebewo makes analysis of taboos in Ika community of Akwa Ibom thus:

> A grandchild is never rebuked for making use of any fruit tree in the grandparent's home. If rebuked, the tree withers…. Eating of sweet yam (*enem*) is forbidden. Harvesting of new yams is not allowed until the *oboong edia afa* performs a customary ritual. Harvesting of palm fruits is forbidden on *Afiong Aran* day. In Ika, the Giant-rat (*ejied*) does not run about in the daytime. If this happens, death is around the corner…. Sex in the farmland (*inaa-ikot*) requires cleansing. To destroy one's property is abomination (*nduo abom)*. To fight with an in-law (*ukod*) or grandchild (*ajejen)* is an abomination. To sleep with a mourning widow (*nwan akpe)* is an

abomination. Whistling in the night is forbidden because it attracts evil spirits…. Women in their menstrual period do not go to the stream to fetch water. (23).

Taboos are therefore, a collection of restricted or forbidden things put in place to check the conduct and moral principles of the people for a better life in the society.

Nonverbal Codes in African Society

In the African society, orality is the harbinger of communication and it is in a word that a culture or value is transmitted. "The word is the capsule of the life force which the human spirit conceptualizes and nurtures…. It is the encapsulation of joy, the sadness, the knowledge, the experience and the feeling that exist in man at a particular time" (Onuenkwusi 2). As Etop Akwang intones, "codes produce messages or meanings which are far more stable within several communicative context and concert" (83). A nonverbal code, then, is a concrete representation of the oral factor with a more stable symbol. According to Anietie Udofia *et al*, a "symbol is a concept made to stand for an idea" (54). Thus, nonverbal codes are pictorial representation of ideas, especially, in films. This may be the reason Wilson generalizes it as, "an admixture of social conventions and practices which have become sharpened and blended into rewritable communication modes and systems and which have almost become standard practices, modes of speech and social organizations" (98).

Nonverbal code is the deployment of concrete visual elements to establish a cultural cynosure. According to Michael Haralambos *et al, "*it is used to explain human behaviour and human society by examining the way in which people… develop a self-concept or self-image, and act in terms of meaning" (856). This may be the reason Sul Yan sees nonverbal codes as signifiers stimulating an idea to be situated from a general conception of a referent, which are usually the discernible pictorials encapsulating spoken or written idea in artifacts, pictures, effigies, or fashion. It is a symbol as long as it can be employed to represent something else (31). In Elizabeth Ben-Iheanacho's view, "a dress is the immediate visible difference that proclaims… identity and symbol (96); nonetheless, "some Nigerians use this to portray special moment in their lives" (Akas 460).

To this effect, designs on fashions play the role of a signifier. But outside dress, such signifiers are sacred forest, shrine, stream, yellow palm frond (*ayei*), masks, rhythms of gongs or drums or bells, costumes, tattoos, totems, sacrifices, empty calabash, koalin *(ndom)* in colours, feathers, tusks, bones, drum, mask or other parts of certain animals. For instance, hoisting a yellow palm-frond on a location, land or whatever, passes an information of strict injunction, prohibiting people from encroachment. In some communities, the presentation of the yellow palm fronds can be a restraining order to stop a conflict or war and embrace an armistice. It is also used to place embargo on a place or object. In the same vein, Elizabeth Isichei details that in traditional pre-colonial old Oyo empire, the presentation of an empty calabash to the *Alaafin* or a dish with the egg of a parrot was a nonverbal indication that the *Alaafin* must commit suicide (67). Therefore, nonverbal codes are concrete representations of "artistic achievements… in an abundant oral literature consisting of myth, legends, stories, short pieces in prose… found in certain parts of Africa to develop a given theme" (Traore 7).

Nonverbal Codes in *Akpan Ekwong*

Cultural taboos are portrayed prominently using codes that are decipherable as a sign. This shows the African conception of figurative expression concealed in traditional media such as riddles, proverbs, adages, dance design patterns and in body accessories. This seems to reflect that figures are used in Africa only when the subject matter is deep enough to code or unravel a mystery or an illogical but factual circumstance. In *Akpan Ekwong*, various codes are deployed to express this African traditional values in the Akwa Ibom setting.

Deadness/Destruction

Fig. 1: Human Skull (*Akpan Ekwong*)

In *Akpan Ekwong*, the life taking force is viewed a dead trap. The deadness is portray with human skill. Thus, the use of human skill to convey the abhorrence of death among African society is a nonverbal coding of the taboo as unwanted circumstance.

Fire

Fig 2: Aliveness (*Akpan Ekwong*)

Fire is not actually a taboo to repudiate in the African context. However, the fire is metaphoric. It represents the aliveness, glowing and the immutable verve of witchcraft in the society. This is a nonverbal representation of the abhorrence of the aliveness of witchcraft and the advantage the coven is gaining within Africa.

Child/Human Sacrifice

Fig 3: Sacrificial Object (*Akpan Ekwong*)

Human sacrifice is portrayed in the symbol above. It is a filmic mode of encapsulating its augury in the African setting. Akpan Ekwong sacrifices a human being to gain his and water demands a live virgin to form a league with the coven to unseat Akpan Ekwong. The image above is a nonverbal code for the act in the film.

Palm Frond

Fig 4: Injunction (*Akpan Ekwong*)

Palm frond is used to encode African conception of human boundaries and injunction. The presence of a palm-frond is a nonverbal enunciation of boundaries.

Stone

Fig. 5: Totemic (*Akpan Ekwong*)

The witches and wizard are so powerful that they can manifest their heinous act in numerous unpredictable mode. Stone is made a contact of evil, in which Uko hits his leg and the leg rots instantly. Stone elicits the impenetrable force of the coven.

***Ibit* (Drum)**

Fig 6. Evangelism (*Akpan Ekwong*)

Drum is an instrument for sound production basically deployed in Africa for information imparting. In *Akpan Ekwong* it is used to encode evangelism.

***Mbamba* (Cowries)**
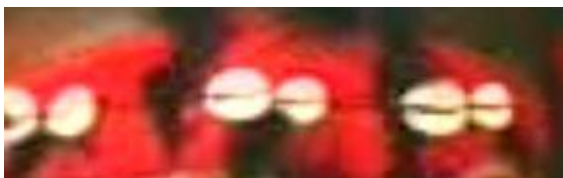
Fig. 7: Sacred (*Akpan Ekwong*)

Cowries is one of the nonverbal codes used in establishing the sacred or an object studded with divine aura when it is used in the Africa shrine.

Ndom (kaolin)

Fig 8: Foresight (*Akpan Ekwong*)

White kaolin is prominently used to convey purity but in special cases of seeing a traditional herbalist's eye, usually one, painted with white kaolin, it communicates that he sees beyond the ordinary.

Enforcing Taboos through Non-Verbal Codes

The Weird Witches/Wizard
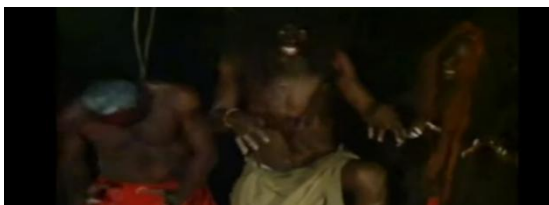
Fig 9: Witchcraft is abominable (*Akpan Ekwong*)

The portraiture of the activities of witches and wizard in *Akpan Ekwong* as detestable and weird is a way of communicating the extent to which the society detests the act. Taboos are detestable human practices. The coven has appeared as an absolute taboo. This taboo is rather enunciated properly using nonverbal cues that represent how the Africans view them.

Human Sacrifice: Sacrificing one's child or other for wealth or power is a detestable act that if proven without doubt may result in the victim being banished in the society. However, this may result to the victim being condemner in the court of law.

Cosmic Unity/Altar in Mask

Fig. 10: Defiling the Mask is Abominable (*Akpan Ekwong*)

According to Margaret Akpan and Anietie Udofia, "a mask is an interface of cosmic connect between the living and the dead in Africa through blood sacrifice… an altar of transmogrification intensified by rites, worship and solemn rituals for a regeneration of cosmic force through circumstances of blood" (21). Desecrating a mask is a taboo.

Ufuum-Mmong (Sacred Water)

Fig. 11: Water for Cleansing (*Akpan Ekwong*)

This is sacred water spiritually sanctified for purification in the African society. Defiling this water is a taboo. In African society, it is a taboo for a lady to cohabit and indulge in sexual relationship with a man who has not paid her bride price. In *Akpan Ekwong*, palm frond is dipped in *Ufuum-mmong* as a cleansing agent to sanctify Akpan, eliciting that the relationship Akpan is having with Ekanem is taboo.

Deadness in Human Skull: The skull is part of the human body. Its concrete substance is acknowledge to be interred as a man dies. Seeing the human skill with someone is abominable. Representing deadness with a frightening element is an indication that it is considered as a taboo in the society.

***Adanga*/Injunction (Ancient Boundary):** This expression is fully encoded in the non-verbal code as indicated above. However, it has a deeper connotative scope which makes tempering with it becomes a taboo. Abusing a grandchild/parent, shifting an ancient boundary, a clergy found indulging in fetish rites, incest, etc. – all these belong to the taboo of unseating the ancient boundary.

Inaa /Nka-udo (Extra Marital Sex)

Fig. 12: Illicit Sex is a Taboo (*Akpan Ekwong*)

Inaa is a general word for illicit sex but in *Akpan Ekwong*, it is a signified for extra marital coitus. This act is enforced by the nonverbal code as a taboo.

Manslaughter

Fig. 13: Taken someone's Life is abominable (*Akpan Ekwong*)

In African traditional setting, every life is valuable and a living person is a replica of the mortal and immortal essence. Life is viewed as a divine existence in a carnal body. Taking of one's life (suicide) is a taboo and taking of another's is abominable. In *Akpan Ekwong,* the portraiture of a gun is a nonverbal code showcase the taboo of manslaughter in Africa.

Conclusion

Non-verbal communication cannot be without purpose. In all its ramifications, intents and purpose, it should serve to advance the cause of sharing meaning, giving information and advancing human interaction. The study of African traditional society from the Akwa Ibom perspective in *Akpan Ekwong* has situated the filmic use of nonverbal code to situate what the African society conceives as taboos. Taboos, on the other hand has a unique role of socialization, indication of boundaries and stimulation of wakefulness for the detestable in the society. That is the process of getting all involved to internalize the approved social norms and societal ethical codes of conduct, which in turn, enhances the building of a strong human community. Through a creativity film becomes a tool for creating awareness of the taboos and the different social roles prescribed in their observance.

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AN ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE TO OPEN CATTLE MOVEMENT AND GRAZING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

A healthy environment is crucial to the well-being of any nation. Open cattle movement and grazing remains a serious problem in Nigeria in the light of ethical concerns, and is a threat to a healthy environment. It poses many challenges and issues for the country, such as health hazards, and environmental damage. If the environment suffers from degradation and pollution, human and public health are endangered. The issue of open cattle grazing and movement should not only be discussed in economic, political, or cultural terms. It should also be examined from an ethical perspective. Ethics concerns human behaviours regarding other humans and non-human beings. Open grazing and movement of cattle in Nigeria pose serious risks, and endanger human welfare and wellbeing. This paper examines open cattle movement and grazing in Nigeria. The paper argues that the open movement of cattle and grazing threaten the environment and all that is related to environmental well-being. The paper finds that open grazing and cattle movement is common in Nigeria, and this has destroyed lives and properties, and endangered the society. The paper concludes that alternative cattle grazing methods that do not endanger society can boost and enhance social welfare and well-being.

Keywords: Open grazing, Cattle movement, Ethics, Nigeria, Environment, Well-being, Welfare.

Introduction

Environmental public health is important for every society. Without environmental public health, people cannot live meaningful and productive lives and their welfare/well-being is endangered. It is important for human beings and the well-being of ecosystems and non-human lives on Earth. Whatever threatens environmental public health threatens all life. Human food and sustenance all come from the earth and its resources. When the earth and its resources are gravely degraded and polluted, human beings run the risk of being affected by sicknesses and diseases. The habitat of non-human organisms and the food chain are affected also. This is why it is imperative to discuss the issue of environmental public health, environmental health, and environmental health ethics. Ethics is concerned with human behaviours concerning other human beings and the entire environment. Environmental public health is an ethical issue, for many causes of ill health arise from human activities on earth, such as the activities of extractive industries, industrialization, urbanization, overpopulation, agriculture, etc.

This paper examines the widely debated issue of open grazing and cattle movement in Nigeria in the light of environmental public health ethics. One finding that became evident from the research for this paper is that the environmental public health ethical implication of this issue is given very little attention. Many issues can be discussed regarding the issue of open grazing and cattle movement in Nigeria, such as the cause, the

consequences, the solutions, etc. Because of the problems consequent on open grazing at the time of writing, there is a proposed bill in the Senate to ban open grazing that has passed the second reading. This is a serious national issue that threatens peace and social order, health, and environmental well-being that should not be ignored. Open grazing with the movement of cattle is one of the greatest challenges that Nigeria is facing. It has irreparable consequences. Okoli et al (2024) cite one Chief Johnson Okolo a farmer and industrialist who has been a victim of herdsmen activities at his farm in Amofia Agu, Enugu State, and lost many cash crops saying that herdsmen are responsible for cattle rustling, clashes, kidnapping, banditry, maiming people and some of these herdsmen are often violent. The havoc that herdsmen have caused in Nigeria is incalculable. This issue should be examined.

Conceptual Clarifications

Nnoruga (2021) defines open grazing as the roaming of animals and the human person caring for the animals in the open fields, bushes, and ways in search of water, food, pasture, and shelter. Chukwuemeka, Aloysius and Eneh (2018) have a similar idea when they define: "…open grazing to mean the age-old practice of roaming about with animals in open fields, plains and nearby bushes in search of pasture or food for the animals. It is mostly practiced in Nigeria by Fulani herders who move for days on foot with their herds from the north to the more rain-fed southern parts of the country, pasturing their flock as they go" (p.3).

Open grazing cannot take place without the open movement of cattle or livestock. Aligba, Omanchi and Gbakighir (2020) quote section 2 of the 2017 Open-Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, in defining open grazing as: 'the act of pasturing livestock to feed on dry grass, growing grass, shrubs, herbage, farm crops, etc. in open fields without any form of restriction' (p. 173). Muoneke and Okoli (2022) note that: "Open grazing is the age-old practice of roaming about with the animals in open fields, plains, and nearby bushes in search of pasture or food for the animals" (p.67).

Having defined the concepts of open grazing and by implication open movement, attention is now focused on environmental public health ethics. World Health Organization (1946) defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of diseases or infirmity." Dzurgba (2005) writes that health is physical, psychological, emotional, and social well-being, and freedom from stress, disease, depression, frustration, maladjustment, and emotional disorder. Odimegwu (2006) writes that health is a positive condition of well-being, wholeness, absence of sicknesses and impairments, and is also inclusive of the ability to function well as a human being. Bellamy (2007) writes that health is a "condition of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease"(p. 211). Health is well-being, welfare, peace, goodness, favourable conditions, mental stability, etc. Whatever makes life meaningful and purposeful are all aspects of health. This is why health is seen not just as physical wellbeing, but also emotional, psychological, spiritual, family, social well-being, etc. If someone suffers from any abnormalities in any of these dimensions of life, then the person is not healthy.

Concerning the environment, Dzurgba (2005) states that it can be defined as influences and circumstances that affect the lives of people. According to Allison (2009), the term environment comes from the French word (*environner*) and it means surrounding. Environment refers to all factors and things that surround an organism, thing, being, reality, etc. Everything that you see is in an environment. Land, water, streams, oceans, mountains, trees, birds, animals, etc are all part of the environment and each of these is surrounded by

an environment. Bellamy (2007) writes that the environment is that which surrounds a community, and an individual in the life cycle, including physical and cultural surroundings.

It is necessary to define the term, ethics, here. Elegido (2020) writes that ethics, which can be used interchangeably with morality, comes from the Greek word (ethos), meaning custom, manners. Ethics is concerned with human behaviour in terms of right and wrong. Right, and wrong are determined by the particular standards that a group of people is informed by different ethical theories such as consequentialism, deontologism, virtue consideration, natural law, intuitionism, etc. Taking public health, for instance, a consequentialist would say what is right depends on its consequences on people or society. A deontologist would say what is right is in the action itself, not the consequences. Omoregbe (1993) writes: "Ethics is concerned with the question of right and wrong in human behaviour. It deals with how men ought to behave, and why it is wrong to behave in certain ways and right to behave in certain other ways"(p.ix).

Bryant and Rhodes (2024) write that public health is: "the art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting physical and mental health, sanitation, personal hygiene, control of infectious diseases, and organization of health services"(p.1). UT Health Houston (2019) cites the American Public Health Association as saying that public health is "promoting and protecting the health of people and the communities where they live, learn, work and play."(p.1). Public and environmental health are interrelated. Public health depends on the health of the environment. This is the basis for speaking of environmental and public health. World Health Organization describes environmental health by stating that a healthier environment protects from diseases and things like a stable climate, clean air, sanitation, adequate water, safe workplace, good built environment, etc, are all necessary for good health. American Public Health Association (2024) writes that: "environmental health centers on the relationships between people and their environment. When people are exposed to hazards like polluted air and lead in their drinking water, they can develop serious conditions, such as asthma, heart disease, cancer, and dementia. Both public health and environmental health are almost co-terminus. Whatever endangers the environment and by extension environmental health negatively impacts public health. It is within the environment that the public exists, what impacts the environment necessarily affects the public. The term public is used here to refer to the collectivity of the people in an organized social space. The public is different from the personal or individual. Environmental health is an aspect of public health, though today, the domain or discipline of environmental health has gained independence and has become a large field in its own right.

It is based on the vital link between public health and environmental health that this paper discusses environmental public health, instead of just public health or environmental health. National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) (2014) state that: "environmental public health focuses on protecting groups of people from threats to their health and safety posed by their environments." Environmental public health ethics refer to norms, rules and regulations, laws that govern human behaviours about what is to be done to keep the environment safe and healthy to ensure that people live in well-being and wellness. Ortunaya (2022) writes that public health issues are also shaped by norms, values, and professionalism; and those who work in the health profession need to be responsible and accountable so they should be guided by a code of conduct. Like every other field of human endeavour, every behaviour cannot be accepted. Any behaviour that does not promote life is unethical and immoral. Environmental public health ethics implies human behaviours

concerning the environment should promote the peace, security, well-being, and wellness of people in the public or social space. A clean environment helps people to be healthy, but dirty and unhygienic surroundings can cause sickness and illness. DEOHS of the School of Public Health of the University of Washington (2024) notes that: "Environmental public health focuses on the ways the natural and built environments affect human health. Specialists in this field identify, evaluate and control exposures to chemical and microbial contaminants in air, water, soil and food to improve health and health equity."

The Situation of Open Grazing and Cattle Movement in Nigeria
Open cattle movement with grazing is a common occurrence in Nigeria. The fact is that it occurs almost daily in Nigeria. It is a common sight to see cattle being driven to the slaughter in Nigerian open markets daily. One often sees cattle being led in the open streets and roads for grazing. Many Nigerian forests, especially in the southern parts of the country, are transversed by cattle and their herdsmen. As one drives on the road from one town or city to another, especially in the morning or evenings, one is likely going to see cattle crossing the road. On a journey to Ekpoma sometime in May 20024, this writer ran into cattle crossing the road somewhere before Ekpoma. On another journey on the way to Abraka after Eku, this author has occasionally run into cattle crossing the road. The fact is that many adult Nigerians and youth have seen cattle moving on roads and grazing openly in people's farmlands. Nkemjika and Arinze-Umobi (2017) indicate that conflicts caused by herdsmen are common in Taraba, Benue, Kwara, Abia, Adamawa, Kogi, Anambra, Imo, Enugu, and Ekiti States; and the situation has made Ekiti, Taraba, and Benue to promulgate anti-grazing legislation. Muoneke and Okoli (2022) cite the April 2021 Premium Times that reported that on May 11, 2021, the 17 Southern Governors of Nigeria banned open grazing to abate conflicts among herders and farmers.

Many factors and causes have been presented for cattle movement and open grazing. Udeagbala (2020) cites the Vanguard in 2018, which opines that the core cause is climatic changes from around 1999 and that climate change has resulted in less pasture in the north and so the nomadic cattle herders move towards the south encroaching on people's farmlands. Udeagbala (2020) quotes Oli, Ibekwe, and Nwankwo from their 2018 work that cattle rearing was mainly done in the periods before the 20th century in the Sudan, Guinea, and Sahel Savanah during the short rainy season; but as a result of pasture challenge, they have moved southward searching for fresh water and pasture. Udeagbala (2020) cites Olaniyan, Francis, and Okeke-Uzodike who state that the herdsmen in the process of grazing now began to intrude into farmlands and this led to conflicts. It is generally known that the Fulani people are a nomadic ethnic group that herds and trades in cattle and so this is crucial to their survival and well-being. Nnoruga (2021) writes that initially, open grazing was not a problem, but when the herders began to kill, destroy crops, and cause disease to others, there was an outcry against the practice. Nkemjika and Arinze-Umobi (2017) write that some persons have opined also that during the President Buhari era, his ethnic politics, because he is a Fulani man, could not allow him to encourage anti-open grazing laws and this encouraged Fulani herdsmen to continue their rampage. It should be noted that in mentioning Fulani herdsmen, not all of them are violent or encourage clashes. Hufschmidt and Ume (2023) state that the armed conflicts arising from pastoralist and farmer clashes are driven primarily by competition over scarce resources of land and water.

Sheidu and Patrick (2023) propose that there should be appropriate measures on the part of the government and other institutions to create modern ranching systems, instead of

open grazing. There are states in Nigeria such as Benue States that have made laws against open grazing. But another issue is that very often the herdsmen don't obey the laws. They are willing to force themselves into people's farmlands. Nnoruga (2021) writes that ranching can curb farmers' and herders' conflicts, foster healthier animal production, provide employment, provide food, and help in a peaceful existence. There should be stricter immigration regulations for those entering Nigeria. While it is true that ECOWAS citizens can enter Nigeria without a visa for 90 days, they should still be subjected to immigration control at Nigeria's borders, especially in the North. Chukwuemeka, Aloysius and Eneh (2018) write that in the past open grazing was appropriate as a result of the small human population, shifting cultivation of crops, and favourable weather conditions but not today; and so the old culture of open grazing should be changed. The place of government in ensuring the consequences of open grazing and the movement of cattle are mitigated should not be underestimated. As the paper has noted, open grazing threatens and negatively affects the health of people. When the human right to health of people is endangered it should be the concern of the government and all stakeholders. Olomojobi (2019) writes that the government has to ensure that people ensure their right to health and anything that endangers this right should be curbed. Open grazing is a threat to environmental public health.   It should be noted that banning open grazing is not enough. The government should put in place measures that ensure that herdsmen have access to basic socio-economic and cultural rights that accrue to all people.

Environmental Public Health Ethical Issues on Open Grazing and Cattle Movement
Herdsmen and others indeed argue that there is a right to freedom of movement. This is a basic human right. The right belongs to all people no matter their ethnicity, sex, occupation, religion, and political affiliation. The United Nations (1948), and the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2023) have all affirmed this right. It is a right that states have a responsibility to safeguard. But the reality is that no human right is an unlimited or absolute right. If rights are absolute, it will give a base for some people to violate the rights of others. Society will become a place of survival of the fittest or the wealthiest. Your right to movement does not mean you trespass into another person's property and forcefully take the property of the other or trample upon his/her property. Your right to movement has a boundary. It is ethically wrong for a herdsman or any other person to argue that his right to movement means he can enter other people's farmlands without consent and harvest their crops or use them to feed his cattle. What if the person whose property is threatened also claims that his right to movement confers on him moving into a ranch where the cattle are kept and forcefully taking the cattle? One's right to movement in a country does not mean the person can enter a road anytime without considering that a vehicle may be coming and thus endanger other lives. You are not the only road user. Other citizens also have a right to use the roads. This is why there are various traffic signs to direct people on their movements, and when it is proper to cross a road, bridge, or hill. Public safety is of paramount concern to government and public authority. Your right to movement does not mean you enter other people's neighbourhoods at night and disturb their sleep time. Herdsmen move at night into villages and people's neighbourhoods. The movement of cows at night causes a nuisance at night. When people's night rest is interfered with, it can affect their health and well-being. People are battling health challenges who are on medication and need a good night's sleep. Aligba., Omanchi, and Gbakighir (2020) rightly note that the right to freedom of movement is not absolute and does not override public safety, order, and peace, and even the rights

listed in Chapter IV of the Nigerian constitution can be curtailed for public interests. Muoneke and Okoli (2020) write that open grazing was appropriate when the population was small and there was enough land, but today globalization and population growth now make open grazing outdated and pose a serious threat to national security. Open grazing and cattle movement is a threat to environmental public health. While it can be right in some limited circumstances, especially in times past, today, because of the hazards it poses, it should no longer be acceptable. A particular community can accept open grazing and cattle movement, but it should not be imposed on all, especially in a federation. It is unethical to impose open grazing and cattle movement on people who do not want it.

There is the question of food security. This is also an environmental public health issue and an ethical one for that matter. Without food, people's lives are endangered and subjected to ill-health. Human beings cannot survive without food. Food also needs a healthy environment. In a degraded environment, food security and systems are endangered. A polluted environment will produce poisonous food. Ensuring that people have food is the right thing to do. It is not right to deprive other people of their rights to secure your rights unless in self-defence, or to secure the public good. So, for instance, a person can be kept in a correction facility to protect him from harming the public and for his reformation. There is a fundamental human right to food and water. The first human instinct is survival. Open movement of cattle and grazing has gravely impeded food security and threatened public health. Many farmers can no longer access their farmlands because of violent herdsmen. Herdsmen brazenly enter into people's farmlands and water supplies and harvest the products for their cattle and themselves. This has contributed to food insecurity and the rising cost of food products. There are people, especially in rural places and semi-urban areas, who cannot safely move through the roads to their places of work because of herdsmen. Some of the herdsmen who move their cattle through the roads have also turned themselves into bandits and kidnappers, killers and rapists. When human beings are deprived of access to food and water, it amounts to an unethical thing. The behaviour of herdsmen who cause food insecurity is unacceptable. It is not the right thing to do. The health and well-being of people matter. The government exists to ensure a good and optimal life for the people. Government loses its essence when it cannot provide a good life for the people. Philosophers such as Aristotle, Locke, and Hobbes all opine that government exists for the good of the people. The activities of herdsmen in violating and degrading people's farmlands make it difficult for the government to provide a good life for the people. It should be an issue of serious concern for the government. It should not be politicized. This is not an ethnic, tribal, or religious issue that people have to see curbing open grazing as persecution. Open grazing endangers human security and national security. Sheidu and Patrick (2023) state that the forced migration of herders from the North into the Middle Belt and the South has led to herder-farmer conflicts, depleted food supply in Benue State and other states, etc. It is an environmental public health concern. Ayayi, *et al* (2023) state:

> Findings further revealed the possible consequences of the free-range system if left unchecked, one of which could gradually affect the country's adequate food supply. Farmlands are gradually abandoned for fear of possible attacks. Some states, particularly known for farming, are now plagued with hunger and poverty among farmers in rural areas. The consequence of unregulated open grazing could impair the possibility of attaining sustainable development goals of zero hunger and eradication of poverty (p. 1).

Open movement of cattle and open grazing is a serious issue in security ethics. The lives of people are not secure when they are endangered as a result of food insecurity. Many have lost their lives and belongings to violent herdsmen who move their cattle through people's farmlands. Traditionally, a nomadic lifestyle is indeed part of Fulani culture. But culture is dynamic and the realities of a globalized world are different from those of yesteryears. Chukwuemeka, Aloysious and Emeka (2018) note that many experts have shown that because of encroachment on development projects, desertification, and overgrazing, the nomadic approach is no longer sustainable. Open grazing is an issue that impinges on environmental public health and personal health. As previously noted open grazing pollutes the environment and creates health hazards such as diseases and ill-health. Olomojobi (2019) writes that:

> To every human being, a positive health is the basis for long life and it is a matter of immense concern. This is so regardless of age, socio-economic status, gender or ethnicity. A positive and stable health status is a very basic and essential asset to any man; ill health on the other hand would impede productivity and embarking on responsibilities or from full participation in daily obligations (p.1).

The violence from open grazers has maimed, injured, and wounded many farmers. These farmers have to battle for their health and life. Some herders have also been injured in the process of clashes between pastoralists (herders) and arable farmers. It is widely acknowledged today and enshrined in human rights instruments that there is a right to health. By implication, there is an environmental public health right. If environmental public health is endangered, then it is difficult to enjoy the right to good health. Environmental public health is seriously endangered by open grazing activities. The United Nations (1948) asserts that states are responsible for providing adequate standards that guarantee healthy living and wellness. United Nations (1966) in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states: "the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health."

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2023) and the Organization of African Unity (1981) acknowledge a human right to health. Human health, whether personal health or environmental public health, is an issue then that borders on ethics. The various human rights instruments mentioned above all place an obligation on states to guarantee and safeguard their rights. Promoting and advancing environmental public health is the right thing to do. When the government fails in this obligation, it becomes an injustice. Not only the government, but individuals also must protect their health from being harmed and degraded. Open grazing is a threat to the right to health and a suitable environment to enjoy one's life.

The value and priority of human labour and work are also an important consideration in discussing open grazing and cattle movement. Labour and work are crucial to human society. Without labour, in this case, agricultural labourers in agriculture will lose their source of livelihood and income. Open grazing is a threat to the value of human labour. While the herdsmen value their labour and their cattle, they are carrying it out in a fashion that destroys the productivity of others. In the theory of curriculum, there is the null or hidden curriculum. Even by what is not taught, something is taught. To neglect the threat posed by open grazing and open movement of cattle as some government officers do is to

say that the agricultural labours of some do not matter. The only one that matters is that of the herdsmen and their cattle. Udeagbala (2020) reports that in the Anambra South Senatorial zone, herdsmen in the process of carrying out open grazing use AK47 rifles to threaten and even kill farmers, and intrude into areas cultivated by others by force. Chukwuemeka, Aloysius and Eneh (2018) write that: "pastoralists perceive cattle breeding as government business which should take pre-eminence over other agricultural activities in Nigeria. Any slightest attempt to manhandle their cattle leads to violent conflict between herders and farmers"(p. 1).

There is also the issue of environmental health, security, and ethics. In open grazing, cattle damage the natural environment through which they move. They destroy plants, trees, crops, and the habitat of other organisms. It is not only human beings who are affected. Non-human lives are also seriously impacted. When cattle openly move through people's farmlands and forests, birds are driven out of their habitats, animals escape from their wild shelter, and micro-organisms are killed. The waste and dump of cattle find themselves in the water bodies, contaminating the water. There are many health hazards associated with open movement and grazing. Some of the water sources polluted by waste from cattle are drunk by humans, especially those in rural areas. These make them susceptible to health problems. The environmental impact of open movement and grazing of cattle is indisputable. Ukhurebor and Adetunji (2020) write that there is a lack of adequate governance of livestock. Because of this, open grazing depletes the water, land, and biodiversity, pollutes the environment, causes desertification, destroys soil quality, causes soil erosion, causes ecological imbalance, and global warming. Nnoruga (2021) writes that in Nigeria, open grazing has caused loss of lives, environmental depletion, destruction of fertile lands and forests, and extinction of biodiversity. Aligba, Omanchi and Gbakighir (2020) write that between 2013 and 2017 there were many clashes between farmers and Fulani herdsmen in Benue State in which many innocent persons were killed, properties were destroyed, including social disruptions, breakdown of order and law. Open grazing not only causes environmental degradation, it can also lead to the spread of diseases. The Benue State Anti-Grazing law states clearly that one reason for the law is to manage, prevent, and control the spread of diseases. From what is being argued in this paper, it is clear that open grazing and movement of cattle affect nature and cause diseases.

Recently, an issue was raised on making cattle citizens in the country. Even if cattle are made citizens of Nigeria, that does not mean they have the same rights as human beings. It does not mean they can be allowed to roam in the open streets causing a nuisance to people. As citizens, they still have to be restricted by laws and the human beings in charge of them have responsibility. In many countries where animals are revered, venerated, or given special status, the animals are not allowed to cause harm to humans or their properties. These animals have lived in relationships with humans for centuries and see humans as friends. Humans also protect these animals from harm and destruction.

Unless one is a vegan, one needs animal meat. Ethical treatment of animals requires that animals be treated humanely and in a friendly manner. Even if an animal is to be used for food, it should be killed humanely without animal suffering. Animals, including cows, suffer pain. The way that cows are treated in Nigeria, such as when they are flogged by herdsmen, driven with force, and flogged to the abattoir, leaves much to be desired. Cows are made to move in the open roads in the heat of the sun or rain. These are causing unnecessary suffering to these animals. There is a vital need for Nigeria to move from the

culture of open movement and grazing of cattle. It is rife with many public health and environmental dangers.

Conclusion

The overall purpose of this paper is not to propose again solutions that people have proposed to the problem of open grazing and movements. Tersely, these solutions include ranching, enforceable public laws on open grazing and cattle movement, peacebuilding and public enlightenment on the dangers of open grazing, humane treatment of animals, respect for property rights, proper understanding of the right to freedom of movement, and education on the importance of environmental public health. The concern here is essentially ethical or moral. What can be done ethically to curb the challenge of open grazing and movement? As noted clearly, open grazing and movement of cattle cause a lot of ethical problems. The paper has clearly shown that in many different ways, open grazing and open cattle movement endanger environmental and public health and are not good for individuals and the public, unless communities willingly accept it, so long as it does not endanger human freedoms, rights, and public health and the environmental good.

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IMPACT OF BABY ABANDONMENT ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
The study investigated the impact of baby abandonment on child development in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The design adopted for the study was a mixed-methods research design. The population of the study consisted abandoned children (current and former) in orphanages, foster care systems, or juvenile centres. Social workers, caregivers, government officials, and psychologists. Young offenders (delinquents) in correctional facilities with histories of abandonment within Akwa Ibom State. The sample size of the study consisted of 150 abandoned children across orphanages, foster homes, and juvenile centres using stratified sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a researcher made questionnaire titled: "Baby Abandonment and Child Development Questionnaire", which was used to obtain data from respondents. The reliability of the instrument was found to between .67-.83 using Cronbach Alpha statistics. The data obtained was analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study showed that the developmental challenges of baby abandonment have a significant impact on child development. There was a moderately low impact of socio-economic and cultural factors on baby abandonment. Also, there was a moderate to somewhat high impact, leaning toward positive but not strongly impactful. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended among others that Government agencies such as ministries of social development and child protection services, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in child welfare and development centres should strengthen child welfare interventions and be made responsible for child welfare.

Keywords: Baby abandonment, developmental challenges, socio-economic, cultural contexts, child development

Introduction
Infants thrive in environments marked by consistent care and affection (Perry et al., 2017). The absence of these foundational experiences, particularly from biological parents, can lead to various psychological and behavioural difficulties. According to Kim and Yu (2023), infant abandonment poses a serious challenge to human dignity, with common justifications including the desire to conceal childbirth or economic hardship. Adult survivors of infant abandonment experience emotional distress, struggle with personal emotional coping, and endure significant internal grief. However, they also demonstrate resilience and adaptability (Sherr, Roberts, & Croome, 2017). Frankel (2023) further notes that childhood emotional

abandonment can result in feelings of shame, self-blame, and an inclination to identify with the aggressor.

Infant abandonment is a crime that occurs frequently, often involving mothers in their teens or twenties. This can result from concealing childbirth or experiencing economic hardship (Kim & Yu, 2023). Baby abandonment refers to infants or foetuses being left in unsafe locations such as gutters, rubbish dumps, railway tracks, and bushes (Singh, 2022). Onyido and Akpan (2018) assert that child abandonment results in physical, behavioural, and psychological consequences for both the child and society. Regardless of the reasons, be it desperation, societal shame, or financial difficulties, abandoning an infant can lead to significant psychological problems and attachment disorders, which initiate a complex and challenging life journey for the child (Popescu, 2017). Kostenko (2014) opined these abandoned babies are typically between 0 and 3 years old. Kim and Yu (2023) emphasize that infant abandonment poses a serious threat to the dignity of human life, with common justifications being the concealment of childbirth and economic struggles. The formation of infant attachment is closely linked to the quality of care provided during infancy. Sensitive caregiving is crucial for the development of brain structures (Perry, Blair, & Sullivan, 2017). Ignoring the developmental perspective can have tragic consequences, as infancy represents a critical period of rapid brain growth, establishing foundational neural connections that significantly influence future learning and behaviour.

Education is identified as a vital tool to mitigate these effects. Abandonment in early childhood disrupts the natural bonding process, creating a profound void that can lead to lasting challenges in emotional regulation and interpersonal relationships. Therefore, Thabane and Kasiram (2015) emphasize the importance of preventing child abandonment and protecting abandoned children for the wellbeing of both the children and the society at large. Community support in the fight of shaping behaviours, and fighting against child, trafficking, abandonment and baby factories, is very important in our society today. They help in identifying, and reporting to the police, trafficking networks, and baby factories and other illegal crimes always located in a community.

Eniola & Omoleye (2018) advocates effective monitoring of child charity organizations, prosecuting and punishing operators of baby making factories, and implementing international instruments on women's reproductive health rights can curb the scourge of baby making factories in Nigeria. Addressing the issue of baby abandonment requires a practical approach that examines root causes such as poverty, social stigma, and the lack of support for vulnerable mothers. Additionally, it is important to recognize that children raised in institutional care or foster systems often experience stigma, identity crises, and a pervasive sense of rejection. These challenges can hinder their ability to form healthy social connections and fully engage in society. The repercussions of abandonment extend beyond individual experiences, placing additional strain on societal structures, including child welfare systems, healthcare, and education. This paper aims to investigate the impact of baby abandonment on child development in Akwa Ibom State.

Statement of the Problem:
Despite the extensive recognition of baby abandonment as a critical social issue, its long-term developmental impacts on children remain underexplored and inadequately addressed. Sherr, & Hackman, (2002). Many abandoned children suffer from emotional instability, delayed physical growth, and limited access to quality education and healthcare. The inability of current child welfare systems to provide comprehensive support worsens these

challenges, perpetuating cycles of neglect and social marginalization. Additionally, the shame associated with abandonment creates isolation for both children and caregivers, adding to the complexity of the problem. And without targeted interventions that addresses the root causes of abandonment, prioritize the holistic development of these children, the cycle of negative outcomes is likely to continue, undermining the potential of future generations. Addressing the issue of baby abandonment and its associated impacts necessitates a multifaceted approach. A thorough examination of the root causes, including poverty, social stigma, and insufficient support for vulnerable mothers, enables policymakers and practitioners to devise interventions that not only mitigate the risk of abandonment but also foster the comprehensive development of affected children. This approach encompasses the enhancement of child welfare systems, the promotion of adoption and foster care solutions, and the cultivation of societal awareness aimed at reducing stigma and encouraging empathy.

Research Objectives
1. To conduct an examination of the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social developmental impacts of baby abandonment on the children who are affected
2. To identify the underlying causes of baby abandonment and evaluate the prevalence of these causes across diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts
3. To assess the effectiveness of existing child welfare systems and to propose evidence-based strategies aimed at supporting the comprehensive development of abandoned children

Research Questions
1. What is the impact of developmental challenges of baby abandonment on child development?
2. What is the impact of socio-economic and cultural factors associated with baby abandonment on Child development?
3. What is the impact of existing child welfare interventions of baby abandonment on child development?

Literature Review

Socioeconomic factors and child development in neglectful conditions.
Personal factors, such as mother's deprivation and childhood socialization, contribute to child abandonment, with factors such as poverty, unemployment, and social deviation also playing a role. Uasheva, et, al, (2016). The absence of family support and societal safety nets are factors that leaves many abandoned children economically vulnerable.Mace (2016), states that child safety is threatened by basic needs, maltreatment, abandonment, child labor, trafficking, disasters, and wars. Without caregivers, children may lack access to food, shelter, education, and healthcare. This deprivation increases their vulnerability to malnutrition, illness, and poor living conditions, according to Clarke, *et, al,* (2021).

Lack of education, a common consequence of abandonment, severely restricts future employment opportunities and contributes to a cycle of poverty. And to survive, abandoned children sometimes are forced into child Labor, begging, or exploitation. These conditions expose them to hazardous environments, and even child trafficking for sexual exploitation, which is a serious global issue that violates basic human rights, according to Nair (2015) Many abandoned children end up in orphanages or foster systems, and some of these

orphanages according to Moffa, et, al, (2019), has poor personal hygiene behaviours, inadequate water and sanitation infrastructure, and overcrowding being major concerns in institutional care settings for orphaned and abandoned children.

Psychological Factors and Child Development in Neglectful Conditions
Early psychosocial neglect leads to persistent deficits in social, cognitive, and emotional development, while foster care improves most domains of functioning for children in adversity. Nelson, Fox & Zeanah (2023). Onyido & Akpan (2018), stressed that abandonment in Nigeria leads to physical, behavioral, and psychological consequences, with society facing the bulk of these consequences. Study went further to recommend education as a vital tool that should be used as an instrument to minimize child abandonment in Nigeria.

Children abandoned without stable, loving relationships may have difficulty forming trusting bonds and secure attachments later in life. This may lead to Attachment disorders, which according to Zeanah, & Gleason, (2015), in early childhood include reactive attachment disorder and disinhibited social engagement disorder. Frankel, (2023), highlighted Chronic childhood emotional abandonment with the capacity to lead to self-blame, shame, and loss of agency, requiring therapists' patience, empathy, and understanding**.** The trauma of abandonment can cause difficulty in managing emotions, Depression, anxiety, PTSD, and suicidal ideation Tinajero, et, al, (2020). Depression, anxiety, PTSD, and suicidal ideation are common psychological consequences due to prolonged neglect and emotional deprivation. And trauma and stress, in this case, can lead to significant neurocognitive effects, such as impairments in verbal learning, speed of information processing, attention/working memory, and verbal memory. Scott, et, al, (2015)

Social Factors and Child Development in Neglectful Conditions
Abandoned children in Nigeria who are stigmatized as witches are vulnerable to statutory rape, sexual addiction, human trafficking, infections, pregnancy, and intergenerational abuse. Agazue, (2021). Abandoned children often experience stigma and discrimination, leading to isolation from peers and society. This isolation limits their ability to develop healthy social skills. Khoo, Mancinas, & Skoog, (2015). Alias, Mustafa, Aziz, & Hamzah, (2024), states that parental disengagement, peer pressure, unfavourable living conditions, and societal indifference contribute to youth involvement in criminal activities, while protective factors like family, schools, and society can help prevent recurrence. They struggle with unresolved anger and a need to survive, and turn to delinquency, drugs, or crime, increasing their chances of imprisonment as they grow up. But Secure parental attachment, according to Delgado, *et, al*, (2022) promotes the creation of quality peer relationships during adolescence, based on communication, support, intimacy, trust, and quality.

Baby Factories and Child Abandonment
Baby factories involve breeding, trafficking, and abuse of infants and their biological mothers, often resulting in physical, psychological, and sexual violence. Makinde, et, al, (2017). They are institutions where pregnant women and young teenage girls are impregnated and kept illegally until their babies are born, then sold for monetary gains. Ombelet, & Johnson, (2016). Children born into or trafficked through baby factories are also victims of neglect, trauma, and exploitation, as they often lack legal documentation, family ties, or any sense of belonging, which creates confusion leading to resentment, defiance, and anti-social

behaviours as they grow up. Babies from these factories may be sold into a corrupt environment, where delinquency becomes part of them, as they grow.

Interventions
Success Stories of Specialized Institutions: Some authors highlight the success of specialized institutions in Nigeria, such as Hope for the Abandoned Children Foundation and The Orphanage Welfare Foundation, which provide holistic care for abandoned children. Olowu (2020); Adegoke (2022); Olaniyi (2021) such institutions have made notable strides in providing both immediate and long-term care, including healthcare, education, and psychological support, leading to improved developmental outcomes for abandoned children. Olaniyi further argues that while the overall system may have gaps, these specialized institutions demonstrate the potential for significant positive impact when interventions are comprehensive and well-funded.

Theoretical Framework
These theories offer a framework for analysing the developmental and societal issues affecting abandoned children.

Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969)
Attachment theory plays a crucial role in understanding the role of early infant separations from mothers and their impact on a child's social emotional adaptation and cognitive growth. Salcuni, (2015). Ogle, & Cozza, (2023), states that Attachment theory suggests that young children develop beliefs and expectations about relationships based on the availability and responsiveness of early caregivers, influencing social information processing and emotion regulation. Attachment issues can show up as feeling emotionally unstable, having trouble building relationships, and dealing with behavioural problems as adults. This idea emphasizes how neglect during childhood can mess with a kid's ability to manage their emotions and interact with others.

Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory (Erikson, 1950)
Erikson's psychosocial development theory focuses on early child development and has influenced various disciplines, including self- and career counselling. Maree, (2021). Corradi, (2024) states that Erikson's Psychosocial Developmental Theory is a comprehensive schema encompassing the life cycle from birth to death, defining important parameters of development that distinguish normative from pathologic. Neglect during formative years can leave children with deep-seated feelings of mistrust, insecurity, and anxiety. These developmental problems can have a domino effect, affecting later stages like developing independence, a sense of self, and the capacity for intimacy. These theoretical perspectives collectively offer a multidimensional framework for understanding the impact of baby abandonment on child development. They underscore the intricate relationships between early experiences, developmental needs, and overarching societal structures. This comprehensive lens facilitates an in-depth analysis of the challenges encountered by abandoned children and informs the design of targeted interventions.

Methodology
The study design was a mixed-methods research design was employed to analyse both numerical data and personal experiences, measure developmental outcomes and rates of

delinquency among abandoned children, and explore lived experiences, psychological impacts, and factors influencing child abandonment and delinquent behaviours. The population of the study consisted of abandoned children (current and former) in orphanages, foster care systems, or juvenile centers. Social workers, caregivers, government officials, and psychologists. Young offenders (delinquents) in correctional facilities with histories of abandonment within Akwa Ibom State. Purposive sampling Technique was used to select participants with relevant experiences (like children in foster care or juveniles with abandonment histories). 150 abandoned children across orphanages, foster homes, and juvenile centers were sampled using stratified sampling to ensure representation across age groups, gender, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Researchers made questionnaire titled: "Baby Abandonment and Child Development Questionnaire" was used to obtain data from respondents. It consisted of 12-items on developmental challenges of baby abandonment on child development, 12-items on socio-economic and cultural factors associated with baby abandonment on Child development and 10-items on child welfare interventions of baby abandonment on child development with 4-point Likert scale of 1 (Not at all), 2 (Somewhat), 3 (To a great extent) and 4 (Almost completely) respectively. The reliability of the instrument was found to be between .67-. 83 determined using Cronbach Alpha statistics. This was adjourned reliable to be used for the study. The data obtained was analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. Any mean response of 2.50 and above was considered high while any mean response below 2.50 was considered low.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the impact of developmental challenges of baby abandonment on child development?

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation of impact of developmental challenges of baby abandonment on child development

S/N.	Item statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Baby abandonment affects a child's emotional stability	2.65	0.76	High
2.	Baby abandonment influences a child's ability to manage stress	2.85	0.69	High
3.	Baby abandonment impacts a child's self-esteem	2.85	0.69	High
4.	Baby abandonment influences a child's ability to form healthy relationships	2.85	0.70	High
5.	Baby abandonment impacts a child's social skills (e.g., communication, cooperation)	3.31	0.77	High
6.	Baby abandonment affects a child's ability to trust others	3.60	0.49	High
7.	Baby abandonment impacts a child's cognitive development (e.g., learning, problem-solving)	3.60	0.49	High
8.	Baby abandonment influences a child's memory and concentration	3.60	0.49	High
9.	Baby abandonment affects a child's language development	3.39	0.79	High
10.	Baby abandonment contributes to behavioural	3.40	0.80	High

S/N.	Item Statement			
	problems in children (e.g., aggression, anxiety)			
11.	Baby abandonment affects a child's impulsivity and self-control	3.08	0.68	High
12.	Baby abandonment influences a child's risk-taking behaviour	3.47	0.50	High
	Grand Mean	**3.22**		

Table 1 shows that a grand mean of 3.22 indicates that respondents generally perceive the developmental challenges of baby abandonment to have a noticeable or significant impact on child development, assuming responses are skewed toward agreement or higher ratings. This implies that respondents perceive the developmental challenges associated with baby abandonment as having a moderately high impact on child development. It indicates a general agreement on the significant negative implications of abandonment for the affected children

Research Question 2: What is the impact of socio-economic and cultural factors associated with baby abandonment on Child development?

Table 2: Mean and Standard deviation of socio-economic and cultural factors associated with baby abandonment on Child development

S/N.	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Poverty contributes to baby abandonment and impacts child development	2.34	0.48	Low
2.	Lack of access to education affects child development in cases of baby abandonment	2.34	0.47	Low
3.	Unemployment influences baby abandonment and impacts child development	2.34	0.47	Low
4.	Social isolation contributes to baby abandonment and affects child development	2.34	0.48	Low
5.	Lack of healthcare access impacts child development in cases of baby abandonment	2.42	0.49	Low
6.	Food insecurity affects child development in cases of baby abandonment?	2.50	0.50	High
7.	Traditional gender roles influence baby abandonment and affect child development	2.58	0.49	High
8.	Cultural attitudes toward adoption impact child development in cases of baby abandonment	2.67	0.47	High
9.	Community support for abandoned children influences child development	2.66	0.48	High
10.	Cultural values around family planning contribute to baby abandonment and impact child development	2.43	0.49	Low
11.	Community resources for abandoned children influence child development	2.36	0.48	Low
12.	Cultural norms around parenting style impact child development in cases of baby abandonment	2.29	0.45	Low
	Grand Mean	**2.44**		

Table 2 shows a grand mean of 2.44 which indicates moderately low impact of socio-economic and cultural factors on baby abandonment. This may be due to other factors such as direct abandonment-related issues like neglect or trauma which are perceived as more impactful. it therefore implies that these factors may not play a dominant role in influencing child development outcomes in the context of abandonment.

Research Question 3: What is the impact of existing child welfare interventions of baby abandonment on child development?

Mean and Standard deviation of the impact of existing child welfare interventions of baby abandonment on child development

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Child welfare interventions for baby abandonment are effective in promoting healthy child development	2.77	0.54	High
2.	Foster care services support the cognitive development of abandoned children	2.57	0.63	High
3.	Adoption programs promote emotional stability in abandoned children	2.57	0.63	High
4.	Availability of foster care services meets the demand for care	2.38	0.49	Low
5.	Adoption programs are well-publicized and understood by the community	2.50	0.65	High
6.	Quality of care provided by healthcare services supports the mental health of abandoned children	2.84	0.57	High
7.	Child welfare interventions for baby abandonment are sustainable in the long term	3.02	0.73	High
8.	Current funding for child welfare interventions is sufficient to meet the needs of abandoned children	3.16	0.60	High
9.	Child welfare interventions are cost-effective in promoting healthy child development	3.18	0.71	High
10.	Child welfare interventions are adaptable to changing community needs	3.05	0.74	High
	Grand Mean	**2.80**		

Table 3 shows a grand mean of 2.80 which indicates a moderate to somewhat high impact, leaning toward positive but not strongly impactful. It reflects a perception that while existing child welfare interventions may have some impact, they are not perceived as significantly effective or impactful in supporting child development comprehensively. This implies that these interventions provide some benefits, and are not perceived as sufficiently effective in addressing the developmental needs of abandoned children.

Discussion of Findings
Findings of the study on the impact of developmental challenges of baby abandonment on child development showed the developmental challenges of baby abandonment have a significant impact on child development. This could be attributed to the fact that the developmental challenges of baby abandonment can have a profound impact on child development, leading to emotional trauma, attachment issues, and cognitive delays. This is

often due to the lack of early nurturing, institutional care, and uncertainty/insecurity that abandoned babies experience. As a result, these children may be at a higher risk of mental health issues, poor academic performance and difficulty forming healthy relationships. The findings of this study is in contrast with that of some Nigerian studies which suggest that community-based care and support can mitigate the negative effects of baby abandonment on child development (Onyido & Akpan (2018); Ogunyemi (2021); Olowu, 2020; Adegoke, 2022). Findings of the study on the impact of socio-economic and cultural factors associated with baby abandonment on Child development showed moderately low impact of socio-economic and cultural factors on baby abandonment, this suggests that while these factors are relevant, they may not be as significant in shaping abandonment-related outcomes as other more direct influences, such as neglect or trauma. The findings is in line with studies by Agazue, (2021); Khoo, Mancinas, and Skoog, (2015) who have pointed out that in many Nigerian communities, abandonment is more often associated with personal crises, such as the inability to provide proper care due to trauma or mental health issues, rather than purely economic or cultural pressures. The findings of this study is in contrast with Mustafa, Aziz and Hamzah, (2024) that socio-economic hardship, particularly in rural and urban poor areas in Nigeria, remains a major factor contributing to child abandonment.

Findings of the study on the impact of existing child welfare interventions of baby abandonment on child development showed a moderate to somewhat high impact, leaning toward positive but not strongly impactful. This suggests that while these interventions are perceived as beneficial to some extent, they are not seen as strongly effective in addressing the comprehensive developmental needs of abandoned children. This reflects a nuanced view of child welfare systems in Nigeria—while they provide some support, they may fall short in terms of their overall impact and effectiveness. The findings is supported by Ogunyemi (2021) emphasizes that while government interventions and NGO-led programs aimed at supporting abandoned or orphaned children do exist, these programs often face challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of resources, and weak implementation frameworks. Ogunyemi notes that these limitations prevent interventions from being fully effective, aligning with the finding of a moderate-to-somewhat-high impact. Interventions may help in some ways, but their overall influence on child development outcomes remains constrained. The findings of the study is in contrast with Ajayi and Adedeji (2021) on child welfare interventions which report shows it have improved significantly in recent years due to increasing government and NGO involvement in the sector. Ajayi and Adedeji emphasize that national and international partnerships have led to better-targeted programs for abandoned children, including education, healthcare, and rehabilitation. They argue that the perception of the lack of comprehensive support may stem from challenges in rural areas or specific regions, but overall, these interventions are making a meaningful difference.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the developmental challenges associated with baby abandonment have a noticeable and significant negative impact on child development, as perceived by respondents. However, socio-economic and cultural factors are perceived to have a moderately low impact, suggesting that other issues such as neglect or trauma may play a more dominant role in influencing developmental outcomes. Existing child welfare interventions are perceived as moderately effective, indicating a need for enhanced strategies to better address the developmental needs of abandoned children.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that;

1. Government agencies such as ministries of social development and child protection services, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in child welfare and development centres should strengthen child welfare interventions and be made responsible for child welfare.
2. Healthcare professionals**,** social workers and mental health organizations should address neglect and trauma to implement trauma-informed care and provide specialized support for abandoned children.
3. Local government authorities**,** community leaders and civil society organizations should design and deliver community-based education and support programs aimed at preventing abandonment and supporting at-risk families.

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PHILOSOPHICAL AND PRACTICAL RELEVANCE OF EVENT ONTOLOGY

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Abstract

Whitehead's event ontology has become one of the most outstanding frameworks for the understanding of the basic structure of reality. It bridges the metaphysical reality with practical fields such as technology, science and everyday life and lays emphasis on change, process, relations and creativity as the primary building blocks of existence in contradistinction with the traditional substance ontology that focuses on static objects that are fixed and constant. This classical position on substance is construed as inadequate to explain reality especially as revealed by the quantum realm. It is the contention of Whitehead that events rather than substance capture reality better. Recent developments in the fields of science and technology such as in biology and artificial intelligence have demonstrated Whitehead's position given the myriad discoveries and developments that demonstrate the dynamism and relational characterizations of events as Whitehead adumbrated. This paper explores the practical and philosophical relevance of event ontology by drawing from Whitehead's point of view. Its significance for addressing a wide range of modern issues is highlighted while demonstrating the interdisciplinary applicability and nature of event ontology. Event ontology has helped to grapple with and redefine philosophical issues like temporality, identity, change and causality. Using the analytic and hermeneutic methods to gain deeper insights into Whitehead, the paper concludes by making a case for the adoption of event-inspired standpoint by all and as a conceptual tool from and with which the rapid changes, developments and preponderant interconnectedness of everything can be better appreciated which would further foster a more inclusive and holistic construal of reality.

Keywords: Creativity, Dynamism, Event, Interconnectedness, Ontology, Substance

Introduction

Whitehead's speculative philosophy gave rise to process philosophy which is a reaction to the 17th century dualism. The early influential modern science was premised on the metaphysical basis of materialism that Whitehead rejected. His book, *Science and the Modern World* is a presentation of the arguments against materialism and its presuppositions. A major presupposition concerns the idea of matter that constitutes reality as simply located bits that are defined by mass, velocity and location among others rather than by non-physical properties such as value, relatedness and consciousness. In the place of these bits of matter as the basis of nature or the final real things the world is made up of, Whitehead posits *events* as that which captures the real essence of what the final real things of the world should be. These events, also known as *actual entities/occasions* are momentary occasions of experience and processes of becoming that unifies. Whitehead's ideas have been found to be relevant and useful in various aspects of modern life in the 21st century as shall be discussed further.

Solving Human Psychological and Psychiatric Problems

A very important area of application of Whitehead's process philosophy is the field of psychiatry and psychology. In this regard, process philosophy can be seen to provide solutions to various human problems. Process philosophy gives an insight into the problems of the mind that is superior to the mechanistic view by presenting the mind as evolving, dynamic and non-static. It helps humans in solving their problems ranging from emotional to psychiatric problems caused by issues like socio-economic stress, addictions, and biological predispositions, among others. In his paper: "Why Process Thought is Relevant: A Psychiatrist's Perspective", Adam Blatner focuses attention on *alienation* that humans face. By alienation, the authenticity of a person is at stake and is negated (Blatner). It is a state of disconnect from the grounds of being. It demonstrates a lack of belongingness. Panteleon Iroegbu brings the etymological view by pointing out that 'alienation' originated from the French verb, 'aliener' which is a composite of 'a' meaning 'out of', 'outside of' and 'lien' which means 'link, band, and nexus'. Put together, 'aliener' would mean 'out of link or nexus'. He further adds:

> The greatest ontological evil that can happen to being in its essence, existence and expression is *alienation*. By alienation here, we mean not just the absence of a being, nor the diminishing of life of a given reality. Ontological alienation is the oblivion of being. It is the conscious attitude or act of indifference toward a fellow being (Iroegbu 380)

Many other personal problems are attributable to the problem of a gaping sense of alienation. There is also the problem of the search for meaning individuals struggle with. To solve these and many other personal challenges confronting humans, Psychiatrist Alan sees the solution in process thought of Whitehead. He outlined five major grounds in Whitehead that can lend help. First, the heightened ontological status accorded the mind in the theory in panexperientialism, developed from the need to reject the idea of 'vacuous actuality' thus leading to subjectivity. He writes: "The implication of this is simply that it suggests that people can deepen their connection with God *through the development of their own consciousness* – which is a type of mysticism. This is contrast to requiring the intervention of external ritual and specialized intermediaries in order to become reconnected." (Blatner)

Ecological Relevance

Whitehead's views have arguably been said to resonate with the tenets of the ecological movements. While some may prefer Deep Ecology to Ordinary Ecology, Whitehead remains relevant to the field of ecology which speaks of the relationship that exists between living organisms, including humans and their physical environment. It unveils the vital connections that exist between animals and plants and the world around them (*www.esa.org*). This captures the essence of the interrelatedness of all things in the world that is a very crucial aspect of Whitehead's philosophy. Some writers see it as the most important feature of Whitehead's metaphysics. The vision of ecologists is to help humans develop ecological sensibilities that would make them realize their unity with nature. A consequent of the metaphysical underpinnings of materialism of the 17th century is the individualism of social philosophy of that period. Individualism underscores the belief and practice of being independent and self-reliant. It disconnects rather than promote relatedness. Whitehead decried the mechanistic outlook when he opined:

> The Western world is now suffering from the limited moral outlook of the three previous generations….The two evils are: one, the ignorance of the true relations of each organism to its environment and the other, the habit of ignoring the intrinsic worth of the environment which must be allowed its weight in any consideration of the final ends (Whitehead 50)

With this disconnectedness the relation that should exist between man and his environment became that of conquering and over-exploitation of the environment. Due to the underlying philosophical idea, man became alienated from any vital connection with is environment or the natural world in such a way as not to see himself as a part of the ecology. This deep disconnect manifested in unappreciated relationship between science and cosmology with ethics and economics; this creates a negative impact on the economic system that currently guides our life. Deep ecology is a term coined by Arne Naess and represents a concern for any species with intrinsic value outside humans. Deep ecology captures environmental ethics that is not anthropocentric. While animal liberalists come under deep ecology, the term stretches to other forms of life that could or should be imbued with values. As Griffin pointed out, deep ecologists are concerned with the biosphere and all that have value within it (Griffin 70). Some deep ecologists reject any kind of value hierarchy that categorizes being as more or less valuable. This is known as egalitarian deep ecology. Whitehead's views are seen to be deeply ecological as he sees all shades of deep ecology – whether nonanthropocentric deep ecology or biospheric deep ecology or egalitarian deep ecology- as rooted in intuition. He however, rejects egalitarian deep ecology which brings hierarchy among beings in term of intrinsic values that are graded.

Deep ecology as a movement is an attempt to recognize the intrinsic value in nature as against the traditional position. It extends to the attempt to highlight and pursue our ethical obligations to other lives other than human on earth. In contrast to Deep Ecology, the ecology that only focuses on human life's value only is seen as shallow ecology. According to Cobb, deep ecology requires "a basic revision of traditional Western thinking toward the acceptance of the reality and intrinsic value of the natural world and the intimate interconnectedness of all things" (Cobb) It obligates us to preserve the ecosystem only if it serves some purpose for man. Deep ecologists want us to preserve nature for its own sake – what it is and not what it holds for man.

Naess has highlighted the principles of deep ecology movement which include the intrinsic value of the environment beyond its usefulness to man which implies some kind of biocentric equality; richness and diversity of life forms as value; vital needs of man as the only basis to reduce the richness and diversity; the importance of smaller population to the flourishing of human life, cultures and nonhuman life and the worsening and excessive interference with the non-human world. Others are change of policies to reflect in the economic, technological and ideological structures based on appreciation of life quality and not numbers. Appreciating life quality – situations of inherent values- should underscore the ideological changes and not just pursuit of higher standard of living. Lastly, emphasis is laid on the obligation for action on all who subscribe to the philosophy of the deep ecological movement. Further, this movement has three actions namely, the need to preserve the wilderness and biodiversity, the control of human population and lastly living on the planet with minimum damage to other life forms. Deep ecology is traced to the monism and pantheism of Spinoza considering their metaphysical foundation (McHenry 229). Monism is the view that all things are ultimately one that dissolves into a web of interconnections.

Whitehead's relevance to the ecological movement is still hinged on the deep interconnectedness of his philosophy. His organic view of nature provides a veritable worldview that can help man escape the crisis that is ahead. Its organicity holds the view that everything in nature – humans and plants inclusive – has an organic basis and is a part of an organic whole. This is such that what affects one will invariably affect the other as nature is integrated. Whitehead's doctrines of actual entities, prehension and panpsychism or panexperientialism, among others, portray the world as systemic and organic as against the bifurcation worldview in all its forms including atomism which foisted an individualistic mindset on social and moral philosophy and is responsible for the loss of the unity that Whitehead sought to restore. Panpsychism/panexperientialism emphasizes sentience up to the basic level of nature that makes nature alive and organic. The experience does not have to be necessarily conscious as humans have it. On the other hand, actual occasions/events form the core of realities and are experiential upward hierarchically as consciousness as experienced cannot emerge from dead and insentient matter of materialism. Whitehead speaks of environment that contains different kinds and levels of social order of actual occasions which forms nexus and different kinds of societies. As Leemon McHenry points out:

> Each society is an organism that is barbored within the environment of another larger society, which serves as an organism for another and so on. The special sciences such as physics, chemistry, biology, geology, astronomy study some layer of society or organisms and their environment -subatomic particles, atoms, molecules, cells, plants, animals, planets, galaxies, to the widest society of actual occasions…." (McHenry)

These actual occasions are processes of becoming and unification that make up reality and not bits of matter. Thus, the environment is integrated and filled with entities of different levels that are conscious and interdependent. The survival of smaller societies depends on the survival of larger societies that contain them. By extension, the Earth has to be sustained if lives in it are to be sustained.

Whitehead and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence has come to be a very important aspect of human life in the 21st century. AI is defined based on the thought processes/reasoning and behavioural standpoints (Russell and Norvig 4). It has become an essential part of the technology industry that helps to solve many challenges that confront humanity. It is said to have been properly lunched in 1956, but its foundation had been laid by various scientists with contributions from different fields of human endeavours such as linguistics, philosophy, psychology, mathematics, computer science and engineering, to mention a few. AI is also known as machine intelligence which contrasts with natural intelligence as displayed by humans. It sees computers and machines as intelligent agents that can display various concepts that usually and ordinarily are associated with humans such as action, intelligence, logic and consciousness among others. Herein lies the nexus between Philosophy and AI. AI studies and seeks to understand and build intelligent entities beyond humans – Homo sapiens. AI deals with entities such as computers that have human-level intelligence or even better. AI has found applicability in healthcare, military operations, automotive industry, finance and economics, government, auditing and video gaming.

The subject of Consciousness ranks very high in any discussion that borders on AI. There cannot be intelligence without consciousness. The relevant questions become, "Can machine act intelligently and thus be regarded as conscious?" Can a machine have mental states as humans do? These and more are the questions that engage AI developers/researchers including philosophers like Whitehead. The relevance of Whitehead to AI can be discerned in his ideas about perception, experience and consciousness which have been properly captured in the word, *Panexperiencialism*. Panexperientialism has been found relevant in understanding AI. This is because AI is more amenable to process-thinking than static-thinking in the sense that the subject matters/cognitive functions AI deals with such issues as perception, memory, consciousness, intelligence among others are processual rather than mechanistic subjects. This makes process philosophy relevant to the field of AI. Whitehead, no doubt, helps to clarify and bring out these issues to the fore thus bringing about attention to them leading to their development and exploration..

In defining consciousness, one will have to deal with experience which could either be conscious or unconscious. Consciousness is seen as a property of an experiencing subject. The problem of consciousness is at the centre of philosophy of mind of the classical period known as mind-body problem which Whitehead's postmodern ideas solved. There are three traditional parts of consciousness namely, sensitive (from senses), intellective (from thoughts) and affective (from feeling). Many phenomena such as time and causality are process-related. This inexorably led him to focus on the nonconscious such as feeling. This is the point Whitehead makes when he says:

> One implicit assumption of the philosophical tradition is repudiated. The assumption is that the basic elements of experience are to be described in terms of one, or all, of the three ingredients, consciousness, thought, sense-perception. The last term is used in the sense of "conscious perception in the mode of presentational immediacy (Whitehead, PR 36).

Much of Whitehead's philosophy is presented as a critique of the modern philosophical tradition which focused on thought and sense perception seen as fundamental modalities of consciousness. He discerns that the mistake springs from the association of experience with consciousness only. Herein lies the crux of the difference between panpsychism and panexperientialism. Whitehead rejected Modernists position which holds consciousness as exhaustive of all mental activities. To him, this is an attempt to over-value consciousness. This is because consciousness as held by Modernist obscures process. He did not accord same value to consciousness as the Modernists did.

Panexperientialism vs Pansychism in AI

Panexperientialism is the way Whitehead grappled with the subject of consciousness, which as has been mentioned, is foundational to the subject area of AI. In saying that "apart from the subjects, there is nothing" (Whiehead, PR 164). Whitehead thus rejected actuality without subjective experience. Panexperientialism is a doctrine that portrays the actual world as composed of creative, experiential and physical-mental events, a replacement of the vacuous entities of the classical period. It is a theory that derives from Whitehead's philosophy and means that fleeting momentary experience happens from occasions of experience (actual occasions) at the sub-atomic level of interaction up all through nature. From the sub-atomic level, through evolution, the momentary experience extends to more complex organic entities with human beings becoming self-conscious at the zenith. This

position is a reaction to supernaturalism or "appeal to a *deus ex machine* who was capable of rising superior to the difficulties of metaphysics" (Whitehead, SMW 156). Panexperientialism is seen as implying "all" things as "pan" suggests including aggregations of rock do have experience. David Ray Griffin defended Whitehead by pointing out that he implied all genuine individuals have experience (Griffin 58). These genuine individuals are only of two kinds: simple (such as quarks) and compound individuals built out of simpler ones. An example is an animal that is built out of cells. Compound individuals whose experience is built to the highest level from the experience are seen as genuine. The compound individual therefore differs in kind from the mere aggregation of individual. This finds expression in Whitehead's theory of societies and applicable to the idea of consciousness in Artificial Intelligence.

Panpsychism implies that all things are endowed with psyches or soul or mind which is an enduring entity. Etymologically, the Greek version means "all" and "soul": the doctrine that everything is psychic or has a psychic aspect, at least. It is the belief that everything is mental and psychical in nature. Panpsychism is known for attributing consciousness to experience and defines it in terms of consciousness and attribution of high-grade conscious mentality. Whitehead rejected the attribution of consciousness at the basic level, pointing out that what exists is basic sentience. To him, consciousness is not fundamental to experience unlike those who conceive consciousness – cognition- as part of inorganic nature. The determinant of consciousness is the intensity of mental pole or physical pole dominant in the experiencing actuality. Mental pole inclines to higher consciousness than physical pole. Experience is more of an uncognitive prehension and is not dependent on sensory organs.

Philosophy of organism of Whitehead conceives of nature as a continuum in which organic and inorganic systems are bound together as sentience and value lie at the base of basic units of experience – actual occasions. This holds the key to the full understanding of evolution from Whiteheadian standpoint: from low-grade sentience to high grade sentience of complicated organisms. This provides an ontological explanation as to how organic matter issued from lifeless matter and how consciousness came from organic life processes. Griffin posits that panexperientialism "holds that all individuals have experience, but that consciousness is a very high-level form of experience, enjoyed by relatively few individuals" (Griffin 59). To have experience is different from consciousness that implies thought. Science is known to have proven that there is experience down through the phylogenetic tree. The three experiments discussed earlier also confirm this. Primitive types of experience and rudimentary forms of decision-making are seen at the prokaryotic levels in Biology. Accordingly, even the previously conceived mechanistic terms are now proven to be organismic (Griffin 60).

Whitehead, doubtless contributed to the ontological foundations of the field of Artificial Intelligence that is set to be the basis of the 4th industrial revolution, even as it throws up further novelties. Event ontology is amenable to novelty and creativity by which new things erupt into existence. Basic sentience or experience underlies all reality at the subatomic level. As computers and robots are compounded, the basic sentience of the constituting entities grows as well thus making it possible for artificial intelligence artifacts and robots to behave intelligently. The research is still ongoing to answer those basic questions with regards to the field of the AI. The foregoing is the way Whitehead solves the classical mind-body problem and can be summarized as follows: the doctrine of the physical-mental experience and creative nature of event by which the physical aspect of event is not devoid of experience. Similarly, the idea of compound individuals based on phylogenetic

tree – from the lowest to the highest with increasing degrees of mentality, hence increasing capacity for deeper experience and self-determination.

Whiteheadian's Solution to the Problems of Modernism

Postmodernism is a reaction against a naïve and too much confidence reposed in progress, objective/scientific truth. It is a rejection of the autonomous individual who is sovereign. It is a mistrust of modernity in the West and rejects ultimate meaning or correspondence between science and the world. Objectivity is a ploy for power for the elite. Postmodernism dismantles objectivity thus leading to liberty/freedom in all spheres. It celebrates the formless, the subjective, spontaneous and non-traditional. It jettisons any concept of objectivity. Postmodernism has shades as is somewhat difficult to characterize. Rorty's version denied the reality of objective truth. David Ray Griffin brings on what he calls *constructive postmodernism* which is a movement beyond modernity. It serves as the foundation of the New Age philosophy. Derida's postmodernism is *deconstructive* as to him, truth does not exist.

According to postmodernism, our views of the nature of reality are informed by our social constructs. Scientific knowledge is seen to be a reflection of the dominant ideologies of dominant social class. Griffin's postmodernism sees modernity as originating from the 17th and 18th centuries. The modernity's implication or emphasis includes individualism, anthropocentricism, mechanization, consumerism, nationalism and militarism. The individual is autonomous and lacks intrinsic connection or relation to others in line with the view that matter is hard, impenetrable and not related. Griffin, following Whitehead, argues that following the developments in in quantum mechanics, biology and thermodynamics, the modern paradigm had outlived its usefulness. This is at the heart of Whitehead's philosophy.

Whitehead sounded the death knell to modern epoch when he believed the crux of the essay to be the denial that consciousness is a stuff which is essentially different from the stuff of which the physical world is composed. It was William James that opined that denial. Two developments, to Whitehead, brought an end to over 250 years period in which modernism reigned supreme (Whitehead, SMW 143). They are the challenge new physics posed to scientific materialism and secondly, the inauguration of a new age of philosophy by William James' challenge to Cartesian dualism just as Descartes inaugurated the modern era with his Dualism. Modernism equates reality with objects of sensory perception thus excluding the possibility of causality, the bedrock of science and the possibility of the reality of God.

Whitehead's philosophy was intent on uniting James' rejection of dualism with the philosophical implications of relativity and quantum physics, which task is postmodern in nature, even though he never used the term. Modernity equated the real with objects of sensory perception, leaving out the possibility of causality and the reality of God. This leads to relativism and nihilism. Whiteheadianism is shown by Cobb to be postmodern on these three reasons namely Whitehead's epistemology rejected the primacy of sense perception; his ontology replaces material substance with events that have intrinsic value and are relational and his ideas developed due to his reflections on the problems of modern science. Another reason Whitehead's philosophy is regarded as postmodern is because it came about as a result of the reflections on the problems of modern science orchestrated the revisional ideas of his philosophy. By his postmodernism, Whitehead envisions a science that will overcome the mechanistic, reductionist and behaviourist approaches of modernism.

Postmodernism brings to the fore the connection between hard fact and value. Being postmodern, Whitehead was a radical empiricist in the order of William James having rejected sensationalist view of perception in its entirety. His epistemology sought to discredit and deconstruct sensory perception. He accused Hume and many other subsequent philosophers of operating only on the perception in the mode of presentational efficacy, pointing out that there exists a more fundamental mode from which the first derives. He calls it "perception in the mode of causal efficacy", which is nonsensory but cognitive. He regards sensory perception as a hybrid of both modes but however holds the later as more fundamental and primary than the former. As Griffin points out:

> In this more fundamental mode, we directly perceive other actualities as exerting causal efficacy upon us – which explains why we know that other actualities exist and that causation is more than Humean constant conjunction (Griffin 10)

Prehension is an example of the mode of causal efficacy – direct apprehension. Through it, we have certain experiences that are nonsensory. It is the prehensions of previous moments that give credence to the idea of time. The solution to the intractable problems of modernity with its mechanistic view of nature and the sensationalist view of perception, Whitehead came up with event ontology. Through the mechanistic conception, nature is seen to be ultimately made up of units/substances that are devoid of all experience, intrinsic value, internal purpose and relations. Event ontology portrays nature as otherwise having events, not units/substances that have experience, value, freedom and internal purpose.

Whitehead's postmodernism solves the problem of normative values which deals with the issues of justice, beauty, truth etc. Modernity, in rejecting the appeal to authority, as done by Hume and Hutcheson, dealt a death blow to norms. Whitehead rejected this. He reactivates norms by means of cognition which issues from the reality of nonsensory perception by which we have awareness. Thus, norms are genuine. By being cognitive, norms can therefore be true, false or somewhere in between (Griffin 11). If norms are denied, there would be no basis for socio-political-cultural life.

Conclusion

Whitehead's ideas find applicability in a wide range of areas of human interest presently as noted in this work and also in the future. Event ontology/Process philosophy is an appropriate philosophy of life capturing science and values thus overcoming dead science in its limitations. Process philosophy provides a more comprehensive way of looking at the nature of reality at its deeper recesses. In a world suffused with the dualities of quantities/qualities, material/spiritual, economic/political, wave/particle, yin/yang, motion/rest, existence/non-existence, rich/poor, Whitehead's event ontology provides an *entitative* view of nature that is imbued with dynamism, freedom, change, development and not substance that is hard, impenetrable, stultified and static, blurring the differences and pointing to an Organism that is integrated, whole, free but interconnected.

The effect of such view cannot be overemphasized as it will cure all dichotomies and differences that have led to so many conflicts. Opposites would be transcended while unity would be attained. The principle of complementarity would further be embrace making for the much desired peace in today's world. The principle of indeterminacy that holds between the dualities would lead to novelties. Herein lies the significance of this study. To be reiterated is the concomitant ecological view of event ontology capable of saving the world

from the global environmental crisis and its myriad effects. The global environmental crisis speaks to the issues of the deteriorating or depletion of the biosphere and the over-exploitation of the Earth's resources that have led to the uninhabitability of the Earth for human life. Novelties and possibilities of the future are to be expected and embraced with open arms. The 21st century has witnessed new vistas and a flurry of new ideas in science and technology including new diseases such as the novel Coronavirus also known as COVID-19. Event ontology opens us up to possibilities of the future thus making for advancement and progress.

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FAMILY CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING OF MARRIED FEMALE TEACHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN UYO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between family conflict resolution strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Three research questions and three corresponding hypotheses guided the study. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 1,074 married female teachers in fourteen public junior secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select a sample of 200 married female teachers used for the study. Two researcher-made instruments entitled "Family Conflict Resolution Strategies Questionnaire" (FCRSQ) and "Emotional Wellbeing Questionnaire for Married Female Teachers" (EWQMFT) were used for data collection. The instruments were face validated while the internal consistency reliability of the instruments were established and reliability coefficients of 0.73 and 0.70 were obtained for FCRSQ and EWQFMT respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics was used to answer the research questions and also test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Results showed that there is significant positive relationship between spousal communication strategies, spousal negotiation strategies, support-seeking behaviours and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Based on the findings of the study, three recommendations were made among which is that schools in Akwa Ibom State should offer regular training programmes for married female teachers that focus on improving communication and negotiation strategies with their spouses.

Keywords: Family, Conflict, Emotional, Wellbeing, Female, Teachers

Introduction

The emotional wellbeing of married female teachers plays a crucial role in their overall life satisfaction, job performance, and work-life balance. In particular, family-related stressors such as conflict within the family setting may significantly impact the emotional health of these teachers. The importance of emotional wellbeing in teachers cannot be overemphasized, as it is intertwined with various aspects of their professional and personal lives. The resolution of family conflicts, which is often a common source of stress, becomes an essential skill for maintaining emotional wellbeing. Emotional wellbeing refers to an individual's emotional and psychological state, encompassing feelings of happiness, satisfaction, and overall mental health (Ryff & Singer, 2016). For married female teachers, emotional wellbeing plays a significant role in their ability to handle stress, perform well at

work, and maintain a healthy family life. Emotional wellbeing is often shaped by a variety of factors, including family dynamics, social support systems, personal self-efficacy, and workplace conditions (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In a school environment, emotional wellbeing is critical for teachers, as it directly influences their interactions with students, colleagues, and even their own children.

For married female teachers, the stress of balancing professional responsibilities and family life can affect their emotional wellbeing. Female teachers often serve as caregivers and role models, and when family conflicts arise, they may experience a drop in their emotional wellbeing. This can lead to burnout, anxiety, and even depression (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). Furthermore, emotional distress can hinder their ability to perform at their best in the classroom, reduce job satisfaction, and even lead to absenteeism (Huang & Shi, 2016). Emotional wellbeing is, therefore, a critical aspect of a teacher's job performance and overall life satisfaction, which is why understanding its sources and impact is vital.

Family conflicts are one of the major stressors in the lives of married female teachers. These conflicts may arise from financial difficulties, parenting disagreements, or work-life balance issues. Research has shown that unresolved family conflicts negatively affect emotional wellbeing, leading to increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Cohen & Wills, 2015). Married female teachers may find themselves caught in the middle of multiple roles such as caretaker, professional, and spouse resulting in emotional strain. Effective family conflict resolution strategies, however, can help mitigate the negative effects of family conflict, thus promoting better emotional wellbeing among married female teachers in particular. Family conflict resolution involves managing disagreements or differences in opinion between family members in ways that are constructive rather than destructive. The way conflicts are handled can either strengthen family relationships or lead to emotional turmoil. For married female teachers, the ability to resolve conflicts in a healthy manner ensures that they do not carry emotional burdens into their professional lives. This will enable them to focus on their job responsibilities and maintain positive relationships at work (Adebayo & Ogunyemi, 2021).

Conflict resolution strategies vary widely, but certain approaches have proven to be effective in improving family dynamics and reducing emotional distress. In the context of this study, three family conflict resolution strategies namely communication, negotiation, and support-seeking behaviour and their potential impact on married female teachers' emotional wellbeing are investigated. By encouraging honest and empathetic dialogue, both partners can express their concerns, frustrations, and desires without fear of judgement or dismissal. When applied to the family context, effective communication can alleviate misunderstandings and pave the way for finding common ground. For married female teachers, improving communication in the home can lead to lower levels of anxiety and greater emotional stability, as they feel heard and understood in both their personal and professional lives.

Family conflict resolution also involves the ability to negotiate and make compromises. When family members have opposing views or desires, it is crucial to find a middle ground. Negotiation entails discussing solutions and being open to trade-offs which satisfy both parties. Married female teachers, who juggle career and family demands, can use negotiation to establish a balance between their professional responsibilities and family obligations. When family conflict is resolved through negotiation, married female teachers are more likely to feel a sense of control over their personal and professional lives. This feeling contributes to enhanced emotional wellbeing.

Support-seeking behaviour is another crucial strategy in resolving family conflicts. Seeking emotional, informational, or instrumental support from others can help alleviate the stress associated with family disagreements. For married female teachers, support can come from various sources, including extended family members, friends, or professional counsellors. By relying on external support, married female teachers can gain new perspectives on their problems, which may help them approach family conflicts in a more constructive manner. In turn, this can lead to reduced feelings of isolation, lower stress levels, and improved emotional wellbeing. Based on the foregoing therefore, the study of the relationship between family conflict resolution strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State became imperative in view of the fact that the ability to resolve family conflicts effectively has a direct impact on the professional lives of married female teachers. It is believed that married female teachers who experience high levels of emotional wellbeing are more likely to perform well in their roles, demonstrate higher job satisfaction, and maintain positive relationships with students and colleagues. When family conflicts are unresolved or poorly managed, the emotional strain can spill over into their work lives, leading to increased absenteeism, burnout, and diminished performance. Effective family conflict resolution strategies can help married female teachers balance their professional and personal lives. When family stressors are alleviated, teachers are able to approach their job with greater focus, energy, and enthusiasm. Furthermore, resolving conflicts in a healthy manner fosters a sense of personal growth and emotional control, which contributes to improved job satisfaction and reduced job-related stress. Moreover, when married female teachers experience emotional wellbeing, they are more likely to form strong, supportive relationships with their colleagues and students. This creates a positive work environment where they are motivated to contribute their best to the educational institution where they work thereby leading to improved school performance and students' outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

The well-being of married female teachers in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, is increasingly becoming a matter of concern. Female teachers, particularly those who are married, often face the dual burden of managing their professional responsibilities and their family roles. This balancing act, which includes fulfilling teaching duties while managing household chores, child-rearing, and maintaining spousal relationships, can lead to significant emotional stress and diminished well-being. These challenges can be exacerbated by societal expectations and traditional gender roles that place primary caregiving responsibilities on women.

In particular, family conflict, especially within marital relationships, can severely impact the emotional health of married female teachers. Conflicts in the home environment, whether related to finances, child-rearing, or other marital issues can create high levels of stress, leading to poor emotional well-being, which in turn affects both their personal lives and professional performance. The unresolved stress and emotional strain from family conflicts can reduce the effectiveness married female teachers in the classroom, lower their job satisfaction, and hinder their overall quality of life. Therefore, understanding the strategies employed by married female teachers in addressing family conflicts, as well as their impact on emotional wellbeing is crucial for improving their work-life balance and general life satisfaction. This study sought to explore the family conflict resolution strategies

employed by married female teachers and how they are related to their emotional wellbeing, with a focus on Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between family conflict resolution strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. In specific terms, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Find out the relationship between spousal communication strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools.
2. Determine the relationship between spousal negotiation strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools.
3. Ascertain the relationship between support-seeking behaviour and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between spousal communication strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools?
2. What is the relationship between spousal negotiation strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools?
3. What is the relationship between support-seeking behaviour and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between spousal communication strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools.
2. There is no significant relationship between spousal negotiation strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools.
3. There is no significant relationship between support-seeking behaviour and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools.

Scope of the Study

The study investigated the relationship between family conflict resolution strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools. Family conflict resolution strategies investigated in this study were spousal communication strategies, spousal negotiation strategies and support-seeking behaviour and they served as the independent variables while emotional wellbeing served as the dependent variable. Only married female teachers in public junior secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria were studied.

Theoretical Literature

Family Systems Theory by Murray Bowen (1960s): Family Systems Theory, developed by Murray Bowen in 1960s, posits that families are emotional units where members are interconnected, and an individual's behaviour is influenced by the family system. It focuses

on the roles that each family member plays and how the family dynamic as a whole influences individual behaviours and emotional health. Conflict within the family can arise due to unbalanced emotional systems, leading to stress and emotional distress for individual members. Family Systems Theory focuses on the idea that the family is an emotional unit and that individuals within the family cannot be understood in isolation. The emotional dynamics of the family deeply influence individual behaviour and emotional health.

The relationship between the Family Systems Theory and this present study can be explained as thus: For married female teachers, the dynamics within the family such as conflict between spouses, in-laws, or children can significantly influence their emotional wellbeing. According to Family Systems Theory, conflict resolution strategies within the family system will affect how a teacher deals with emotional strain and stress. If family conflict is unresolved, it may spill over into their professional lives, affecting their teaching effectiveness, stress levels, and emotional wellbeing. The theory can help explain how a female teacher's role in the family influences her capacity to manage emotional challenges and work-life balance.

Role Theory by George Herbert Mead (1930s)

Role Theory, particularly as applied to gender studies, focuses on the roles that individuals are expected to fulfil in society and how these roles impact behaviour and emotional wellbeing. In the context of married female teachers, this theory examines the roles they are expected to play within the family (for example, mother, wife) and their professional role as educators. The theory posits that conflict can arise when there are role conflicts or role overloads, leading to stress and emotional distress.

The relationship between the Role Theory and this present study can be explained as thus: For married female teachers, Role Theory helps explain how the expectations associated with their family roles (for example, caregiving, managing household) and professional roles (e.g., being an effective educator) can create conflict and affect emotional wellbeing. If a female teacher is expected to excel in both family and professional domains, the resulting role strain can lead to emotional exhaustion, stress, and burnout. Understanding these role expectations and the associated conflicts can guide conflict resolution strategies to better balance family life, work, and emotional wellbeing.

Empirical Literature

Smith and Walker (2021) investigated the role of communication in marital satisfaction and emotional well-being of married female teachers using 100 married female teachers from urban high schools, selected using stratified random sampling. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and multiple regression analysis were used for data analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that effective communication with spouses was correlated with lower levels of stress and higher levels of happiness among female teachers. The authors further explained that positive communication in marital relationships enhances emotional well-being and marital satisfaction. A study entitled spousal communication and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in urban settings was carried out by Adebayo and Ogunyemi (2021). Purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 200 married female teachers from urban schools used for the study. Spousal Communication Scale (SCS) and Emotional Wellbeing Scale (EWS) were used for data collection. The study found a significant positive relationship between open spousal communication and the emotional wellbeing of married female teachers. Those who

reported high levels of communication with their spouses had better emotional health and lower stress levels. Conversely, poor communication was linked to increased anxiety and depression.

A similar study was carried out by Okonkwo and Nwogu (2020) on spousal communication and emotional distress among married female teachers in Anambra State, Nigeria. Four hundred and thirty married female teachers in secondary schools were selected for the study via stratified random sampling technique. Communication Satisfaction Scale (CSS) and Emotional Distress Inventory (EDI) were used for data collection while Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) were used for data analysis. The study indicated that poor communication in marriage was associated with higher emotional distress. Female teachers in unhappy marriages reported feeling emotionally drained and overwhelmed, which negatively affected their work-life balance and job performance.

Johnson and Clarke (2019) investigated the impact of teacher-parent communication on emotional well-being of married female teachers. A sample of 120 married female teachers working in primary schools was selected for the study using purposive sampling procedure. ANOVA and thematic analysis of interview responses were used for data analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that positive communication with parents about students' progress significantly reduced stress and enhanced emotional stability in married female teachers. Smith and Johnson (2020) investigated the role of spousal negotiation strategies in emotional well-being among married female teachers using a sample of 200 married female teachers from three urban schools selected via stratified random sampling technique. Self-report questionnaire including sections on negotiation styles (collaborative, avoidant, competitive) and emotional well-being (using the Emotional Well-Being Scale) were used for data collection. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used for data analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The study found a positive correlation between collaborative negotiation strategies and improved emotional well-being. More so, teachers who used avoidant strategies showed lower levels of emotional well-being.

In a similar study, Jackson and Davis (2021) found that successful negotiation between work and home responsibilities was strongly associated with higher emotional well-being. According to the authors, teachers who successfully negotiated flexible work hours experienced less emotional fatigue and more work-life satisfaction. The study was conducted with a sample of 85 married female teachers from suburban schools selected using purposive sampling method. Multiple regression analysis was used for data analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

Klein and Peterson (2019) carried out a study aimed at negotiating family and career while emphasizing emotional well-being among female educators. A sample of 130 married female teachers was selected for the study via simple random sampling method. Pearson correlation and regression analysis were used for data analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that teachers who were able to negotiate family obligations and career demands felt more emotionally fulfilled. More so, it was found that better work-family negotiation strategies correlated with better mental health and fewer feelings of burnout. Jackson and Davis (2021) studied the relationship between negotiation strategies and work-life balance among married female educator using a sample of 180 married female teachers across different education levels. The participants were selected using convenience sampling method. Work-life balance inventory, marital communication scales, and a well-being index were used for data collection. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the

relationship between negotiation strategies and work-life balance. The study found that effective negotiation strategies positively influenced teachers' work-life balance and emotional well-being, reducing burnout and increasing job satisfaction.

Similarly, King and Lee (2016) studied the role of negotiation skills in managing stress and mental health of married female teachers. A sample of 100 married female teachers from middle schools was selected for the study using snowball sampling method. Negotiation skills assessment tool and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) were used for data collection while Pearson Product Moment Correlation and regression analysis statistics were used for data analysis at 0.05 level of significance. It was revealed that teachers with higher negotiation skills experienced lower levels of stress and better mental health, emphasizing the importance of communication in managing emotional well-being.

Carter and Miller (2020) investigated the relationship between support-seeking behaviours and emotional well-being in married female teachers. A sample of 180 married female teachers from rural schools was selected for the study using purposive sampling method. Only married female teachers with at least five years of teaching experience were studied. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the relationships between support-seeking behaviours and emotional well-being. The study found that higher levels of support-seeking behaviour, especially from family members, were linked to better emotional well-being. Teachers who sought help were more emotionally stable. Smith and Johnson (2018) studied social support and emotional well-being among female teachers.

This study included 200 female teachers from public schools in a mid-sized city. A random sampling method was used to ensure a representative sample. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used to assess the relationship between social support and emotional well-being. Results indicated that emotional support from family and colleagues significantly enhanced emotional well-being, while lack of support was linked to increased stress and emotional distress.

Miller and Roberts (2021) studied the role of social support in the emotional health of female educators. A sample of 220 female teachers was selected for the study using convenience sampling method. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Pearson correlation were used to analyze the data at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that teachers who engaged in support-seeking behaviours, both at work and in their personal lives, reported significantly higher levels of emotional well-being compared to those who did not.

Larson and Foster (2023) found that teachers who engaged in frequent support-seeking behaviours were less likely to experience emotional distress, especially when support was from close family members. The study was conducted to investigate the relationship between teacher support-seeking and emotional distress in married female teachers. The study used a sample of 400 married female teachers from across different regions of the country selected with a cluster sampling technique. Path analysis was employed to examine the pathways through which support-seeking behaviours affect emotional distress. From the foregoing therefore, the researchers observed that none of the past studies reviewed investigated the entire independent variables (spousal communication strategies, spousal negotiation strategies and support-seeking behaviours) and dependent variable (emotional wellbeing of married female teachers) which the present study investigated. In addition, to the best of the researchers' knowledge no empirical research has been carried out on the relationship between family conflict resolution strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools in Uyo Local

Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Thus this present study was carried out to fill the existing gap as observed in the past empirical studies reviewed.

Research Design
Correlational design was adopted for the study. A correlational research design is useful in determining whether two or more variables are related (Wali, 2002). Thus a correlational research design is more suitable for this study because the researcher investigated the relationship between family conflict resolution strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools in Uyo LGA of Akwa Ibom State.

Population of the Study
The population of the study consisted of one thousand and seventy four married female teachers in fourteen public junior secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. This figure was obtained from Uyo Local Government Education Authority (2025).

Sample and Sampling Technique
Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select a sample of 200 married female teachers in public junior secondary schools in Uyo LGA of Akwa Ibom State. In the first place, purposive sampling technique was used to identify married female teachers. Simple random sampling technique was used to select ten schools out of the fourteen schools in the study area. Thereafter, proportional stratified random sampling procedure was used to select 15% of married female teachers from each of the ten public junior secondary schools selected for the study.

Research Instrument
Two researcher-made instruments entitled "Family Conflict Resolution Strategies Questionnaire" (FCRSQ) and "Emotional Wellbeing Questionnaire for Married Female Teachers" (EWQMFT) were used for data collection. FCRSQ consisted of eighteen items. Six items measured each of spousal communication strategies, spousal negotiation strategies and support-seeking behaviour. The second instrument (EWQMFT) consisted of twenty items which measured emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in public junior secondary schools in Uyo LGA of Akwa Ibom State. The items contained in the two instruments were responded to on a four-point rating scale namely Strongly (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point.

Validation of the Instrument
Face validity of the instruments was carried out by three (3) experts. Two experts in Department of Guidance and Counselling and one from the Department of Psychological Foundations of Education, Faculty of Education, University of Uyo. The validation of the instruments was done to ensure that the instruments measured what they claimed to measure. In all, the three experts were requested to read through the instruments, vet the items for clarity, relevance and suitability for the study. The inputs from the experts were in-cooperated into the final draft of the instruments.

Reliability of the Instrument
To determine the internal consistency reliability of the instruments, the researcher randomly selected 25 married female teachers who were part of the population but not part of the study sample to respond to the instruments. Data generated were subjected to analysis

using Cronbach alpha statistics and reliability coefficients of 0.73 and 0.70 were obtained for FCRS and EWQFMT respectively.

Method of Data Collection
The researchers with the help of two well briefed research assistants administered the instruments to the selected respondents after seeking permission from the respective authorities through a letter of introduction from the researchers' institution to carry out the study. Permission obtained from the respective authorities allowed the participants to respond to the items in the questionnaires.

Method of Data Analysis
Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic was used to answer the research questions and also test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Data were subjected to analysis using Social Science Statistical Package (SPSS) version 22.0.

Results

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation between spousal communication strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area

Variables	n	r-value	p-value	Remark
Spousal Communication (X)				
	200	.71	.000	Sig.
Emotional Wellbeing (Y)				

p<.05

The result in Table 1 shows a correlation coefficient value of .71. This implies that there is a high positive relationship between spousal communication strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools**.** This means that as the scores of most of the married female teachers in secondary school on spousal communication strategies increase, there is a corresponding increase in their emotional wellbeing scores and vice versa. More so, the test of corresponding hypothesis one reveals that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is statistically significant at .05 level of significance. Thus, there is significant relationship between spousal communication strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area.

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation between spousal negotiation strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area

Variables	n	r-value	p-value	Remark
Spousal Negotiation (X)				
	200	.62	.000	Sig.
Emotional Wellbeing (Y)				

p<.05

The result in Table 2 shows a correlation coefficient value of .62. This implies that there is a moderate positive relationship between spousal negotiation strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools. This means that as the scores of most of the married female teachers in secondary school on spousal negotiation strategies increase, there is a corresponding increase in their emotional wellbeing scores and vice versa. More so, the test of corresponding hypothesis two reveals that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is statistically significant at .05 level of significance. Thus, there is significant relationship between spousal negotiation strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area.

Table 3: Pearson product moment correlation between support-seeking behaviour and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area

Variables	n	r-value	p-value	Remark
Support-Seeking Behaviour (X)				
	200	.74	.001	Sig.
Emotional Wellbeing (Y)				

p<.05

The result in Table 3 shows a correlation coefficient value of .74. This implies that there is a high positive relationship between support-seeking behaviour and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools. This means that as the scores of most of the married female teachers in secondary school on support-seeking behaviour increase, there is a corresponding increase in their emotional wellbeing scores and vice versa. More so, the test of corresponding hypothesis three reveals that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is statistically significant at .05 level of significance. Thus, there is significant relationship between support-seeking behaviour and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area.

Discussion of Findings
Analysis of data on research question one showed that there is a significant positive relationship between spousal communication strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools. This means that effective communication within a marriage is fundamental to emotional health. When married female teachers employ good communication strategies with their spouses, they are more likely to express their thoughts, emotions, and concerns clearly and constructively. This open line of communication helps to resolve conflicts, reduce misunderstandings, and foster emotional intimacy.

This finding could also be explained based on the fact that when couples communicate well, they are more likely to address issues promptly, which reduces the emotional stress that can come from unresolved conflicts. Effective communication allows for better emotional support from the spouse, which can significantly improve the emotional well-being of the individual. Good communication helps in managing work and family life more efficiently, leading to less stress and greater emotional balance for the married female teacher. Clear and honest communication builds trust, which is crucial for emotional security in a marriage. This present finding is in agreement with Okonkwo and

Nwogu (2020), Adebayo and Ogunyemi (2021) as well as Smith and Walker (2021) who in their study revealed that study revealed that effective communication with spouses was correlated with lower levels of stress and higher levels of happiness among female teachers.

Analysis of data on research question two showed that there is a significant positive relationship between spousal communication strategies and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools. Spousal negotiation strategies refer to the ways in which partners negotiate and make decisions together, especially in situations of disagreement or differing priorities. A positive relationship suggests that when spouses are able to negotiate effectively and fairly, it promotes emotional well-being. This could involve compromises, joint decision-making, and mutual respect during disagreements.

More so, successful negotiation means that both partners have a voice in family and personal decisions, which can lead to a greater sense of fairness and satisfaction in the relationship. Effective negotiation skills help de-escalate tensions and reduce emotional strain. A partner who is able to listen and engage in constructive dialogue is less likely to contribute to emotional distress. Through negotiation, a female teacher can ensure her spouse respects her personal and professional needs, giving her more autonomy while also feeling supported in her decisions. When both partners feel they have equal say in negotiations, it fosters a sense of balance and equity, which can positively affect emotional well-being. This present finding supports Smith and Johnson (2020), Jackson and Davis (2021) as well as Klein and Peterson (2019) who in their study reported that better work-family negotiation strategies correlated with better mental health and fewer feelings of burnout.

Analysis of data on research question three showed that there is a significant positive relationship between support-seeking behaviour and emotional wellbeing of married female teachers in secondary schools. Support-seeking behaviour refers to the act of actively seeking help or emotional support from others, such as from a spouse, family members, or friends, when facing stress or emotional difficulties. This finding suggests that married female teachers who actively seek support when needed experience better emotional well-being. Seeking support can help individuals manage stress by providing a safe space to express their emotions, which improves their emotional regulation.

More so, having strong social support networks, including from a spouse, reduces feelings of isolation, which is vital for emotional well-being. Support-seeking is an effective coping strategy, especially for women who may juggle the demands of work and family. When they can turn to their spouse or others for help, it lessens the burden on their mental health. When a person seeks support, it often leads to validation of their feelings and concerns. This reassurance can reduce anxiety and improve emotional stability. This present finding supports Carter and Miller (2020), Smith and Johnson (2018) as well as Larson and Foster (2023) who earlier found that teachers who engaged in frequent support-seeking behaviours were less likely to experience emotional distress, especially when support was from close family members.

Conclusion

The study has revealed significant positive relationship between various family conflict resolution strategies and the emotional well-being of married female teachers in secondary schools. Specifically, spousal communication strategies, spousal negotiation strategies, and support-seeking behaviour all play critical roles in enhancing emotional well-being. These findings highlight the importance of effective communication and negotiation within marital relationships, as well as the value of seeking support when facing emotional challenges.

Married female teachers who utilize positive communication strategies and engage in constructive negotiations with their spouses are more likely to experience higher emotional well-being. Furthermore, seeking emotional support from others, whether from spouses or external sources, significantly contributes to their overall mental and emotional health.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings and conclusion of the study:

1. Schools in Akwa Ibom State should offer regular training programmes for married female teachers that focus on improving communication and negotiation strategies with their spouses. Such programmes can foster healthier relationships and positively impact teachers' emotional well-being.
2. School management and teacher unions in Nigeria and particularly Akwa Ibom State should create support systems that encourage teachers to seek emotional support, whether from colleagues, mentors, or family members. This will help alleviate stress and emotional challenges that come with balancing work and home life.
3. Educational institutions in Nigeria should include emotional well-being as a key component in professional development programmes for teachers. Training that emphasizes emotional intelligence, stress management, and self-care can empower teachers to better manage both their professional and personal lives.

Implications for Counselling

Since spousal communication strategies are positively correlated with emotional well-being, counsellors can focus on helping individuals and married couples develop stronger communication skills. This may involve teaching techniques for active listening, expressing emotions clearly, and fostering an environment of openness and trust in the marriage. By improving these communication skills, married female teachers can handle marital conflict and emotional challenges more effectively, leading to better emotional health. More so, the study emphasizes the importance of spousal negotiation strategies, suggesting that when married couples engage in constructive negotiations, they experience greater emotional well-being. Counsellors can guide married female teachers on how to approach negotiations with their spouses, teaching them how to handle disagreements and make decisions collaboratively. They can also work on conflict resolution strategies that reduce the potential for emotional distress and foster mutual respect.

Seeking support from others, whether from a spouse or external sources, was shown to be a significant contributor to emotional well-being. The implication of this finding is that counsellors can work with married female teachers to help them understand the importance of reaching out for support, whether it is through their spouse, friends, family, or even professional help. They can also help these teachers identify when and how to seek support, ensuring that they do not feel isolated in their struggles. Additionally, creating a supportive network of peers who understand the pressures faced in both teaching and family life could be beneficial. Hence, counselling becomes imperative so that married female teachers can significantly improve their family life and their ability to manage school responsibilities. The positive emotional impact on their relationships will likely reduce stress, enhance work-life balance, and increase overall job satisfaction, creating a healthier and more productive life both at home and in the classroom. These improvements are likely to have ripple effects, positively influencing their families, students, and colleagues as well.

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FAMILY CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES QUESTIONNAIRE (FCRSQ)

Instruction: Please, indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the items by ticking (√) against any of the response options below.

SA = Strongly Agree
A = Agree
D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree

S/N	Spousal Communication Strategies	SA	A	D	SD
1.	My spouse and I regularly set aside time to talk about our feelings and emotions.				
2.	During tense conversations, we maintain a calm tone and avoid raising our voices.				
3.	My spouse and I make an effort to clarify misunderstandings by asking follow-up questions.				
4.	We share both positive and negative feedback with each other in a respectful manner.				
5.	I feel comfortable expressing my desires to my spouse without fear of judgement.				
6.	My spouse and I make a conscious effort to listen actively to each other during conversations.				
	Spousal Negotiation Strategies				
7.	Using compromise in negotiations helps maintain a balanced and healthy relationship.				
8.	My spouse and I avoid using aggressive language during negotiations.				
9.	Negotiations should prioritize finding win-win solutions that satisfy both partners.				
10.	It is sometimes better to give in to one's spouse's demands to avoid conflict, even if it isn't fully fair.				
11.	Negotiating with one's spouse is easier when both partners show empathy towards each other's needs.				
12.	The use of humor can defuse tension and improve the negotiation process.				
	Support-Seeking Behaviours				
13.	I often seek professional support when faced with difficulties.				
14.	I am open to receiving support from friends, family, or colleagues.				
15.	When I face a challenge, I feel better after talking to someone who understands my situation.				
16.	When I need advice or guidance, I prefer to talk to close friends.				
17.	I feel comfortable asking for help when I'm struggling with something.				
18.	When I have problems, I usually try to solve them on my own before seeking assistance.				

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MARRIED FEMALE TEACHERS' (EWQMFT)

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1.	I feel emotionally supported by my spouse in managing my teaching responsibilities.				
2.	I receive adequate emotional support from my colleagues at school.				

3.	My spouse understands the emotional demands of my teaching job.				
4.	I am able to find time for self-care despite my work and family commitments.				
5.	I feel that my emotional needs are prioritized by my family.				
6.	I feel satisfied with the balance I have between my career and personal life.				
7.	My spouse helps with managing household responsibilities when I feel overwhelmed.				
8.	I feel confident in my ability to handle emotional challenges at work.				
9.	I believe that being a teacher enhances my emotional well-being.				
10.	My family helps me recharge emotionally after work.				
11.	I have learned effective coping strategies for handling the emotional demands of my job.				
12.	My emotional health is supported by engaging in activities outside of work and family life.				
13.	I am satisfied with the emotional connections I have at both work and home.				
14.	I feel that my emotional well-being has improved since becoming a teacher.				
15.	I feel confident in handling my emotions.				
16.	I am able to cope with stress in a healthy way.				
17.	I am able to manage my anxiety effectively.				
18.	I feel that I am in control of my emotions.				
19.	I find it easy to relax and unwind.				
20.	I am able to stay calm under pressure.				

INSECURITY AND ITS ATTENDANT EFFECTS IN NIGERIA: A PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract
Insecurity in Nigeria is at the front burner in the national discourse, and has escalated into a critical national concern, manifesting in various forms such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and ethno-religious conflicts. This pervasive issue of insecurity not only threatens the safety and stability of individuals and communities but also hampers economic growth and development. Understanding insecurity in Nigeria requires a multidimensional approach that considers its historical, socio-political, and economic contexts. This article aims to dissect the complexities of insecurity in Nigeria by integrating philosophical perspectives. By doing so, it seeks to uncover the root causes of insecurity, its impact on the societal fabric, and potential pathways for fostering a more secure and just society. Through critical examination and philosophical discourse, this article aspires to contribute to the ongoing discuss to understand and address the pressing issues of insecurity in Nigeria. The paper argues that insecurity is not merely a physical phenomenon but also an ontological one. This study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the impacts of insecurity and inform strategies for addressing it.

Keywords: Insecurity, Nigeria, Philosophical perspective, Terrorism, Governance, Politics

Introduction
The concept of insecurity in Nigeria is a pervasive issue that has profound implications for the society at large. The pervasiveness of insecurity in the country has not only threatened the lives and properties of its citizens but has also eroded trust in government institutions, destabilized communities, and hindered socio-economic development. Nigeria is a nation that is blessed with vast human and natural resources and potential, but has been plagued by the hydra-headed monster of insecurity. Insecurity has become a major concern, with the country facing various challenges such as terrorism, kidnappings, banditry, etc. Insecurity remains a pressing concern in Nigeria, with far-reaching implications for the nation's social fabric, economic development, and political stability. This scourge has ravaged the country, leaving in its wake a trail of destruction, fear, and despair.

At the heart of Nigeria's security challenges lies a complex interplay of historical, political, social, and economic factors. Years of colonial rule, post-independence struggles, ethno-religious tensions, economic disparities, and governance failures have contributed to the pervasive sense of insecurity across the country. This article seeks to explore the multifaceted nature of insecurity in Nigeria through a philosophical lens, aiming to unravel the underlying causes and consequences of this phenomenon. Moreover, a philosophical perspective allows us to explore the interconnectedness of various socio-political, economic, and cultural factors that drive insecurity in Nigeria. As philosophers, it is essential to examine the concept of insecurity and its effects on the Nigerian society, seeking answers to the fundamental questions of existence, human nature, and the quest for peace.

While the physical consequences of insecurity are evident, its philosophical dimensions remain largely unexplored. This article seeks to fill this gap by examining insecurity in Nigeria from a philosophical perspective. By drawing on existential, phenomenological, and ethical theories, this study will illuminate the complex nature of insecurity and its attendant effects on individuals and society. Through this philosophical lens, we will reveal how insecurity affects not only the physical well-being but also human existence, dignity, and flourishing.

The Concept of Insecurity

The word "insecurity" has myriads of connotations. It signifies danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety. According to Ndubuisi-Okolo and Anigbuogu (2019), Beland defines insecurity as "the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection". It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. This implies that insecurity is an absence of peace, order and security. Achumba, et. al. (2013) defines insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, "insecurity is 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". Secondly, "insecurity is 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 therefore, is a state of uncertainty, vulnerability, and fear, stemming from the absence of safety, stability, and protection. It manifests in various forms, including terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, cultism, political violence, etc. Insecurity breeds an atmosphere of anxiety, mistrust, and hopelessness, eroding the fabric of society.

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

There are different causes of insecurity in Nigeria. As a matter of fact, Yaminu, (2021) posited that the "National Security Strategy 2019 outlines Nigeria's security challenges under the following security threats as: terrorism and extremism, armed banditry and militia group activities, farmers-pastoralists clashes and transnational organized crimes. Others are border security, cyber and technology challenges, socio-political developments, environmental challenges and threats, economic challenges and threats, as well as regional and global challenges". The foundations of our institutional framework over time have become very weak and have provoked deterioration of state governance and democratic accountability. Therefore, other causes such as unemployment and poverty, ineffective policing and weak criminal justice system are not an exception. We will look at some of the causes one after the other below.

Political Instability/Power Tussle

This is one of the major problems that fuel insecurity in the country, where the misfit are imposed and allowed to rule the fit; where people with questionable characters and criminal records are chosen to rule over the ones with a spec, good leadership skills, and ideology. This has resulted in misappropriation of leadership priorities, putting the square peg in a round hole. This has deprived Nigerians the benefit of being governed by good leaders as most of the political leaders are in office for their own selfish gain and the gains of their immediate cronies/cabal. According to Ndubuisi-Okolo and Anibuogu (2019), "these crops of

political leaders oppress the citizens with the looted money; buy arms, train thugs and hooligans who later turn to armed robbers, kidnappers, drug pushers, etc. When they are dumped by the politicians after elections, they constitute serious threat to national growth and development" of the country. Sometimes they even go as far as using these recruited thugs as tools to oppress and even snuff life out of their political opponents. The last general elections of February, 2023 corroborate this as it was filled with a lot of political violence and intimidation during elections (Adeleye, 2020).

Unemployment/ Poverty Issue

This is a major cause of insecurity in Nigeria. For Yaminu (2019) "Poverty and unemployment lead to economic disparity and depravity which fuel terrorism and criminality with attendant implications for national security in Nigeria". Unemployment confronts the youthful populace with devastating psychological and economic effects. Also, the severity of poverty in Nigeria when examined with indicators such as life expectancy, population per doctor, population per hospital bed and infant mortality rate demonstrates the challenging nature of the situation (Yaminu, Ibid).

The percentage of unemployed youths roaming the streets is alarming, particularly in the Northern part of the country. The 'almajiri' system in the North has also made matters worse. These unemployed youths according to Adagba, et al. (2012) cited in Ndubuisi-Okolo and Anibuogu (2019), at present "employ themselves by engaging in illegal activities such as kidnapping, robbery, child abduction, and other nefarious activities. As a result of the high level of unemployment and poverty among Nigerians, especially the youths, they are adversely attracted to violent crimes". The outcome of unemployment is evident in our society today as a lot of unemployed youths have found love in indulging in advance free fraud (419) or what is mostly referred to in our local parlance as 'yahoo yahoo', cultism, ritual killings/sales of body parts, rape, etc. Nwagbosa (2012) posits that "the failure of successive administrations in Nigeria to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities is one major cause of insecurity in the country". Unemployment has a severe negative implication on sustainable and national development in Nigeria as it leads to poverty and hunger. Poverty also is a threat to human existence and reduces the dignity of man. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2007) recorded "that despite Nigeria's huge resources and oil wealth, poverty is still rampant to the extent that the country is ranked one of the 20th poorest countries in the world". Indeed, over 70 percent of the population is classified as poor, with 35 percent living in abject poverty (Ndubuisi-Okolo and Anibuogu, 2019). This has greatly increased given that the inflation rate is over 40% at present.

Ethnic and Religious Tensions

These have arisen from distrust among various ethnic groups and among the major religions in the country. Igbuzor (2011) identified ethnic and religious conflict as a major source of insecurity in Nigeria. Ethnic and religious conflict was defined "as a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion, fear, and tendency towards violent confrontation". The constitution of Nigeria recognizes the secularity of the State but this often times is being undermined by certain sections of the country to the extent that those who practice Traditional Religion are mostly discriminated against. Frequent and persistent ethnic conflicts and religious clashes, present

the country with a major security challenge. In all parts of Nigeria, there exist ethno-religious conflicts and these according to Igbuzor (ibid) "have emerged as a result of new and particularistic forms of political consciousness and identity often structured around ethno-religious identities". The claim over scarce resources, power, land, chieftaincy, local government councils, control of markets, and sharia amongst others have resulted in large scale killings and violence amongst groups in Nigeria (Ndubuisi-Okolo and Anibuogu, 2019).

Ineffective Policing

The issue of ineffective policing remains one of the major drivers of insecurity in Nigeria. This situation results in the growth of the culture of impunity and absence of risk to perpetrators of violent crimes. For Ibrahim (2020), police corruption and lack of effective investigation and prosecution are major causes to insecurity. It is however important to state that the situation of ineffective policing cannot be blamed on any particular individual or attributed to a particular period. It is an accumulation of poor police governance over the past decades. For Ndubuisi-Okolo and Anibuogu (2019), "this is as a result from inadequate equipment for the security arm of government, both in weaponry and training. This is in addition to poor attitudinal and behavioral disposition of security personnel". In many cases, security personnel assigned to deal with given security situations lack the expertise and equipment to handle the situations in a way that will prevent them from reoccurring or escalating. And even when these exist, some security personnel get influenced by ethnic, religious or communal sentiments and are easily swallowed by their personal interest to serve their people, rather than the nation. Thus, instead of being national watch dogs and defenders of national interest and values, and protecting people from harm by criminals, they soon become saboteurs of government effort, by supporting and fuelling insecurity through either leaking vital security information or aiding and abetting criminals to acquire weapons or to escape the long arm of the law (Achumba, et. al. 2013).

Weak Criminal Justice System

Nigeria has a very weak criminal justice system which contributes to the culture of impunity which breeds violence. According to Yaminu (2019), "the weak capacity of law enforcement agencies to rigorously investigate cases and bring culprits to justice is a challenge". Bad judgments that lately emanates from the courts of law at all levels due to undue influence by the high and mighty of the society are also a cause of insecurity. The level of state capture of the judicial system has resulted in self-help by the parties to the conflict, which exacerbates the cycle of violence. Lately, the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, in the person of Lateef Fagbemi expressed his worry when he made a public statement stating the obvious that "the Judiciary in Nigeria is no longer the hope of the common man but of the rich, the big shots. Justice is now for the rich, highest bidder" (Hafsoh, 2024).

Transnational Crimes/Porous Borders

The activities of transnational criminal networks engaged in smuggling, trafficking in persons and illicit drugs, terrorism, proliferation of small arms and light weapons are pronounced across Nigeria's international borders. These activities as observed by Yaminu (2019) have been exacerbated by the crises in Libya, Mali, Chad, Central African Republic and Sudan amongst others and thus have also made small arms readily available and cheap for non-state actors (unauthorized persons in Nigeria). These illicit arms stoke up violent conflicts,

armed banditry, kidnapping, cattle rustling, militancy, and the insurgency/terrorism experienced in Nigeria (International Crisis Group, 2020).

Achumba, et. al. (2013) also opined that "the porous frontiers of the country, where individual movements are largely untracked have contributed to the high degree of insecurity in Nigeria". Available data show that Nigeria host over 70 percent of about 8 million illegal weapons in West Africa (Ndubuisi-Okolo and Anibuogu, 2019). Also, the porosity of the Nigerian borders has aided the uncontrollable influx of migrants, mainly Fula men, from neighboring countries such as Republic of Niger, Chad, Central African Republic and Republic of Benin responsible for some of the criminal acts (Ndubuisi-Okolo and Anibuogu, ibid). The porosity has raised a lot of dust which has degenerated into the ugly experiences we are currently facing today. Nigeria is the only country people troop in and out without adequate tracking, monitoring and checkmating.

Terrorism/Violent Extremism
The threat of terrorism orchestrated by Boko Haram/ISWAP/Herdsmen continue to carry out relentless attacks on both soft and high-profile targets in the North East, North West, and North Central, and gradually spreading all over Nigeria with an ultimate aim of creating an Islamic Caliphate where everyone will be subject to the imposition of the sharia law. Following the death of Abubakar Shekau in May 2021, the Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP) has emerged as the dominant group in the region. According to Yaminu (2021) "The near defeat of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Syria has resulted in the movement of hardened terrorists from Northern Africa across the Sahel into Nigeria to support and strengthen terrorist groups in the North East". This has the potential of undermining ongoing counterterrorism/counterinsurgency efforts to rid Nigeria of terrorists/insurgents. In light of the gravity of the situation, the threat by ISWAP is considered quite potent and continues to require a comprehensive response in collaboration with our contiguous neighbours and the international community.

The Effects of Insecurity on the Development of Nigeria
Philosophically analyzing insecurity in Nigeria reveals its detrimental effects on development and progress. The erosion of trust between citizens and institutions impedes socio-economic growth and perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality. The effects of insecurity in Nigeria are profound and multifaceted. Beyond the loss of lives and property, insecurity erodes social cohesion, hampers economic progress, undermines the rule of law, and perpetuates cycles of violence and retribution. Some of the effects of insecurity are adumbrated below which include but not limited to:

Fear and Anxiety: Insecurity instills fear, causing individuals to live in constant apprehension, affecting their mental and physical well-being.

Poor Educational Standard: Education in the country has recently come under significant threat due to increased number of mass kidnappings of students from schools. This is a new strategy adopted by terrorists and bandits groups. Kidnappings in Schools have become a great disincentive for both parents and students alike, which may cause children who should be students from enrolling in schools, opting to stay at home in order to ensure their safety. Today, Nigeria has one of world's highest numbers of out-of-school children, 13.2 million, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF as cited in Yaminu 2019). A wave of

school kidnappings has worsened the situation, with some state governments closing boarding schools in their states until security is guaranteed. For instance, between December 2020–June 2021, over 1,000 students and staff have been kidnapped in 9 school abductions reported in the North West Zone (Yaminu, Ibid).

Displacement and Migration: Insecurity forces people to flee their homes, leading to internal displacement, migration, and social dislocation as it is experienced in the larger part of North-Eastern Nigeria and North-Central Nigeria respectively.

Food Insecurity: This is one of the major effects of insecurity in Nigeria. Insecurity breeds food shortage which in turn causes severe hunger as it is experienced in the whole of the country now. Today we have the herder-farmer clashes which leads to a lot of destruction of farm products as a result of the herders deliberately leading their livestock to destroy farm produce planted by the farmers, and some even go as far as cutting down grown farm cereals and at the same time kill or maim the farmers if found on the farm. This leads to food shortage, poverty and severe hunger in the country.

Economic Devastation: Insecurity hinders economic growth, discourages investment, and disrupts trade, exacerbating poverty and unemployment. Sustainable development requires stability, trust, and investment in human capital, all of which are severely hindered by insecurity. It is a truism that National wealth creation and economic development is one of the major objectives of any reasonable government. The achievement of this objective invariably depends on the level of economic activities which is in turn enhanced by a secured and safe environment for peaceful co-existence of its population to go about their activities unhindered. Although the cost implication of security challenges may be difficult to measure in monetary terms, however, the huge cost such challenges usually have on the human and material resources in the country are always obvious. This is visible as a large chunk of Multi-national companies are folding up and leaving Nigeria to more conducive countries to do business. Beyond the immediate impact, insecurity produces disruptions to the broader economy that may only appear days, weeks or months after the incident (Umezurike, 2023).

Social Fragmentation: Insecurity fuels ethnic, religious, and political tensions, fragmenting society and undermining national unity. In Nigeria, using the Muhamadu Buhari regime of 2015-2023 as an example; the North then refused to be involved in any form of protest against bad governance meted out to the citizenry because Buhari was from the North and he is a Muslim, so protest was seen as a 'haram' (something bad even though it was a constitutional right), but today in 2025 the same North has woken up to reality calling for protest against bad governance meted out to the citizenry by Bola Tinubu, a Yoruba man who is from the South-West of the country. Social fragmentation also leads to poor governance structure and nepotism, lopsided appointments, religious intolerance, ethnic rift and suspicion, poverty, loss of traditional and moral values, low quality education, etc. which in turn leads to poor service delivery.

Political Instability: Insecurity weakens governance, erodes trust in institutions, and undermines democratic values. A good example of this is the political crisis in Rivers state, a South-South state of the country where the idea of god-fatherism has been rejected.

Political instability is majorly caused by politicians themselves with the help of the touts they recruit to do their bidding. This hampers the success of any society or community as it tends to cause chaos, stagnancy and under-development in the society.

The Philosophical Perspective

At its core, insecurity in Nigeria underscores fundamental aspects of the human condition such as fear, vulnerability, and the struggle for survival. From a philosophical perspective, it reveals the fragility of human existence and the inherent tensions between individual rights and collective security. The quest for meaning and purpose amidst chaos becomes heightened, as individuals and communities navigate the existential challenges posed by insecurity. Philosophy invites us to question the essence of human existence and the nature of society. In Nigeria, insecurity serves as a poignant lens through which we examine the intricate dynamics of power, justice, and morality. Insecurity in Nigeria can be examined from various philosophical perspectives, each providing a unique lens through which to understanding the concept. Here, we will explore it through the lenses of existentialism, the social contract theory, and postcolonial theory. For Umezurike (2022), through the philosophical lens we can look at the following;

Social Contract (Power and Governance): This can be properly explained using the social contract theory, particularly as articulated by Thomas Hobbes (1982), John Locke (1988), and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1968), which posits that individuals consent, either explicitly or implicitly, to surrender some of their freedoms to a governing body in exchange for protection and guarantee of their rights. In Nigeria, the state's failure to provide security undermines the social contract theory. Hobbes' notion of the "state of nature," where life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short," can be invoked to describe areas plagued by violence and lawlessness. For Okpanachi (2023) "the lack of effective governance and protection can lead citizens to question the legitimacy of the state and their allegiance to it. The Hobbesian state of nature, characterized by a lack of government, laws, and authority, can partly explain the widespread insecurity in Nigeria".

The inability of the Nigerian state to fulfill its primary duty of providing security and basic needs for its citizens has led to a situation of "war of all against all", where citizens resort to violence and criminal activities to ensure their own survival (Okpanchi, Ibid). Insecurity often stems from a perceived or real imbalance of power within society. Philosophically, this imbalance challenges the social contract theory. In Nigeria, the breakdown of this contract, manifested in ineffective governance, corruption, and abuse of power, fuels grievances and undermines social cohesion. Thus, the state's failure to provide security violates the social contract, eroding trust and legitimacy (Anayochukwu and Abah, 2020).

Moral and Ethical Dimensions: Ethical theories such as utilitarianism and deontology provide frameworks to evaluate actions and policies concerning insecurity. For the Utilitarians, government policies are supposed to bring about the greatest good for the greatest number of the citizens, but in the Nigerian context, the reverse is the case. The ethical implications of insecurity in Nigeria are profound, as it raises questions about the moral responsibility of leaders to protect citizens and uphold justice. Moreover, it prompts reflection on the ethical dilemmas faced by individuals caught between survival and principles in the face of adversity. Insecurity raises questions about morality, justice, and

responsibility, highlighting the need for ethical leadership and good governance. It suggests that a revival of moral values and virtues within the socio-economic, political, religious, and educational institutions is necessary to address the root causes of insecurity (Okpanachi, 2023).

Social Cohesion and Identity (Existentialism): This is also referred to as the Existentialist perspective which is a philosophy that emphasizes individual freedom and responsibility and can provide insight into the experience of insecurity in Nigeria. Existentialist thinkers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus focus on the inherent meaninglessness of life and the necessity for individuals to create their own meaning. In Nigeria, existential insecurity arises from the pervasive violence and instability, which disrupt individual's ability to create a stable sense of self and purpose. The threat of terrorism, banditry, and kidnapping challenges the existential security of individuals, leading to a crisis of identity and meaning (Anayochukwu, et. al. 2020).

Insecurity fractures social cohesion by fostering fear, suspicion, and division among communities. Philosophically, it challenges the notion of a unified national identity and exposes the complexities of identity formation within a diverse society like Nigeria. The existential angst caused by insecurity forces individuals to reconsider their roles within the community and their place in the broader narrative of nationhood (Anayochukwu, et. al. ibid). That is to say insecurity confronts individuals with the reality of mortality, forcing them to re-evaluate their values, beliefs, and purposes. The inclination towards self-preservation and security is fundamental to human nature. Insecurity violates this basic human need, leading to existential crises.

Postcolonial Theory: The postcolonial theory examines the impacts of colonialism and the lingering effects of colonial structures and ideologies on contemporary societies. Thinkers such as Frantz F. (1961) and E. Said (1978) "have analyzed how colonial legacies shape modern identities and social dynamics". Nigeria's insecurity can be partly traced to its colonial history. The arbitrary borders and centralized governance structures imposed by colonial powers disrupted traditional forms of governance and conflict resolution. This alone creates chaos and unnecessary suspicion of different ethnic groups in the country. The postcolonial theorists argue that the enduring legacy of these disruptions contributes to contemporary ethnic tensions, corruption, and weak state institutions as we have them today.

Recommendations

The role of philosophy in combating insecurity and bringing about good governance in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Hence, it is essential to address the root causes of insecurity by improving on the following:

Food Security: As one of the major causes of insecurity, it is recommended by the researcher that by enacting good and enabling laws that are pro-people and not anti-people laws, laws that are utilitarian and egalitarian in nature, can enable farmers and the farming communities return to their farm lands. Doing this will improve food security and reduce drastically the food inflation rate of the country. Enacting a law banning open grazing at all levels will reduce to the barest minimum the so-called herder/farmer clashes as there will

no longer be the issue of land grabbing and destruction of agricultural produce. Those in the IDP camps can return to their various lives and businesses

Education: The role of education in combating insecurity cannot be over emphasized. Education is the bedrock of any society that wants to achieve greatness. This is because education breeds an intelligent and enlightened citizenry with bright ideas to develop the country and create self-empowerment in order to increase the growth and development of the economy. Thus, free and compulsory education is germane to addressing the challenge of lack of universal basic education, and also questions the anomalies in the society. Enlightened men do not bear arms indiscreetly.

Job Creation and Youth Empowerment: The government's efforts at creating jobs should be increased in order to reduce the rate of poverty, hunger and crime in the society. 'A hungry man is an angry man'; thus, reduction in poverty rates will reduce the 'pull factors' that lead youths into violent crimes. As it is said; 'an idol mind is the devil's workshop'. When jobs are created, the minds of the youths will be put to proper use. Thus, when the youths are gainfully employed, crime rate in any society reduces; examples of such societies include Canada, Japan, etc.

Improving Border Security: Tackling cross border crimes/activities and strengthening border security is critical to addressing the multi-faceted threats of insecurity in Nigeria. Proper effective policing, effective control of small and light weapons will help in curbing violence and insecurity in the country.

Strong Justice System: Nigeria has a weak criminal justice system which contributes to the culture of impunity and in turn breeds violence. The National Judicial Council (NJC) has a lot of work to do in ensuring that Judges/Justices so appointed are men with integrity who are not easily swayed by undue influences. Men of integrity at the helm of a functioning criminal justice system are at the core of a functioning democratic and civil society. Strengthening the criminal justice system and providing affordable education, ensures a peaceful and secure society

Evaluation and Conclusion

From the above exposition, we have seen from an existentialist perspective how insecurity disrupts individual's ability to create meaning in their lives; and from the social contract theory, the state's failure to provide security delegitimizes its authority. The ethical theory raises questions of the roles and morality of our leaders, while the postcolonial theory highlighted the enduring impacts of colonialism on Nigeria's social and political structures. Together, these perspectives offer a comprehensive understanding of the philosophical dimensions of insecurity in Nigeria.Okpanachi (2023) opined that "philosophers like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke shed light on the nature of power, authority, and the role of the state in addressing security challenges". In the Nigerian context, questions about the legitimacy of state institutions, the equitable distribution of resources, and the protection of human rights come to the fore, highlighting the need for a philosophical rethinking of governance and social contracts.

Ultimately, a philosophical perspective on insecurity in Nigeria not only deepens our understanding of the issue but also paves the way for more informed and effective solutions.

By engaging with philosophical concepts and frameworks, we can transcend conventional analyses and develop novel approaches to promoting peace, justice, and security in the country. Through this interdisciplinary exploration, we can contribute to the ongoing discourse on insecurity in Nigeria and work towards building a more secure and prosperous society for all. Thus, insecurity in Nigeria, viewed through a philosophical lens, transcends mere statistical figures of violence and crime. It embodies profound philosophical inquiries into power, justice, ethics, identity, and the human condition itself. Addressing insecurity requires not only tactical security measures but also a philosophical introspection into the societal structures, governance frameworks, and moral compass guiding our actions. Only through a holistic understanding can Nigeria aspire towards a future where security will not be a distant dream but a tangible reality for all its citizens for a more sustainable future.

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A STUDY ON THE PEACEBUILDING CHALLENGES OF THE CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ABUJA, NIGERIA

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Abstract
The quest for durable peace has been a fundamental issue since violence and persistent insecurity became hallmarks of Nigeria's capital, Abuja. This explorative survey examines the key challenges the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja faces in its peacebuilding efforts. Primary data was obtained from participant observation, interviews, and discussions with benefiting community members. Secondary data was sourced from extant literature consisting of books and journals. The study utilises the structural functionalism theory which stresses social solidarity. Findings indicate a strong correlation between the peacebuilding initiatives of the archdiocese and the relative peace in the area. Notwithstanding its successes, the peacebuilding initiatives of the archdiocese are not without several setbacks. The study established that the archdiocese is faced with the key challenges of lack of a unified peacebuilding advisor and vision, inadequate funding, inadequacy of qualified human resources, as well as its peacebuilding initiatives being misperceived as proselytism in some quarters. The paper tasks the archdiocese to establish a central body to coordinate its peacebuilding activities, scale up synergistic collaborations with other faith-based and secular institutions to train peacebuilders, and jointly build projects to erase prejudice.

Keywords: Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja, Conflict Prevention, Peace, Peacebuilding

Introduction
This paper was precipitated by the continuous incidences of social violence in Abuja which have necessitated the urgent need to scale up peacebuilding efforts by state and non-state actors. For several years, Abuja has been enduring a rise in open violence engineered by various individuals and groups that take up arms against citizens and the state from time to time. The violent incidences have resulted in fear, injuries, displacements, destructions, and deaths which have reinforced the attention of state and non-state actors to respond to the problem through peacebuilding. The Catholic Church is generally regarded as one of the best-performing religious institutions in peacebuilding in the world today (Powers, 2021; Montevecchio, 2023). Locally, the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja has gained prominence in peacebuilding discourse and practice in Nigeria since it was erected in 1981. The archdiocesan peacebuilding interventions combine different peacebuilding activities to address as many different types of conflict drivers and underlying causes as possible. Moreover, Nwosu (2024) established that the Abuja archdiocese is engaged in peacebuilding and its peacebuilding initiatives are majorly centred on seven core indicators: education, healthcare, environmental protection, relief and economic development, inter-faith dialogue,

humanitarian assistance, and psychosocial care. The initiatives in these sectors have helped to mitigate the risks of violent conflicts and their debilitating impacts in Abuja. Thus, the far-reaching initiatives led Nwekeaku and Christopher (2021) to pinpoint the Abuja archdiocese as one of the best-performing religious institutions in peacebuilding in Nigeria.

Notwithstanding its successes, the peacebuilding initiatives of the archdiocese are not without several challenges. The archdiocese has continued to face various obstacles and limitations in the pursuit of its mission in the peacebuilding field. Four significant challenges were identified by this research. The magnitude of the identified challenges has provoked calls for further strengthening of the archdiocesan social institutions to make them more functional and effective in the face of the dynamic nature of conflicts. Flowing from the above scenario, this paper therefore examines the challenges facing the Archdiocese in Nigeria's capital from 2015 to 2023. The paper is organised into seven sections. The first section is the introduction while the second is devoted to conceptual discourse. The third section focuses on the theoretical framework, the fourth is the methodology, and the fifth section presents the conflict profile of Abuja in brief. Section six is dedicated to the discussion, while the last section is the conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptual Premise of Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is a very broad field, a subject of innumerable manuals and frameworks, which can mean different things to different people (CRS, 2018). The concept was first introduced in the academic lexicon before it became consensual in the world of policymaking (Cravo, 2018). Coined by Galtung in 1975, the concept of peacebuilding did not take off as a practical concept and did not receive due attention until the 6th Secretary-General of the United Nations Boutros Boutros-Ghali used it. It was in the year 1992 that Boutros-Ghali in his *Agenda for Peace* defined peacebuilding as a set of actions undertaken "to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace to avoid a relapse into conflict" (Boutros-Ghali, 1992:21). During Koffi Annan's leadership at the UN, peacebuilding and conflict prevention were used interchangeably (Annan, 2014). With the creation of the UN Peacebuilding Commission in 2007, the UN has harmonised all its peacebuilding activities under the Commission. Since its establishment, the Commission has been involved in peacebuilding processes in more than 20 countries (De Coning & Stamnes, 2016).

Over the years at the UN and elsewhere, peacebuilding has continued to gain more attention and traction from scholars and peacebuilding practitioners. The 1992 conceptualisation of peacebuilding by Boutros-Ghali has "stimulated increased discusses that challenge as well as draw out critical issues that depict contending positions among scholars, organisations, practitioners, and donor agencies" (Jarikre, 2016:33). However, fast-forwarding to 2023, with the conditions that shaped the 1992 Agenda no longer in vogue, the 9th Secretary-General of the UN Antonio Guterres on July 20, 2023, launched *A New Agenda for Peace* (NAFP) which outlines an ambitious and extensive set of recommendations that recognises the inter-linked nature of the plethora of challenges and what needs to be done to prevent violent conflicts and mitigate the risks (Gowan, 2023). The NAFP's emphasis on conflict prevention is its most innovative feature. By utilising early warning systems, the Guterres' Agenda aims to detect potential conflicts before they escalate - a noble goal, albeit with significant logistical hurdles. The NAFP is clear-eyed about the magnitude of the 21st Century's challenges and realistic about potential solutions. To effectively address these challenges, the NAFP encourages UN Member States to move

beyond the logic of competition and seek avenues for cooperation and collective action to pursue shared interests. The vision offered by NAFP is grounded in three principles: trust, solidarity, and universality (UN, 2023). Thus, the core principles of trust, solidarity, and universality are the foundations of the UN Charter and of a stable world. It consists of policy recommendations for direct action in key areas for conflict prevention at the global level: "Addressing strategic risks and geopolitical divisions; preventing conflict and violence and sustainable peace; strengthening peace operations and addressing peace enforcement; novel approaches to peace and potential domains of conflict; strengthening international governance" (Gowan, 2023).

Flowing from the leading position of the UN, there is a persistent call for true peace in all corners of the world and Nigeria in particular. Going beyond institutions, Nigerian scholars and peacebuilding practitioners from diverse disciplines have also articulated the concept of peacebuilding from different perspectives to stimulate and project their points. Hence, peacebuilding becomes of paramount interest to policymakers and the academic discipline of peace and conflict studies. For instance, Jega (2018) maintains that peacebuilding need not be reactive; it should primarily be preventive and proactive. It should be aimed at bringing about enduring peace, or to prevent conflicts from occurring ab initio. Earlier in the same token, Orebiyi (2016:18) asserts that preventive peacebuilding efforts include research, conflict resolution training, capacity-building, diplomacy, economic development, social, educational, health, legal and security sector reform programmes that "address potential sources of instability and violence."

The debate on peacebuilding since 1992 has been influenced by scholars and peace practitioners, and the concept has evolved through continuous interaction between academic studies and real-world field experiences. To further flesh out the ongoing debate, Jarikre (2016) succinctly teases that the concept of peacebuilding depicts an academic license whereby its meaning is derived from the scholar's or practitioner's vintage position, outcome, and understanding of post-conflict interventions. In sum, peacebuilding is any deliberate and proactive effort by individuals, governments, and non-governmental organisations to address the root causes of violence by building enduring structures and institutions that enhance true peace and improve human security. In terms of praxis, peacebuilding has been much criticised because it is too broad a concept and includes many different activities under its umbrella.

Theoretical Framework
The research is anchored on structural functionalism – an interesting theory propounded by Emile Durkheim which stresses social solidarity. The theory sees society as 'a complex system' whose components work together to promote solidarity and stability. Durkheim wanted to understand what exactly keeps the society together and functional. At the core of structural functionalism is the very simple idea that society is interconnected, interrelated, and dynamic, rather than isolated and static; and all the parts of society work together to create a stable whole. Structural functionalism theory explains what keeps society stable. As an example, one function of the laws of a society is to keep the society from violence. Violent conflicts and disasters happen in society, yet society remains intact because the pieces of our society are interactive, interdependent, and interconnected which creates stability.

Comprehending how religious institutions are organised and how they integrate with the rest of society helps in understanding how the structural functionalism theory applies to

the peace initiatives of the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja. Durkheim's theory explains the many ways religious groups promote social cohesion, justice, development, peace and unity in a multicultural society like Abuja. For instance, Catholicism teaches good neighbourliness, that one cannot be reconciled with God before one is reconciled with his neighbour. This is because reconciliation must take place among people before going to God (Cf. Matthew 5:23-25; 18:23-35). By this reasoning, the Church acts as a bridge and reconciliation agent between God and human beings, and human beings with fellow beings. Thus, the Church helps humanity to cross the boundaries of culture, ethnicity, and language that characterise the Abuja population and build social solidarity and peace. Additionally, the Archdiocese also participates in the operation of social institutions like families, hospitals, schools, and financial services. This makes the Church a functional structure crucial to conflict prevention in Abuja.

Methodology
A review of selected relevant literature was adopted for this paper. The paper used both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data was obtained from participant observation and the conduct of semi-structured interviews, conversations, and focus group discussions with the clergy, laity, and community members in the six area councils of Abuja. Apart from the primary data, the researcher also depended on secondary sources for data collection and these included books, journals, and church reports. The paper used purposive random sampling and the snowball techniques to select interviewees and discussants.

A Brief Conflict Profile of Abuja
Abuja is passing through difficult challenges engineered by various individuals and groups that have taken up arms against the state. It has been experiencing outbreaks of high-intensity conflicts and open violence resulting in avoidable injuries, displacements, destructions, and deaths. The conflicts are attributable to violent extremist organisations, herdsmen banditry, sporadic inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts, kidnapping for ransom, and sundry criminality across the length and breadth of the territory.

For instance, Abuja as the seat of power and Nigeria's centre of unity has been deliberately targeted on several occasions by Boko Haram and allied terror groups. Some of these have both national and global significance. In the case of the bombing of the UN Building in August 2011, the troublemakers became more confrontational with the government than they had previously been in Abuja. The attacks on the UN headquarters and other symbols of state power, authority, and national security in the city are attacks on hard targets (UN News, 2011). The blue flag had previously been targeted with bombs in Algeria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan (UN, 2009; Foulkes, 2023). Also, there have been other attacks in the territory by violent extremist organisations like Boko Haram and ISWAP. For instance, on July 5, 2022, ISWAP carried out a high-profile critical attack on a maximum-security prison in Kuje that allowed about 900 inmates to escape, including over 60 Boko Haram members. Security analysts highlighted the involvement of Ansaru, a rising Al Qaeda-backed splinter faction of Boko Haram in the attack (UN News, 2011). There was also the brutal killing of more than 70 civilians in 2014 in a motor park within proximity of Abuja and the killing signalled critical levels of violence (BBC, 2014). Additionally, there have been recurring violent disputes between nomadic animal herders and farmers. These conflicts over the use of land and water resources, as well as grazing routes, have been exacerbated

by climate change and the spread of the Sahara Desert, as herders move southwards in search of pasture.

One of the scariest threats to Abuja residents is the frequent kidnappings and abductions. Many residents have been abducted from their homes and elsewhere, only to be released after millions of naira are paid as ransom. By every indication, Abuja's lucrative kidnapping industry is thriving and expanding into previously safe areas. Some of the kidnappers are commonly referred to as bandits. The bandits emerged following years of conflict between nomadic herdsmen and farming communities (Hassan, 2023). These criminals raid communities, kidnap civilians, rape, kill, loot shops, rustle cattle, and burn down houses. Attacks by bandits have forced thousands to flee their homes and seek shelter elsewhere. The rising insecurity in Abuja and the influx of displaced persons from conflict-affected states surrounding Abuja and beyond, has given rise to internal displacement and the emergence of IDP camps. These issues have negatively affected the peace, rolled back the city's developmental strides, and decreased human security while plunging many of the population into paucity. These litanies of open violence have necessitated peacebuilding more than ever before.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja and Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is a religious task, a central mission, an obligation, and a vocation of all Catholics, not just the clergy and select laity (Schirch, 2004; Smock, 2001). The involvement of faith-inspired institutions in peace efforts is not a new phenomenon. Faith-based peacebuilding advocates have imagined much richer visions of peace and play a leading role in building peace for the beginning of time (Appleby, 2000). The Catholic Church is the global religious institution at the forefront of the struggle to promote positive peace and justice based on the dignity of the human person (Montevecchio, 2023). It is dedicated to the proposition that a world without violent conflict is possible, practicable, and essential to global security. The Catholic Church in Nigeria is part of the worldwide Catholic Church, under the spiritual leadership of the Pope, the Curia in Rome, and the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria. In Nigeria, it has nine Archdioceses with 59 dioceses for administrative convenience. The Archdiocese of Abuja was erected in 1981 and elevated to Archdiocese in 1994 (CBCN, 2019). The archdiocese is shepherded by His Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Ignatius Ayau Kaigama, and operates eight apostolic deaneries.

In consonance with the UN's New Agenda for Peace, the Archdiocese of Abuja adds distinctive values to the peacebuilding enterprise by emphasising conflict prevention, human security, peace, and reconciliation (UN, 2023). This emphasis is further energised by the spiritual and human resources that support growth and transformation in individuals and communities, offering tools for reconciling differences and addressing systemic violence by intentionally working on education and healthcare, micro-enterprise and agriculture, climate change and peace, relief and development, spirituality and other programmes. Moreover, an existing archdiocesan structure allows the seamless connection of the grassroots and the grass tops plus horizontal networking to share experiences, expertise, resources, and learning in line with the Catholic social encyclical tradition and praxis.

The Abuja Archdiocese can promote true peace because it is ubiquitous, has credibility, legitimacy, comprehension of the local context, a wide network of social organisations, a large population of church members, a unique organisational structure, partnerships with governments, the Catholic Social Teaching, access to all levels of authority, policymakers and powerbrokers in the study area and a wide international network with

Catholic Churches in other jurisdictions. More so, the leaders of the Church are regarded by the communities as dependable and upright due to their unbiased approach that seeks the common good.

It is pertinent to affirm that the Abuja Archdiocese embraces a bottom-up approach, involving local peacebuilders, civil society, and marginalised community members in the peacebuilding process. The peacebuilding architecture of the Archdiocese is eclectic and includes development organisations (CAFOD, Caritas, Catholic Relief Services, and Justice Development and Peace Commission); service organisations (Catholic Television, Radio Maria, and the Good Shepherd Newspapers); and specialised institutions (Kuka Centre, Gaudium et Specs Institute, Lux Terra Leadership Foundation, Psycho Spiritual Institute). Others include lay apostolate Catholic organisations like the Catholic Men Organisation, Catholic Women Organisation, Catholic Youth Organisation of Nigeria, *Zumuntan Mata Katolica*; and base community groups for conflict transformation.

Undoubtedly, the Archdiocese intentionally invested a great deal of resources in erecting these multifarious institutions for the common good and to be able to draw from their wealth of experience in fieldwork, multi-sectorial partnerships, context-sensitivity expertise, skills, tools, and research, to deepen the culture of peace, strengthen the population, and promote peaceful coexistence. These institutions have been pivotal in providing opportunities for stakeholders to discuss contemporary viewpoints around indicators such as justice, development, peace, reconciliation, conciliation, conflict prevention, conflict resolution, conflict transformation, and share and analyse best practices. Schirch (2004) and Jarikre (2018) see peacebuilding as a new way of approaching development with an emphasis on peace stating that increased infrastructure development is critical to peacebuilding activities. Thus, the archdiocesan peacebuilding interventions combine different peacebuilding and development activities to address as many different types of conflict drivers and underlying causes as possible. While further broadening the notion, scope, and scale of peacebuilding, Jarikre (2021) in harmony with the position of Gas-Aixendri (2020) elucidates that peace cannot only be kept (peacekeeping) or made (peacemaking), but can also be built (peacebuilding) by developing a robust architecture, or a strategic framework that integrates development to reduce violent conflict and its debilitating impact.

Though the discipline of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution has researched and built extensively on peacebuilding, it has yet to provide a concrete and clear definition for the term (Iyer, 2011). Peacebuilding therefore ends up meaning a lot of different things to a lot of different people. While some refer to it as a set of activities following a war; others view it as a relational and psychological process, and yet others define it as a new way of approaching development. Peacebuilding, in the academic discipline, is best understood as the set of actions that seek to prevent, reduce, transform, and help people recover from violence in all forms, even structural violence that has not yet led to massive civil unrest (Tschirgi, Lund, and Mancini, 2010; Knight, 2003). At the same time, it empowers people to foster relationships at all levels that sustain them and their environment (Schirch, 2004; Lederach, 2014).

Some Peacebuilding Challenges of the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja
Peacebuilding as a complex and multifaceted process of creating conditions for a self-sustaining peace often faces numerous barriers (Nwaka, 2019). The Catholic Church in Abuja is making a distinctive contribution to peace in many different contexts. Notwithstanding its

successes, the distinctive contribution of the archdiocese is not without challenges. Using the framework and variables provided by existing literature, interviews, discussions, and participant observation, four significant challenges were identified during the research. The findings are presented below.

Lack of a Uniform Peacebuilding Office and Peace/Conflict Advisor

There is no central office charged with coordinating the efforts of the church in peacebuilding. Consequently, there is a lack of standardised uniform practices, thus stakeholders have no unified vision for peace and long-term development. As a participant observer, the researcher uncovered that individual Catholic organisations designing projects and programmes with peacebuilding objectives develop and follow their approaches and processes. These fragmented approaches and processes are often isolated and not robustly practised across projects and programmes even within a common context, let alone across the organisation. There seems to exist an uneven or ad hoc nature of practices due to the absence of a policy-mandated peace/conflict advisor to standardise operational methods and skills, as well as make peacebuilding work evidence-based. Individual organisations' efforts are more likely to achieve a more meaningful impact on peace if the organisations work within an institutionalised system comprising other sister organisations. In summation, the process of how peacebuilding should be done should be mapped and widely shared across social institutions.

Inadequate Funding

Peacebuilding is a rigorous, long-term, and expensive engagement that comes at a high cost. Another pivotal encumbrance noted is the inadequacy of financial resources. Qualitative data from several interviewees and respondents indicate that inadequacy of financial resources is a primary challenge facing the peacebuilding efforts of the archdiocese. Catholic organisations greatly depend on donations from individuals, groups and parishes to implement their peacebuilding and community development programmes and projects. This scenario implies that the success or otherwise of their programmes and projects depends on the availability or unavailability of funds. An interviewee from Caritas presented that,

> Over the past seven years, we have received dwindling funds to support our community development and peacebuilding programmes. Unfortunately, some of our donors are shifting their focus to supporting other areas.

This challenge of funding is further supported by a Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) staff who acknowledged during a focus group discussion at Durumi that the Abuja JDPC could not upscale its interventions in some instances due to paucity of funds. The staff gave an example of JDPCs inability to sometimes meet the healthcare and education needs of irregular migrants, displaced persons, and some vulnerable communities, while other discussants nodded their heads in agreement that:

> One major challenge to peacebuilding in our (Abuja) Archdiocese is insufficient funding. Insufficient funding has limited our capacity to deliver on all fronts. There are many people in need of our interventions and in several areas the JDPC could have intervened if funding was adequate. The reality is that many businesses, companies, and institutions in Abuja should be funding peacebuilding activities but they are not. This may be because

they are not well aware of the importance of peacebuilding and the magnitude of efforts we (JDPC) put in place to make Abuja peaceful.

This position is in line with the finding of Obote (2024:52) that institutions that receive "continuous external funding demonstrate a higher capacity for peacebuilding activities."

Inadequacy of Qualified Human Resources
Additionally, another prevalent challenge as expressed by most of the study participants is the inadequacy of trained and experienced peacebuilders. Peacebuilding requires competent individuals with adequate training and experience. Implementing intervention projects requires that an organisation has the appropriate expert capacity to do so. As a participant observer, the researcher noted that, unfortunately, there seems to be a lack of qualified and experienced human resources especially concerning expertise in terms of guidance and counselling for trauma victims and survivors. Many actors functioning in the peacebuilding arena are not professionally trained, certified, and skilled enough to execute some interventions. Catholic organisations involved in peacebuilding face challenges in accessing well-trained and experienced personnel. The organisations assume that the clergy are natural trainers and peacebuilders, but this has been proven to the contrary (Schreiter, Appleby, & Powers, 2010). The practice of using inadequately trained, certified, and experienced personnel could lead to improper intervention - thus, may lead to doing more harm than good. For instance, well-trained and practising specialist trauma counsellors are few in Abuja, whereas thousands of men, women, and children are daily experiencing tragic events that often overwhelm the capacity of trauma specialists in the study area to cope.

Catholic Peacebuilding Sometimes Seen as Proselytising
Another major albatross is the resistance of members of local communities who are not Church members who question the real intent of the Church. An example in the case was of a non-Catholic interviewee in Gwagwalada who seemed to see the potable water project executed by the CMO of St. Mary Magdalene Parish in Kutunku Soho as a form of proselytising in disguise. While commending the church for the provision of potable water, which has been a major challenge and source of conflict in the community, however satirically interjected,

> Dem don give us free water 247. Na better thing dem do so but dem still never tell us wetin dey for inside dem mind. But make we dey look them with one eye first, maybe tomorrow dem go fit talk say make we come attend catechism before we go fit fetch water.

This albatross of mistrust and misperception by some members of local communities is in tandem with the findings of Orebiyi (2016) who established that faith-based organisations are sometimes perceived to be proselytising, by actively seeking to attract religious membership or conversion. However, such selective perception of Catholic peacebuilding initiatives being interpreted as evangelism in disguise has been severely refuted (Ugorji & Ogun, 2024; Akighir & Akighir, 2024). Nevertheless, the present study found that such claims of evangelism in disguise hold no water because Catholic social institutions, programmes, and projects are open to people of all creeds and ethnicities as most interviewees and discussants attested to during the research. Moreover, the peacebuilding interventions of the archdiocese are based on need, not creed, tribe, race, nationality, or political affiliations

- as the archdiocese prioritises the most marginalised and most vulnerable. However, the archdiocese must continue to address similar perception concerns to secure buy-in from all residents since such concerns if left unchecked, can lead to hate, polarisation, and conflict.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Peacebuilding exists because of the inevitability of violence in the society. From the discussion above, it could be deduced that faith-based institutions are increasingly taking an active role in peacebuilding. This is evident in the efforts of the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja which have significantly deepened peace and translated into tangible benefits for residents and communities. Notwithstanding its laudable successes, the peacebuilding initiatives of the archdiocese are not without challenges. In essence, building sustainable peace can be a challenging endeavour because conflict drivers are characteristically multivariate. In sum, this paper has put forward some of the key peacebuilding challenges facing the archdiocese. These challenges include a lack of a unified peacebuilding advisor and inadequate funding. Additionally, the challenges of the inadequacy of qualified human resources, as well as its peacebuilding initiatives being misperceived as proselytising in some quarters have also been examined and addressed. This paper charges the archdiocese to establish a central body to coordinate its peacebuilding activities, scale up synergistic collaborations with other faith-based and secular institutions to train peacebuilders, and jointly build projects to erase bias.

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COLONIALITY OF CONFLICT, RESOURCE WAR AND CONTENDING GEOPOLITICAL ISSUES SURROUNDING THE 2023 NIGER COUP

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Abstract

The pervasiveness of conflict situation in the African continent, its relation to African resources and the struggle for power and influence, both internally and externally, have conditioned the nature of politics in the continent. Following the coup carried out by the Niger military against their democratically elected president in 2023 and the reactions from local and international actors, issues around the nature and reactions to conflicts in Africa and Africa's colonial legacies come to fore. This paper is a critical reflection on the situation in Niger and the geopolitical circumstances associated with it ever since. Using an analytical approach, the researcher explores the true motif of the global reactions to the conflict situation in Niger from the point of view of coloniality of conflict and resource war. Guided by the question; How does the colonial legacy of Niger shape the current crisis and what has it to do with its resources, the researcher argues that the 2023 coup in Niger and reactions to it are manifestations of coloniality of conflict. The paper also reveals the dynamics of resource war, which involves competing interests and agendas over the exploitation and distribution of natural resources in Niger, especially uranium and oil. The paper concludes with a call for a thorough decolonial turn in Africa's affairs as the solution to unnecessary conflict which exacerbates underdevelopment in the continent.

Keywords; Coloniality, Decoloniality, Resource war, Coup, ECOWAS.

Introduction

On July 28, 2023, a group of military officers led by Gen. Abdourahamane Tchiani, the head of Niger's presidential guard, staged a coup and detained President Mohamed Bazoum, who had been elected in February 2023 in what was claimed to be a peaceful and democratic transition of power. The coup leaders announced the formation of a transitional government called the National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland (CSNP), and declared themselves the sole legitimate authority in Niger. They claimed that they acted to save the country from corruption, insecurity, and foreign interference. Blaming the rising insecurity and a lack of economic growth, they stated that the intervention was necessary to avoid "the gradual and inevitable demise" of the country[1]. These reasons, however, may not reflect the true motives and interests of the coup plotters. Some experts have suggested that other factors, such as ethnicity, the presence of foreign forces, and the weakness of regional bodies, may have also contributed to the coup in Niger.

> First, the debate over the ethnicity and legitimacy of Bazoum was an issue during the last election campaign. Bazoum is from Niger's ethnic Arab minority and has always been labelled as having foreign origins. This did not sit well within the military circle, which is predominantly composed of the larger ethnic groups…Second, the large number of foreign military troops

and bases in the country has not been well received by the military. They believe this undermines them… Third, I suggest the failure of regional organisations such as ECOWAS and the African Union to take a firm stance against military power seizures in Guinea, Burkina Faso and Mali emboldened the Nigerien military…[2]

While the international community, including the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union, the United States, and France, condemned the coup, sanctioning Niger and demanding a return to democracy, the regional bloc ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) took a leading role in trying to resolve the crisis. After failing to act upon the elapsing of the hasty seven-day ultimatum it initially gave the coup leaders to step down and reinstate Bazoum or face military intervention, ECOWAS sent a delegation to Niger to meet with the coup leaders and Bazoum, and urged them to engage in dialogue and respect the will of the people.[3] Rejecting the ultimatum, the coup leaders withdrew from ECOWAS, criticizing it for deviating from its foundational ideals and being influenced by foreign actors. Amidst concerns about the stability and security in the Sahel region following the withdrawal, along with Mali and Bukina Faso, Niger formed the Alliance of Sahel States as a new regional bloc focused on mutual defence and support, while distancing themselves from traditional Western allies like France and seeking closer ties with Russia, a key Western opposition that has been expanding its influence and presence in Africa in recent years.[4]

In light of this state of affairs, the different sides and issues that have emerged, and the central role of France, the former colonial overlord of Niger with a considerable interest and influence over the country, one cannot help but wonder to what extent this crisis is linked to coloniality and resource control. How does the colonial legacy of Niger shape the current crisis and what has it to do with its resources? What are the geopolitical implications and challenges of the 2023 coup for Niger and the region? In this paper, I argue that the 2023 coup in Niger is a manifestation of the coloniality of conflict, which refers to the enduring effects of colonialism on the political, economic, and social structures of Niger and its relations with other actors. The coup also reveals the dynamics of resource war, which involves competing interests and agendas over the exploitation and distribution of natural resources, especially uranium and oil. The coup poses significant geopolitical issues for Niger and its neighbours, as it exposes the fragility of democracy, the vulnerability to terrorism, and the influence of foreign powers, especially France, Russia, and the US in the region in particular and Africa as a whole.

Nature of Conflict and the Centrality of Resource War to Conflict Situations in Postcolonial Africa

Conflict is a state of affair in which discord and disagreement manifests in a particular situation, event or consideration. It can exist both at the individual (in terms of one's relation and internal engagement with him/herself) and group level (in terms of one's engagement with others). The interest in this work is however on the group level of conflict. In line with this, Forsyth in *Group Dynamics* considers conflict to be a situation where one or more members of the group disagrees or find discrepancies and frictions they consider unacceptable in the actions or beliefs of one or more other group members and are rejected by them.[5] Glasl captures it as incompatibilies in thinking/imagination/perception and/or feeling and/or wanting that manifests in the interaction between actors (individuals, groups,

organizations, etc.), experienced by at least one actor in dealing with the other actor (the other actors).[6]

In the realm of philosophy, conflict is a fundamental concept. It represents the clash of opposing forces, the striving of all things to become manifest. This perspective views conflict as inherent in existence itself as it is in this dynamic tension between opposing vectors, where power contends with power that a new reality dawns. Philosophers throughout history have grappled with the implications of this cosmic struggle. From Plato's ontological conception of the tripartite nature of the soul which corresponds to the tripartite nature of society, to Hobb's theorization of the brutal nature of the state of nature that inevitably gives way to social formation in the state, to Hegelian ontological dialectics and Marx's Historical Dialectics, we see littered in philosophy, a grappling with the nature of conflict and how it conditions existence at the ontological, epistemological and social levels. From a sociological standpoint, conflict emerges as a distinct category of social behaviour. It occurs when two or more parties vie for something they both desire but cannot fully possess. This "something" could be tangible resources (like land, wealth, or goods), intangible goals (such as recognition, status, or influence), or even conflicting viewpoints. Social conflict is woven into the fabric of human interactions, shaping societies and driving change. In Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) for instance, we see a commitment to deal with social conflict by his conception of society as a functioning organism. In his concept of Functionalism, one sees "the effort to impute, as rigorously as possible, to each feature, custom, or practice, its effect on the functioning of a supposedly stable, cohesive system,"[7]

Conflict theories like those of Marxist orientation, emphasize the central place of interests in understanding social conflict. This is based on the assumptions that; Humans are self-interested beings who consider what benefits them and their group before that of others. Secondly, societies operate under perpetual scarcity of resources and the need to maximize one's advantages in order to secure more resources inevitably leads to conflict. Thirdly, consequent upon the two assumptions above, conflict is pervasive and unavoidable within social groups and between social groups. With conflict and attempt to resolve it come disparity and some form of hierarchy in group dynamics. The different conflicting groups in a social setting may cooperate for their own mutual benefit, but they never stop competing for a higher hand in every situation based on their identified interests. At the heart of this competition for higher hand lies power. Power is the capability to produce effects and shape outcomes. When different powers intersect, conflict arises. Understanding conflict necessitates untangling the web of powers involved. Who holds authority? Whose interests clash? How do these forces interact? These questions guide the exploration of conflict in social, political, and even personal contexts. This is much so as conflict is not static; it involves a dynamic balancing of powers. When conflicting forces meet, they engage in a process of pushing and pulling, seeking resolution. This dialectical interplay characterizes conflict as a perpetual negotiation. The outcome depends on the context, the actors involved, and the stakes at play. Most the time, the groups with the most resources will gain or maintain power since they have the resources to support their power. This reflection on conflict, interest and power dynamics will help to shade light on the nature of conflict in Africa, especially in the postcolonial moment.

Postcolonial Africa is marked by a complicated narrative of conflicts, shaped by historical, political, and social factors. The region has seen all manner of conflicts, ranging from that of secessionist movements, ethnic violence, and struggles over power and resources, etc. These conflicts often revolve around issues of identity, boundary, citizenship,

power, and resource ownership, etc, as they are not uniform across the continent; while some countries experiencing civil wars and insurgencies, others remain relatively stable.

Boundary conflicts in postcolonial Africa are mostly caused by the colonial partitioning of Africa carried out without consultation or sensitivity to the ethnic, cultural and historical realities of the people. These colonial partitioning has mostly remained and has been the geographical bases upon which modern African states are built, causes schisms that has led to shading of blood. Examples of boundary conflicts include the Eritrea-Ethiopia war, the Bakassi peninsula dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon, and the Casamance conflict in Senegal. Identity conflicts on the other hand, are conflicts that involve the assertion and recognition of different social identities, such as ethnicity, religion, language and culture. These conflicts are often caused by a feeling of marginalization by one group, mostly a smaller group, by a larger one. The Biafra war in Nigeria, the Tuareg rebellion in Mali and Niger, the Oromo movement in Ethiopia and the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya, Niger delta militancy in Nigeria are all examples that come to mind here. The different level of violence that has been witnessed in southern Kaduna in recent years also falls into this category as the Christian minority in the state is mostly the victims. There are also conflicts that arise out of inefficient and corrupt governance in Africa. This often stem from the authoritarian and corrupt practices of African leaders, who use state power and resources to oppress and marginalize their opponents, especially ethnic minorities and civil society groups. Examples of conflict governance include the civil wars in Sudan, Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Congo and Rwanda[8].

Another form and perhaps the most all-encompassing form of conflict witnessed in Africa is Resource conflicts or wars. With impacts, such as human rights violations, environmental degradation, displacement, poverty, instability, etc, resource war is a term that refers to the use of violence or coercion to gain access to or control over natural resources, such as oil, gas, minerals, water, land, etc. Resource war can occur within or between states, and can involve state actors, non-state actors, or both. Resource war can be motivated by various factors, such as scarcity, greed, grievance, ideology, identity, etc. While particular examples of this kind of conflict abound in Africa (the Darfur conflict in Sudan, the Coltan war in Congo and the diamond wars in Sierra Leone and Angola), it can be argued that all the other conflicts experienced in Africa in one way or the other, are tied to resource conflict. For instance, while the Niger Delta crisis in Nigeria can be called an example of resource conflict, it can also be tied to corrupt governance and identity conflict. The Bakassi conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon while an issue of boundary, was intensified by the amount and quality of oil found in that region[9].

Resource war often has geopolitical implications as most of the resources for which control is battled have strategic global relevance. These resources are of tremendous value to global economy and who controls it, hence the willingness of different nations of the world to covertly and overtly resort to violence to secure them. The prevalence of conflict in Africa has often been linked to the continent's abundance in natural resources. The conflicts, from the politically motivated ones to the socially and economically motivated ones are often linked to the influence of external actors interested in these resources. Michael Ross discusses the role of natural resources in triggering and prolonging civil wars in Africa. It explains how foreign actors, such as the United States, Soviet Union, and France, have historically supported peripheral insurgencies to gain access to Africa's natural resources.[10] While Africans kill themselves, there is always an external actor at the other end fuelling the conflict with the hope of ripping the benefit in the access to strategic resources. Given this,

the question then is; to what extent is the Niger conflict and the global response to it about resources and how does coloniality of conflict explain the situation?

An Exposition of the Concept of Coloniality of Conflict

Coloniality in global relations is a term that refers to the persistence and reproduction of colonial forms of domination, violence, and exclusion in international relations and global politics. Coloniality affects different aspects of human life, such as knowledge, culture, politics, economy, and identity. It is often contrasted with decoloniality, which is a movement that seeks to challenge and transform colonial structures and epistemologies. The concept helps to throw light on the challenges of the Eurocentric assumptions and narratives in global relations and exposes the racialized, gendered, and class-based hierarchies that structure the global order. It also seeks to recover and valorise the subaltern knowledge, experiences, and practices that have been marginalized or silenced by coloniality. One of the main proponents of the concept of coloniality is Aníbal Quijano, who coined the term 'coloniality of power' in his 1989 essay "Coloniality, Modernity/Rationality". He argues that after the end of colonialism, early instruments of social domination survived and continued to shape Eurocentric forms of rationality and modernity. He identifies four interrelated domains of coloniality: control of economy, authority, gender/sexuality, and knowledge/epistemology.[11] Another influential thinker in the decolonial studies is Walter Mignolo, who develops the notion of "colonial difference" as the space where coloniality operates and where subaltern voices emerge. He also proposes the idea of "border thinking" as a way of de-linking from the colonial matrix of power and creating pluriversal alternatives to modernity. In his book *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Option,* he introduces the concept of coloniality as a hidden side of modernity that emerged from the colonization of America. Mignolo traces the historical and geographical dimensions of coloniality and its effects on knowledge, subjectivity, and economy and argue that the idea of the Western Hemisphere was a radical change in the imaginary and power structures of the modern/colonial world system. This binary distinction had important repercussions for South-North relations in the Americas, as well as for the diverse Afro-American and Latin American communities.[12]

One of the main arguments that some scholars make is that colonialism has left a lasting impact on the patterns of conflict and violence in Africa. Coloniality of conflict is a concept that refers to the enduring effects of colonialism on the patterns and dynamics of conflict and violence in the post-colonial world. Coloniality of conflict implies that colonialism was not only a historical phenomenon that ended with political independence, but also a structural and epistemological phenomenon that continues to shape the relations of power and knowledge in the contemporary world. Colonialism was not only a process of political domination and economic exploitation, but also a form of epistemic violence that imposed a certain worldview and knowledge system on the colonized peoples. This violence disrupted the indigenous forms of social organization, governance, and identity, and created new forms of difference and inequality among the colonized populations. Coloniality has the ultimate purpose of subjecting the being and resources of a people to others who not only consider themselves superior, but also depend on such scheme to maintain their real or perceived superiority. Coloniality conditions the modern international system and its apparatus of anarchic social relations as nations will lie, cheat, kill and unleash all manner of propaganda and violence to get ahead in such system. Coloniality of conflict suggests that many conflicts in the post-colonial world are rooted in the colonial legacies of artificial

boundaries, uneven development, cultural imposition, ideological domination, etc., all aimed at exploiting the former colonies[13]. This leaves one with the question; is the global reaction to the Niger coup one motivated by genuine concern or is it a manifestation of coloniality?

Coloniality of Conflict, Global Reactions and the Geopolitical Responses to the Niger Coup
Geopolitically, Niger is of strategic interest to the global powers as its location and natural resources have made it an important player in the global war on terror and a battleground for geopolitical dominance. Niger is rich in uranium, which is a strategic resource for France its former colonial masters. Its position also allows for the transmission of gas from Nigeria to Europe. The US, EU, and France have military interests in the Sahel region as their military bases there play a strategic role in protecting their interests in the region. Russia's gradual inquest in the region through the angle of military contract has also been another point of geopolitical reaction. All these have conditioned most of the reactions that followed the coup in Niger from the global community. The coup was condemned by the international community, with the US, France, EU, UN, and ECOWAS calling for a return to constitutional order. However, the coup leaders have so far refused to engage with these demands. The coup is claimed to present a challenge to democracy across West Africa, which has been bombarded with six coups in three years. While the intentions of these international actors seem all noble and good, one still wonders the reason why, even with the heavy military presence of these actors in the region, the region is still pummeled by all manner of insecurity and economic hardships. Is there any sincerity to the so-called assistance that has been offered to Niger for years or is it another enabling ground for the manifestation of coloniality?

The 2023 Niger coup and the international response can be analysed from the perspectives of coloniality of conflict. The colonial angle to the conflict becomes more manifest when one considers the history and the current situation of the country. The colonial legacy of France in Niger has shaped the political, economic, and social structures of the country, creating inequalities, dependencies, and grievances that fuel instability and conflict. For instance, the colonial borders of Niger were drawn arbitrarily by the European powers, without regard for the ethnic, cultural, and historical realities of the people. Niger is home to various groups, such as the Hausa, the Zarma-Songhai, the Tuareg, the Fulani, the Kanuri, and others, who have different identities, aspirations, and grievances. The colonial state imposed a centralized and authoritarian rule that marginalized and oppressed some groups while favouring others. This colonial state of affair also spilled over to the post-colonial realities of the country as some of the larger ethnic groups have dominated the different sections of the country, leaving peace and stability to a balance of power between the large ethnic factions. The 2023 coup in Niger may be seen as an expression of ethnic discontent and a demand for more autonomy and representation by some segments of the country. President Mohamed Bazoum, who is from the ethnic Arab minority, faced challenges regarding his legitimacy, partly due to his ethnicity. There were unfounded rumours and perceptions within the military, which is predominantly composed of larger ethnic groups like the Hausa, that he was a foreigner[14]. Such ethnic politics, along with other factors like insecurity and economic stagnation, contributed to the coup. The coup leader, General Abdourahmane Tchiani, is from the Hausa ethnic group, which is a majority in Niger. The ethnic composition of the military and its leadership, which does not reflect the broader population's diversity, creates a sense of unequal access to power and career advancement

tied to ethnicity. This presents another reason for the coup as the coup leaders and their ethnic group feared being displaced by the alleged plans for military restructuring[15].

As its former colonial master, France has a huge stake in the political, economic and social affairs of Niger, and continues to have a considerable influence in the country's affairs in the postcolonial times. With 1,500 of its troops in Niger which have now been expelled, together with an air force base servicing fighter jets and attack drones, France is also supposedly a key ally in the fight against Islamist militants in the Sahel region. France also has economic and political interests in Niger, which is a major uranium producer and a member of the Francophone community[16]. France's role and presence in Niger has been challenged by the coup leaders, who accuse France of being biased and influenced by Bazoum, the deposed president. In fact, one of the reasons given by the coup leaders and other coup leaders in the Sahel region for the coups is Frances' undue influence in the region and how it only exploits resources and does nothing significant about the insurgency and underdevelopment in the region. France initially refused the coup leaders command to withdraw the French troops from the country, strongly supporting potential armed intervention by ECOWAS. The coup leaders annulling five military agreements with France, which had granted French troops the right to operate in Niger, also sought support from Russia, engaging a delegation from the Russian private military company Wagner Group, which has been accused of human rights violations and war crimes in several African countries[17]. This move is seen as a major blow to French influence in the region, especially as the coup was supported by popular protests and assaults on the French embassy in Niger, further highlighting the anti-French sentiment that drove the coup.

The coup in Niger also caused a fresh tension in the France-U.S. alliance as the two countries were at odds over how to respond to the coup. France refused to diplomatically engage with the junta and strongly supported ECOWAS now failed threat of military intervention. The U.S. on the other hand, initially dispatched an envoy to meet with the junta leadership and held back from officially declaring the takeover a coup, insisting there's still a negotiated way to restore democracy[18]. The sincerity of France's intentions in the conflict, especially considering the haste with which they supported the use of military rather than diplomatic approach to handle the conflict, is suspicious. While Frances' reaction may seem to be out of concern for the good of the Niger people, the fact of the persistence of insecurity and underdevelopment in the region would at the very least, suggest that Frances' efforts in the region is ineffective, and the insistence of France continual stay in the country even at the cost of violence is a manifestation of the colonial arrogance that has caused and sustained most conflicts in Africa. Just like France, Nigeria and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the regional economic organization of West African States, has a huge stake in the situation in Niger. Mohamed Bazoum's overthrow marks the seventh military coup in West and Central Africa within the past four years. Nigeria's stake in the conflict in Niger and its response to it is connected to that of ECOWAS. Nigeria's interest in the region involves many factors ranging from ethnic, economic, cultural, as well as regional security concerns. The crisis affects Nigeria directly as Nigeria faces its own security challenges, particularly in the northern regions, which share strong ties with Niger. An exacerbation of the conflict in Niger can spill over to Nigeria, worsening its already precarious security situation.

The coup raises concerns about democracy in the region, putting ECOWAS under pressure to contain this democratic erosion. It is argued by some observers that the coups in the region undermine ECOWAS's power and reinforce the perception that it is a toothless

organization. In response to the events in Niger, ECOWAS, led by the Nigerian President, Bola Tinubu condemned the coup threatening sanctions and even the use of force if the deposed president is not unconditionally released and reinstated immediately. As the coup leaders failed to comply with this demand, ECOWAS imposed sanctions on Niger, including closing its borders, suspending trade, and freezing of assets. Also, all active member states of ECOWAS, except for Cape Verde, pledged to engage their armed forces in the event of an ECOWAS-led military intervention against the Nigerien junta[19]. In response to this, the military juntas in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger formally withdrew their membership in the organization, forming a Mutual Defence Pact which would mandate them to send in troops in defence of each other in case of any attack from ECOWAS. The border closure ordered by the Nigerian government following ECOWAS's declaration of sanctions on Niger backfired as it was observed to have caused more hardship and insecurity especially in the Northern region. The closure led to economic disruptions, as Lorries piled up at crossing points like Sokoto. The sanctions imposed by ECOWAS hurt civilians in the whole region more than the junta, disrupting livelihoods, exacerbating humanitarian challenges, and jeopardizing important economic projects between Niger and Nigeria[20]. The sanctions also threatened to harm bilateral cooperation between Niger and Nigeria on security and other issues as militant attacks have surged in Niger since the coup, putting the campaign against jihadist groups in jeopardy[21].

While ECOWAS and Nigeria are under pressure to act decisively to restore democracy, the stakes are high and the path forward is fraught with risks and unintended consequences. Pleas from both civilians and international actors urged ECOWAS to stand down on the use of force and embrace negotiating a peaceful transition as the wisest course of action. This is more so as using force to intervene in Niger risks a major sustained crisis for ECOWAS and Nigeria. Niger's large size and scattered population make a military campaign perilous. Nigeria also risks becoming a pawn in a proxy fight between Western countries and Russia, which has pledged to support the junta[22]. Given its economy and population, Nigeria has been a regional power in West Africa, involving itself in Niger's affairs, sometimes as a mediator, sometimes as a competitor, sometimes as a supporter of rebel groups. The coup in Niger may be seen as a challenge to Nigeria's hegemony and a threat to its security; hence its response. It has also been argued that President Tinubu's haste in threatening war against Niger was a way of currying legitimacy and international support for his government, given the controversies surrounding his election to office earlier in 2023.

At the onset of the coup, the U.S. held back from officially declaring the takeover a coup, however, as talks to restore democracy failed, the United States officially declared it a coup in October 2023, with the suspension of military and other foreign assistance programs. Niger is important to the U.S. as it has been significant to its counterterrorism operations in the region. The United States had established military bases in Niger, including drone operations, which have been crucial for monitoring and responding to terrorist activities across West Africa. However, the political upheaval in Niger complicates U.S. operations as the new ruling junta has declared U.S. presence as a violation of its sovereignty, demanded the cessation of U.S. military operations in the country. This resulted in the U.S. losing access to its bases in Niger as of March 2024[23]. The withdrawal of U.S. forces is a significant setback for American interests in the region. It not only affects the U.S.'s ability to conduct counterterrorism operations but also cedes strategic ground to other global powers like Russia and China, who may already be filling the vacuum left by the U.S. withdrawal. In April

2024, Russian military personnel arrived in Niger to train Nigerien forces and announced plans to build an air defence system, indicating a shift in Niger's international alliances.[24]

The United States and Russia's reactions to this crisis can be seen through the lens of coloniality of conflict, underscoring the interaction between local agency and external influence in shaping conflict dynamics in post-colonial regions like the Sahel. Coloniality of conflict in this instance suggests that global powers often engage with conflicts in formerly colonized regions in ways that reflect historical patterns of dominance and intervention. Historically, both the US and Russia have engaged with African nations in ways that reflect their global strategic interests, often in the context of their competition for influence during the Cold War era. The US strategy in Africa was part of a broader effort to contain Soviet influence, which led to various interventions and support for certain regimes or movements that aligned with US interests[25]. Similarly, the Soviet Union sought to expand its sphere of influence in Africa as a way to counter US dominance, supporting liberation movements and establishing relationships with socialist-oriented governments[26]. The US's approach of seeking to maintain contact with the coup leaders while emphasizing diplomatic solutions could be seen as a continuation of its historical pattern of seeking to maintain influence through engagement and aid. Russia's warning against military intervention by Ecowas and its broader efforts to develop a multipolar world order on the other hand, could be seen as part of its historical pattern of challenging Western dominance and seeking to expand its own influence. While these two great powers had no colonial stake in Africa during the colonial era, their current approach reflects coloniality. Their actions serve more to protect their interests than quell the conflict or find a sustainable solution to it.

Conclusion

The reality of coloniality in all fabrics of Africa's postcolonial existence is in no doubt. Africa's colonial legacies are intentionally woven into all structures of its modern development, from the political to the social and the economic. When African countries gained political independence, the hope was that they would dismantle these colonial structures. However, the transition from colonial exploitation to postcolonial misrule was not straightforward. Instead of inclusive institutions, many African states continued to suffer from cronyism, clientelism, dictatorship, and all forms of corrupt governance. The extent to which this conditions conflict narrative and the social structures that sustains it therefore opens an interesting vista of inquiry, and this is just what this paper has explored. The researcher explores the true motif of the global reactions and the geopolitical implications of the 2023 Niger coup through the lens of coloniality. In doing this, the researcher finds that while conflict is a natural existential condition that bedevils us as a result of our nature as social being, conflict, especially in Africa often revolves around the fight over resources. Typically experienced as civil wars and insurgencies, political violence, militant struggles, etc., these conflicts often have a colonial undertone as they are engineered or most times exacerbated by external actors, usually former colonial overlords, in their quest to have undue access to critical resources they need for their industries. Bringing the Niger situation in focus, it is argued here that while the different global reactions to it seems well intentioned, they are laced with a colonial desire to maintain control over the affairs of the country in order to continue with the status quo of exploitation and dehumanization that has kept not just Niger, but Africa in shackles and underdeveloped. The implication of this is that while Africans kill themselves in different forms of conflicts, there are often external hands with internal stooges manipulating the situation for their own selfish gains. This is reminiscent of the

colonial order in which African life and wellbeing is only as important as it facilitates control of the precious minerals and resources of the continent by the colonial masters and their African stooges. This state of affair suggests the urgent need for Africans to take the business of decoloniality seriously as coloniality underbellies a large chunk of the woes bedevilling the continent. While it will be infantile for Africans to completely lay the blame of its problems on its colonial past, it will be intellectually dishonest to not acknowledge the effects these colonial legacies have on Africa's present. Africans have wildly underutilized their sovereignty in securing their interests in our anarchic international system, and this is the major reason for the continual influence of this colonial situation in Africa's postcolonial life. It is the believe of this author that for Africa to get a hold of the conflict situations and underdevelopment in the continent, there is need for a thorough decolonial turn in Africa's affairs. The only way for this to happen is if Africans make concerted political effort to uphold its sovereignty in protecting its interests and resources from undue external incursion. Whether the recent approach of Niger and the newly formed Alliance of Sahel States is the right direction in decolonial efforts remain to be determined as decades of military misrule in the continent only teaches one to be hopeful in this situation but reasonably sceptical as to the success of this Sahelian revolution.

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GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND THE PATHWAY FROM POLICY FORMULATION TO IMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract

The formulation and implementation of public policies are essential for the development of any country. However, Nigeria has faced challenges in implementing its numerous well-formulated policies. Successive governments have exhibited a pattern of abandoning inherited policies and introducing new ones, leading to a trail of unimplemented policies and unfinished projects. This paper examines how government institutions in Nigeria formulate and implement policies, using the Treasury Single Account (TSA) and Naira Redesign Policy as examples. Additionally, it assesses the performance of these public policies. The study employs a qualitative research design, analyzing secondary data from various sources, including literature books, academic journals, articles, reports, and newspapers. The findings reveal that inadequate statistical data, poor policy focus and objectives, misconception and misapplication of policy contents, weak political and administrative institutions, political instability, and inconsistency in policy-making and implementation are key contributors to policy failures in Nigeria. The paper therefore concludes that to achieve its development goals, the Nigerian government must actively engage all policy-making actors, both within and outside the government, and prioritize continuity in implementing effective policies regardless of changes in administrations.

Keywords: Public policy, Formulation, Implementation, Institutions, Policy failures, etc.

Introduction

The effectiveness of a political system depends significantly on how public policies are formulated and executed. In Nigeria, the process of policy formulation and execution has attracted considerable attention, partly due to global calls for transparency and accountability in governance. This shift has made citizens realize that good governance can only be achieved if they are informed and involved in decisions affecting their lives (Wilson & Epelle, n.d.). Public policy plays a central role in shaping the success of any administration, whether in the public, private, or non-profit sectors. These policies are designed to address specific social issues within a political system, encompassing a range of programs and initiatives aimed at tackling societal challenges. Public policies employ all legitimate means necessary to achieve the government's goals and objectives, ensuring the provision of essential services through various governmental agencies or departments. In developing

countries like Nigeria, public policy is crucial as it serves as a foundation for national development. Arowolo and Egugbo (2010) argue that public policy is the key to transforming government intentions into tangible actions. However, the challenge in Nigeria lies not in policy formulation but in its effective execution. Policies are often formulated, but the critical question remains: how can these policies be successfully implemented? The formulation and execution of policies in Nigeria are heavily politicized, leading to a fragmented landscape with multiple governments and agencies often engaging in overlapping or conflicting activities. This complexity is heightened by Nigeria's federal system and democratic framework, where different political parties control various levels of government. As noted by Abdulsalami in Yakubu and Obasi (1998), these parties' ideological inclinations and priorities often influence their developmental objectives, contributing to inconsistency in policy-making and implementation. Unfortunately, this political fragmentation often overlooks the perspectives and needs of the masses, leaving them out of the policy-making process. The policy-making process in Nigeria involves various actors, including governmental and non-governmental entities. Governmental actors include the legislative, executive, judiciary, and bureaucracy, while non-governmental actors include political parties, pressure groups, the media, and citizens (Ikelegbe, 1996). Despite the involvement of these actors, policy failures in Nigeria can be attributed to several factors, such as a lack of adequate data on public issues, poorly defined policy objectives, misapplication of policy content, weak political and administrative institutions, political instability, and inconsistent policy-making. These issues have resulted in ineffective policy implementation, preventing the realization of the intended outcomes and hindering Nigeria's development. The primary aim of this paper is to examine the processes of policy formulation and implementation within Nigerian government institutions, with a focus on specific policies such as the Treasury Single Account and Naira Redesign. Additionally, this study will evaluate the effectiveness of these policies in addressing Nigeria's socio-economic challenges. By assessing the methods used in formulating and implementing these policies, the paper seeks to provide insights into their impact on the Nigerian socio-economic landscape.

Conceptual Discourse

The concept of policy has been subject to diverse interpretations. According to Ikelegbe (2005), policy refers to the actions taken or to be taken and actions not taken or not to be taken by government or private organizations. It is a statement of what an organization wants to do, what it is doing, what it is not doing and what would not be done. It encompasses what an organization intends to do, is currently doing, refrains from doing and will not do. Implicit in Ikelegbe's definition is the inclusion of both implemented and proposed actions for the future (that is, intended actions). Conversely, Anderson (2003) holds a different perspective, challenging the notion that intended courses of action constitute policies. Anderson (2003:2) defines policy as "what is actually done instead of what is only postponed or intended." He characterizes policy as a relatively stable, purposeful course of action undertaken by an actor or set of actions to address a specific problem or concern. Despite their differences, both definitions converge on the understanding that policy goes beyond individual decisions. A policy establishes a broad framework within which discrete decisions are made, accounting for greater complexity and a longer time horizon for its achievement compared to individual decisions. Ezeani (2006), asserts that that policy can be defined as a proposed course of action which government

intends to implement in respect of a given problem or situation confronting it. On the other hand, Abdulsalami (in Yakubu & Obasi, 1998), argues that a policy refers to hard patterns of resource allocation represented by projects and programmes designed to respond to perceived public problems or challenges requiring government action for their solution. Dye (1995) further emphasizes that policy is concerned with understanding the reasons behind governmental actions and the discrepancies between what they do and what they fail to do. In essence, these perspectives highlight the proactive nature of policy-making, the allocation of resources to address public issues and the analysis of governmental decisions and actions.

Public Policy
The term "public policy" can carry different meanings depending on the context and the perspective of the person providing the definition. It is worth noting that while there may be various definitions of public policy, these definitions serve to establish the scope and boundaries of the concept rather than presenting conflicting interpretations. Some definitions restrict the concept of public policy to the actual actions undertaken by the government, while others encompass the intentions and goals of the government. Additionally, certain definitions not only include the actions of the government but also its inactions (Lasswell and Kaplan, 1970; Sharkansky, 1970; Lowi, 1972; Dror, 1973; Jenkins, 1978; Gordon, 1986; Starling, 1988; Dye, 2004). Public policy is typically developed to impact a specific population within a defined geopolitical entity. This aligns with Dye's (2004) definition, which states that public policy encompasses the decisions made by the government regarding what to do or what not to do. Consequently, citizens may express their demands to the political system (government) for the establishment of industries, but it is ultimately the government's decision to either fulfil those demands or disregard them. When discussing public policy, Egonmwan (1991:1) suggests that it is often synonymous with "government policy." It encompasses "whatever government chooses to do or not to do" (Dye, 1972:18). Friedrich (1962:79), on the other hand, defines it as a proposed course of action by the government that provides challenges and opportunities which the policy was supposed to utilize and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realize an objective. Although these definitions have faced criticism (particularly Dye's inclusion of government intentions or indecisions as public policy), they all indicate that public policy encompasses a wide range of activities, starting from the expression of government intent, through goal formulation and culminating in implementation. More specifically, these definitions convey the following points:

Public policies are actions taken by the government, distinct from individual or private decisions of public officials, and are purposeful and goal-oriented, driven by intention rather than random behavior. These policies are authoritative, carrying legal binding power and legitimacy granted by the government. Furthermore, public policies have a broader impact than those of the private sector, as they affect a wider spectrum of the population. These characteristics illustrate the distinct nature of public policy and differentiate it from individual decision-making or private sector policies. Public policy is driven by objectives that outline the desired outcomes and identify the individuals or groups affected by the policy. These objectives guide the development of plans or programs that outline the necessary steps to achieve them, providing a roadmap for implementation. Dimock *et al*. (1983) argue that public policy involves prioritizing objectives, selecting measures to address them and providing justifications for these choices. Ikelegbe (2005) states that public policy "is a course of action and a programme of actions which is chosen

from among several alternatives by certain actors in response to certain problems." This implies that policy actors have multiple options to choose from, whether they are government entities, private organizations or individuals. Ultimately, public policy is directed towards addressing specific problems, making it an action or inaction taken by the government, private organizations or individuals (Arowolo and Egugbo, 2010). Public policy possesses several characteristics that distinguish it from other forms of decision-making. Dror (1973) highlights the following key characteristics of policy:

Choice: Public policy involves making significant choices or critical decisions by individuals, groups, or organizations. This implies that there are multiple policy alternatives to consider.

Prospectivity: Policies are projected courses of action or sets of decisions. They pertain to future actions and outline the intended or desired actions. Policies articulate a planned trajectory of action in relation to specific objectives or events in the real world.

Goal-orientation: Policies are directed towards the achievement of specific end states or objectives. They are driven by purposes or intentions, seeking to attain desired outcomes.

Problem-focused: Policies are grounded in addressing particular problems or problem areas. They are not abstract concepts but rather responses to challenges and pressures arising from the environment. Often, policies are designed to resolve existing or anticipated problems or fulfil specific needs.

Action-oriented: Policies entail taking action and require flexibility to adapt to changing societal desires and the socio-cultural environment. Ikelegbe (1996) adds that policies are course-setting actions that provide direction, guidance, and a pathway to achieve goals. They establish the framework within which present and future actions are taken. These characteristics collectively shape the nature and function of public policy, enabling it to serve as a dynamic and purposeful instrument in addressing societal challenges and achieving desired outcomes.

Public Policy Formulation
Policy formulation encompasses all the activities that occur prior to the official announcement or implementation of a policy by the government. According to Ikelegbe (2005:77), it involves the process of "identifying the policy problem, developing and analyzing policy alternatives, and selecting a preferred alternative." This definition aligns closely with the perspective of Egonwam (1991:5), who states that public policy formulation involves the following key elements:

Goal Formulation: This stage involves multiple groups with diverse and sometimes conflicting interests coming together to establish the desired objectives or outcomes of the policy. Various stakeholders contribute their perspectives and interests in shaping the policy goals.

Problem Identification and Delineation: It is crucial to identify and define the specific problem or issue that the policy seeks to address. This step entails conducting research, gathering data and analyzing the root causes and implications of the problem.

Agenda Setting: During this phase, individuals and groups exert influence to ensure that the identified problem gains attention and priority on the policy agenda. They engage in advocacy, lobbying, and other activities to shape the focus of policy decisions and garner support for their preferred policy approaches.

Seeking Policy Alternatives: Policymakers explore various options and alternatives to tackle the identified problem. They consider different strategies, approaches, and interventions that could potentially address the issue effectively. The consequences and potential outcomes of each alternative are carefully evaluated and assessed.

Making the Policy Choice: Ultimately, policymakers make a decision and choose a specific policy option among the alternatives. This decision is translated into various forms such as decrees, directives, laws, acts, or guidelines, depending on the legal and institutional framework of the governing system. Together, these steps and processes constitute the formulation stage of public policy, where goals are defined, problems are identified, alternatives are explored and a policy choice is made to guide subsequent implementation efforts. Undoubtedly, the process of public policy formulation described above portrays an ideal and rigorous approach. It involves the transformation of a localized social problem into a widespread public issue, capturing the attention of the government and prompting legislative action. The aim is to develop a policy that is well-considered, clear in its objectives and intended to serve the broader public interest. However, it is questionable whether public policies formulated by government officials in the country consistently embody these qualities. Instead, what often occurs is that public policies are shaped by the personal interests, moods and arbitrary decisions of these officials (Epelle, 2011:55). Consequently, this can lead to a misalignment of goals, weak political institutions and unsatisfactory policy outcomes.

Public Policy Implementation
Policy implementation is the stage where policies are brought to life and tested. As Eminue (2005) points out, this process is crucial for determining whether a policy succeeds or fails. It involves converting inputs — information, technical expertise, human resources — into concrete outputs, such as public services. Akindele *et al*. (2006) define implementation as the government's actions to turn laws into reality, which includes delivering services and allocating resources. Successful implementation requires robust administrative structures and political will. Public policy implementation is a critical phase in the policymaking process. Honadle and Klauss (1979) suggest that it is often seen as the downfall of policy designers, with plans going astray or failing to meet expectations, leading to disappointment. This is because policies are frequently derailed by administrative issues or failure to follow through, which undermines carefully crafted plans (Egonmwan, 1991). According to Ikelegbe (1996), implementation involves allocating funds, setting up structures, recruiting personnel, executing activities, and safeguarding intended outcomes. Essentially, it is the process of transforming resources, such as human capital and technical expertise, into tangible services and goods. The execution phase is crucial, as it is at this stage that political and administrative forces can distort the original intentions of policy designers. This makes a thorough analysis and assessment of the implementation process necessary for success. Ikelegbe (2005) emphasizes that the process includes allocating funds, building

administrative frameworks, recruiting personnel, managing activities, and ensuring that policy goals and services are protected. Addressing these factors increases the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes.Eminue (2005) identifies three interconnected concepts that are integral to policy implementation:

Tension: When a new policy is introduced with the aim of transforming an undesirable situation into a desired and improved state, it naturally generates tension within and among the administrative organizations responsible for implementation, the target groups and the broader environment. This tension can arise from various factors, such as a lack of necessary skills among personnel or resistance from the target audience. The effective management of this tension becomes pivotal in determining the degree of success in policy implementation.

Institutionalizations: The implementation of a new policy typically involves the establishment of institutional structures and mechanisms. This raises important questions about the long-term sustainability and survival of these institutions. The institutionalization of a policy ensures its integration into the existing systems and processes, thereby increasing the likelihood of its continued operation and impact.

Feedback: During the actual implementation of a new policy, the tensions that emerge can provide valuable feedback that informs further adjustments and refinements to the implementation process. This feedback loop allows for the incorporation of new demands, which are then processed and transformed into additional policies that must be implemented. This iterative process challenges the notion that policy formulation and implementation are completely distinct phases of activity, as noted by Adamolekun (1983). Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) argue that separating policy from its implementation can be harmful. Simply executing a policy without direction is ineffective. While policy formulation and implementation can be discussed separately, they should be closely aligned to ensure success, as emphasized by Egonmwan (1991). Without effective implementation, a policy remains an abstract set of guidelines or intentions. Policy implementation is the crucial bridge between policy goals and real-world outcomes, translating plans into concrete actions. As Ikelegbe (2005:83) states, policy implementation turns prescriptions into measurable outcomes and brings goals into reality. Thus, it serves as the vital link between policy formulation and its tangible effects, making the enforcement of actions essential for policy success.

Theoretical Framework

Elite Theory: The elite theory posits that societies can be divided into two distinct groups: a small group of individuals who possess power and occupy top positions in society by virtue of that power, and a larger group of individuals who lack social influence or power and are positioned at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The power-holding few in the first group exercise governance over the many in the second group. In light of this perspective, public policy formulation and implementation are seen as processes that primarily reflect the preferences and values of the governing or political elites. Consequently, the notion that public policy is a result of the demands of the people is considered more of a myth than a reality (Okereke, 1998:35). This theory, which gained prominence through scholars such as Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, and C. Wright Mills, assumes that the masses are generally

apathetic and lack sufficient knowledge about public policy, making it unreliable to rely on them to drive policy matters. Consequently, the responsibility falls squarely on the elites to initiate policies and disseminate them to the masses. In the Nigerian context, it is undeniable that the elite exert significant influence over the policy formulation and implementation processes. Often, it is the elites who wield the power to determine which policies are enacted in the country and who stands to benefit from them. Due to their shared consensus on certain social values, they actively work to undermine policies that are formulated without their input or are perceived to be against their class interests. This situation is exemplified by the anti-graft policy of the government, which has struggled to effectively curb corruption among the elite in the country. Despite the policy's intentions, the influence and resistance of the elite have hindered its success in combating corruption at that level.

Historical Overview of Public Policy Formulation and Implementation in Nigeria
The formation of Nigeria dates back to 1914 when Lord Frederick Lugard, the British Governor -General, amalgamated the northern and southern protectorates. However, Nigeria did not gain independence until 1960. Since then, the country has launched numerous policy initiatives aimed at national development, but these efforts often fall short due to poor execution. Policies introduced by one government are frequently abandoned by subsequent administrations, with little recognition of the successes of previous governments. In a developing country like Nigeria, public policy is vital as a catalyst for progress. The country has devised various developmental, economic, and social policies to propel it forward. The challenge, however, lies in the effective implementation of these policies, which has often been inadequate. Implementation in Nigeria is influenced by the interplay of administration, politics, and the involvement of the citizenry. Unfortunately, policymakers tend to overlook the importance of execution, creating a disconnect between the government and the public. This gap between policymakers and the people has led to policy failures and abandonment, causing significant hardship for citizens who are deprived of the intended benefits. Service delivery has been severely impacted. The societal stratification in Nigeria, as discussed by Adamolekun (1983), further complicates matters. Class struggles among the elite, along with inter and intra-party rivalries, ethnic divisions, religious disparities, and regionalism, all intensify the challenges. The absence of a direct link between the policymaking elite and the masses, who bear the brunt of ineffective policies, is a major issue. To bridge this gap, it is essential that Nigeria fosters inclusivity, transparency, and accountability in the policy process. Policymakers must prioritize the welfare of the people and ensure that policies are designed and executed with their needs in mind. Only through collaboration and a shared commitment to national development can Nigeria overcome the challenges of policy failure and deliver meaningful outcomes. A significant challenge in Nigeria is the lack of proper consultation with the public regarding policies. The masses are rarely involved in decision-making, and there is a lack of participatory governance that values their perspectives. Furthermore, policy continuity remains a problem, as new administrations often discard previous policies. This cycle of discontinuity hinders Nigeria's development and perpetuates the problem of policy failure. For example, Eleagu (2019) cited the agriculture sector as a case study. Between 1976 and 2001, several policies aimed at poverty alleviation were introduced, such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1976, Free and Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE) in 1977, and the Green Revolution in 1980. Institutions like the People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN) and the Family Economic

Advancement Programme (FEAP) were also established. However, many of these initiatives failed due to corruption, lack of continuity, poor implementation, and inadequate supervision (Okoye and Onyeukwu, 2007, as quoted in Eleagu (2019). This pattern of renaming policies without sustained implementation has undermined their effectiveness, particularly in the agriculture sector. Corruption, discontinuity, and lack of oversight have further hampered progress, highlighting the importance of a consistent and coherent approach to policy implementation. Nigeria's inability to sustain and properly execute policies has contributed to its ongoing developmental challenges.

Naira Redesign and Treasury Single Account Policies

Naira Redesign: Public policy formulation and implementation are essential processes used globally to address societal challenges and improve the welfare of citizens. Public officials are tasked with designing policies to achieve two key objectives: institution-building and socio-economic progress. These goals are crucial for improving the well-being of individuals and society at large. By focusing on institution-building, policies aim to establish strong frameworks for effective governance and service delivery, while socio-economic policies seek to promote economic growth, reduce inequality, and foster social development. The ultimate goal is to align government actions with the aspirations of the people, thereby improving quality of life and societal outcomes. In October 2022, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) announced plans to redesign the N200, N500, and N1000 currency notes. The decision followed a two-decade period in which the existing notes had remained unchanged. This change was intended to address multiple issues, such as counterfeiting, corruption, kidnapping, money laundering, and other illicit financial activities that have hindered the nation's economic progress. Another significant concern was the large volume of cash transactions occurring outside the formal banking system, which impacted financial transparency. Advocates also saw the policy as a potential tool to reduce vote-buying during elections. The redesigned currency notes aimed to strengthen security features and make counterfeiting more difficult. Additionally, the CBN encouraged the use of digital transactions to reduce reliance on cash, thus improving financial inclusion and enabling better tracking of financial flows. The policy intended to address various challenges, including promoting a more efficient and transparent financial system, safeguarding currency integrity, and ensuring fair elections. While the initial announcement focused primarily on the introduction of new currency notes, it soon became clear that the policy had broader implications. It was not just a currency redesign but a move toward "demonetization." The CBN expected citizens to embrace electronic payment methods and reduce their dependency on cash. Given Nigeria's dual economy, with a significant informal sector, the use of cash is widespread.

In 2015, informal sector activities contributed 41.43% to GDP, and by 2021, around 80.4% of Nigerian employment was in this sector, according to the World Bank. This heavy reliance on cash reflects the financial needs of individuals in this sector. Surveys further highlight the pervasive use of cash. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that only 35.4% of women and 47.2% of men aged 15-49 had bank accounts in 2021. In states like Bauchi, Jigawa, and Kebbi, fewer than 8% of women had bank accounts, and many cited the lack of stable income as the reason for their reliance on cash. A separate survey by Enhancing Financial Innovation in Africa (EFINA) revealed that 100% of adults surveyed used cash for payments, while only 24% utilized digital payment methods. Additionally, 86% of

respondents received income in cash, with only 13% reporting digital income channels. These figures underscore the critical role cash plays in the daily lives of Nigerians, especially those in the informal sector. Despite the policy's focus on reducing cash usage, Nigeria's cash-to-GDP ratio has already been declining. In 2007, cash accounted for 11% of the money supply, but by 2022, this had reduced to approximately 5.6%. Similarly, cash's proportion of GDP fell from over 2% in 2007 to 1.67% by 2021. Comparatively, countries like the UK, US, China, and Japan have currency in circulation accounting for 3.5%, 7.5%, 9%, and 20% of their GDPs, respectively. This suggests that Nigeria was already moving towards digitalization before the currency redesign. However, the policy's implementation revealed significant weaknesses. The Nigerian Security Printing and Minting Company (NSPMC), responsible for printing currency, had a limited capacity to meet the demand. The company's printing capacity was reportedly only N200 billion, while approximately N2.73 trillion in cash was in circulation as of September 2022. This disparity, coupled with the rapid transition to digital platforms, overwhelmed key financial institutions like the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS), which lacked sufficient time to prepare for the surge in demand. The consequences of the policy's miscalculation were profound. Long queues at ATMs and bank counters, alongside frequent digital transaction failures, created significant challenges for Nigerians. The poor, particularly women, bore the brunt of these issues, as they are more likely to rely on cash for daily survival. The shift to digital payments, while commendable in principle, created substantial hardship for those who lacked access to banking infrastructure or digital platforms. While some of the policy's objectives—such as combating money laundering and vote-buying—may be valid, the economic costs, particularly for vulnerable populations, cannot be ignored. The unpreparedness of financial institutions, limited printing capacity, and insufficient public awareness of the policy's broader implications raised questions about the policy's overall effectiveness.

As Achebe (1983) noted, Nigeria's central issue is one of leadership. The country needs leaders with the determination to execute policies effectively. Political will must be a key factor in both the formulation and implementation of government policies. Policy execution has long been a challenge for developing nations, and Nigeria's experience with the currency redesign underscores the importance of careful planning, foresight, and the consideration of all segments of society when formulating public policy. The policy change, while well-intentioned, demonstrates that effective governance requires more than just the introduction of new policies. It necessitates understanding the socio-economic realities of the population, ensuring institutions are prepared for implementation, and assessing the full range of potential costs and benefits. The failure to do so in this case has highlighted significant gaps in policy execution, and the consequences for the Nigerian public have been substantial. Future policy initiatives should be designed with a comprehensive understanding of these complexities, ensuring that they are both feasible and inclusive.

Treasury Single Account (TSA): The Treasury Single Account (TSA) is an integrated system, officially introduced in Nigeria in 2012 under President Goodluck Jonathan's administration, aimed at consolidating and streamlining government bank accounts to provide a unified view of cash resources. This system is part of the broader personnel financial management (PFM) reform agenda, promoting transparency, accountability, and efficiency in financial transactions. In countries with fragmented banking systems, the TSA plays a crucial role in improving cash management by centralizing government revenue and ensuring that funds are not left idle in various commercial banks. The TSA policy aligns with Nigeria's broader

objective of curbing corruption and improving cash flow management. This has become particularly necessary due to declining revenues and increasing demands from the government to meet statutory obligations. The TSA aims to address the inefficiencies and potential for misconduct linked to manual payment processes and multiple bank accounts within Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). By centralizing government funds, the TSA increases transparency and reduces opportunities for fraud. The TSA is a public accounting system that consolidates all government revenues, receipts, and income into a single account, typically managed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). According to Adeolu (cited by Okoye and Okerekeoti, 2017), this approach eliminates the practice of maintaining idle funds in various commercial banks and enhances the reconciliation process for revenue collection and payments. While the origin and complete implementation of the TSA were difficult in Nigeria's unstable economic environment, its significance should not be underestimated. Initially, former President Jonathan's government faced criticism for not fully enforcing TSA implementation. Some argued that Jonathan either lacked the determination or was influenced by powerful bank executives and business figures. However, the arrival of President Buhari in 2015, known for his anti-corruption stance, marked a turning point. Under his leadership, revenue-generating agencies began complying by moving their accounts, including offshore accounts, from commercial banks to the Central Bank without additional government directives. Nigeria's TSA practices were designed to unify the government's banking arrangements, with the exception of agencies such as the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and the security sector. This unification ensures that all government revenues are deposited into the Federation Account, as required by Section 161(1) of the Nigerian Constitution, which mandates that government revenues (excluding certain funds) be placed in a special account.

The TSA initiative formally began in 2012, although its roots trace back to 2004 when plans were made to withdraw public sector funds from commercial banks as part of a broader bank consolidation policy. However, it was in 2016 that implementation was fully enforced, with the government requiring all MDAs to transfer their accounts to the CBN. A key part of the policy was the use of the REMITA payment portal, developed by SystemSpecs, which facilitates direct payments to government accounts via codes assigned to MDAs through the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS). This transition to a centralized payment system has brought about significant improvements in fiscal transparency and accountability. The TSA has helped consolidate over 17,000 MDAs bank accounts, reducing bank charges by N4 billion monthly. Additionally, e-payment systems have streamlined the remittance process, providing clear guidelines based on each MDA's funding status, whether fully, partially, or self-funded. The implementation of TSA has already shown financial benefits. Following a successful pilot phase, Nigeria saved approximately NGN 500 billion through improved spending practices. The government intensified the TSA's full implementation due to its potential to enhance transparency, accountability, and revenue generation while reducing financial leakages. As part of this, the CBN issued strict directives prohibiting government agencies from operating bank accounts outside the oversight of the TSA. While the TSA has had notable successes, the implementation of both the TSA and the Naira redesign policies has faced challenges. These reforms were intended to combat corruption and establish a culture of accountability and transparency. However, the assumption that transparency would automatically lead to good governance underestimated the challenges posed by social behaviors, including resistance and sabotage.

The challenges encountered in implementing the TSA highlight the complexities of enforcing policies within Nigeria's diverse and often fragmented institutional framework. Despite these challenges, the TSA remains a vital step in improving Nigeria's financial management, fostering greater transparency, and curbing corruption. However, for it to achieve its full potential, continued efforts must be made to address the obstacles that hinder its effectiveness. These include resistance from certain sectors, inadequate institutional capacity, and the need for a comprehensive strategy to ensure the broader adoption and sustainability of the policy.

Factors Affecting Policy Formulation and Implementation in Nigeria
As stated by Cochran (2015), policy involves political decisions aimed at implementing programmes to achieve societal objectives. However, in developing countries, a significant challenge arises in the form of the implementation gap, which refers to the widening disparity between policy intentions and actual outcomes. This gap becomes evident as there is a growing divide between the stated policy goals and the realization of those goals. In Nigeria, the implementation gap stemming from policy formulation cannot be underestimated, as successive governments have formulated policies that prove to be unattainable throughout their tenures. Over the years, Nigeria has introduced well-designed developmental, economic and social policies with the aim of drifting the nation towards meaningful development. However, the flawed nature and approach to policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria have resulted in the failure of many policies to achieve their intended goals and targets. This includes a range of policies, such as but not limited to the following examples:

Inadequate Statistical Data on the Perceived Public Problem: In Nigeria, public policy is intended to address societal problems and improve the well-being of citizens. However, the formulation and implementation of policies often face challenges that hinder their effectiveness. One of the main obstacles is the lack of adequate statistical data to inform policy decisions. Policymakers rely on available data to design solutions, but in Nigeria, many policies are developed without sufficient information, resulting in misguided approaches. For instance, the Amnesty Programme aimed at resolving insecurity in the Niger Delta lacked data on the insurgents' number, activities, and resources, leading to its ineffectiveness in curbing hostility in the region. Without comprehensive statistical data, policies often fail to address the root causes of public problems, leaving them unresolved.

Poor Policy Focus and Objective: Another significant challenge is poor policy focus and objective setting. Public policies are supposed to tackle specific problems, but many Nigerian policies lack clear goals, making it difficult to achieve intended outcomes. Environmental factors, such as political pressures, interest group dynamics, and the absence of relevant information, can skew the policy formulation process. As a result, policies may deviate from their original objectives, complicating existing issues. For example, if policymakers do not clearly define objectives, their policies may become ineffective or exacerbate the problems they aim to solve.

Misconception and Misapplication of Policy Content: The misapplication and misconceptions surrounding policy content further undermine policy implementation. Often, those who stand to benefit from policies may misinterpret or distort their content, while

those who are adversely affected may resist compliance. The "Change Agenda" introduced by President Muhammadu Buhari is an example of a policy that faced opposition from political figures and bureaucrats who had benefitted from corrupt practices. These stakeholders hindered its implementation, demonstrating how vested interests can affect the successful realization of policy goals. Overcoming these misconceptions and conflicts of interest is critical to ensuring policies achieve their desired outcomes.

The Activities of Policy Actors in Policy Making and Implementation in Nigeria: According to Okeke (2001:78), the formulation and implementation of policies involve the collective efforts of various individuals and institutions within the state. Obi, Nwachukwu & Obiora (2008) further identify these individuals and institutions as policy actors, categorizing them into official actors and non-official actors. The official actors include branches of government such as the legislature, executive, judiciary and state agencies, while the non-official actors comprise political parties, pressure groups, interest groups, and influential individuals. These actors may have conflicting interests that complicate policy implementation. For example, the proposed Cattle Colony Policy, aimed at addressing challenges posed by cattle herders, has sparked disagreements among various stakeholders. Clashes between actors' interests and viewpoints can hinder the successful implementation of policies. To improve policy outcomes, it is essential to engage in dialogue and address the concerns of all involved parties.

Weak Political and Administrative Institutions: Weak political and administrative institutions also pose a significant barrier to effective policy implementation in Nigeria. Despite the existence of anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), corruption remains pervasive, undermining governance and policy effectiveness. The inability of institutions to carry out their responsibilities compromises the achievement of policy objectives. To overcome this, Nigeria needs to strengthen its institutions, promote transparency, and enhance collaboration between agencies. By improving the functioning of key institutions, Nigeria can tackle corruption more effectively and achieve better policy outcomes.

Activities of Corrupt Politicians and Public Bureaucrats: According to Wilson (2018), the activities of corrupt politicians and public bureaucrats exacerbate the challenges facing policy implementation. These individuals often exploit their positions to redirect state resources for personal gain, undermining policies aimed at addressing societal problems. For example, corrupt politicians may resist policies that curb their ability to misuse public resources, instead promoting policies that perpetuate the status quo. Addressing this requires comprehensive anti-corruption strategies, focusing on strengthening institutions, promoting ethical behavior, and fostering a culture of integrity across the public service. Protecting whistle-blowers and ensuring the swift prosecution of corrupt individuals will also contribute to a more transparent and accountable government.

Political instability and inconsistency in Policy Making and Implementation
Political instability and inconsistency in policymaking further hinder the effectiveness of public policies in Nigeria. Successive governments often abandon the policies of their predecessors and introduce new ones, leading to policy discontinuity. This has been seen with initiatives like the Agricultural Development Program (ADP) and the National

Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), which were abandoned after political transitions. The lack of policy continuity results in inefficiency, as new policies duplicate previous efforts rather than building on existing ones. A more strategic approach to policy development, which transcends political transitions, is needed to ensure long-term goals are achieved and policies remain effective.

Lack of Political Will to Make and Implement Policies in Nigeria
According to Roberts (2017), the lack of political will to implement policies is another obstacle. Political will refers to the determination and resolve of political leaders to take necessary actions, even if it means facing challenges or social costs. Unfortunately, many Nigerian leaders have demonstrated a lack of political will to address pressing issues. For instance, during the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Independent Power Project (IPP) aimed to solve Nigeria's electricity crisis but failed to produce the desired results due to insufficient political commitment. Similarly, although Presidents Yar'Adua and Jonathan acknowledged the insurgency in the North East, they lacked the political will to effectively address the situation. Political leaders must demonstrate the resolve to implement policies and follow through on their commitments to achieve meaningful change.

Irregular Evaluation of Existing Policies
Irregular evaluation of existing policies also hampers the progress of public policies in Nigeria. Many policies are abandoned or duplicated without being properly evaluated to determine their effectiveness. A regular evaluation process is necessary to assess policies, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and make adjustments where needed. By conducting thorough evaluations, policymakers can improve existing policies and ensure resources are used efficiently. Evaluation helps policymakers understand what works and what does not, enabling them to make informed decisions and enhance the effectiveness of public policies. In conclusion, several factors contribute to the challenges faced by public policies in Nigeria. These include the lack of adequate data, poor policy focus, misapplication of policy content, weak institutions, corruption, political instability, and the absence of political will. To address these challenges, Nigeria needs to prioritize data-driven policy formulation, clear objectives, stronger institutions, and the resolution of conflicts of interest among policy actors. By fostering political will and ensuring regular policy evaluations, Nigeria can improve its policymaking process and achieve better outcomes for its citizens.

Consequences of Policy Catastrophes
Policy failures have far-reaching consequences that afflict both citizens and the country as a whole, giving rise to a host of catastrophes. These include:

Underdevelopment: Inadequate policy implementation hampers a country's ability to provide for its citizens and create employment opportunities. When citizens are deprived of basic necessities, they are unable to contribute effectively to the nation's growth and development. The state of a country's economy is directly reflected in the quality of life experienced by its citizens.

Decreased Patriotism: Continuous failures in policy implementation diminish citizens' interest and engagement in national affairs. The lack of progress and positive change resulting from failed policies can erode patriotism and reduce public trust in government.

Stagnant Human Capital: Public policies are intended not only to address societal problems but also to enhance human resources. Human capital is the key driver of national progress and prosperity. Policy failures hinder the development and improvement of human capital, impeding the overall advancement of society.

Resource Waste: Failed public policies represent a squandering of valuable human and material resources invested throughout the formulation and implementation processes. The entire policy-making process is a significant undertaking. When policies fail to achieve their intended outcomes, the extensive resources expended from formulation to implementation stages are wasted. These resources could have been utilized in other areas requiring attention and investment in the country. It is the people's shared resources, or the nation's commonwealth, that are utilized in policy making and implementation. Addressing these policy failures is crucial to mitigate the negative consequences they bring about. By ensuring effective policy implementation, countries can foster development, enhance citizens' well-being, encourage patriotism, invest in human capital, and maximize the efficient utilization of resources for the benefit of the nation as a whole.

Conclusion

In Nigeria, the main challenge lies not in the formulation of policies, but in their implementation. This complexity stems from various factors, including conflicting interests, which can lead to policy failures if not properly managed. The success of any government or administration ultimately depends on the development and effective execution of sound public policies. For public policy formulation and implementation to be successful in Nigeria, it is vital to recognize the importance of involving not just the elite but also the broader population. Engaging all stakeholders provides a more comprehensive understanding of societal needs, addressing the gaps and weaknesses in the current system. This inclusive approach ensures that policies are more responsive to the challenges and aspirations of the nation, fostering greater transparency, accountability, and a sense of shared responsibility. Additionally, robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are crucial to track policy implementation, measure outcomes and make necessary adjustments to improve effectiveness. Moving forward, Nigeria must prioritize the enhancement of policy implementation, considering it a collective concern that requires active participation from all sectors of society. With this inclusive approach and continuous evaluation, Nigeria can bridge the gaps in its policy framework, leading to more effective public policies and better outcomes for the country.

Recommendations

It has been observed that despite the lofty and painstaking policies usually formulated in Nigeria, little or no tangible outcomes have been achieved as they always tend to fall by the wayside. This is because the critical elements in both the internal and external environments and the implementation process account for the gap between goals and achievements. Nigeria has never lacked in planning, but the problem has always been achieving results. The Late Indian Prime Minister, Pandhit Nehvu lamented on similar situation in India saying. We in the planning commission and others concerned have grown more experts in planning, but the real question is not planning but implementing the plans. That is the real questions before the country. I fear we are quite as expert at implementation as in planning (Eminue, 2005). Despite the formulation of ambitious and meticulous policies in Nigeria, the country

has struggled to achieve significant and tangible outcomes, as these policies often fail to materialize. The disparity between policy goals and actual achievements can be attributed to various factors within the internal and external environments, as well as shortcomings in the implementation process. Nigeria has consistently demonstrated its capacity for planning, yet the challenge lies in translating these plans into concrete results. This issue is not unique to Nigeria, as even the late Indian Prime Minister, Pandhit Nehru, expressed similar concerns about the implementation of plans in India. He emphasized that while expertise in planning has grown, the crucial question lies in effectively implementing these plans. Regrettably, our expertise in planning does not necessarily translate into equal proficiency in implementation (Eminue, 2005). It is essential to recognize that successful policy outcomes rely not only on planning but also on the efficient execution of those plans. Nigeria must address the gap between planning and implementation to achieve meaningful progress. By improving implementation strategies, enhancing coordination among stakeholders and addressing underlying challenges, Nigeria can bridge the divide and turn its well-conceived policies into tangible and transformative results.

Strategies to Improve Public Policy Formulation and Implementation in Nigeria
Generating Adequate Data/Records: Prior to formulating a policy solution, policymakers should gather comprehensive data and records on the underlying causes of the identified public problem. This data will inform policymakers about the problem's scope, causes, and the necessary policy direction for addressing it. This approach will contribute to more effective policy making and implementation in Nigeria.

Targeting Beneficiaries: Recognizing that a single policy plan may not be sufficient to meet the diverse needs of the population, it is beneficial to target specific groups for more focused policy implementation. Involving the target beneficiaries in the formulation stage allows them to contribute their insights and ensures that the policy directly addresses their concerns, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment.

Enhancing Interaction and Communication: Meaningful engagement with non-governmental organizations, professional bodies, the private sector, and civil society groups should be prioritized throughout the policy process. This collaboration fosters a more inclusive approach, incorporating diverse perspectives and expertise in policy formulation and implementation.

Implementing Effective Monitoring: Adequate mechanisms for monitoring policy projects should be established to prevent the issue of abandoned projects and to ensure that policy goals are realized. Regular monitoring and evaluation allow for timely adjustments and corrective actions, enhancing the overall effectiveness of policy implementation.

Providing Adequate Resources: Sufficient material and human resources necessary for policy implementation should be allocated. This includes allocating budgetary provisions, ensuring skilled personnel are available and providing the necessary infrastructure and tools for successful policy implementation.

Promoting Effective Communication: Effective communication between the policy implementers and the target beneficiaries is vital for successful policy programs. Clear and

transparent communication channels facilitate understanding, address concerns, and ensure the policy's intended outcomes are achieved.

Encouraging a Culture of Continuity: Discouraging the discontinuity of policies is crucial. National and state assemblies should enact laws that promote policy continuity to support long-term growth and development. Policies should only be discontinued when they are found to be ineffective or do not serve the best interests of the people.

Sustained Effort and Continuity: Implementing policy decisions requires substantial effort and should be treated as an ongoing process. Adequate resources must be allocated to ensure the implementation of relevant policies, moving from intention to action and ultimately achieving policy objectives.

Embracing Governance as a Continuous Process: Successive governments should view governance as a continuous process and prioritize the continuation of good policies inherited from previous administrations. This approach ensures the interests of the populace are served consistently and avoids unnecessary disruptions.

Regular Policy Evaluation: Regular evaluation of existing policies is essential for objective assessment, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and informing future policy making and implementation. Evaluations provide valuable insights and guide decision-making to enhance the effectiveness of policies over time. By adopting these strategies, Nigeria can improve public policy formulation and implementation, leading to better outcomes and sustainable development for the country and its citizens.

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JUSTICE AS A PATHWAY TO DEVELOPMENT AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE IN SANKERA AXIS OF BENUE STATE

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Abstract
This paper applies Michael Sandel's theory of justice to crisis situation in Sankera axis of Benue State, examining the moral and ethical dimensions of decision makers in the face of uncertainty and urgency. Through a critical analysis of Sandel's concept of justice, morality and civic virtue, the work demonstrates how his theory can provide a framework for navigating complex situations. Using the case of banditry(mbakwendev), the paper illustrates the application of Sandel's theory in a real-world context, highlighting the importance of considering the common good, moral virtues and civic responsibility in crisis decision making. Justice is mostly connected with a situation which creates a standard for relative peace devoid of active war, violent confrontation or crisis. It also entails, a pleasant situation that guarantees positive thoughts. The endless discussions and agitations for justice in all human societies underscores the enormous value of the concept of justice that all humanity have continue to seek for justice as it effective application can manage, coordinate, regulate, all other aspects of the society. It is however regrettable, that the people of Sankera geopolitical axis across gender and age bracket have been clamouring for justice with no hope at sight. This paper is therefore inspired by the continuous agitations to interrogates the concept of justice and its applicability to the people of Sankera, it also examines the position of justice in ensuring economic, political development and peaceful coexistence in Sankera. The paper adopts a descriptive and qualitative methodology, it also employs, multidisciplinary approach for data collection, analysis and presentation, it depends on both primary and secondary sources to conduct it findings. Findings of this study conceives justice beyond the mere absence of active violent confrontations as the paper situates the concept of justice in line with Michael Sandel who sees justice as being connected with freedom, welfare and virtuous life of a person or group of persons. The paper concludes that justice is a necessary condition for societal development with particular reference to Sankera axis and as such, commitment must be made at all cost by all relevant authorities, traditional, religious and political authorities, military and paramilitary alike to deliver justice to the people.

Keywords*: Justice, Peace, Sankera, Nigeria, Development

Introduction
In crisis situations, such as banditry and economic crisis pose significant challenges to individuals, communities and societies. In such case, decision makers must navigate complex moral and ethical dilemmas, balancing competing values and interest in the face of uncertainty and urgency. Michael Sandel's theory of justice, as outlined in his book "Justice:

what is the right thing to do?" provides a framework for thinking about these moral dimensions of conflict decision making. Sandel's theory emphasizes the importance of considering the common good, moral virtues and civic responsibility in decision making. He argues that justice is not just a matter of individual rights and freedom, but also involves a sense of community and the common good. In crisis situation like that of Sankera, where the stakeholders have neglected their primary duty of protecting lives and properties, this means considering not just the immediate needs and interest, but also the long-term consequences of decisions for the community as a whole. In the actual sense of humanity, the place of justice in the life of any society is so important that no community can afford to ignore the invaluable and sensitive role it plays in holding the fabrics of the society. The concept of justice could therefore be considered as the bed rock of all normal great societies. This is particularly so because, justice, when denied can cause a people to protest, when suppressed can cause a people to exhibit indifference towards a common goal but when served or delivered, it can inspire a people to act committedly in unison for the common good (324).

Unfortunately, the Sankera federal constituency of Benue state since her creation in 1967 to this period is battling with one form of crisis or the other arising from political conflicts, sectional conflicts, economic conflicts and most importantly, of recent the issue of banditry as witnessed 'Mbakwendev criminal group' kidnapping, killing, stealing and destroying valuable properties. At the heart of these problems lies the issue of justice. If justice is sincerely and faithfully managed in Sankera area by the decision makers, the peace that is eluding Sankera federal constituency which has earned Benue state status of "food basket of the nation" the area's socio-political and economic backwardness might have not occurred in the first place. There is, however, a moral judgement that justice if maintained is good and it enables peaceful and stable society. This paper therefore, takes a critical look at the concept of justice according to Michael Sandel theory of justice to bring out it relevance and relative position in promoting a lasting peace and enhancing social and economic development in a crisis torn society like Sankera (346).

The concept of Justice
To enhance the understanding of the study, there is a need to explain the concept of justice by using different philosopher's views since every aspect of human life in this world is affected by this concept justice directly or indirectly. It is an important tool in shaping our social thoughts and also the cultural, religious, economic, psychological, and most especially, political spheres that; peaceful, harmonious co-existence and development among men of all societies is key. Justice as a concept or theory is among the most commonly discussed issues in philosophy, and the history of justice is as old as the history of man. It appears to us that it is natural to man, for example, it assumes a high degree of importance in every sphere of human endeavor. In the past several centuries, justice has played one of the most important roles in the micro and macro societies. It is not only a recurrent concept, it is an idea in philosophy of ethics, jurisprudence, governance or other form of human undertaking that involve human relationships, administration, and management, but also cardinal virtue upon which the global peace is built on. That's why so many researchers have focused on this issue. Through the ages, the definition of "justice" has taken the coloring of cultures, philosophies, individuals, and schools of thought. Most of the social and political philosophers aimed at solving this problem. It seems to be   a common problem to find definitions of justice.

Understanding the Philosophy of Justice

According to Plato, justice is a universal concept that transcends human conventions and laws. It is a state of being in which each individual performs their designated role in society, and in which the three parts of the soul (reason, spirit, and appetite) are in harmony with one another. Justice is achieved when individuals cultivate virtues such as wisdom, courage, and temperance, and when they live in accordance with the eternal and unchanging principles of the universe. Plato's definition of justice is doing one's own work; for justice is the minding of one's own business and not meddling with other people's affairs." (The Republic, Book IV).

Aristotle defines justice as the virtue that assigns to each person what they deserve. He distinguishes between two types of justice: distributive justice, which concerns the distribution of goods and services within a society, and corrective justice, which concerns the rectification of injustices and the punishment of wrongdoing. Aristotle argues that justice is a mean between excess and deficiency, and that it is achieved when individuals act in accordance with reason and virtue. For Aristotle "Justice is the virtue which assigns to each man his due." (Nicomachean Ethics, Book V).

For utilitarian justice: according to utilitarian philosophers such as Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, justice is the maximization of overall happiness or well-being. This means that actions are right if they promote the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people, and wrong if they fail to do so. Utilitarian justice is often criticized for its potential to justify the sacrifice of individual rights and interests for the sake of the greater good. Utilitarian definition of justice is the maximization of overall happiness or well-being." (326).

Immanuel Kant in his 'Metaphysics of Morals' defines justice as the application of moral law to the external actions of individuals. He argues that justice is based on the principle of respect for the autonomy and dignity of all individuals, and that it requires the protection of individual rights and freedoms. Kantian justice is often seen as a form of deontological ethics, which emphasizes the importance of moral rules and duties. (421).

John Rawls in his theory of justice defines justice as fairness and argues that a just society is one that is governed by principles of justice that are fair and acceptable to all rational individuals. Rawls' theory of justice as fairness is based on two principles: the principle of equal basic liberties, and the principle of distributive justice, which requires that social and economic inequalities be arranged to the benefit of the least advantaged members of society. Rawls' definition of justice is all about fairness, and fairness is the principle of distributing benefits and burdens in a way that is acceptable to all rational individuals (257).

David Miller, in his 'Principles of Social Justice' defines distributive justice concerns the distribution of goods and services within a society. It is often seen as a matter of economic justice, and is concerned with issues such as poverty, inequality, and access to resources. Theorists of distributive justice often argue that a just distribution of goods and services is one that is fair, equitable, and responsive to the needs and interests of all individuals. therefore, justice is the fair distribution of resources, benefits, and burdens within a society." (152).

According to Michael Moore, justice is concerned with the punishment of wrongdoing and the rewarding of good behavior. It is often seen as a matter of moral justice, and is concerned with issues such as guilt, innocence, and desert. This is called

retributive justice. Theorists of retributive justice often argue that punishment should be proportionate to the offense, and that it should be designed to promote moral reform and rehabilitation (342). Howard Zehr in book 'Changing Lenses' justice is concerned with the repair of harm and the promotion of healing for victims, offenders, and communities. It is often seen as a matter of relational justice, and is concerned with issues such as accountability, forgiveness, and reconciliation. This is seen as restorative justice. Theorists of restorative justice often argue that justice should be focused on repairing harm and promoting healing, rather than punishing wrongdoing. (417).

In Noel O'Sullivan's, book 'Social Justice' justice: justice is concerned with the promotion of equality, fairness, and human rights within a society. It is often seen as a matter of systemic justice, and is concerned with issues such as racism, sexism, and economic inequality. Theorists of social justice often argue that justice requires the transformation of social and economic systems to promote greater equality and fairness. (173). Tom Tyler's book 'Why People Obey the Law' maintained that justice is concerned with the fair and impartial application of rules and procedures to ensure equal treatment and protection under the law. It is often seen as a matter of institutional justice, and is concerned with issues such as due process, equal protection, and access to justice. Theorists of procedural justice often argue that justice requires the establishment of fair and impartial procedures for resolving disputes and making decisions (428).

Justice according to Michael Sandel

A critical understanding of the concept of justice in the Sandel approach shows that, his thought or view of justice points to specific factors that should be taken into account in the formation of the theory of justice and sets it deep in reality. This paper would like to take a closer look at them. They are: first: citizenship, sacrifice, and service, secondly: the moral limits of markets, thirdly: inequality, solidarity, and civic virtue and fourthly: the politics of moral engagement.

Starting with the first: sacrifice, and service. Many times, Sandel emphasizes the value of community; just society requires a strong sense of community; and above all the national community. That is why it has to cultivate in citizens a concern for the whole, a dedication to the common good. Values and civic virtues, which citizens bring to public life, should be included. Society is obliged to the explicit teaching of civic virtue, and also to the practical, often inadvert civic education. It takes place, for example, when young people from different economic classes, religious backgrounds, and ethnic communities come together in common institutions. Such places as schools, colleges, and even the army. Sandel notices that nowadays many public schools are in a parlous condition and only a small fraction of society serves in the military, so he asks a serious question: how a democratic society so vast and disparate could cultivate the solidarity and sense of mutual responsibility that a just society requires? He calls for finding   new ways to arouse in society a sense of patriotism and pride, and a new   willingness to serve their country (35).

Secondly, Sandel describes the moral limits of markets as an important factor in the theory of justice. One of the most striking tendencies of our time is the expansion of markets and market-oriented reasoning into spheres of life traditionally governed by non-market norms. Sandel notes that in the last 30 years, since the free market arose, we have

moved to market society which is a very dangerous process. He believes that the spread of markets should be resisted for two reasons. First, because markets are more responsive to purchasing power rather than to any de liberate assessment of need. Consequently, those with less ability to pay will not have their needs met as effectively as those with greater financial resources. If in society the healthcare is provided via market, the rich will be able to provide better treatment compared to that received by the poor. Second, it is argued that unchecked markets are corrosive to the cultural and moral fabric. Markets reflect and promote certain norms, certain ways of valuing the goods. Because marketizing social practices may corrupt or degrade the norms that define them, we need to ask what nonmarket norms we want to protect from market intrusion. Sandel provides an interesting discussion of experimental evidence that suggests that paying people to be good citizens reduces their willingness to act altruistically. Monetary incentives for reading may help school children increase their willingness to read, for example, but such rewards will ultimately undermine the appropriate ways of valuing books, reading, learning and education (39).

Next factors of justice which Sandel discusses are solidarity, civil vir tue and the inequality issue related to them. A lively debate about the problem of a fair distribution of income and wealth has been very strong in philosophy since the 1970s. However, we can see a certain drawback in it: too great gap between the rich and the poor undermines the solidarity that democratic citizenship requires. As inequality deepens, the rich and the poor live more and more apart. Elitism and higher quality pull the rich away from public places and services, leaving them to those who cannot afford anything else.

"The affluent send their children to private schools (or to public schools in wealthy suburbs), leaving urban public schools to the children of families who have no alternative. A similar trend leads to the secession by the privileged from other public institutions and facilities. Private health clubs replace municipal recreation centers and swimming pools. Upscale residential communities hire private security guards and rely less on public police protection. A second or third car removes the need to rely on public transportation. And so on. The affluent secede from public places and services, leaving them to those who can't afford anything else"(42).

This has two consequences: fiscal and social. Fiscal means that public services are getting worse because people who no longer use these ser vices are less likely to support their taxes. The social consequences are as follows: public institutions such as schools, parks, playgrounds, and social centers cease to be places where citizens of different backgrounds meet. Places that once gathered people and served as informal schools of civic virtue have become few. The issue of social justice would treat as one of the main goals the re- construction of the infrastructure of civic life. Instead of focusing on re-distribution in order to expand access to private consumption, it would burden the rich with the reconstruction of public institutions and services, so that the rich and the poor would like to use them. It draws people from their closed communities into common spaces of common democratic citizenship. Focusing on the social consequences of inequalities and the ways of reversing them may find political traction of those who do not have arguments about the distribution of income as such. It would also help to underline the relationship between distributional justice and the common good (47).

In the end, Sandel raises issues of politics of moral engagement. It is now believed that public involvement in matters of the good life as a civil offense goes beyond the limits of a liberal public reason. It is believed that politics and law should not be entangled in

moral and religious disputes, as this opens the way to coercion and intolerance. Citizens of pluralistic societies disagree about morality and religion, but this does not exclude the possibility of building a just society based on mutual respect. In recent decades, we have started to assume that respecting the moral and religious beliefs of our citizens means ignoring them, leaving them alone and trying to lead a public life without referring to them. But this attitude of avoidance can arouse false respect. Meanwhile, Sandel believes that a firm public commitment to our moral misunderstandings could provide a stronger and not weaker basis for mutual respect. Instead of avoiding moral and religious beliefs that our fellow citizens bring into public life, we should address them more directly – some- times by challenging and contesting them, sometimes by listening to and learning from them. He professes the thesis that the policy of moral commitment is not only a more inspiring ideal than a policy of avoidance. It is also a more promising basis for a just society (48). This for Sandel does not guarantee a just society where the citizens can enjoy a harmonious and a peaceful coexistence but rather triggers all kinds of conflicts.

Understanding the Philosophy of Peace
The knowledge of history, the knowledge for the lives of people of the world and especially the knowledge of our people, the knowledge of the viewpoints of philosophers, politicians and theoreticians about peace, as a spiritual and universal value, even today remains the orientation compass towards it. On the one hand, the aspiration of these people and nations creates the existential condition for a long lasting and a permanent peace. From the other hand, the existence of wars, regional and global conflicts in different times brings in the tables of philosophers, diplomats and statesmen the need of engagement in theoretical, political, juridical and practical level. The idea that "Peace is a concept that refers to the lack of a conflict, but at the same time represents a wider concept that refers to security in social relations or economic welfare, the equality and justice in political relations of a state, lack of war or lack of a conflict", witnesses the complex nature of peace. Another definition of peace even refers to keeping balances in human relations, tolerance and solving problems through dialog and deals. But above all this rationalizing and paradigms, peace is a dominating element in democracy because it is related to honor and guarantee of freedom and basic human rights (54).

A short historical-philosophical glance over peace the origin of the notion and the meaning of peace, that has arrived to us nowadays has its roots in ancient times. The word "Peace" has its origin from the ancient English which mean "freedom from conflicts", comes from Latin language "pax", while in the ancient Greek comes from the word "eirene (Ειρήνη)". In ancient times that symbolized harmony, tolerance and understanding among people. Today, this notion refers not only to the process of reaching peace among individuals of society, but also in a meditative, richer and more complex context such as "Being in peace with yourself", this means achieving a state of serenity and harmony with yourself. In times, the origin of this concept has evolved gaining a wider dimension and meaning. Peace is a concept that refers to the lack of a conflict, but at the same time it represents even a wider notion related to the field of human or international relations that has to be healthy and in accordance with the international values. This concept means the achievement of an economic well-being, the establishment of justice in political relations, also the lack of war or conflicts. Another definition of peace includes even having balances in human relations, tolerance and solving conflicts through having dialog and making deals. Peace is a dominating element in democracy because it has to do with the respect of freedom and

basic human rights, and with the guaranteeing the respect of these rights. However, the concept of peace couldn't escape from interpretations in different forms varying from the cultural level, experiences of society and to the historical and political context it is experienced in (67).

Today, peace is nourished even from the cultural level of modern society, that includes even the establishment of a spiritual peace with itself, which closely relates to the highest moral values of man. Love for peace was transformed in a vital movement only during the 19th century, when it was strongly set against First World War and exercised a wide activity even latter during war in Vietnam, Iraq etc. During the period of Cold War between United States of America and ex-USSR, pacifists protested against the use of atomic weapons, which can cause a new World War. During the war in Iraq, the pacifist movement supporters had the idea that war against terrorism couldn't be solved with the use of weapons but, through other peaceful ways, making space for diplomacy and making pressure to strengthen the laws (89).

Peace and its Two Sides of Medal

The one side of the medal of the problem of peace remains the level of human freedoms that man had in today's society. The progress of democracy and its content is closely related to the fact that how much from the field of the rights and freedoms the individual and the human society "grabs," from the state. Human freedoms and rights form the basis upon which the democratic system of a society is raised. The other side of the medal on the problem of peace, remains the establishment of right and stable relations with other nations. In this framework, a right and a stable peace cannot be done without righteousness. It will be established and strengthened when it is supported on the basis of legitimate right of people and not on the basis of interests of some powerful countries, which in relation with people and states, impose their hegemonic and enslaving policies. This point of view announced from prominent personalities protecting peace and freedom, has been transformed in principle and work program for international organizations, as warrantors of a stable and a permanent peace. A considerable number of philosophers, influenced by the ideas of Kant and Rousseau, concluded and formulated enough concepts that overcame those of the above philosophers, in response of the need of our times finding arguments for the phenomenon of reciprocal and stable relationships between justice and peace. In this formulations justice is evaluated as a human request and an important virtue throughout which the rights of individual and all society are protected and guaranteed (97).

The essence of this outlook is supported on the existence of a close relation between the justice of everyone with the peace of all. Justice and peace are not empty concepts or distant aspirations, but values that are gained and a common wealth of free and emancipated people. In this sense the protection and keeping of peace and justice requires an all-inclusive commitment of all, considering that as primary task of society. History of humanity witnesses that peace and justice have conquered new spaces in accordance with the stages of society development. It's the duty of philosophers to manifest in front of human society, not only the historical and philosophical circumstances of relations and influences that exist among human freedom itself, freedom of society, justice and peace, but also the new visions about them, as the only alternative over which human life is raised and developed (105).

Concept of Development

Development is a broad concept. It entails human, political, social, and economic development. Notably, the most profound objective of development is to liberate human potentials, (Gran, 32), hence human development forms the basis for evaluating political, economic, and social development. It is expected that a progressive political process, social transformation, and economic development should translate to significant changes in the quality of life of the people.

Gran construes development as a social and practical process that liberates human potentials so that people may achieve the maximum socially feasible and practical control of available resources required to achieve basic human needs and security. Gran's view suggests that development is a collective process that allows, or ought to allow, the meaningful and effective participation of all classes of people in the society for the liberation of human potentials. Development, thus, focuses on liberating human abilities in ways that facilitate their exercise of absolute control over resources to achieve their basic human needs (56).

The Humanist View of Development

The humanist view construes development as: a process by which the members of society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed (45). This view includes processes that people explore to improve their quality of life-based on their aspirations, and through the sustainable mobilization and management of available resources for equitable and legitimate distribution of the benefits among people.

For Burkey (35), the humanist view of development represents: a process by which an individual develops self-respect, and becomes more self-confident, self-reliant, cooperative, and tolerant to others through becoming aware of his/her shortcomings as well as his/her potential for positive change. This takes place through working with others, acquiring new knowledge, and active participation in the economic, social, and political development of their communities (36). This short passage holds development as a process that facilitates people's recognition and activation of their potentials. It allows them to work in the collective through the knowledge they have gained to achieve their basic and abstract needs. Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:26) identify these needs as self-respect, self-confidence, self-reliance, and the people's collective involvements in socio-economic and political dialogue for sustainable change in their societies.

According to the United Nations Development Programme, development involves enlarging people's choices. These choices include the desire for creative and productive opportunities and self-respect. The Programme notes the need to understand that people have certain potentials and abilities from birth to fully appreciate the development idea about enlarging the people's choice (80). The United Nations identifies these potentials and abilities as "active participation, empowerment, and a sense of belonging to a community. Hence, "development is of the people, for the people and by the people" (UNDP, 2000:17). According to the United Nations Development Programme, therefore, development creates an environment in which everyone can expand their capabilities.

The humanist view includes the idea that development should focus on people's fundamental needs such as shelter, food, health, and protection. For Coetzee (1989:8), development should promote people's "self-esteem, the feeling of a sense of respect and

worth within the society" (Coetzee, 8). In addition to self-respect, Coetzee notes that development should improve the quality of life of the people in ways that facilitate the achievement of their most fundamental needs (25). Todaro believes that human esteem and the values of development are possible if and only if people are free to express their potentials. Hence, any successful development approach must respect human rights and include the recognition that people are equal and must be protected from servitude (17). Gran shares this sentiment when he argues that: that human beings do not live by material needs alone, but rather they need safety, affection, and self-esteem. They also need to be loved, have justice at their disposal, have a purpose to fulfill in their societies, and be empowered to have control of their future (20). Humanists, thus, view development as a process that ought to focus on human's personal, social and mental satisfaction.

The Emotivist View of Development

Development analysis goes beyond the acquisition of material wealth to include people's emotional and psychological satisfaction (Rahman, 17). The idea is that development should create a sense of meaning for people, facilitate respect and affection in society, coexistence among people, a sense of belonging to a social collective for common objectives. Swanepoel and De Beer accept Rahman's view of the psychological imperative of human development as abstract needs but emphasize human happiness, dignity, and self-reliance (26). According to Todaro, development should enhance "the power of the people to secure the three basic values of human development: life-sustenance, self-esteem, and freedom from servitude." Wetmore and Theron add that development should provide for community capacity and empowerment. In this way, development helps people to acquire the capacity to articulate their needs. It allows them to control the resources that are needed to improve their conditions of living. Hence, development works to sustain human life (76).

The Economic View of Development

The economic view of development construes development as "a process that is meant for the equitable social and economic transformation of the society through institutionalized social structures and people's positive attitudes for an accelerated and increased growth and poverty eradication" (Smith, 17). This view construes development as a way of facilitating equitable societal change through structural capacities. It entails the sustainable use of resources to improve the economic opportunities of the people (19).

The Goals of Development

Smith construe development as "a physical reality and a state of mind in which society has secured the means for obtaining a better life" Society grows in wealth and mental enrichment. It improves the standard and quality of life of its people through development. Society combines economic, political, social, and institutional processes to acquire better living conditions and improve the general welfare of its people (22). Development, thus, aims to:

a) increase the availability and distribution of goods and services needed for human survival. These services can be technological, agricultural, economic, or social in nature. They can include things such as food, shelter, health, and security.

b) To improve the living standard of people in all aspects of their lives. These aspects include social needs such as education and human cultural values, household, and national income. The achievement of these needs enhances people's individual and national material wellness and self-worth.

c) To expand the range of the available individual and national economic and social choices by freeing them from servitude by forces of ignorance and human misery on the one hand, and dependence from other people and nation-states on the other. Development focuses on human wellbeing in terms of their livelihood, sustainability, and security (126). Swanepoel and De Beer notes that development encompasses security and freedom of choice and action, and bodily, material, and social wellbeing on the other hand. Hence, development aims mainly to improve the lives of the people (77).

Michael Sandel's concept of justice emphasizes the importance of civic virtue, moral worth, and distributive justice. Let's examine the implications of his ideas for the Sankera people of Benue State, Nigeria.

Sankera People's Cultural Context
The Sankera people are from Sankera federal constituency in Benue State, with a rich cultural heritage. Their traditional society is organized around a complex system of kinship, age grades, and territorial divisions. The Sankera people place a strong emphasis on community, cooperation, and mutual aid.

Implications of Sandel's Justice for the Sankera People
Civic Virtue: Sandel's emphasis on civic virtue and active citizenship might challenge the Sankera people's traditional hierarchical structure. Encouraging participatory governance and civic engagement could help promote more inclusive decision-making processes. Moral Worth: The Sankera people's cultural values prioritize community and cooperation. Sandel's concept of moral worth might encourage the Sankera people to reflect on the moral value of their communal practices and how they contribute to the common good. Distributive Justice: The Sankera people's traditional system of land ownership and distribution might be challenged by Sandel's ideas on distributive justice. Sandel's emphasis on fairness and equality could lead to a re-evaluation of land distribution and access to resources.

Challenges and Opportunities
Cultural Adaptation: Sandel's ideas might require adaptation to accommodate the Sankera people's unique cultural context. Power Dynamics: The introduction of new ideas on justice might disrupt existing power dynamics within Sankera society. Community Engagement: Sandel's emphasis on civic virtue and participatory governance could foster greater community engagement and cooperation among the Sankera people. Michael Sandel's concept of justice, as outlined in his book "Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?", emphasizes the importance of civic virtue, moral worth, and distributive justice. If applied to the Sankera people's social, political, and economic structures, Sandel's ideas could have several potential impacts.

Social Structure: Sandel's emphasis on civic virtue and community involvement might encourage the Sankera people to re-examine their traditional social hierarchies and age-

grade systems. This could lead to a more inclusive and participatory approach to decision-making, potentially empowering marginalized groups within Sankera society.

Political Structure: The Sankera people's traditional political system, based on a council of elders, might be influenced by Sandel's ideas on distributive justice. Sandel argues that justice involves not only respecting individual rights but also promoting the common good. This could lead to a more equitable distribution of resources and power within Sankera society.

Economic Structure: Sandel's critique of markets and his emphasis on the importance of civic virtue in economic life might challenge the Sankera people's traditional economic practices. For example, Sandel argues that certain goods and services, such as healthcare and education, should not be treated as commodities. This could lead to a re-evaluation of the Sankera people's economic priorities and a greater emphasis on social welfare and community development. However, it's essential to note that the Sankera people's cultural context and traditional practices would need to be carefully considered when applying Sandel's ideas. The potential impacts of Sandel's concept of justice on the Sankera people's social, political, and economic structures would depend on various factors, including the extent to which Sandel's ideas are adapted and contextualized to fit the Sankera people's unique cultural and historical context.

The Impact of Sandel's Concept of Justice on Violence among the Sankera People of Benue State

The impact of Michael Sandel's concept of justice on violence among the Sankera people of Benue state is a complex issue. Sandel's ideas emphasize the importance of civic virtue, moral worth, and distributive justice. If applied to the Sankera people's social and political structures, Sandel's concept of justice could potentially reduce violence by promoting a more inclusive and equitable distribution of resources. However, the Sankera people have historically faced challenges related to land ownership, political representation, and economic opportunities, which have contributed to violence and conflicts with neighboring groups Sandel's concept of justice might encourage the Sankera people to re-examine their traditional practices and institutions, potentially leading to positive changes. Some potential benefits of Sandel's concept of justice for the Sankera people include:

Promoting Civic Virtue: Encouraging active citizenship and community engagement could help reduce violence by fostering a sense of shared responsibility and collective ownership.

Addressing Distributive Justice: Sandel's emphasis on fair distribution of resources could help alleviate tensions related to land ownership and economic opportunities.

Fostering Moral Dialogue: Sandel's concept of justice encourages public deliberation about moral values, which could help promote greater understanding and tolerance among different groups. Therefore, it's essential to consider the unique cultural and historical context of the Sankera people and the potential challenges of implementing Sandel's concept of justice in a way that respects and acknowledges their traditional practices and institutions.

Recommendations

Justice cannot be taken for granted if a society must make progress. Nothing should be counted too expensive, no negotiation too hazardous, painful and irrational to be made for justice to be restored. The destruction and killings of a great magnitude seen in this banditry group called 'Mbakwendev' activities are financially involved hence sponsorship of the wicked activities is certain. Tracing the sponsors by government to tackle the menace is key. Most importantly, the justice system needs to be responsive. Those saddled with the responsibility of igniting justice should not compromise for either family ties, religious or political affiliations. Another key aspect is an effective and practical oriented education aimed at promoting justice, peace and welfare of the people. Education is necessary for the sustenance of justice in any society. Its helps to equip individuals with capability to accept justice, to know and value its impotence and move towards enhancement of a just and peaceful coexistence most especially in a crisis ton area like Sankera.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated the application of Michael Sandel's theory of justice to the crisis situation of Sankera axis. Through a critical analysis of Sandel's theory and its application to the case, this paper has highlighted the importance of considering the ethical dimensions of crisis decision making and the value of Sandel's theory in providing a framework for navigating complex crisis situations. Michael Sandel', theory of justice provides a valuable tool for resolving complex crisis situations including those involving social vices. Sandel's theory encourages us to think critically about the common good, moral virtues and civic responsibility. In the case of social vices, Sandel's theory highlights the importance of addressing the root causes of social problems, rather than just their symptoms. By considering the ethical dimensions of social vices, we can develop a more nuance understanding of the complex issues involved and work towards creating a more just and equitable society together with a lasting peaceful coexistence. From the above analysis it is observed that centuries over centuries the desire of people for justice and peace continues to be a distant dream, because human society inherits problems from the biggest ones that harm its security and its existence. The efforts for the establishment of democracy are efforts for the organization of societies, in order to support the triumph of new social values and the functioning of the state of law in full harmony with them.

In a paradoxical glance, disappearing the conflict from the universe that we live in, means disappearing human life itself. As far as we live, we will have conflicts, the world we live in is a world of diversity, different ideas and viewpoints, which we cannot avoid, they can frequently become a starting point for conflicts. From these proceeds the idea that, the duty of an organized society is not the disappearance of conflicts, but their management and finding solutions which cause little loss and have low cost. The above thought is similar to what is obtainable in Sankera axis since the decision makers have neglected justice. Therefore, Michael Sandel's concept of justice offers valuable insights for the Sankera crisis. By examining the implications of his ideas, we can identify opportunities for promoting more inclusive and equitable governance, while also acknowledging the challenges of adapting Western philosophical concepts to a unique cultural context as we work towards creating a lasting peaceful coexistence.

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PROMOTING INNOVATION FOR DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A PARTICIPATORY-BASED PEDAGOGY: THE FREIREAN MODEL RE-CONSIDERED

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Abstract
The aim of educational practices and policies should be to inculcate innovative tendencies in learners. Failure to consider this puts the practices and policies into the risk of churning out graduates who are incapacitated of contributing meaningfully to the development of the society.Paulo Freire in an attempt to resolve the above dilemma, argues that the stimulation of innovative qualities in learners is attainable through the appropriation of what he terms the 'problem posing' pedagogical model, which is characterized by the creation of a dialogical atmosphere, tolerance for freedom, critical thinking and radicalism, and the provocation in learners, the propensity for curiosity, self-affirmation, communication and praxis. This studyexamined the Freirean pedagogical approach in an attempt to ascertain the extent at which its appropriation can promote innovation in learners, and by extension, approximate to human capital development. Adopting the qualitative design and the methods of hermeneutics and textual analysis, this papercorrelated education, innovation and development, and argues that innovation drives development, and thatthe Freirean model contains elements which when adopted, can foster innovative capacities in learners for societal transformation. It therefore recommends that parents at home should endeavour to dislodge dictatorial practices that engender mutism and timidity in their wards. Teachers should be more interactive in their teaching approach to encourage learner's participation, while curriculum planners should inject learning exercises like debates in curriculums to foster a sense of deliberation and interaction in students; and finally, it proposes that the government and societal authorities should ensure an enabling environment for learning.

Keywords: Innovation, Development, Participation, Freirean Model, Pedagogy.

Introduction
From antiquity, the search for a perfect definition of education, an articulation of its purpose, an elucidation of its attending concepts and a prescription of workable instructional model, has been the preoccupation of thinkers with bias in education. This attempt to project a lucid explication of the nature and meaning of education has been greeted with such controversy that reaching a consensus seems far-fetched. The Latinized etymological rendition displays same controversy as it flanks two perspectives - *educare* and *educere*; while *educare* translates to the 'act of training', *educere* denotes 'to lead out' (Caft, 1984). These etymological versions have translated in the bipolarization of philosophers of

education along two predominant orientations, reflecting two metaphysical *cum* epistemological foundations; viz: the materialist-empiricist camp on the one hand, and the idealist-rationalist camp on the other hand. While the former, which adopts the *educare* point of view and championed among others, by John Locke, posits that a child's (learner's) mind is, from birth, a 'tabula rasa' (Abiogu, et al, 2016), an empty slate upon which knowledge, skills, attitude and culture are gradually and mechanically imprinted; the latter which favours the *educere* Latin root and espoused among others, by Socrates and Descartes, projects that man is born with innate ideas or principles (Cardinal, 2020) and that education plays the role of mid-wifery, eliciting such innate knowledge.Despite these differences, there is still need to seek for a point of interaction for a balanced education that would eventually culminate in appropriate levels of *educare* and *educere*. Thispoint of interaction must be articulated to contain what an educated child should know and be able to do. *Educare* and *educere* radiate equal relevance since education devoid of *educare* dooms students to starting over each generation, while ignoring *educere* produces students who are incapacitated in solving novel problems. Hence, any system of education that supplies students with only one of these has failed miserably (Bass & Good 2004).

Against the above backdrop, this paper therefore contends that solving novel problems, and by extension, exhibiting innovative tendencies, requires a blend between *educare* and *educere* in such a way that, that which is imbibed and internalized via *educere* as components of culture, provides the platform and raw materials for the change by *educare*'s critical and creative approach; and this is reflected in Freire's pedagogy. In addition to the above, this paper, which seeks to ascertain the extent at which Freire's model can, as a matter of immediacy, help engender innovation in learners, and by extension, the development of societies, posits that an appropriation of tolerance for freedom, critical thinking and radicalism and the provocation in the learner, of the propensity for curiosity, self affirmation, communication and praxis in every teaching and learning environment, can help solve the problems of human capital development. The paper also maintains that insecurity which is a product of lack of human capital development can be addressed when students are disoriented from the culture of aggression and coerciveness and taught to imbibe the culture of dialogue; when leaders as one-time students, adopt innovative approach to the resolution of conflicts and when human capital development is emphasized.

In view of the foregoing, the study, which adopts the qualitative design and the methods of hermeneutics and textual analysis, displays significance for governments at all level as it spells out modalities to be adopted in actualizing total, meaningful and sustainable societal development. Theoretically, it makes far-reaching contribution to knowledge in the fields of education, administration, philosophy and philosophy of education; hence a rich source of reference for further studies in these mentioned academic fields of study. The paper is partitioned into sections, marked by sub-topics: the abstract which attempts to briefly summarize the paper; an introduction that elaborates what is contained in the abstract; the conceptualization of key words as pictured in the topic like, innovation, participation and pedagogy; a consideration of Freirean notion of the human person namely: the human society as constitutive of his point of departure; his concept of education, featuring his perspective to the nature and purpose of education; the problem posing method as his ideal method of education; the tenets of this (problem solving) approach especially with respect to the extent at which they foster and drive innovative thinking in students; an appraisal which assesses the level of interplay between education and development as conceived within the confines of Freirean postulation; and a projection of

some recommendations implicit in lessons sifted from Freirean model; finally, a conclusion which re-presents the paper in an attempt to re-establish the thesis.

Conceptual Analysis

The Concept of Innovation: Innovation as a basic component of successful development-oriented education has the aim of raising learning productivity and improving the quality of learning. It is commonly conceived as the successful introduction of a new thing (Brewer &Tieney, 2012). It is the capacity to display insight beyond what is presently given, and creating new ideas that help in executing tasks or doing a job in a new and different ways. Hence, innovation displays two dimensions namely; an idea which is new and stems from a particular individual or a group of people; and the change occasioned by the adoption of such idea. Innovation can also be broadly classified into two categories, namely; evolutionary and revolutionary (Osolind, 2012), disruptive and sustaining (Yu & Hang, 2010).

Evolutionary innovation, just like its sustaining counterpart, is a gradual but continuous change that involves retaining existing pattern of performance. On the other hand, revolutionary innovation and its disruptive counterpart seeks to totally and thoroughly overhaul existing pattern of doing things and replacing them with novel dimensions within a short period of time. Whether evolutionary or revolutionary, sustaining or disruptive, the bottom line remains that innovation points to something novel and different, not just better, and it must be useful (Okpara, 2007). However, certain factors can constitute barriers to the realization of innovative capacities especially within the academic context. Few of such barriers are mercantilism and consumerism (Serdyukov, 2017), displayed in negative socio-cultural practices like egotism which militate against the development of creativity and innovative tendencies in students (Kerby, *et al*, 2014).

More so, given the fact that innovation is characterized by experimentation and in some cases, disruption of existing pattern with the attendant implication of pushing implementers out of their comfort zones, teachers and school administrators may frustrate innovative inclinations by displaying hostility for the uncertainty orchestrated by major innovations (Serdyukov, 2017). In addition, lack of political will which is evidenced in the prioritization of political and business interest over society's welfare, results in little or no investment in innovative projects which by implication, stifles innovative spirit. But then, the gains of innovation cannot be over-emphasized, as they help to create and satisfy new needs, facilitate the development of creative skills, self learning skills and the realization of potentials towards the development of the polity.

The Concept of Participation: Participation is a consequent of democracy where people are included in planning and implementation (Kouba, 2018) and they are also permitted to bear responsibilities (Braun & Zolfagharian, 2016). It has both an ethical and socio-political colouration of inclusiveness, fairness and equality, and entails that individuals savour the least of a sense of belonging, access to right and favourable space, means, chance and time to vociferate their opinions, to be understood and to contribute to issues affecting them (Niia, et al, 2015). As a practice permissible within the realm of teaching and learning, participation which requires student's mental and emotional involvement, enables them attain their academic goals through the creation of active, creative and enjoyable learning environment (Phaswana, 2010). It is an activity that engages both learners and teachers, and

provides an avenue for familiarity between learners and the ideas to be taught and materials of teaching (Ugwu & Ozoemena, 2019a).

It is pertinent to note that permitting participation may not necessarily consist in getting every students involved in the same way and rate, what matters the most is that participants are provided with an avenue to learn in such a way that the class deeply explores issues from a variety of viewpoints (Triyanto, 2019). Broadly, factors that facilitate participation in students can be either students-induced or teacher-induced. Students-inducing factors are found in their personality as students with high self-efficacy (Stewart, 2008), demonstration of participatory vibes like posing questions, giving opinions and discussion of topics in the classroom (Triyanto, 2019). On the other hand, teacher-inducing factors rest in the teacher's skills, qualities and traits. These dispositions are portrayed in the forms of support, understanding, approachability, friendliness and positive non-verbal behaviour (Triyanto, 2019). However, teacher gestures such as frown, non-affirmativeness and close-mindedness are factors that militate against the development of participatory tendencies in students. These are summarly ways of expressing teacher unprofessionalism (Ugwu & Ozoemena, 2019b).

Concept of Pedagogy: The term 'pedagogy' refers to a conscious instructive activity designed to enhance learning in students. Etymologically, it stems from the Greek duo of *pais*, genitive *paido*, meaning 'child' and *ago*, meaning 'lead', literally rendered in English as 'lead the child' (Rajendra, 2021). It is a term used to refer to teaching procedures, teaching practice and instruction (Loughan, 2006). It is a term that explains the nature of interaction that exists between students, teachers and a learning environment (Murphy, 2008). Pedagogy cannot be reduced to mere teaching because it incorporates a larger socio-cultural value within the teaching and learning environment. It blends the act of teaching with culture, structure and social control mechanism (Alexander, 2008). Hence, as a teaching model for adoption, pedagogy denotes the design for teaching and learning, and its influence on the socio-political and psychological development of learners. A particular favoured pedagogy determines and shapes the judgment and actions of learners toward the attainment of a particular instructive goal because as a matter of importance, it pays attention to learners' background, experience, knowledgeand environment, as well as learning goals.

The Freirean Model

Prelude: On the Human Person vis-à-vis the Human Society: Freire characterizes the human person basically as a social being who is also an agent of change and history. For him, the hallmark of the human person is the capacity to engage in a relationship with other humans and the intelligible world. It is a forth and back relationship because it involves reaching back to yesterday, recognizing today and predicting tomorrow. The lower animals by contrast, possess no historicity, hence unable to emerge from time and by extension, subjected to one dimensional today without consciousness. The human person is one who is capable of apprehending data from reality, not via reflex like the lower animals but through critical reflection which enables them to actively and not passively incorporate and modify the world. Unlike the lower animals, the human person participates in creating the world by his humanly interventions, inheriting acquired experiences, recreating and integrating himself into a context, giving responses to attendant difficulties, objectifying himself, transcending

and discerning. By integration which is distinct from adaptation, the human person displays a critical capacity to make choices and transform reality. Adaptation which characterizes other lower animals, on the other hand, is marked by adjustment and the unwillingness to exert change on reality.

The society for Freire is a reality that is, by nature, in constant flux, and continuously dependent on the human person for the manifestation of its latent possibility for change. There exists a form of relationship between the human person and the world which permits societal mobility and by extension, makes it possible for the creation of historical epochs. This interaction is marked by the participation of man in the task of creating and deciding on reality (Freire, 2005). The human person develops the capacity to critically perceive the way he exists in the world in which he finds himself. The world is not a static reality, but rather a reality in the process of transformation.

On the Nature and Purpose of Education: The primary purpose of education is to instil in learners, the capacity for the transformation of society. Education is needed to resolve the difficulties of a particular moment in history and the interpretation of its attendant aspirations, values and concerns. Hence education should capacitate learners and human persons to reflect on themselves, their roles and responsibilities in the culture and society they find themselves. Education institutes the courage in the student to discuss problems that characterize their immediate environment and to critically intervene in issues that arise in such environment rather than subjecting their senses of selfhood at the mercy of the decisions of others. Education is also meant to create in learners, the disposition to constantly re-evaluate and project analysis. to findings, to appropriate processes and methods that are scientifically oriented, and to see themselves as existing in a dialectical relationship with their social reality. In order words, education must aim at inculcating in learners, those requirements needed to transform the society; to assume an increasingly critical attitude towards the world and so to transform it (Freire, 2005).At this point, it is deducible that education gears towards formation and transformation of society. By this, it does not just producelearners with good characters, capacity for skills acquisition, right sense of judgment and thinking capability, and enlightenment of the thinking faculty,but also transforms the whole person who would in turn respond to the environment with the formation and transformation tools received from education process. Suffice it to say therefore that education brings about physical, mental and moral capability and the formation and transformationof the society at large through the informed, enlightened, formed and transformed individuals living in it. Many scholars have maintained this position (Ugwu and Ozoemena, 2019$_b$; Omoregbe, 1993; Ocho, 1988; Nwankwo, 2014; Kalu, 2011; Sheela, 2014; Goldmann, 1973; Rusk, 1965).

On Ideal Teaching Method: Given the contention that what characterizes the human person is the capacity to integrate and transform the world, where reality is perceived as being in constant flux and receptive to transformation; and given that education performs the task of implanting in learners, elements that capacitate them to transform their environment, the question that begs for answer is, what suitable approach to teaching should be adopted to make such learning-goal feasible? Freire proposeswhat he termed 'Problem-Posing' method, which in his contention, is majorly marked by dialogue. This approach is needed because according to him, the human person's world and the reality with which he interacts are neither static nor is it a given close order that must be accepted and adjusted to; rather,

reality is a problem and a puzzle to be worked on and solved. Reality is the raw material utilized by the human person to create history. The opposite of the problem-posing learning-dimension which Freire vehemently criticized, is what he terms 'banking system of education' which for him, adopts monologue and narration, involving a relationship of a teacher, who is a narrating-subject and students who are listening-object. The significant feature of this model is the sonority of words, not their transforming power - six times six is thirty-six; the capital of Enugu is Enugu. Learners memorize and repeat these phrases as they are deposited without paying attention to their true meaning, function and significance, especially outside the context of narration (Freire, 2000). By implication, it turns learners into containers to be filled. Learners develop only to the extent that they are able to receive, file and store what is deposited. This is a big challenge to the African, particularly Nigerian educational system (Ugwu & Ozoemena, 2019$_b$). Freire exposes the danger of this approach by arguing that in the final analysis, it is the learners' senses of creativity, invention, innovation and true knowledge that get stifled.

In the problem-posing model which Freire applauds, learning is mutual, the student-teacher dichotomy is broken, and students are no longer docile-listeners**,** but participants and critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teachers. The teacher plays the role of introducing lesson topics to students for deliberation and consideration. The problem-posing educator plays the role of creating and recreating alongside with the student**s** (Freire, 2000). Whereas, banking model anesthetizes and inhibits creativity and maintains the subjugation of learners, the problem-posing model permits the constant unveiling of reality, the emergence of consciousness and by extension, the fostering of innovation.

Dialogue: The Core of Freire's Problem-Posing Model

Characteristically, at the centre of Freire's model is dialogue because dialogue provides an avenue for both the students and the teachers to utilize words in their capacities as human persons to name and transform the world. Dialogue is the encounter between persons, mediated by the world; as an existential necessity, it involves an encounter wherein, the united reflection and actions of the interlocutors are addressed amidst the reality which they are meant to transform. Hence, when parties are not willing to change the world, when a party denies another the right to speak, efforts to dialogue become futile. Therefore, authentic dialogical teacher must always make effort to present topics of discussions not as lectures, but as puzzles that ought to be collectively solved.

Dialogue involves an epistemological relationship which binds teachers to engage students not necessarily because they like students or vice-versa, but because they know that the process of learning and knowing is characterized not merely by individualistic but also social dimensions (Freire, 1995). Though everything about dialogue may not be reduced to the display of love; dialogue needs love to thrive because the act of naming the word which is an act of creating and recreating the world gets frustrated if not done in love. Love portrays a two-dimensional sense of commitment-commitment to the cause (in this context, the cause of transforming the world) and commitment to the other with whom one dialogues in an effort to transform the world. More so, dialogue is perpetrated in humility as against arrogance, for no one can genuinely dialogue by denying one's self ignorance and accruing same to others with whom he dialogues in naming and creating the world (Freire, 2000). Furthermore, faith is a crucial component of dialogue– faithin the human person's capacity to create and recreate reality, without which dialogue degenerate in paternalistic manipulation (Freire, 2000). In the same vein, trust and hope are indispensable in every

dialogical activity. Mutual trust leads parties in a dialogue into closer partnership in the task of naming and transforming the world. Hope as being rooted in the spirit, stimulates the desire in man to search in communism with others for solution to challenges capable of stifling change and transformation. As against despair, hope does not consist in crossing one's arms and waiting (Freire, 2000).

Other Elements of Dialogue that Foster Innovation

Critical Thinking/Consciousness: Critical thinking as an element of dialogue is the disposition to perceive absence of dichotomy between people and the world. In contradistinction to naivety which tries to fit itself within the present, critical thinking aims at transforming reality by transcending the present and the given. It goes beyond magical and miraculous interpretation of reality to embody an in-depth disposition and unbiased articulation of problems, the testing of findings, openness to revisions, avoidance of distortion, passive positions, presuppositions and transferring of responsibility while engaging and analyzing problems. As a driver of innovation, critical thinking also involves the ability to question crude practices and refine old approaches by sifting out the best from both old and new patterns as ways of resolving the challenges of the present for progress into the future. Furthermore, as against what Freire terms 'massification'– the blind adherence and submission to general formulas and prescriptions (Freire, 2005), critical consciousness is the deep and genuine reflection on the concrete reality and an effort to transform such massifying-reality.

Curiosity: Curiosity has to do with an inner desire, interest, longing and inquisitiveness to possess acquaintance or to know. It is a necessary intellectual tool that propels one to apprehend and comprehend objects of knowledge in dialogical situations (Freire, 2000). Dialogues are not mere conversational activities, but rather epistemological and transformative activities geared towards understanding of the world as an object meant to be comprehended and transformed. Curiosity is needed to apprentice learners into the new body of knowledge that stems from critical deliberation on their lived experience. This inner drive to comprehend and transform lived experience is a dispositional requirement in a dialogical exercise, and by extension, an essential attribute of an innovative mind.

Praxis: Praxis explains interplay between theory and practice, because true reflections as sources of theory only gain relevance and significance when translated into actions as forms of practice; in the same way that actions become authentically transformative only if their consequences become the object of continuous critical reflection and theory (Freire, 2000). Innovation which denotes a novelty and discovery must be radiated in the merger of intellectualization and action which will, in other words, culminate into continuous transformation of reality as a result of the concretization of the abstract and abstractions from the concrete. Dialogue which provides the interactive platform for the unveiling of the world, and by implication, the possibility for innovation, becomes viable when by-products of reflection and abstraction are properly utilized and concretized via praxis.

Communication: Authentic dialogue meant to stimulate innovative tendencies in learners must be communication-laden, because communication which is the exchange and dissemination of information and thoughts makes it possible for dialoguers to verbalize their

acts of cognition of the object - the world, by which they are mediated. Since dialogue accommodates contrast in opinion and thoughts about reality and the world, communication is needed as a tool to transmit these differences for deliberation during dialogue especially in a learning environment. For in a genuine learning environment, students' thoughts authenticate the teachers' thoughts because thinking about the world and reality which characterizes innovative and authentic thinking is not perpetrated in ivory-tower**,** but in an atmosphere of collaboration facilitated by communication (Freire, 2000). In communication, meaningfulness in man's life is attained, for to impede communication is to reduce men to the status of things (Freire, 2000) and objects, incapable of sharing the products of his innovative thoughts.

Radicalism: Radicalism is a term which denotes temperament and attribute for desiring and effecting spontaneous and holistic change. Within the Freirean theoretical parlance, it refers to a sense of strong and rational commitment to an adopted perspective while increasingly engaging in the task of transforming concrete reality (Freire, 2000). As against sectarianism which is irrational, and distorts reality, radicalism perpetrated and fed by active and critical spirit yields innovation and creativity. The more one exhibits a quality of radicalism, the more one engages reality and comprehends it in order to completely transform it.

Freedom: Freedom bespeaks of liberty, non interference with one's individuality and the permission for the expression of one's autonomy. In as much as freedom does not prohibit wilful conformism to generally stipulated *modus operandi*, choices or precepts, it also permits dissent from the opinions and choices of the 'crowd' or public. It forbids prescription which, for Freire, is an imposition of one's individual choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed into one that must conform with the prescriber's consciousness (Freire, 2000). Innovation, which is the discovery and application of novelty, requires a great level of a sense of individualism, liberty and recognition of one's independent self-consciousness and permission to think differently. It also enjoys one to freely apply the product of such free and independent thinking exercise. Conversely, actions which frustrate freedom not only dehumanize but deter the inner urge to search, thereby stifling creative and innovative powers in individuals and learners.

Self-Affirmation: Self-affirmation which negates self-deprecation, approximates a sense of self-worth, stimulates confidence and contributes in dislodging timidity and naivety. It finds expression in the orientation that no one monopolizes knowledge and that learners just like teachers, should appreciate the fact that they also are capable of, and in some cases, actually possess knowledge worthy to be acknowledged. It describes a departure from overly modest disposition and entails the recognition of the fact that one also has access to knowledge. Situations which objectively exploit and hinder the pursuit of self-affirmation constitute violence (Freire, 2000). To help learners develop innovative spirit, teachers must desist from paternalistic oriented practices like manipulation which tends to anesthetize learners so that they become robots. As against the practice of conquest which involves a subject who conquers another person and transforms him or her into a thing (Freire, 2000), self-affirmation is better facilitated when learners are considered also as subjects who cooperate in order to transform the world through innovation.

Implications of the Freirean Model

Inter-Play of Education and Development within the Freirean Framework:: Development is a complex issue with many different and sometimes contentious definitions. A basic perspective equates development with economic growth, that is, a sum of economic output of the entire firm in the economyas determined solely, in terms of yearly output in *per capita* income or gross national product, regardless of its distribution and the degree of people's participation (Abuiyade, 2018). Some other people define development from the perspective of an imitative process (Abuiyade, 2018), a change from a traditionalist state to a state of modernity. Hence, any society that has abandoned the traditional ways of doing things for a modern one is developed. Development thus becomes a process of change towards modernity. Some others see development as a product of diffusion and acculturation.Countries develop to the extent that they can accommodate or reflect diffusion of ideas, skills, capital and technology from foreign countries. Freire condemns as misleading, any developmental criterion based on indices of *per capita* income, expressed in statistical form (Freire, 2005). In the same vein, he criticizes the modernity version on the basis that it is externally induced; and it is the metropolitan society which derives the true benefit thereof (Freire, 2005). Also, a modernized but not developed society stands the risk of being tactically and technically denied its supposed independent, autonomous and sovereign status, because it is alienated in such a way that its political, economic and cultural decision-making powers are externally located.

Freire would however; favour The United Nations Development Programme's definition of development from the human-capital perspective as leading long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and to be able to participate in the life of the community (UNDP). Education on the other hand, is a measure carefully designed to inculcate in students, the appropriate skills, knowledge attitudes and values, meant to inform their ratiocination in addressing the interconnected societal challenges like climate change, environmental degradation, and loss of biodiversity, poverty and inequality (UNESCO).

Development as conceived within the Freirean orientation is empowerment. It is about people taking care of their own lives, expressing their own demands and finding their own solutions to their problems. It must be judged by a suitable impact on the well-being of the people. It is the improvement of the well -being of a community through efforts focused on job creation, leading to improvement in the quality of life. Hence, learners must be capacitated through education to proffer solutions to today and future challenges. Education which should induce innovative tendencies should also be transformative, and enables learners to make informed decision and take individual and collective action towards societal changes.

Freire, Development and Insecurity: The term insecurity radiates diverse meaning, and this explains the suffixes in words like life-insecurity, property-insecurity, food-insecurity, job-insecurity and feeling-insecure. It is a feeling of uncertainty and a state of vulnerability on concerns about safety of property and life, availability of food and job and personality complex of confidence. Achumba *et al.*, (2013) summarize insecurity both as a systemic-level construct and as a personal experience, characterised by; want of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty, want of confidence, state of doubt, inadequately guarded or protected, instability, etc. While Nwolise (2006) projects the devastating consequences of insecurity as

resulting in internal upheavals, such as unemployment, hunger, starvation, diseases, ignorance, homelessness, environmental degradation and pollution cum socio-economic injustices. Dare and Omoni (2017) who conceived insecurity of life and property from the perspective of violent conflict, describe the drivers of this sought of insecurity as; arm-robbery, torture, abduction for ransom, stealing, assassination, religious and ethnic violence, rape and riots; while food and job insecurity which approximate to his notion of non-violent conflict are the consequences of failure of leadership to adequately provide essential services for people.Ugwu (2020) and Ugwu and Abah (2020) hold a broader view of both development and security that goes beyond physical to metaphysical domains, for the former is dependent on the latter hence they inseparably go together.

How then can this aforementioned social menace be addressed using the Freirean model? It is simply in the realization of the role human capital development plays as an independent variable in ensuring security. Insecurity is a phenomenon that revolves around man; it is man who gets unemployed, hungry, diseased and deceased, homeless and looses properties, hence development which is an enhancing activity should be man-centred. Man should therefore be the beneficiary of developmental activity to ensure improvement of their conditions in areas that they are vulnerable to the devastating phenomenon of insecurity.

More so, Freire advocates for dialogue as an avenue for deliberation. Dialogue makes deliberation possible for people to vent their plights and vociferate their dissents. It is a technique which if well adopted, can serve as a needed measure to evade violent conflicts which has the adverse effect of resulting in insecurity. It is also within the context of a meaningful dialogue that diverse opinions and views are harnessed toward finding solutions to these drivers of insecurity; by emphasizing tenets which engender confidence and innovative spirit, Freire's approach, when adopted by leaders, promotes development and by extension, security.

Recommendations/Lessons from the Freirean Model

For innovation to be effectively fostered in children, all hands must be on deck, hence, teachers, parents, policies and curriculum developers and the government have roles to play.

Teacher: Teachers must perceive their roles as ones that educe (bring forth) from the child, inherent latent potentials and capabilities. They must strive to encourage discussions with no repercussions, be more democratic in their teaching approach to encourage learners' participation, encourage students to think analytically in order to inculcate a sense of ingenuity, indomitability and creativity in them. Importantly, as guides and mentors, they should induce creative and critical thinking in students– where creative thinking is conceived as the ability to make connections and create links between events and phenomenon. In the same context, they should involve students in the process of their own learning. Hence, instead of just teaching them to memorize the right answers, teachers should ask them to engage their own minds by questioning things, attaining understanding (not just knowledge) as a factor that keeps the spark of curiosity alive. Thus, when curiosity is aroused, teachers will no longer have to compel knowledge on students, because students will actually strive to understand as they have become wired in such a way that they become self-powered as curious machines.

On the other hand, teaching students how to think critically entails not only teaching them to be adaptive and innovative in solving problems, but also to inculcate in them, the

skills to question things rigorously, to form sound and well reasoned and coherent argument, to become aware and question their own thinking. When creative and critical thinking interplays, it results in a seed of genius, a fertility of understanding that culminates in the growth of the mind capabilities in such a way that an analysis of things becomes easy, and the mind freed to plan and explore and disciplined to apply reason and rationality as a fortress of understanding things. Hence, as a consequence, the activity of teaching and learning should be made simple, fun, deliberative, participatory, free and accommodative (Ugwu and Ozoemena, 2019ᵦ).

Attention should also be paid to the kind of questions posed, because questions ignite the whole process of teaching and learning; asking higher other questions is the key to critical thinking and by extension, innovative thinking. Students need to be availed the opportunity to grabble with questions that do not have one correct answer, and this is designated in Ugwu and Ozoemena (2019ᵦ) with the phrase 'Give to Me Exactly What I Give to You'. This becomes realistic of the sought of situation they are likely to face when they are outside the classroom. Students therefore should be exposed to degrees of life uncertainties in classes prior to their experience of it off the classroom. By asking tougher questions in the form of the 'why' questions, students are intellectually challenged and dialectically compelled to be exposed to the risk of thinking and feeling that the possibility of thinking and saying things wrongly may attract unfavourable comments and feed-back from teachers and classmates alike.

Tougher questions help to extend the horizon of students' total knowledge beyond what is to be merely tested in exam situations. Rather than asking 'what 5+5 is?', ask 'what are the different ways to arrive at 10?'. Teachers provide the platforms and create the enabling ground that permit the expression of freedom on the side of the students. Freedom is best displayed in the free exercise of reason unrestrained by tradition or authority, especially in a teaching and learning environment. Teachers must ensure to induce in learners, open-mindedness and imaginative capacities; the liberties to recognize and counter the mental frameworks societies impose on students.

Parents: Parents play the role of reviewing and consolidating on a child's learning outcome at school, and they can also encourage innovative thinking. Parents at home should endeavour to dislodge dictatorial practices that engender mutism and timidity in their wards. Overly display of demand for such domestic and cultural practices as respectfulness and modesty should be de-emphasized as a means of ensuring that children do not become overly reserved and withdrawn, with the attendant effect of their questioning and dissenting propensities being dwarfed. Innovative thinking can also be encouraged when parents provoke the imaginative tendencies in their wards. Imagination as a requirement for innovation is without limit, unlike knowledge that is limited. Children cannot innovate without being imaginative and creative, hence they should be allowed to imagine things even when such tends to be laughable and unrealistic. They should communicate what they imagined because something good can proceed out of the process.

Innovative thinking can also be promoted when children are permitted to internalize the difference between rights and wrongs and not just to be told what is right or wrong. Parents should also endeavour to introduce activities that are interesting and motivating as measures to facilitate children-parents interaction, which by extension, builds social skill in children. Every child has creative and innovative potentials, so the role of parents is to provide the experience to help optimize these potentials. These innovative and creative

potentials function to stimulate flexibility in thinking; to have the imagination of thinking things outside of the box.

Therefore, creating space for children to interact their own experience, make decisions about where they want to go to and what they want to do; such opportunities are important to develop what psychologists call 'executive function skills'. Executive function skills are connected to children's creativity and by extension, innovative disposition. Thus, children should be allowed to struggle independently in their quest to resolve domestic challenges without parental aid or interference. They should also be made to understand that they get better, smarter and creative by continuous-trying even when they fail, hence, difference should be encouraged and decisions of the child, respected. Failure of this, breeds children who can only follow the 'given', not creating the 'un-given'.

Curriculum Planners: Curriculum planners should inject learning exercises like debates and group discussions in curriculums to foster a sense of deliberation and interaction in students. They must ensure not to develop curriculum that induces a lop-sided cognitive development in students, because it does not portend healthiness for the society's long term development. The future of a society requires all forms of thinking to be adaptive to present and future needs. Policies and curriculum must be spirited toward the social development of rule-makers and not rule-takers. It must dislodge the promotion of subservience, and produce students who think and value things for themselves. Certification which forms one of the roles of a school system should not be merely conceived as a process that confirms, supports and promotes lop-sided brain development and thinking, through the process of measurement of one person against another. It should be targeted at assessing an individual's aptitude against that individual's own abilities as a means of evading discord and enthroning harmony.

Curriculum must discourage regimented thinking and conformity and fear of failure. Policies should encourage competence, analytical and creative capacities, against mere paper qualification. Hence, towards the end of a tertiary or high school study, a task should be given to students, detailing them to make a presentation from a supposed independently conducted and creative research on solution to a particular societal problem, and this should constitute a greater percentage of their over-all cumulative grades. Such curriculum must pay attention to the intellectual development of students towards the attainment of persistent, independent, imaginative and interactive dispositions.

The Government: The leaders as (supposed) products of education ought to adopt dialogue not only a means of resolving disagreements which leads to crisis, but also a means of aggregating diverse ideas during deliberations towards discovering possibilities and areas of development. This also has the advantage of demilitarizing the polity and downplaying violent aggressiveness as the people are provided a fair and enabling ground to vent their plights, and when people are given a sense of belonging via these dialogical situations, a feeling of security and development becomes something not far-fetched.

Conclusion
This paper which centres on the Freirean educational pedagogy is an effort to ascertain the extent at which it provides modalities for engendering innovative thinking that will translate to the human capital development and by extension, the development of the society. It x-rays the roles of Freirean'problem-posing' pedagogical concepts like dialogue, freedom,

critical thinking, radicalism, curiosity, self affirmation, communication and praxis. The paper therefore enacts the contentions that an appropriation of these Freirean pedagogical tenets will provoke a creative disposition and foster an innovative spirit in learners and students. It posits that insecurity which is a consequence of the neglect of human capital development can be resolved better in a society with policies that encourage inclusiveness which finds expression in dialogue, and also creates a sense of belonging among the citizens. Hence the recommendation that parents at home should endeavour to dislodge dictatorial practices that engender mutism and timidity in their wards. Teachers should be more democratic in their teaching approach to encourage learners' participation. Curriculum planners should inject learning exercises like debates in curriculums to foster a sense of deliberation and interaction in students, while societal leaders as (supposed) products of education ought to adopt dialogue as not only a means of resolving disagreements which leads to crisis, but also a means of aggregating diverse ideas during deliberations towards finding solutions to obstacles that impede development

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BEYOND THE POSSIBILITY QUESTION: THE REALITY AND NATURE OF AFRICAN LOGIC

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Abstract

This work on "Beyond the Possibility Question: The Reality and Nature of African Logic" seeks to go beyond the argument about the possibility of African Logic by affirming the reality of African logic and then elucidating the nature of African logic. There was a point in time, and there was a debate about whether or not there is an African philosophy. With that debate settled and the affirmation of the reality of African philosophy, Udo Etuk tries to fly a kite of the possibility of African logic. Arguing that since logic is a discipline in philosophy, and given that there is an African philosophy, he concluded that there must be an African logic. The crux of the doubt about the existence of an African logic seems to stem from the belief that reasoning and thus, logic is universal and cannot be a matter of cultures. Through the method of analysis, it will be the contention of this research work that given the role language plays in thinking and ultimately in reasoning and also given the limitations and nature of African languages, there is a particular nature of African reasoning. This work ends with some specific practical examples of the nature of African logic.

Keywords: African Philosophy, African Logic, African Reasoning, Udo Etuk, Universal Particular.

Introduction

According to Alexander Getmanova (11), logic as a branch of philosophy examines thought as a means of cognizing the objective world, its forms and laws in which the world is reflected in the process of thought. In the consideration of Getmanova, since the process by which the world is cognized in its entirety is the subject of philosophical studies, then logic represents a philosophical science. Egbeka Aja (9) defines logic as the study of reasoning, of how to think clearly, how to reason validly, and how to argue soundly. From Aja's point of view, logic deals with the methods and privileges by which one distinguishes good from bad reasoning. Logic can also be used to denote the science of the rules of reasoning and the forms in which it occurs. Thus, it is common to consider logic as a term that denotes the laws governing the objective world. This is always the case when one talks of "logic of things" or "logic of events". (Ozumba & John, 10).

As a branch of philosophy, logic shares in the characteristic nature of philosophy, this essentially includes that of a reflective activity. Accordingly, logic reflects on the nature of thinking. Still again, logic can be defined both as a science and an art of correct reasoning. Indeed, logic can be said to be a science in that it is a body of knowledge that is systematically studied for the purpose of evaluating kinds of arguments and predicting the phenomena. This may be the reason that Runkle (9) is of the view that logic is the science of

sciences because its principles, by their very generality, are indispensable to all sciences and indeed to every endeavour where truth is the object.

Logic as an art concerns itself with the critical and constructive business that can be considered in terms of tactical human skill or creativity (Okafor, 4). In defining logic both as a science and an art, Duns Scotus is said to have defined it as "the science of sciences and the art of arts" (Onyeocha, 215). Furthermore, logic is defined as "the study of the methods and principles used in distinguishing correct from incorrect reasoning" (Copi, 3). Similarly, Howard Kahane (2), a contemporary of I.M. Copi, defines logic as an attempt to distinguish between correct or valid and incorrect or invalid arguments. According to Jacques Martin (115), logic is all about the study of reasoning as the tool of knowledge. This means reasoning as a process and an activity must be engaged in conformity with the appropriate rules of rationality that brings about valid knowledge. (Ozumba & John, 11).

Let us also posit that logic provides man with rules of correct or rational thinking, that is to say that logic prescribes the way and manner in which one ought to think more critically, constructively, persuasively, productively, rationally and/or reasonably. Thus, logic can be said to be a critical thinking about thinking itself. From the above, one would discover that these various definitions of logic have something in common one with another. That is to say that all these definitions demonstrate some basic ingredients of logic, which invariably tilt the mind into one and the same direction of thinking. Consequently, it would be seen that each of these definitions obviously and sublimely points one to what logic entails.

Whether from a weak or strong sense, logic can be defined in any of the following ways and would still be acceptable: "the study of reasoning", "the science of proper thinking", "the science of argument", "the art of intelligent thinking", "the study of philosophical science", "a systematic study of thinking", "the art of reasoning", "rational thought or thinking", "a critical thinking", "a critical evaluation", "a logical reflection of thoughts", etc. Logic as a discipline can be classified into two basic areas, namely: formal and informal logic. Formal logic is concerned with the methodology, meta-logic (that is, the metaphysics of logic), and logic proper. Issues covered in logic proper include monadology, logic of propositions, logic of predicate, logic of terms, logic of classes and logic of relations. Mathematical or symbolic logic is that area of formal logic that is set to eliminate the ambiguities and other logical inadequacies of ordinary language philosophy. Consequently, symbolic logic handles this task by means of a formalized language or calculus.

Expectedly then, formal logic tackles issues affecting the modes or forms of mental action, rules of reasoning and the forms and inner structures of thought in order to discover if they are valid or not. Logic is the systematic study of the valid rules of inference. That is the relations that lead to the acceptance of one proposition on the basis of a set of other propositions. More broadly, logic is the analysis of arguments. There is no universal agreement as to the exact definition and boundaries of logic, but there is agreement of analysis in human reasoning. However, it has traditionally included the classification of arguments, exposition of the logical forms, the validity and soundness of deductive reasonings. It is also interested in the strength of inductive reasoning and the study of formal proofs, including paradoxes and fallacies. It also studies the syntax and semantics of logical statements.

When logic originated, it seemed to be a universal discipline. But with progress in philosophy in the West, we started noticing that logic was beginning to take regional dimensions. Instead of having a universal, we started having particular logics. On the strength of the above an attempt was made by Udo Etuk to think of the possibility of an

African logic. But in this paper, it will be argued that to think of the possibility of African logic, it will appear like Africans have no rationality till recently.

The Question of the Universal and Particular in Philosophy

It is necessary to begin this discussion by looking at the nature of philosophy in general. From its inception at Greece, philosophy was an attempt by man to understand and give meaning to his world. As Wiredu would say, "the function of philosophy everywhere is to examine the intellectual foundation of our life using the best modes of knowledge and reflection for human well-being" (62). From this statement, we find the essential elements which constitutes the general conception of philosophy. The first consideration is the conception that much of philosophy consists of conceptual elucidation. It is axiomatic that action by an individual or a group of individuals needs to be guided by ideas, and what philosophy does is to attempt to elucidate the most fundamental of such ideas. Thus, the primary task of philosophy is the pursuit of understanding. However, the task of understanding the world is not an end in itself, but rather it is for the practical good of man.

The second point we need to note about this conception of philosophy is that although philosophy is conceived of predominantly as a theoretized activity, we cannot be oblivious of its practical functions. Philosophy is meant to solve human problems. After all, we do not philosophize in void or vacuum. So philosophy is not simply a function of what form its practice would take, but it is more significantly a reflection on its functions within the context of the challenges, both theoretical and practical facing the world. Now, let us expatiate on these points by characterizing the nature of philosophical problems and the kind of understanding which attempts to tackle them can yield. Philosophical questions like other sorts of questions which engage the human mind arise within the context of the interactions between human beings and their social and physical environments between human beings and themselves. However, unlike other sorts of issues, philosophical questions are not directed at particular issues, for example, whether a certain kind of social arrangement is just or not. Philosophical questions, unlike this kind of questions have a special kind of generality. They are abstract questions such as the general nature of values, and that of the question of the general criteria for the correctness of our claims to knowledge. Included also are questions that centre on the issue of the origin of the world, the stuff of which the world is made of, the meaning of life and the destiny of human beings.

These questions are fundamental because we cannot derive them from other questions. Although they appear not to have a link with the down-to-earth affairs of the world, they nonetheless have a practical motivation. It is worthy of note that no meaningful orientation in life is possible, if we do not pay serious attention to these questions. Though philosophical questions in general are abstract, they are, however, indispensable to human existence. Now, having described the nature of philosophical problems, let us now consider the question of how these questions are investigated. Philosophers proceed to answer these questions by analysis, generalizations and synthesis.

In philosophical analysis, the philosopher deals with concepts but uses philosophy in elucidating these concepts. This conceptual elucidation here is not merely an explanation of meaning like the lexicographer, but show the problematic concepts to be equivalent to certain organization of numbers which are less problematic in nature. This position about the nature of philosophy may be disputed by students in philosophical discourse because there is no agreement about what constitutes the exact nature of philosophy. For if there was any such agreement, then philosophy would cease to be philosophy as a dialogical

activity. There is hardly any issue for which philosophers are in agreement completely. Thus, this raises the problem of the universal and the particular in philosophical discourse. This has to do with question of what minimum character a thought pattern should have, to be a candidate of philosophy and what is the account of the peculiarities of thoughts of individuals and groups. There have been an age long habit whereby many philosophers classify philosophy from different perspectives and shades; some philosophers classify philosophy according to the method used and focus of a particular philosophical system and a few others classify philosophical systems according to geographical regions, religions, cultures and so on. That is why as Onah would have it thus:

> Indeed for a long time, was quite harmless to attach adjectives to philosophical systems in an attempt to classify them. Thus, one reads about Greek philosophy, Christian Medieval philosophy, British empiricism, German idealism, American pragmatism, etc. Any of these classifications evolves the problem of the universal and the particular in philosophy. There has to be something common to all systems for them to be regarded as philosophy; and each system must have some features that distinguish it from other systems (64).

This classification of philosophy according to geographical locations, epochs, religions and cultures can be misleading because when speaking of African, Asian, Christian, Indian and Western philosophies, it gives the impression that there is a way of reasoning common to a group of people by virtue of the fact that they inhabit a particular region or profess a certain faith. But this can be understood because if we examine the issues and methods of some philosophical traditions, we would notice that religion and culture provide the ingredients for each philosophizing and this can only be appreciated by those who belong to such cultures and profess such religious beliefs. But the danger of this is that we would inevitably slide into relativism in philosophy which is not accepted in logic.

But what is wrong with relativism in philosophy? Philosophy though is universal in the sense of employing the method of analysis and criticism, it should have local relevance in the sense that it solves particular problems affecting a people. Philosophy, it is said, does not thrive in vacuum. If all these are accepted, then the idea of this classification could be reasonable. Thus, we can say that there can also be a kind of reasoning common to a people. It is in this, that we can talk of African philosophy and ultimately African logic.

The Idea of Logic and the Humanity of Man
Having discussed the universal and particular in the philosophical discipline, let us now turn to another subject which is a precondition for any discourse to be tagged as philosophical. That means such a discourse must be logical. So we have to look at logic as a discipline in philosophy. Logic is one of the disciplines called philosophy. Its main concern is reasoning. As Etim would put it etymologically, logic is "derived from the Greek word 'Logos' which is the Latin equivalent of 'ratio'" (42). The etymological meaning of logic is reason that is why when you reason well, your reasoning is described as logical or rational. But as Anoh would put it, the "subject matter of logic is argument" (166). Also, Bello believes that "in logic we are primarily concerned with arguments" (3). But for him, this concern with arguments as a science is multifarious from any angle, logic is concerned with reasoning; and the reasoning pattern can be described as a logic. Thus, the reasoning pattern of a people can be said to be a logic of such a people.

Logic or reasoning is essentially a human activity. Arguments are indispensable in human life since human life includes the processes of choosing, decision-making, willing and acting. It is the belief of many philosophers that the essential defining attribute of man is rationality. That is, the capacity of man to reason. Without reason, man's humanity is called to question. As Bello would put it, rationality is "one of man's essential attributes, such that the humanity of any group is in doubt if it lacks rationality" (243). Most times human behaviour is purposive, that is, man behaves for a reason. That is why it is said that human life is impossible without arguments. That means, man behaves in a way that he can justify his actions, his decisions and choices he makes by providing reasons why he acts, decides and chooses in such a manner. This explains why Graham describes human actions as rational. He sees rational action as behaviour alone for reasons or purposes of the agent. Citing an example, Graham says:

> Suppose it is a hot steamy summer day, in Birmingham, Alabama. You and I have just finished wrestling weed from my favourite patch of background Okra. I ascend the porch and open the door to my home. I want an ice cold beer supposes not to be left out in the heat, you too, need an ice cold beer. However, while I walk to the refrigerator, you drive to the supermarket. Why do we travel to different directions? I walk to the fridge because I believe that cold beer is located there, whereas you drive to the supermarket because you believe that the fridge is empty, the market stocks beer (109).

He continued that walking to the fridge is something he did for a reason and your driving to the market is also something you do for a reason. So to act rationally, is to behave for a reason, as such reasons make actions rational from the agent's point of view. Thus, reasons produce action and also causally explain actions. But can we say that all actions produced or backed up by reason are rational? Can there be a distinction between actions performed by man which are rational and those actions which are non-rational and irrational? Of course, there are distinctions. Just as rational actions contrast with mere rational movements, they also contrast with irrational actions. People no doubt, get irrationally, that is, they act for reasons but the reasons themselves may be bad. When action is performed for bad reasons, then the action is an irrational action. Rational action is one that is performed for good or rational reason.

Udo Etuk and the Possibility of African Logic
Udo Akpan Etuk, a professor of philosophy at University of Uyo, has demonstrated strong interest in logic throughout his academic career and has been a teacher of logic in the University of Uyo and a prolific writer on many logic themes. In a published essay, Udo Etuk explored the possibility of a distinct reasoning pattern of the African which shapes the uniqueness of the African, since the African is a member of the global human community. He decides several examples in this essay to show how some reasoning patterns which the Whiteman thinks are irrational, are considered by the African to be rational. First is the African conception of time. According to him, the Westerner introduced the notion of African time pejoratively to give the impression that Africans do not keep to time. But he explains that while for the whitemen, time is determined by the exact-time on the clock, the African conception of appointed time is determined by the event and the principal actor in any engagement. The African does not see himself controlled by time as against the Westerner; rather, he (the African), controls time, because time is made for man.

The second issue for him is the status factor in which the African values relationships. That is, if one commits an offence for instance, what the African does is to look at his relationship to the community whom the offence is committed against. If the offender is an in-law or grandchild for example, the penalty may be waived for him. The African arrangement of seniority goes against Western culture where seniority is used in determining the merit of anything and who gets a share of things distributed especially at the village settings. It is the senior who first makes a choice before others in the African rationality. That is why in inheritance, the senior makes the choice first, because, he is considered to be the father of the family in waiting. On the basis of the above explanations, Udo Etuk, basking in the euphoria which characterized the settlement of the debate about whether or not there is an African philosophy, has attempted to fly a kite about the possibility of African logic. For him;

> Some years ago, there was a long debate over the status of African philosophy. The lines in this debate appeared to have been drawn between those whom we shall call the purists who appeared to set themselves up as gate keepers to maintain the purity and integrity of philosophy and guard them against being compromised and a much larger number of scholars who thought the gate should be kept wide open for many more enterprises to qualify as philosophy (98).

He recalls that the debates between the purists and ethno-philosophers have settled and applying the methods of analysis of this philosophy to issues and concerns which are peculiarly African, we now have a body of work which can be called African philosophy. As such, he maintains that "this paper is clearly riding on the crest of what I take to be the success story in African philosophy" (99). He equally states that philosophers know the centrality of the role of logic in the study of philosophy because it is an exacting and rigorous philosophical activity. Basking from the classification of philosophy into German, British, Indian, American and Islamic philosophies, he argues thus:

> So philosophy, though a universal quest, had boundaries. This is convincingly shown by the existence of Chinese, Indian, Islamic, British, European and other particular philosophies. Since this is so of philosophy, what about logic which forms an essential part of philosophy? Either we are prepared to say that whatever is true of philosophy as a whole is also true (of) logic or we must say that logic is an exception (103).

Drawing examples from the Polish, Chinese and Indian philosophical traditions which show some peculiarities of their logical traditions, Etuk notes that the Polish appeared to have done more work in requiring the technique of symbolic than other groups, wondering whether their obsession with formalization in abstraction was the driving force since it was a national thing. Through the Polish, formalization has been raised to a point that the forms have become the measuring rods by determining which reasonings are valid and which are not. He also notes that in line with Chinese and Indian logic, then there is nothing to rule out the possibility of an African logic.

Nature of African Logic
Africans as rational beings begin to act from reasons. They make choices and decisions which follow extensive deliberations. People who have doubted the rationality of Africans

had described African thought patterns in different ways, for example, by describing African mentality as pre-logical or that Africans do not care about contradictions, and are emotional. We need to assert that no human group with a language can be said to be prelogical. This is because at the base of every language lies the process of classification, for example, of foods and provisions, or plants, animals and minerals. The classification takes the logical principle of identity and non-contradiction, two of the laws of thoughts, for granted.

No human group can ignore the distinction between foods and poison and survive. The classification of food and poison is based on the logical principle of induction. There are other folk items or beliefs based on induction, experience or keen observation of phenomenon – in medicine and agriculture, of animals, plants and the elements. The medicinal uses of plants, the typology and symptoms of diseases, rotation of crops, migration to more fertile lands, hunting and domestication of animals and description of animal behaviour. All these, abound in traditional African culture and is an indication of rational procedure.

But there is this supposition that Africans hold superstitious beliefs that they believe in re-incarnation, in the existence of ancestors, and in the existence and operations of witchcraft. These beliefs are the reason that they are considered to be prelogical and non-philosophical. It is worthy to note that philosophy is cultural entity that has cross-borderline marks, that is, some unconsciously, rooted in assumptions which Ijiomah calls "root paradigms" which serve as the criteria for determining which, propositions should be included and which should be excluded from the African epistemology.

For Ijiomah, every part of philosophy is coloured by the root paradigms of the culture in which the philosophy is domiciled and every explanation has a logic base and every logic has a correlation with the structure of the reality combination within its culture. Logic in this sense explains the structure of reality without distorting what reality is in itself (v). The problem of the denigration of African thought system seems to have come from the development of formalism in logic which seems to make us feel that formal systems are sine-qua-non in logic. But formal systems do not have eidetic meaning and cannot serve as a statement of ontology. Thus, it only leads to a valid and not a sound argument because they do describe reality of the world of experience.

The idea that there is only one logic originated from Immanuel Kant who claimed that there is only one logic which is the logic of Aristotle, which is adequate for all cultural explanations. But there are some ethnocentric logicians like John Dewey who posited that every analysis and explanation presumes a logical standpoint which is justifiable in the logic of that culture. To buttress the point of a cultural logic in Africa, Anyanwu posits:

> What the love of God, ancestors mother earth, family and community means to the African can neither be reduced to scientific truth nor improved upon by science. Rather, the meaning, value of personal experience require personal commitment and concern, and this means that a person has to be involved in it in order to become aware of its relation and thereby know it… All forms of African experience (political, religious, economic, moral, aesthetic, historical, etc) are rooted in life and all permeate and penetrate each other… as a result, we cannot talk of myths, religion, philosophy, etc in African cultural experience as if each exists independently of each other. (86).

This explains why Africans recognize ancestors, re-incarnation, witchcraft, etc as realities. However, African mode of thinking has striving similarities with Western logic. Let us take these few examples about how African mode of reasoning have some similarities with Western reasoning.

It can easily be imagined how African would argue in accordance with the rules of inference in modern propositional logic, for example, the rules of simplification, disjunctive syllogism and modus tollens. Imagine a meeting of kingmakers of a kingdom whose immediate past King has only recently joined his ancestors; imagine also that there are many ruling houses in the kingdom, each fully qualified to produce the future king, but in succession. One of the King makers might argue thus: The next King may be from the house of Ekpat, Akpan or Udoh. He cannot come from the House of Ekpat because the immediate past King was from there. He cannot be from the House of Akpan the last but one King was from there. Therefore the next King must come from the House of Udoh".

The above reasoning follows the rule of disjunctive syllogism which is a valid argument form even though it does not mean that the conclusion of a valid argument is always followed in practice. Let us consider another example, this time a proverb: "If I worship a deity then it should make positive difference to my fortunes. This deity does not make a positive difference to my fortunes. Therefore, I should stop worshipping the deity. This is a clear case of *modus tollens.* And there are folk tales of people and individuals abandoning the worship of an old deity and adopting a new one. Furthermore, it is wrong to claim that Africans were not worried about contradictions. Since contradictions, by their very nature, cannot be true it would indeed be amazing if Africans or any group would consciously embrace them. Thus, it would not be possible for our kingmakers to accept the contradiction: "Ekpat's family should produce the King and Ekpat's Family should not produce the King" with catastrophic political consequence(s). Or, would it be possible for them to believe the contradictive position; the palace is full but empty?

Conclusion

Logic is a discipline that studies reasoning. Philosophers have claimed that humans are rational. But many philosophers especially of Western extraction, claim that Africans are prelogical, while accepting that the West is logical in this paper, we have said that unlike Udo Etuk who held that there is the possibility of African logic, that there is actually an African logic by showing some instances of the nature of African logic. Udo Etuk's position is concealed in probability, presumption and over hope. But our position is anchored on certainty, reality, actuality and factual in the question of the nature and reality of African logic, that means, the existence of African logic is accurately true.

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