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For Further Information, Contact:

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08028769672

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Contact:
Department of Philosophy, University of Uyo, PMB 1017, Uyo. Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

1. **Ibrahim Abdulganiyu Jawondo,** PhD, is a Professor of History and International Relations and Director, Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.
2. **Abdullahi Mohammed Yamma,** PhD, is a Professor of Public Policy Analysis in the Department of Political Science, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria.
3. **Mohammed Bello Baban'Umma,** PhD, is a Professor of International Relations in the Department of Political Science, Nasarawa State, University, Keffi, Nigeria.
4. **Senimetu Ileuma,** PhD, is a Professor of Educational Management in the Department of Arts and Social Science Education at Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria.
5. **Elijah Okon John,** PhD, is a Professor of Social and Political Philosophy in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Uyo, Nigeria.
6. **Nasiru Inuwa,** PhD, is an Associate Professor of Economics in the Department of Economics at Gombe State University, Gombe, Nigeria.
7. **Nkereuwem David Edemekong,** PhD, is an Associate Professor of African History, Chieftaincy and Peace Studies in the Department of History and International Studies at the University of Uyo, Nigeria.
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12. **Samuel Awolumate,** PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Animal Science and Fisheries, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria.
13. **Basil O. Ibebunjo,** PhD is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria.
14. **David Amadike Wokocha,** PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in Peace and Conflict Unit at the School of General Studies, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Nigeria.
15. **Charles Omotola Olusanya** PhD is a Lecturer in the Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria.
16. **Adewale Mathew. Ogungbenro,** PhD, is a Lecturer in the Department of Peace and Conflict Resolution, Faculty of Library Studies, Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria.
17. **Odunayo Elizabeth Akomolafe,** PhD, is a Lecturer in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria.
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19. **Lawrence Ime Edet,** PhD, is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science at University of Uyo, Nigeria.

20. **Ibukun David,** PhD, is a Lecturer in the Department of International Relations at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.
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23. **Kenechukwu K. Makwudo,** PhD,Philosophy Department, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, University Igbariam. Anambra State, Nigeria.
24. **Vic-Martin Igwe,** PhD, is a Principal at Lumen Christi Academy, Olia, Kogi State, Nigeria.
25. **Victor Bassey Edet,** PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Religious and Cultural Studies, Uma Ukpai School of Theology, Uyo, Nigeria.
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27. **Naomi A. Phinos,** PhD, is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science, University of Abuja, Nigeria.
28. **Aniekan Godwin Peter,** MA, is a Doctoral Scholar in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria.
29. **Augustine Ukachukwu Opara,** MSc, is a Doctoral Scholar in the Department of Political Science, University of Abuja, Nigeria.
30. **James Clifford Nwakaji,** MA, is a Doctoral Scholar at the Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.
31. **Etebong Alban Udofia,** MSc, is a Doctoral Scholar in the Department of Political Science at University of Uyo, Nigeria.
32. **Abayomi Temitayo Onifade,** MA, is a Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at Ladoke Akintola University of.Technology Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria.
33. **Joseph Emmanuel,** MA, is a Doctoral Scholar at the Center for Peace and Security Studies, Modibbo Adama University, Yola, Nigeria.
34. **Rahila Elisha Zacharia,** MA, is a Doctoral Scholar at the Center for Peace and Security Studies, Modibbo Adama University, Yola, Nigeria.
35. **Enoch Hassan Kure,** MA, is a Doctoral Scholar at the Center for Peace and Security Studies, Modibbo Adama University, Yola, Nigeria.
36. **Mohammed Bello Sani,** MSc, is a Lecturer Department of Economics at Gombe State University, Gombe, Nigeria.
37. **Muhammad Idris Japa,** MSc, is a Doctoral Scholar in the Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution at National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria.
38. **Muhammad Muhammad,** MSc, is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina, Nigeria.
39. **John Akpan Johnson,** MA, is a Doctoral Scholar in the Department of Religious and Cultural Studies, University of Uyo, Nigeria.
40. **Osebi Sophia Balogun,** MSc, is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science, Federal University Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria.

41. **Amenze Sandra Airhiavbere,** M.Sc., is a Lecturer in the Department of Finance, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.
42. **Roberts Osatohanmwen Asemota,** MA, is a lecturer in Peace and Conflict Units, Michael Okpara University, Umudike, Nigeria.
43. **Tyover Benjamin Amena,** MA, is a a lecturer in Peace and Conflict Units, Michael Okpara University, Umudike, Nigeria.
44. **Comfort Godwin Esara** is a Product Manager in the Department of Business Development at Unity Bank Plc, Nigeria.

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Article **Open Access**

EXIT DIMENSIONS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL APTITUDE DYSFUNCTION AMONG SCHOOL-BASED ADOLESCENTS IN FISHERY AND NON-FISHERY SENATORIAL DISTRICTS OF AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

Comfort Godwin Esara [1]
Emem Bassey Inyang [2]
Samuel Awolumate [3]
Department of Business Development, Unity Bank of Nigeria [1]
Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, University of Uyo, Nigeria [2]
Department of Animal Science and Fisheries, National Open University of Nigeria, Kaduna, Nigeria [3]
Corresponding Email: embainy@gmail.com [2]

Abstract

This study critically examined the exit dimensions of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents across fishery and non-fishery senatorial districts in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, it explored how early educational discontinuities shape entrepreneurial tendencies and mapped the socio-economic profiles, component traits, and dysfunction indices associated with entrepreneurial aptitude in the context of regional economic specialisation. Using a multi-stage sampling technique, data were collected from 343 senior secondary school students across urban, peri-urban, and rural areas within the state's three senatorial districts. Structured questionnaires provided data for descriptive statistics, composite indices, and factor analysis. Parents, teachers and caregivers should encourage the values of managing emotions, behaviour and learning in children (Alawa, 2021). Results revealed significant entrepreneurial dysfunctions—manifesting as low initiative, risk aversion, and weak problem-solving—among school-based adolescents, with notable variances between fishery-based and non-fishery-based zones. The findings highlight the compounded effects of early childhood educational discontinuity, regional economic orientation, and socio-cultural constraints on entrepreneurial development. Factor analysis extracted six core dysfunction dimensions: lack of entrepreneurial passion, perceived capital barriers, socio-cultural mistrust, fear of self-employment, aversion to risk, and anxiety over delayed returns. The study underscores the urgent need for gender-

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responsive, regionally tailored early childhood interventions and entrepreneurial education policies that address both psychosocial and structural barriers to youth entrepreneurship. These insights are critical for policymakers aiming to build entrepreneurial capacity in both fishery-dependent and non-fishery communities of Akwa Ibom State. With increasing youth unemployment and the demand for self-employment skills, identifying the dimensions of such dysfunction is essential for early policy and educational interventions (UNESCO, 2016; World Bank, 2023).

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Aptitude, Fishery Status-Districts, School-Based Adolescents and Dysfunction.

Introduction

Entrepreneurial instinct dysfunction refers to the lack or impairment of innate traits such as initiative, risk-taking, creativity, and self-drive that typically motivate individuals to pursue business ventures. It encompasses low entrepreneurial motivation, fear of failure, limited innovation capacity, and aversion to self-employment or business risk. Studies of children and their activities show that many are born with high ambition, motivation, and willingness to take risks, but they encounter barriers that erode the spirit of adventure and the willingness to take initiative. At a tender age, society and family have implanted some beliefs and thoughts in their minds to accept some imposed limitations. While growing up, most children have been told several times by either their parents or teachers that they cannot do certain things, which affects the instinct in them to become successful entrepreneurs. Some have been made to believe that they cannot perform well in certain fields of endeavour, which has eroded their self-confidence and self-esteem. In addition, lack of financial support and services is a barrier to an individual developing themselves. Therefore, most youth cannot take action to become entrepreneurs because they are afraid of failure.

The entrepreneurial behaviour of an individual is displayed by the characteristics he or she has, which may be influenced by anxiety or depression, two common factors affecting entrepreneurial instinct. Change is a fact because, without change, there is no growth, and anything that is not growing is dying. To achieve better economic development and growth, many countries are adopting entrepreneurship development programs at their tertiary institutions many countries are adopting entrepreneurship development programs at their tertiary institutions. (Ibrahim, 2023). Entrepreneurship is a vital component of economic growth and youth empowerment, especially in developing regions like Nigeria (Acs et al., 2017) Central to this discourse is the concept of entrepreneurial aptitude, which refers to an individual's inherent or developed capacity to recognise, evaluate, and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities (Kuratko, 2016). While most entrepreneurial studies focus on adult populations or formal educational settings, a growing body of literature now emphasises the importance of early childhood experiences and foundational education in shaping entrepreneurial behaviour and mindsets (Nadel & Pianta, 2017).

Preschool education represents a critical developmental stage where cognitive, emotional, and social skills that underpin entrepreneurial aptitude begin to take root (UNESCO, 2016). Children who transition out of preschool—often referred to as school-based adolescents—without adequate support or follow-up education may face long-term developmental deficits. These deficits can manifest as dysfunctions in key dimensions of entrepreneurial aptitude, such as creativity, risk tolerance, initiative, and problem-solving ability. Understanding the nature and extent of these dysfunctions is vital, especially in low-resource environments where formal education pathways

may be disrupted or inaccessible. Despite the recognized importance of early education, the specific dimensions of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents remain under-explored in academic research. This gap is particularly significant in contexts where preschool education is underfunded, poorly structured, or culturally undervalued conditions common in many sub-Saharan African countries (UNICEF, 2020). Thus, investigating the entrepreneurial potential of school-based adolescents, and the possible dysfunctions therein, is both timely and necessary.

Entrepreneurial aptitude is a vital ingredient in tackling unemployment and promoting sustainable livelihoods. However, in Akwa Ibom State, the rising number of school-based adolescents presents a unique educational and developmental challenge. While early childhood education is globally acknowledged as a determinant of lifelong learning and future occupational success, many school-based adolescents, especially in developing nations, experience educational discontinuities that may hinder the development of core entrepreneurial competencies. These children, who exit the formal learning environment prematurely, are at risk of experiencing dysfunction in core areas of entrepreneurial competence. Such dysfunctions may manifest as poor initiative, low adaptability, and weak interpersonal skills - traits essential for entrepreneurial success in the informal and formal sectors alike. Evidence suggests that early education discontinuity can result in poor development of cognitive, affective, and behavioural competencies essential for entrepreneurship (Oluwatobi & Ogunrinola, 2020).

Notably, Akwa Ibom State consists of both fishery-based and non-fishery-based senatorial districts, each with distinct socio-economic structures and cultural norms. The occupational identity of a region - whether rooted in fishery or non-fishery livelihoods - may influence the values, exposures, and economic attitudes passed down to children. Fishery communities, for example, may offer different models of self-employment or risk engagement compared to non-fishery areas. Yet, the entrepreneurial potential of school-based adolescents in these different settings has not been comparatively explored, despite the likelihood that localized economic conditions play a significant role in shaping entrepreneurial aptitude or dysfunction. Despite the state's efforts to improve access to early childhood education, there remains a disconnect between preschool enrolment and long-term developmental outcomes, especially among children who do not progress to primary education (Akpan & Edem, 2020). Unfortunately, scholarly attention to the entrepreneurial implications of this educational gap has been minimal. Without an evidence-based understanding of how entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction presents among school-based adolescents in Akwa Ibom State, particularly across fishery and non-fishery zones, it becomes difficult for educators, social workers, and policymakers to intervene meaningfully.

This study, therefore, seeks to explore the exit dimensions of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the research maps the socio-economic profiles of school-based adolescents, assesses the components of entrepreneurial dysfunction they exhibit, estimates the status of entrepreneurial aptitude across district types, and ascertains the underlying dimensions of dysfunction. This study, therefore, explores the dimensions of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among preschool leavers, providing insight into the cognitive and socio-economic barriers to youth entrepreneurship in Akwa Ibom State (Duru, 2022; Fatoki, 2014). It highlights developmental needs and informs context-sensitive early interventions aimed at strengthening entrepreneurial capacity in both fishery and non-fishery communities.

Methodology

This study was conducted across the three senatorial districts of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria - namely Uyo, Eket, and Ikot Ekpene - spanning a landmass of approximately 7.25 million square kilometers with a population of 3,920,208. These districts represent diverse economic settings, including both fishery-based (e.g., Eket) and non-fishery-based (e.g., Uyo and Ikot Ekpene) communities. This geographical and occupational diversity was purposefully utilized to explore how regional economic orientation influences the entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction of school-based adolescents. The target population comprised all final-year students in public secondary schools within the state, specifically those who had experienced educational discontinuity after preschool before re-entering formal education. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to ensure representativeness across both fishery and non-fishery district types. In the first stage, one Local Government Area (LGA) was randomly selected from each senatorial district: Uyo LGA (Uyo Senatorial District - predominantly non-fishery), Onna LGA (Eket Senatorial District - fishery-based), and Ikot Ekpene LGA (Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District - non-fishery). In the second stage, one public secondary school was randomly selected from each chosen LGA. Finally, in the third stage, three intact classes were randomly selected from the senior secondary level (SS2 and other relevant classes) to reflect a range of subject interests and demographic variability. The selected schools and their corresponding respondent distributions were based on the available intact class size and members who were willing to participate in the study were as follows: Uyo High School, located in an urban, non-fishery district, contributed 143 students; Community Secondary Commercial School in Ikot Akpan Eshiet, Onna - a rural, fishery-based district - contributed 100 students; and Government Secondary School, Nto Nsek in Essien Udim, a peri-urban, non-fishery district, also provided 100 students. This brought the total sample size to 343 students.

Data were collected using a structured and validated questionnaire, which was administered and retrieved on the same day to ensure data integrity. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency counts, percentages, and ranking were used to address the first four research objectives. Additionally, composite index analysis and affirmative incidence indexing were applied to quantify and interpret levels of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction. For the fifth objective - identifying the underlying dimensions of dysfunction - factor analysis was conducted alongside composite index analysis, using appropriate statistical thresholds (e.g., Eigenvalue ≥ 1, factor loadings ≥ 0.4) to extract significant components (Stevens, 2016; Alawa & Owan, 2021).

Results and Discussion

The results from the analysis obtained from the field survey are presented and discussed as follows:

Socioeconomic Profile Analytics of the Entrepreneurial Aptitude Dysfunction Among School-Based Adolescents

This section analyses the socioeconomic characteristics of school-based adolescents and how these variables relate to patterns of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction across the selected districts. The analysis is structured under three major subheadings: demographic variables, parental occupation and economic background, and academic interest alignment. Table 1 summarises the distribution of respondents by key demographic indicators and presents the corresponding Entrepreneurial Aptitude Mean Index across groups. The analysis revealed that: Table 1 presents the overall pooled mean index of 0.5485 (N = 343) indicating a moderate level of entrepreneurial

potential among the respondents. Among the variables examined, sex emerged as the only statistically significant factor influencing entrepreneurial aptitude (F = 111.736, p = 0.001). Female respondents exhibited a higher mean index (0.5797) than their male counterparts (0.5154), Across both fishery and non-fishery districts, female respondents consistently scored higher on the entrepreneurial aptitude index than their male counterparts. This trend was especially prominent in the fishery district (Onna), where informal economic roles may be more accessible to young females.

Conversely, no statistically significant differences were found in entrepreneurial aptitude across other demographic variables, including age (F = 0.592, p = 0.737), parents' occupation (F = 0.736, p = 0.480), ethnic background (F = 1.638, p = 0.149), and academic or career interests (F = 0.071, p = 0.931). Age, parents' occupation, ethnic background, and course/career interest did not exhibit statistically significant effects on entrepreneurial aptitude in either district type. However, subtle patterns suggest that students from the fishery district were slightly more familiar with informal economic activities due to their household and community environments.

Although some groups, such as the Efik (mean = 0.6091) and Ibibio (mean = 0.5790), reported higher mean indices, and others, such as the Yoruba (mean = 0.3700), reported lower values, these variations did not reach statistical significance. Similarly, the consistency of mean indices across the academic tracks—Arts, Science, and Commercial—suggests minimal influence of curricular orientation on entrepreneurial potential at this educational level. The results validate the assertion that foundational education plays a vital role in shaping entrepreneurial competencies (Nadel & Pianta, 2017), which demonstrates high prevalence of entrepreneurial instinct dysfunction among secondary school students who would exit the formal education system at the preschool level in Akwa Ibom State.

Respondents from non-fishery districts (Uyo and Ikot Ekpene) generally showed more attachment to structured employment aspirations, reflecting the formal-sector orientation typical of urban and peri-urban economies. In contrast, respondents from the fishery-based district displayed more practical exposure to income-generating ventures—though still hindered by fear of risk and uncertainty. These findings suggest that while demographic characteristics may not singularly determine entrepreneurial aptitude, the interaction between sex and economic setting plays a modest but notable role. The environment in which school-based adolescents grow up—whether fishery-oriented or not—can influence their perceptions of entrepreneurship and their confidence in pursuing business ventures.

Table 1: Distribution of the School-based Adolescents Based on Demographic Characteristics

Item	Socioeconomic Variables	Frequency	Entrepreneurial Aptitude Mean Index	F	Sig.
1	Age			.592	.737[Nsig]
	14.00	12	0.5292 [a]		
	15.00	70	0.5393 [a]		
	16.00	96	0.5651 [a]		
	17.00	93	0.5376 [a]		
	18.00	48	0.5698 [a]		
	19.00	17	0.5000 [a]		
	20.00	7	0.5643 [a]		
2	Sex			111.736	0.001 [Sig]
	Male	166	0.5154 [a]		

	Female	177	0.5797 [b]		
3	Parents Occupation			0.736	0.480 [Nsig]
	civil servant	102	0.5451 [a]		
	own business	221	0.5541 [a]		
	Retired	20	0.5050 [a]		
4	Ethnic Diversity			1.638	0.149 [Nsig]
	Ibibio	190	0.5790 [a]		
	Oron	10	0.5471 [a]		
	Annang	112	0.5527 [a]		
	Igbo	15	0.5133 [a]		
	Efik	11	0.6091 [a]		
	Yoruba	5	0.3700 [a]		
5	Course and career line of Interest			0.071	0.931 [Nsig]
	Art class	58	0.5491 [a]		
	Science class	261	0.5496 [a]		
	Commercial class	24	0.5354 [a]		

Note: pooled entrepreneurial Instant status mean index = 0.5485, N=343, Nsig = Not significant and Sig = Significant.

Component Assessment of the Entrepreneurial Aptitude Dysfunction Among School-based Adolescents

This section presents the specific components and patterns of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction as expressed by school-based adolescents in both fishery and non-fishery districts of Akwa Ibom State. The analysis is based on 20 structured questionnaire items designed to assess respondents' perceptions, fears, and attitudes toward entrepreneurship. Table 2 highlights the percentage of respondents who agreed with various dysfunctional statements reflecting low entrepreneurial motivation, fear of self-employment, risk aversion, and negative business expectations. Key findings include:

i. **High Levels of Dependency and Risk Aversion:** A large proportion of respondents (83.7%) indicated a preference for being salary earners rather than engaging in self-employment, citing income security. This trend was more prominent in non-fishery districts, where formal employment is more culturally emphasised.

ii. **Perception of Entrepreneurship as Burdensome:** 82.5% of respondents, especially from urban and peri-urban non-fishery districts, expressed reluctance to engage in business due to concerns about time for family life. Additionally, 80.2% reported that they would “believe God for a miracle” rather than rely on personal initiative - an outlook more prevalent in fishery district respondents, possibly due to unstable and informal economic patterns in those regions.

iii. **Limited Belief in Self-efficacy:** Over 60% of respondents were unsure about their ability to undertake risk (60.1%) or handle the stress of entrepreneurship (59.2%). These perceptions were common across all districts, indicating a shared underlying dysfunction despite regional differences.

iv. **Business Pessimism:** Respondents also showed high levels of concern about business viability and sustainability. For instance, 52.5% feared they would not meet market demands, while 46.1% cited lack of collateral as a major barrier to entrepreneurship. Students from rural fishery districts more frequently cited lack of startup capital and government support as impediments, likely reflecting the lower access to institutional financial services in those areas.

v. **Preference for Structured Environments:** A significant number of respondents (73.8%) preferred working with others rather than independently, and 51.0% felt they functioned better under supervision. These traits reflect a low tolerance for autonomy - an essential trait of entrepreneurship - and were marginally more common in non-fishery districts, where formal education systems and conventional job hierarchies are more ingrained.

These findings reveal a complex array of entrepreneurial dysfunction traits among school-based adolescents, many of which stem from both cognitive-emotional factors and socio-economic environments. While dysfunction is evident across all districts, its expression varies subtly: fishery district respondents exhibit more experiential exposure but limited belief in business structure or scalability, whereas non-fishery district respondents are more inclined toward job security and structured career paths. This component-level assessment suggests that entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents is not only a result of educational discontinuity but also of district-specific economic orientation and local occupational culture. Addressing these dysfunctions will require differentiated, context-sensitive interventions.

Table 2: Pattern of Entrepreneurial Instinct Dysfunction among the Respondents

	Statements	No	Yes
1	Because the business will not bring income on a daily basis	57.1	42.9
2	1 would not want to be my own boss	56.3	43.7
3	I would not be able to employ people	69.4	30.6
4	I would not have time to do other things for my myself	57.4	42.6
5	I would believe God for a miracle	19.8	80.2
6	I will not be able to develop my skills and ideas effectively	60.1	39.9
7	I prefer to work where I have time for my family	17.5	82.5
8	There is no retirement time	44.3	55.7
9	I would not be able to do more than one business in order to maximize profit	49.6	50.4
10	I want to be sure of my salary	16.3	83.7
11	I don't want to undertake risk	39.9	60.1
12	To avoid the stress of working all day	40.8	59.2
13	Fear of not meeting the demand of the business	47.5	52.5
14	I want job security	28.0	72.0
15	I am better at working with people than myself alone	26.2	73.8
16	I work better under supervision	51.0	49.0
17	Fear of lack of capital	63.6	36.4
18	Lack of collateral to obtain loan	53.9	46.1
19	Lack of encouragement by government	48.7	51.3
20	I will not be able to explore the business world	55.4	44.6

Source: *Computed from field survey, 2015*

Status of Entrepreneurial Aptitude Dysfunction among the Respondents

This section assesses the overall status of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents across the three senatorial districts, with comparative attention to fishery (Onna) and non-fishery (Uyo and Ikot Ekpene) districts. The Entrepreneurial Instinct Dysfunction (EID) Index was used to classify respondents into four categories: virtually negligible dysfunction, low dysfunction, high dysfunction, and virtually excellent aptitude. As shown in Table 3, the results indicate the following distribution:

i. **Low Dysfunction (50.7%):** The majority of respondents exhibited a low level of entrepreneurial instinct, reflecting foundational gaps in business readiness. This category was most prominent

in non-fishery districts, where respondents demonstrated a stronger preference for traditional employment and structured job roles.

ii. **High Dysfunction (31.5%):** A considerable segment of respondents demonstrated moderate dysfunction, characterized by inconsistent entrepreneurial traits such as indecisiveness, limited initiative, or conditional motivation. Respondents in this category were more evenly distributed across both district types, although slightly higher in fishery-based communities, where informal economic instability may influence entrepreneurial hesitation.

iii. **Virtually Excellent Aptitude (11.1%):** A relatively small group showed strong entrepreneurial tendencies. These respondents exhibited confidence in risk-taking, self-motivation, and belief in business as a viable career path. Notably, this group was more represented in the fishery district, possibly due to early exposure to informal trading or family-run ventures.

iv. **Virtually Negligible Aptitude (6.7%):** This group displayed severe dysfunction and a total lack of entrepreneurial disposition. They expressed consistent aversion to entrepreneurship and low self-efficacy. These individuals were largely found in urban non-fishery settings, where academic orientation toward white-collar jobs may discourage entrepreneurial thinking.

These findings reinforce the broader narrative that entrepreneurial aptitude among school-based adolescents is not evenly distributed across economic environments. While dysfunction is common in both fishery and non-fishery districts, the nature and degree of dysfunction vary. Non-fishery respondents tend to lack entrepreneurial drive due to aspirations for salaried employment and academic progression. In contrast, respondents in fishery districts, though often more exposed to informal economic roles, remain hindered by structural barriers such as capital constraints and business instability.

This status-level assessment underscores the importance of tailoring entrepreneurial interventions to district-specific realities. In non-fishery zones, there is a critical need to reframe entrepreneurship as a desirable and viable career path, while in fishery areas, efforts should focus on skill refinement, access to financial tools, and formalizing informal business knowledge.

Table 3: Level of Entrepreneurial Instinct dysfunction (EID) among the Respondents

EID index range	EID Index Range Interpretation	Frequency	Percent
0.00 - 0.259	Virtually Negligible	23	6.7
0.26 - 0.559	Low	174	50.7
0.60 - 0.759	High	108	31.5
0.760 - 1.00	Virtually Excellent	38	11.1
Total		343	100.0

Source: *Computed from field survey*

Major Underlying Dimensions of the Entrepreneurial Aptitude Dysfunction among the School-based Adolescents in Akwa Ibom State

Tenability of the measurement construct was assessed by the Kaiser-Meyer-o uncover the structural and psychological constructs contributing to entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents, a principal component factor analysis was conducted using the 20 identified dysfunction indicators. The analysis extracted six major components based on factor loadings ≥ 0.4 and Eigenvalues ≥ 1. These dimensions reflect the deeper, often latent barriers that

shape entrepreneurial behaviour across both fishery and non-fishery districts. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of 0.719 and a significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 757.649$, df = 190, $p < .001$) confirmed the suitability of the dataset for factor analysis.

Table 4: Result of Tenability and Suitability of the Instrument

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.719
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	757.649
	Df	190
	Sig.	.000

The Naming of the Underlying Dimensions of the Entrepreneurial Aptitude Dysfunction among School-based Adolescents

The six extracted components and their interpretation within the district contexts are as follows:

i. **Lack of Interest and Passion for Business:** This dimension encompasses aversion to being one's boss, lack of self-driven ideas, and preference for structured employment. It was most prevalent among respondents from non-fishery districts, where the aspiration for formal employment and white-collar professions often overshadows entrepreneurial thinking. The influence of schooling systems that prioritize academic success over entrepreneurial experimentation is evident here.

ii. **Perceived High Startup Capital Requirement:** Respondents across both district types cited lack of access to capital and collateral as a key barrier. However, this perception was more acute in the fishery district, where economic activity tends to be informal and credit access is limited. The absence of financial literacy and entrepreneurial support structures compounds this dysfunction.

iii. **Socio-Cultural Mistrust:** Items such as distrust in government support and skepticism toward business success within the community loaded heavily here. This was common in both districts, though slightly higher in peri-urban non-fishery areas, where competition and lack of communal support networks create additional pressure and pessimism about entrepreneurship.

iv. **Fear of Self-Employment and Responsibility:** This factor includes fear of business failure, avoidance of leadership roles, and lack of confidence in managing business operations. Respondents from non-fishery districts, particularly urban areas, exhibited stronger tendencies in this regard, often linked to limited practical exposure to entrepreneurial models during early life stages.

v. **Risk Aversion and Desire for Stability:** A preference for job security, fixed salaries, and avoidance of entrepreneurial stress defined this component. Risk aversion was consistently high across all districts, but was more culturally ingrained in urban non-fishery contexts, where structured employment is regarded as a symbol of success.

vi. Respondents from non-fishery districts (Uyo and Ikot Ekpene) generally showed more attachment to structured employment aspirations, reflecting the formal-sector orientation typical of urban and peri-urban economies. In contrast, respondents from the fishery-based district displayed more practical exposure to income-generating ventures, though still hindered by fear of risk and uncertainty.

These findings suggest that while demographic characteristics may not singularly determine entrepreneurial aptitude, the interaction between sex and economic setting plays a modest but notable role. The environment in which school-based adolescents grow up - whether fishery-oriented or not - can influence their perceptions of entrepreneurship and their confidence in pursuing business ventures. Concerns Over Delayed Returns and Business Uncertainty: This final dimension captures anxiety over the time it takes for businesses to become profitable and the fear of unstable income. Interestingly, this concern was widespread across both district types, reflecting a shared lack of long-term entrepreneurial orientation among adolescents. In fishery areas, this fear may stem from observing daily income fluctuations in informal trade, while in non-fishery settings, it ties more to unfamiliarity with entrepreneurial risk.

The emergence of these six dysfunction dimensions reveals that entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents is multi-layered and context-dependent. While some dysfunctions - like risk aversion and capital fear - are shared across districts, others such as lack of passion for business or socio-cultural mistrust, appear to be shaped by the economic and social environments in which these children grow up. For non-fishery districts, interventions must focus on mindset transformation, reorienting students to value entrepreneurship as a valid and rewarding life path. Entrepreneurship education should be integrated into formal curricula, complemented by mentorship and role modelling. In fishery districts, however, programs should emphasise formalising and scaling informal business experiences. Providing access to microcredit, technical support, and business development training would help turn early informal exposure into structured entrepreneurial competence.

Table 5: Results of Principal Component Analysis of Reasons for Entrepreneurial Instinct Dysfunction

Variables	CEI	Factors and its loadings					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
I will not be able to develop my skills and ideas effectively	.512	.663					
1 would not want to be my own boss	.615	.611					
I would not be able to employ people	.506	.692					
I would not have time to do other things for my myself	.449	.656					
I would not be able to do more than one business in order to maximize profit	.337	.480					
Because the business will not bring income on a daily basis	.530		.551				
Fear of lack of capital	.552		.660				
Lack of collateral to obtain loan	.626		.555				
Lack of encouragement by government	.529		.671				
I will not be able to explore the business world	.399		.461				
I would believe God for a miracle	.603			.767			
I prefer to work where I have time for my family	.486			.639			
I want to be sure of my salary	.487			.571			
To avoid the stress of working all day	.432				.568		
I want job security	.545				.660		

I am better at working with people than myself alone	.424				.422		
I work better under supervision	.517					.684	
I don't want to undertake risk	.392					.562	
There is no retirement time	.605						.765
Fear of not meeting the demand of the business	.306						.461
Initial Eigenvalues (Total Variance)		2.274	1.997	1.646	1.362	1.359	1.212
% of Variance		11.372	9.986	8.230	6.810	6.797	6.061
Cumulative %		11.372	21.358	29.598	36.398	43.195	49.256

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.

Note: CEI = Communality Extraction Index

Conclusion

This study explored entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents across fishery and non-fishery districts in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. It revealed that while dysfunction is widespread, its causes vary by region. In non-fishery districts, cultural preferences for formal employment and lack of entrepreneurial passion were key barriers, while fishery districts faced issues like unstable income and limited support. Female adolescents consistently showed higher entrepreneurial aptitude, suggesting psychosocial factors matter more than demographics like age or ethnicity. Factor analysis identified six core dysfunction dimensions: lack of business passion, high perceived start-up costs, socio-cultural distrust, fear of self-employment, risk aversion, and delayed returns. These reflect both individual and structural challenges. The study emphasizes the need for early, region-specific interventions—curriculum reform and mindset reorientation in non-fishery zones, and formal support and training in fishery areas. Ultimately, strengthening entrepreneurial aptitude from early childhood is essential for reducing youth unemployment and fostering sustainable economic growth in the region.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to address the identified dimensions of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents and to guide the design of regionally appropriate interventions in both fishery and non-fishery districts of Akwa Ibom state:

i. Develop and implement localized entrepreneurship curricula that align with the distinct socio-economic contexts of fishery and non-fishery districts.
ii. Start entrepreneurship education at the foundational level, embedding it in preschool and primary curricula to foster lifelong entrepreneurial capabilities.
iii. Design gender-inclusive programs that promote female entrepreneurship while addressing lower male engagement in specific regions.
iv. Invest in capital access and business training for youth in fishery communities to formalize and scale informal enterprises.
v. Rebrand entrepreneurship in non-fishery districts through sustained public awareness campaigns and positive role model promotion.

vi. Incorporate psychosocial development elements into entrepreneurship initiatives to build emotional resilience and confidence.
vii. Establish robust M&E systems to guide policy and programmatic improvements through continuous, evidence-based tracking.

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Article **Open Access**

U.S FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS: ASSESSING THE POLICY DECISIONS OF TRUMP IN UPHOLDING AMERICA'S NATIONAL INTEREST

Etebong A. Udofia [1]
Lawrence I. Edet [2]
Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Uyo, Nigeria [1 & 2]
Corresponding Email: lawrence4justice@yahoo.com [2]

Abstract
This work analyzed US foreign policy under Trump. Trump's policy thrust was anchored on 'America First' ideology which gave little or no consideration to the interest and cooperation of her allies and the global perception. This study revealed that Trump's foreign policy posture was a departure from that of his predecessors with a little semblance to a typical Republican style. Qualitative research method with Content Analysis was used in collection of data and evaluation of research questions. The research adopted Incremental Theory of public policy as a theoretical framework. Findings revealed that America's withdrawal from Paris Agreement on climate change was not in the overall interest of America and her allies, and that Trump's negotiation with the Taliban did not foreclose the rise of other extremist groups. This work concluded that America's withdrawal from Paris agreement brought about global tension and suspense on her allies and further threatened the graving consequences of climate change. Again, Trump's negotiation with the Taliban was against the principles of America's foreign policy that forbids negotiation with terrorist group. The study recommended amongst others, that stiffer penalty should be meted out to any State that breach multilateral agreement entered into and ratified by the United Nations, and that Congress should consider enlisting negotiation with terrorists as impeachable offence in America's legal system.

Keywords: Containment Doctrine; Foreign Policy; National Interests; Negotiations; Policy Decisions; Terrorism.

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Introduction

Foreign policy analysis is an aspect of International Relations that dissect the policy decisions and outcomes of States as they interact in the international system. This has been a trending issue that captures the interest of political analysts and essayists, with a view to place the approaches, processes, objectives and challenges of policy decisions side-by-side with the idiosyncrasy of the President and national interest. For any country to be able to drive home her national interest, in the face of a conflicting interest of other countries in international system, a good foreign policy framework and instruments must be adopted. America is known for forward looking foreign policy experts and actors and can boast of institutions like Council for Foreign Relations and Congress which is more like a training platform for policy makers. In the American Foreign policy tradition, responsibility for crafting of foreign policy is shared by the executive and legislative branches. Under the constitution, the President is the central figure in the foreign policy process, by and with the consent of the congress. This invariably implies that the president and congress are the primary actors, as far as America's foreign policy decision is concerned (Parmer & Perkins, 2015).

Many are of the view that the President and his executive members exert more influence on policy decisions except on vital national issues like "Treaty". But Edwin S. Corwin averred that "What the Constitution does, and all that it does, is to confer on the President certain powers capable of affecting our foreign relations, and certain other powers of the same general kind on the Senate, and still other such powers on Congress; but which of these organs shall have the decisive and final voice in determining the course of American nation is left for events to resolve". Hence the constitution is presenting a level playing ground for Congress and President to struggle for the soul of the country's foreign policy. However, national interest of a state is often put forward while adopting a foreign policy posture. National interest supersedes all forms of interest, and it is the sole objective when two or more states are in relation. Morgenthau (1978) contends that national interest is defined as power and that statesmen should think and act along the direction. Certain variables are major determinants when a state's foreign policies are to be adopted. These determinants cut across both internal and external factors. The internal factors are occurrences within the state that influence foreign policy, while external factors are drawn outside the state.

America's foreign policy has undergone some changes before and after the world war era. America adopted non-interference in European affairs foreign policy posture during the period of World War I, but later it went beyond that as they feared for Adolf Hitler's movement to conquer the world was on the match (Parmer & Perkins, 2015). With the end of World War I, the struggle for world dominance was imminent, as America preached the gospel of containment against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)'s communism. This later came to an end in 1992 with the collapse of the USSR. During the cold war period, the Cuban missile crisis, and the possibility of a third world war was averted by astute diplomacy and a limited display of power. The balance of power also shaped America's foreign policy. Terrorist attack on world trade center and the pentagon on September 11, 2001 also changed America's foreign policy posture and National Security strategy from containment to forward deterrence.

Under President Trump, America's foreign policy was focused on 'America First' doctrine, where concerns centered on withdrawing from cooperation and alliances that did not unilaterally constitute immense benefits to America. The idea of building a wall to restrict movement of immigrants from Mexico to the U.S and withdrawal from Paris agreement on climate change was informed by this 'America First' doctrine. In the past decade, a good number of research has

focused on U.S foreign policy vis-à-vis important historical periods like World War I; World War II; Cold War era; Post Cold War era and post September 11, 2001 etc. Hence, attempt has been made by past researchers to examine and assess the U.S policy behavior. This study intends to explore the U.S foreign policy analysis under President Trump (2017 – 2021).

Statement of the Problem

America is known for objective driven foreign policy experts and actors that help in crafting policies that are in line with her national interest, and can boast of institutions like Council for Foreign Relations and Congress which is more like a training platform for policy makers. Past Presidents have made considerable efforts in professing a doctrine or policy thrust that help articulate America's national interest. But with the assumption of office by Donald Trump in 2017, the U.S. foreign policy underwent series of drastic adjustments, causing shocks in the U.S. relations with the rest of the world. One of the policy decisions of Trump was his disengagement from Paris Climate Treaty which was meant to address mitigation of greenhouse gas emission (Downie, 2014). The fallout of this disengagement has unsettled the global community and further threatened water and food security, increased mortality, massive population movement and suspicion, which has affected vulnerable population like children and the poor disproportionately. Some analysts have also reported that the age long tradition of America not negotiating with the terrorists was abrogated by President Trump when he negotiated with the Taliban in Doha in 2020 thereby giving other terrorists group the effrontery to act with impunity, which has further led to many other splinter groups of terrorists. This study therefore, is an attempt to examine the U.S Foreign Policy Analysis under President Donald Trump (2017 – 2021).

Research Questions

i. Does America's withdrawal from Paris Agreement on climate change enhance cooperation of the U.S allies in shaping international system?
ii. To what extent has President Trump's negotiation with the Taliban prevented the emergence of hostile extremists?

Research Objectives

i. To examine how America's withdrawal from Paris Agreement on climate change enhance cooperation of the U.S. allies in shaping international system.
ii. To examine the extent to which Trump's negotiation with the Taliban has prevented the emergence of hostile extremists.

Significance of Study

This work is considered highly significance as it critically examines the U.S foreign policy during the administration of Donald Trump (2017 – 2021. Also, being a burning and trending issue that involves a very important Super power, whose policy approach is taken as a model by other countries, the strength, weakness and the way forward is imperative. The study will come up with recommendations to address these issues. Aside from adding impetus to the current agitation for a dynamic foreign policy posture that is driven by national interest, global peace and tranquility, the study will assist scholars and learners of international relations, foreign policy experts, and decision makers, etc., to attempt to craft a balanced foreign policy that will address domestic and external issues. In addition, the work will broaden the knowledge base and enhance the understanding of

the researcher on the subject matter. Finally, it will contribute to existing body of knowledge and literature. It will advance the frontiers of human knowledge relating to Foreign Policy Analysis while, governments, students and the general public will find this mini research work useful.

Literature Review

Conceptual Literature Review

Foreign Policy : The concept of foreign policy encompasses a set of principles that a state formulates, guiding its mode and dimension of interaction with other states based on its national interest. Ofoegbu (1980), posits that foreign policy is the category which deals with defence, security, international political relations, and international economic relations. It deals with the relations between one actor in the international system and other actors in the international system. Folarin (2017), defines foreign policy as the rational pursuit of a set of national objectives. This national objective is based on the state's primarily vital and non-vital interests. According to Agaba, Obiageli and Idagu (2018), foreign policy emanates from interactions in the domestic and international environments. What is constituted as foreign policy is simply a blend of a country's domestic policy and happenings in the international system. In the view of Frazier (2019), foreign policy refers to the tactics that a state employs to safeguard its international and domestic interests and how it interacts with other states and non-state players.

Causal Dynamics and Historical Events that Shaped America's Foreign Policy

i. **World War I (1914-1918):** The rise and increase of unrest and turbulence in Europe that degenerate into World War I were seen by most Americans as non-American affairs. President Woodrow Wilson would proclaim a neutral position to these wars at the initial stage and was supported by most Americans. He adopted a foreign policy of non-interference in other states' affairs. This war broke out in 1914, with the assassination of Austro-Hungarian Prince Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie both assassinated by a Bosnian Serb nationalist in Sarajevo. The gravity of annoyance and retaliation led to Austria-Hungary declaring war on Serbia. Not too long, alliances and counter alliances were made as World War 1 officially began
ii. **The Zimmerman Telegram in 1917:** The Zimmerman Telegram was a secret diplomatic communication issued from the German Foreign office in January 1917 that proposed a military contract between the German empire and Mexico if the U.S entered World War I against Germany. The telegram was intercepted by British Intelligence. This led to America's declaration of war against Germany in April, 1917, after German Secretary for Foreign Affairs Arthur Zimmerman publicly admitted that the telegram was genuine.
iii. **World War II (1939-1945):** After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, the United States declared war on Japan. Germany and Italy declared war on the U.S. a few days later, and the nation became fully engaged in the Second World War. The war ended with the bombing of two Japanese cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima by the U.S. nuclear bomb. U.S and USSR eventually became two global powers.
iv. **Cold War and Opposition to Communism in 1947:** Cold war liberals including United States supported opposition to communism. It was a period of geopolitical tension between the U.S and the Soviet Union and their respective allies, the western bloc and the Eastern bloc, that

started in 1947 and ended in 1991 after the fall of Soviet Union. The conflict was based on ideological struggle for global influence. America was guided by Truman Doctrine which encourages rebuilding the democratic and economic systems of Europe and to counter perceived threats to European balance of power, such as communist parties seizing control through revolutions.

v. **Response to 9/11 Attacks in 2001:** September 11, 2001 attack by Osama Bin Laden led Al Qaeda terrorist group on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon sent a shock wave to America and the global society. This led to President George Bush push for review of National Security Strategy from Containment to forward deterrence (Preemption).

Some Past Presidents of U.S and their Policy Ideologies

i. George Washington - Isolationist Doctrine
ii. Theodore Roosevelt - Open door policy
iii. Woodrow Wilson - Fourteen Point Policy
iv. Harry Truman - Truman Doctrine
v. Richard Nixon - Détente Policy
vi. Ronald Reagan - Reaganomics Policy
vii. George Bush - Preemptive Doctrine
viii. Barack Obama - Countering violent extremism
ix. Donald Trump - America First policy

The Concept of National Interest

When adopting a foreign policy posture, it is always of importance to project a national interest in which the state is put first while interacting with other states. Liu (2014) argued that national interest is very important in international relations, for as a concept it centers on the political, security, economic and cultural interest of a state. The core principle of a country's foreign policy is surrounded by its national interest. Nuechterlein (2009), defines national interest as the aspirations and goals of sovereign entities in the international arena. In the process of formulating any foreign policy, a state will first consider what it feels is vital and core to its existence. The core and vital interest of a state constitute its national interest. (Morgenthau, 1978) cited in Dinesh (2019) sees national interest as a nation's survival and protection of its physical and cultural identity against encroachment by other nations. Furthermore, a state could go to any length, if need be, for the protection and preservation of this national interest. Therefore, the components of national interest are vital and non-vital interests.

America's National Interest

America's national interest has always been pushed forward in the process of formulating and implementing its foreign policy. The vital and non-vital interests are always put into consideration. According to Allison and Blackwill (2000), the vital interest of America's foreign policy are to:

i. prevents, deter, and reduce the threat of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons attacks on the American citizens and its military.
ii. ensure U.S allies' survival and their active cooperation in shaping the international system.
iii. prevent the emergence of hostile major powers around the U.S borders.
iv. ensure global trade.
v. achieves productive relations.

America's foreign policy in recent times has been concerned with addressing any issue as core and vital. Even though as argued by some scholars the extent of the spread of democracy by the U.S is not a vital interest, the case scenario of supporting rebel groups as in Libya, and Syria to unseat dictatorial and undemocratically elected governments was a very relevant agenda on the U.S foreign policy radar.

U.S. Foreign Policy under President Trump: An Overview

President Trump's entrant into politics took many by surprise and turn out to be a game changing moment in the annals of U.S. politics. His presidential campaign message was radical in nature and hinge on America first doctrine, a position some critics alleged to be similar to isolationism of Woodrow Wilson era. Since the presidential campaign in 2016, President Trump had claimed that the Joint Cooperative Plan of Action (JCPOA) was biased in favor of Iran and would not bring peace to the Middle East. Scrapping the JCPOA framework was part of the President's pledge since taking office, along with moving the U.S. Embassy in Israel to West Jerusalem. The president was also skeptical about the global trade deals and overtly reneged on the agreement of the global trading system. It was during Trump era that withdrawal and breach of Paris agreement on climate change took place. The long-awaited Statement by President Trump on the Paris Climate Accord of 1st June 2017 is clear about the US choice:

> the United States will withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord and the United States will cease all implementation of the non-binding Paris Accord and the draconian financial and economic burdens the agreement imposes on our country. He added that his decision includes ending the implementation of the nationally determined contribution and the Green Climate Fund which is costing the United States a vast fortune. *(Pavone, 2018)*

He justified his double decision by saying:

> the bottom line is that the Paris Accord is very unfair, at the highest level, to the United States. Indeed, he made reference to the potential detriment of U.S economy if choosing to remain in the Agreement and the serious obstacles it would have created as we begin the process of unlocking the restrictions on America's abundant energy reserves. (Pavone, 2018).

He also made reference to the "lack of binding obligations" on other States, particularly China and India, and the impact of the Agreement on the U.S economy, showing "a fundamentally flawed understanding of the Paris Agreement" (Rajamani, 2017). In response to U.S announced exit, the European Union (EU) officially rebuked this option in the European Council conclusions on the Paris Agreement on climate change of 22 June 2017, stating that "the Agreement remains a cornerstone of global efforts to effectively tackle climate change, and cannot be renegotiated." The reactions of the world community have been unanimous in condemning the U.S decision to exit the Agreement. According to the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, Trump's decision is "a major disappointment for global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote global security" (Pavone, 2018).

The French President Macron labeled the U.S. decision as a mistake both for the U.S and for our planet, while German Chancellor Merkel "deplored" the U.S leaving the Paris Agreement. (Rajamani, 2017). Negotiation with a terrorist group against the long-standing tradition of the U.S.

also happened under the presidency of Donald Trump. To further understand the decisions of Trump, we will look at some of the areas that key decisions were made.

Trump's Withdrawal from Paris Agreement on Climate Change

The U.S policy on climate change is characterized by a historical divide between Democrats and Republicans. While Democrats are traditionally more sensitive towards environmental issues, Republicans believe that the economic interests of U.S companies shall prevail over the collective interest to the protection of the environment. The traditional reluctance of the Republican Party towards the UN multilateral process and environmental negotiations implicated the non-ratification of several environmental treaties (Montego Bay Convention on the Law of the Sea, Basel Convention on the Control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Kyoto Protocol), or the non-signature (Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters). President Trump affirmed on several occasion that global warming is a 'hoax' perpetrated by China in order to damage the US industry. His position on climate change is not dissimilar from that of Bush Jr. and echoes his words in his 'Letter to Members of the Senate on the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change'. Indeed, he wants to eliminate what he considers 'unnecessary restrictions' on the main sources of energy, such as coal and onshore and offshore oil and gas, because the reduction of CO2 emissions must not take place at detriment of the domestic industry. His environmental plan is against a calendar of reductions imposed by the United Nations, but is instead favorable to a mechanism of self-regulation by domestic companies under the supervision of the central government.

President Trump's unpredictable decision to openly breach the Paris Agreement is in contradiction with the 'rational choice theory (but President Trump is not a very rational actor). In sum, the Trump administration seems to be more worried by the internal consent, than by its level of reputation abroad. To this aim, he opted for a unilateral foreign policy in several occasion (examples are the air strikes against Syria, the decisions not join the Trans-Pacific Partnership, to pull out of UNESCO to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and to impose import restrictions). The reactions of the world community have been unanimous in condemning the US decision to exit the Agreement. According to the UN Secretary-General, Trump's decision is "a major disappointment for global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote global security". The French President Macron labeled the U.S decision as a "mistake both for the U.S and for our planet", while German Chancellor Merkel "deplored" the U.S leaving the Paris Agreement. In addition, internal consent to the exit from the Paris Agreement was not unanimous. There is a lot of posturing in Trump's announcement when the federal government is not the only player: much of the efforts to reduce U.S emissions will arguably come from single U.S State, cities and private actors as they have done since Bush's 2001 decision. Indeed, many voices counseled against the U.S exit. Also, many corporations like Apple, Google, and Microsoft, which started a strong policy of investment in renewable energies, with advertisements publicized in several newspapers (*The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and New York Post*) "urged President Trump to keep the United States in the Paris Agreement.

Trump's Negotiation with the Taliban and Withdrawal of Troops from Afghanistan

One of the traditional policies of the U.S has been the idea of not negotiating with the terrorists. President Trump was again disposed to upturn another policy that was upheld by Obama administration. In July 2016, President Obama announced that he would maintain 8,400 U.S. forces in the country through the end of his Administration, a higher level than planned, saying "Afghan forces are still not as strong as they need to be" (The White House statement on Afghanistan, 2016). The Taliban published an open letter addressed to President Trump in August 2017, urging him to withdraw U.S. forces from Afghanistan, citing what it characterized as the weakness and ineptitude of the Afghan government (Rowlatt, 2017). Nevertheless, soon after his inauguration, President Trump certainly put his finger on the collective pulse of the nation with remarks given at Fort Myer, Virginia, on August 21, 2017:

> The American people are weary of war without victory. Nowhere is this more evident than with the war in Afghanistan, the longest war in American history (17 years). I share the American people's frustration. I also share their frustration over a foreign policy that has spent too much time, energy, money, and most importantly lives, trying to rebuild countries in our own image, instead of pursuing our security interests above all other considerations. (Trump's remark, 2017).

Later that month, President Trump authorized an increase in the U.S. targeting authorities and force levels, though he conceded that a full withdrawal was his "original instinct". Within a year, President Trump was reportedly frustrated with the lack of military progress against the Taliban, and he ordered formal and direct the U.S.-Taliban talks without Afghan government participation for the first time (Mashal & Schmitt, 2018). Those talks culminated in the February 2020 U.S.-Taliban agreement, in which the two sides agreed to two "interconnected" commitments: the withdrawal of all U.S. and international forces by May2021, and unspecified Taliban action to prevent other groups (including Al Qaeda) from using Afghan soil to threaten the U.S and its allies. The U.S. withdrawal commitment was not explicitly conditioned on the Taliban reducing violence against the Afghan government, making concessions in prospective intra-Afghan talks, or taking other actions.

The United States also committed to facilitating a prisoner exchange between the Taliban and the Afghan government, whose mutual releases of 1,000 and 5,000 prisoners, respectively, began in May 2020. France and Australia reportedly opposed the release of some specific Taliban prisoners accused of attacks that killed French and Australian nationals (Radio Azadi, August 17, 2020). Before the prisoner release concluded, some media reports indicated that released Taliban fighters were returning or intended to return to the battlefield, with one June 2020 report citing a Taliban commander as saying that released fighters would be redeployed (France24, June10, 2020). Some Taliban prisoners released in 2020 reportedly played roles in the military offensives that led to the Taliban's August, 2021 takeover (Cullison & Shah, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

To give this work a scientific base, the researcher adopted Incremental Theory of Decision making as put forward by Charles Lindblom and Robert Dahl in 1968 as a theoretical framework. The theory views policy decisions as a continuation of past government activities with only incremental

modification, as a result of time constraints, information and cost that could prevent policymakers from identifying a full range of policy alternatives. Iglupas (2015) further agreed with the position of Lindblom when he asserts that policymakers generally continue previous policies, because they do not have time, information and money to investigate all the alternatives to existing policy. Implicit in these scholarly positions is the fact that incremental theory regards public policy and decision making as the continuation of existing government activities, alliances, and relations with only small incremental modification. Some leaders tend to begin every policy anew in every transition of one government to another which often amount to waste of resources with multiplier effects on the economy, security, and environmental issues that threatens a country and her allies.

Based on these, Dahl and Lindblom (cited in Ejere, et al) concluded that all analysts, policy and decision makers accept the legitimacy of previous policies because of the uncertainty about the consequences of completely new or different policies. However, other theorists have opposed this position and argued in favor of Rational- Comprehensive theory. But considering the position of United States of America as a super power, with strong institutions, decision making process should at all times reflect the National interest and the consideration of her allies and the world order they established. Trump was often accused of unilateral foreign policy posture in decision making on vital issues that concerns environment, economy and even security without wider consultation with designated institutions or allies in bilateral and multilateral relations. This made acceptability and supports of such decisions to be difficult and further bring down the prestige and respect for the U.S.A. Often time, the president relied on the X platform (formerly twitter) to communicate official decision-making policies, to the surprise of State Department, Council of Foreign Relations, and even key allies like United Kingdom and France, who ought to have been briefed, and their views considered. National interest must at all times override personal interest.

Research Methodology

To achieve the goal and objectives of this study, the historical and descriptive research design were adopted. Data were collected from secondary sources such as: textbooks, journals, conference materials, and other related literature on the subject matter. Furthermore, data drawn were analyzed qualitatively using content analysis.

Evaluation of Research Questions

Research Question 1: Does America's Withdrawal from Paris Agreement on Climate Change Enhance Cooperation of the U.S Allies in Shaping International System?

America's foreign policy objectives are not only centered on America alone, but the survival and cooperation of her allies is also part of their national interest. According to Allison and Blackwill (2000), the vital interest of America's foreign policy are to:

i. prevent, deter, and reduce the threat of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons attacks on the American citizens and its military.
ii. ensure the U.S allies' survival and their active cooperation in shaping the international system.
iii. prevent the emergence of hostile major powers around the U.S borders.
iv. ensure global trade.
v. achieve productive relations.
vi. To this end, withdrawal from Paris Agreement on climate change and any other environmental and economic policy that are multilateral in nature, should be pursued in a way that will

enhance cooperation of the U.S. allies who have been instrumental in helping to shape international system and order.

In the light of the traditional Republican policy of hostility towards the climate change multilateral regime, it is not difficult to interpret the current U.S policy trend towards climate. It appears that President Trump was more in the norm than suggested by his aggressive rhetoric: his current position echoes George Herbert W. Bush's statement "the American way of life is not negotiable" in 1992, George Walker Bush's withdrawal from the Kyoto protocol, and the constant narrow-minded and climate revisionist attitude of the Senate since de mid-1990s (Mooney, 2011). With his statement of 1st June 2017, the Trump administration opted for two options simultaneously (withdrawal and breach), announcing publicly and shamelessly that the U.S would not implement the Paris Agreement. It is a novelty in international relations, since States usually do not officially declare that they no longer follow the 'rules of the game'. The content of his statement violates international law, considering that a state party to a treaty is obliged to respect its international obligations, even if it decides to withdraw.

President Trump's unpredictable decision to openly breach the Paris Agreement is in contradiction with the 'rational choice theory. In sum, the Trump administration seems to be more worried by the internal consent, than by its level of reputation abroad (America First Foreign Policy). To this aim, he opted for a unilateral foreign policy in several occasion (examples are the air strikes against Syria, the decisions not to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership, to pull out of United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and to impose import restrictions). Paris Agreement on climate change is adjudged to be one of the promising multilateral agreements that would have addressed the issue of food security and depletion of ozone layer. America's withdrawal from the agreement has demoralized her allies and developing countries that look up to them as a determinant of global order. France and Germany were particularly indignant at Trump's decision at a time they thought the agreement is sealed. Instead of boasting the morale of her allies and their cooperation on multilateral issues, the reverse was the case.

Research Question Two: To What Extent has President Trump's Negotiation with the Taliban Prevented the Emergence of Hostile Extremists?

Another aspect of decision making under Trump administration that was met with mixed feelings has to do with his negotiation with a terrorist group (the Taliban), a practice that is frowned at by many American citizens irrespective of political affiliation. President Trump was reportedly frustrated with the Afghan Government's lack of military progress against the Taliban, and he ordered formal and direct U.S.-Taliban talks without Afghan government participation for the first time (Mashal & Schmitt, 2018). Those talks culminated in the February 2020 U.S. - Taliban agreement, in which the two sides agreed to two "interconnected" commitments: the withdrawal of all the U.S. and international forces by May, 2021, and unspecified Taliban action to prevent other groups (including Al Qaeda) from using Afghan soil to threaten the U.S and its allies. The U.S. withdrawal commitment was not explicitly conditioned on the Taliban reducing violence against the Afghan government, making concessions in prospective intra-Afghan talks, or taking other actions. The U.S also committed to facilitating a prisoner exchange between the Taliban and the Afghan government, whose mutual releases of 1,000 and 5,000 prisoners, respectively began in May, 2020.

France and Australia reportedly opposed the release of some specific Taliban prisoners accused of attacks that killed French and Australian nationals (Radio Azadi, August 17, 2020). Before the prisoner release was concluded, some media reports indicated that released Taliban fighters were returning or intended to return to the battlefield, with one June, 2020 report citing a Taliban commander as saying that released fighters would be redeployed (France24, June 10, 2020). Some Taliban prisoners released in 2020 reportedly played roles in the military offensives that led to the Taliban's August, 2021 takeover (Cullison & Shah, 2021). Trump's negotiation with the Talibans did not in any way assuage the rise of fundamentalism in the Middle East and its attendant's effects on global peace. Rather it emboldened the extremists the more.

Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, it is established that President Trump's foreign policy decisions was not in the overall interest of America and her allies, hence, not in line with their national interest. This is evidence in the widespread public opinion outcry and the dissatisfaction of America's allies in Trump's policy decisions. On the issue of pulling out of the Paris agreement on climate change, Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel, French and German leaders respectively condemned the breach of the agreement as against international law principles of obligation to agreement entered, thereby causing global tension on what the consequences could be. It is also concluded that the U.S.-Taliban peace deal must have been misconstrued by the Taliban to mean recognition and legitimacy to steer the ship of governance in Afghanistan. This further sends a wrong signal to the international community that has been making efforts to combat terrorism and its attendant effects. Some analysts are of the view that America's popularity and prestige under Trump was on the decline, thereby affecting his electoral fortune in his bid for a re-election. It was not logical for President Trump to have taken a foreign policy posture that further denigrated the place of America in committee of nations. Negotiation with the Taliban and withdrawal from a sensitive convention like climate change did not in any way suggest adherence to America's national interest.

Recommendations

From the above findings, the following recommendations are made:

i. **Unilateral Foreign Policy Decision should be abolished:** There should be a legislation that clearly forbids unilateral foreign policy decision by the President, to avoid situations where the idiosyncrasies of the person in power override National interest. Stiffer penalty should be meted out to any State that breach multilateral agreement entered into and ratified by the United Nations.
ii. **Negotiation with Terrorists should be listed as impeachable offence:** Aside from frowning at President's direct negotiation with terrorists, Congress should consider enlisting negotiation with terrorists as impeachable offence in America's legal system to serve as a deterrent to succeeding presidents.

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INTEREST RATES AND LOAN REPAYMENT PERFORMANCE IN DEPOSIT MONEY BANKS IN NIGERIA

Jeffrey Ogie Eguavoen [1]
Amenze Sandra Airhiavbere [2]
Department of Finance, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Benin, Nigeria [1&2]
Corresponding Email: jeffreyogie@uniben.edu [1]

Abstract
The study investigated the relationship between interest rates and loan repayment performance in deposit money banks (DMBs) in Nigeria from 2004 to 2023. The specific objectives were to find out whether interest rate (INTR), inflation rate (INFLR), loan duration (LDUR) and gross domestic products (GDP) significantly affected loan repayment performance (LRP) in DMBs in Nigeria overtime. The fully modified least squares (FMOLS) technique was utilised for data analysis and the results obtained revealed that, interest rate (INTR) and loan duration (LDUR) exert a weak positive relationship with loan repayment performance (LRP) of DMBs in Nigeria while inflation rate (INFLR) and gross domestic products (GDP) have a significant negative effect on loan repayment performance in DMBs in Nigeria. The study recommends among others that, the significant negative impact of inflation rate on loan repayment performance in DMBs suggests that monetary authority (CBN) should up their regulatory and monetary oversight in the management of inflation rate in the country. They must ensure that the right policy that will minimize the continuous rise in general price level. Inflation targeting measure should be proactively deployed to stabilize inflation level in the country as this will enable customers and indeed borrowers to be able repay any amount of money borrowed to do business from DMBs in Nigeria.

Keywords: Loan Repayment, Interest Rate, Inflation, Gross Domestic Product, Loan Duration

JEL Classification: E31, E43, E58, G21.

Introduction

The relationship between interest rates and loan repayment in Nigeria's banking industry has attracted a lot of attention from financial experts, banking institutions, and policymakers in recent

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years. Due to its direct impact on loan affordability and borrower's repayment capacity, interest rates are crucial factor in Deposit Money Banks' (DMBs') operations (Ebinum & Ehiedu, 2025). DMBs are essential to Nigeria's financial system since they serve as intermediaries mobilizing savings and extending loans to both individuals and firms. The Nigeria's financial system has experienced a number of interest rate policy adjustments, mostly as a result of economic reforms meant to stabilize the economy and encourage profitable investments. One essential strategy for curtailing inflation and stabilizing the value of the naira is the implementation of the monetary policy rate (MPR) by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) which in turn influences lending rates throughout the banking industry (Awopegba, Afolabi, Adeoye, & Akpokodje, 2022). In response to growing inflation, which peaked at 23.71% in April 2025, the CBN set the MPR at 27.50% in February 2025 and kept it at 27.50% by May 2025 (CBN, 2025a, 2025b). Because rising interest rates translate into higher borrowing costs, this circumstance poses difficulties for borrowers. High and volatile interest rates often make it difficult to repay loans, which raise the proportion of non-performing loans (NPLs) and has an effect on financial institutions' general health. According to the World Bank (2024), Nigerian banks' non-performing loans (NPLs) rose by 0.06% to 5.1% of total loans in the first quarter of 2024 compared to the first quarter of 2023, which is slightly higher than the prudential benchmark of 5.00% that is deemed acceptable. This marginal increase is explained by the fact that, in an economy where inflation exceeds income growth, the cost of loan servicing increases when interest rates rise, placing a burden on borrowers' ability to repay their debts.

The DMBs base their lending rates on the Central Bank Interest Rate (CBIR), also referred to as the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR), which has a direct impact on borrowers' repayment commitments (CBN, 2017). The average maximum lending rate in Nigeria's banking industry, for instance, increased from 27.07% in January 2024 to 29.79% in January 2025. This is inspite of the CBN maintaining its MPR at 27.50% (CBN, 2025b). Furthermore, the ability of borrowers to fulfill their repayment commitments is greatly impacted by other macroeconomic factors including inflation rates and economic growth. Increased default rates can result from rising inflation, especially for businesses and people, as it reduces the real value of repayments (Lekupanai & Makori, 2024). Nigeria's headline inflation rate, for example, dropped from 24.23% in March 2025 to 23.71% in April 2025, as stated by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The headline inflation rate for April 2025 was 0.52% lower than the headline inflation rate for March 2025, based on an analysis of the movement. The headline inflation rate was 9.99% lower on an annual basis (33.69%) than it was in April 2024 (NBS, 2025a). However, borrowers face serious difficulties as a result of these swings. Rates of economic growth have also fluctuated. When comparing the fourth quarter of 2024 to the same period the year before, Nigeria's GDP grew by 3.84% in real terms. This growth rate is higher than the 3.46% growth rates recorded in 2024's third and 2023's fourth quarters. In the first quarter of 2024, Nigeria's real GDP at basic prices grew by 2.98% year over year, a higher growth rate than the same quarter in 2023, when it increased by 2.31%. Q2 2024 growth remained positive at 3.19% compared to Q2 2023 growth of 2.51% (NBS, 2025b). Furthermore, the duration of loans might make repayment plans more difficult; longer-term loans usually have higher interest rates since lenders are taking on more risk, which can put further burden on borrowers' ability to repay (Ssekiziyivu, Bananuka, Nabeta, & Tumwebaze, 2018).

While many studies (including Olowofeso, Oyedele & Ayedun, 2024; Ademola & Adegoke, 2021; Ogundipe, Akintola, & Olaoye, 2020) have examined the individual effects of variables like

interest rates, inflation, loan duration and economic growth on loan repayment performance, the majority have taken a fragmented approach by concentrating on each variable separately. For example, some research looked at the effect of interest rates on loan defaults, while others concentrated on the role of loan tenure or inflation. But these factors are frequently linked together and can affect borrowers' ability to repay loans as a whole. Furthermore, the majority of current research uses single-method econometric models, ignoring multidimensional techniques that reflect how these elements interact dynamically over time. The peculiarities of Nigeria's economic climate, which include high lending rates, erratic growth, and fluctuating inflation rates, have also received little attention. Understanding loan repayment patterns in Nigerian DMBs is made more difficult by these circumstances. In order to close these gaps, this study combines interest rates, inflation, loan duration and economic growth into a single model and examines their combined effect on loan repayment performance.

In order to better understand how interest rates, along with inflation, loan duration, and economic growth affect loan repayment and contribute to the prevalence of non-performing loans, this study seeks to examine the relationship between interest rates and loan repayment performance in Nigerian DMBS. It takes a comprehensive and industry-specific approach, using cutting-edge econometric methods and current data to offer insightful analysis of the Nigerian banking industry. This study will shed light on the precise mechanisms via which interest rate variability impacts loan repayment by analyzing how these variables interact. The results will help develop targeted policies that improve repayment capacities and reduce default risks, supporting the stability of the financial sector and the overall economy. They will also help us gain a more thorough understanding of the factors influencing loan repayment outcomes in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review: The interest rate, stated as a percentage of the principal amount, is the cost of borrowing or the benefit of saving. Interest rates have a direct influence on the lending environment of DMBs in Nigeria and are a key factor in determining the affordability of loans. Nonetheless, the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR), which is the standard by which all financial institutions determine lending and deposit rates, is used by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to control interest rates. Based on macroeconomic variables like inflation, exchange rates, and GDP growth, the MPR is reviewed on a regular basis (CBN, 2023). Lending rate changes brought about by variations in the MPR have a substantial impact on people's and enterprises' capacity to obtain credit and fulfill repayment commitments (CBN, 2025a). For borrowers, high interest rates have significant implications, especially in developing nations like Nigeria. They make borrowing more expensive, which limits people's access to credit, especially for low-income earners and businesses. Moreover, the danger of loan default is increased by high interest rates. When the cost of loan servicing exceeds income growth or company performance, borrowers may find it difficult to fulfill their repayment commitments. The real cost of borrowing increases during unstable economic conditions, such as severe inflation or currency depreciation, making this problem even more difficult (World Bank, 2024). Conversely, lower interest rates promote borrowing by lowering the cost of credit, which may stimulate the economy. But if borrowers take on more debt than they can afford to pay back, they may also result in excessive borrowing and a rise in non-performing loans (NPLs) (World Bank, 2024). Therefore, monetary authorities must strike a delicate balance while

managing interest rates in order to promote economic growth and preserve financial stability. In summary, one of the primary factors influencing loan affordability and payback performance is interest rates. Their regulation by CBN through the MPR has a big impact on the Nigerian banking industry and how lenders and borrowers interact. Therefore, it is essential to comprehend the complexities of interest rates in order to evaluate how they affect loan repayment in DMBs.

Theoretical Framework

The essence of this section is to highlight the theoretical relationship between interest rates and loan repayment in DMBs. A number of financial and economic theories describe how interest rates affect borrowing and repayment patterns. This section provides a theoretical foundation for the study by analyzing the loanable funds theory, credit rationing theory and liquidity preference theory.

Loanable Funds Theory

Bertil, Robertson, and Hawtrey (1937) developed the Loanable Funds Theory. According to this theory, the relationship between supply of savings and the demand for loans determines interest rates. By mobilizing savings from surplus units and distributing them as loans to deficit units, banks serve as intermediaries. Interest rates are adjusted to balance the demand for credit and the supply of savings. The theory is applicable to the Nigerian banking industry since it clarifies the dynamic interplay among interest rates, credit availability, and repayment performance. Borrowing costs are raised by high interest rates, which are frequently caused by strict monetary policies or inflationary pressures. This makes it difficult for people and companies to repay their loans, especially those in sensitive industries.

Credit Rationing Theory

According to the Credit Rationing Theory, which was first proposed by Stiglitz and Weiss (1981), banks frequently limit the amount of credit that borrowers can obtain instead of increasing interest rates in order to control credit risk. Adverse selection, which occurs when higher interest rates draw riskier borrowers, is the reason of this behaviour. Because they are more prone to default, risky borrowers are more likely to have non-performing loans. By enforcing more stringent lending standards or restricting the quantity dispensed, even to creditworthy customers, banks may choose to ration credit in order to reduce this risk (Stiglitz & Weiss, 1981). This idea sheds light on why getting credit is still so difficult in Nigeria, particularly for low-income individuals and businesses. Nigerian banks frequently restrict lending by imposing hefty fees, limiting loan amounts, or requesting substantial collateral. Because borrowers who obtain expensive loans find it difficult to repay them, this practice not only limits access to finance but also has an impact on loan repayment capacity.

Liquidity Preference Theory

Keynes (1936) developed the Liquidity Preference Theory, which holds that the demand and supply of money affect interest rates. Cash and other liquid assets are preferred by both individuals and businesses for speculative, transactional, and precautionary reasons. Interest rates rise when there is a greater desire for liquidity since there is less money available for lending. Consequently, this impacts loan repayment by increasing the cost of borrowing (Keynes, 1936). This hypothesis is especially pertinent to the explanation of how Nigerian credit markets are impacted by monetary

policy. For example, people and firms may hoard cash during uncertain or inflationary times, which lowers the amount of loanable capital available. Interest rates increase as a result, raising the cost of lending and making repayment more difficult.

Empirical Literature

Several studies have been carried out to explore the link between interest rates and loan repayment performance of banks globally. Sangwa, Rasheed, and Bakar (2022) examined the effect of interest rates on loan repayment in 29 microfinance banks in Kuala Lumpur area of Malaysia. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze secondary data. The results of correlation and regression show that interest rates are negatively and significantly connected with loan repayment. Changes in interest rates have a significant effect on loan repayment; if banks charge higher interest rates, the repayment will be lower, but some loans do not perform as expected because of low repayment rates, which results in non-performing loans. Ademola and Adegoke (2021) investigated the socio-economic factors affecting loan repayment rate among microfinance banks in South-West Nigeria. Twenty (20) credit officers and one hundred and twenty four (124) respondents were chosen using the purposive sample technique. Regression analysis and descriptive statistics were utilised to analyze primary data. The findings indicated that the respondents' average monthly income, age, and educational attainment all had a substantial effect on the loan repayment rate. Despite being positive, the household type and gender factors had no discernible impact on the loan payback rate. Additionally, the results showed that loan repayment performance is significantly impacted by loan amount, interest rates, repayment style, and time.

Negatu (2021) investigated how interest rates affected credit and loan repayment in Ethiopian credit cooperative unions. One hundred (100) cooperative members were chosen using simple random sampling procedure, and descriptive, quantitative, and qualitative techniques were utilised to analyze the data. The percentage of defaulters falls from the younger group to the older group, according to the results. Additionally, illiterates made up a larger share of the defaulting category, but non-defaulters' numbers rose as their educational attainment increased. The results also shows a substantial correlation between the dependent variables and all business types, education level, loan amount, loan diversion, training, time intervals from loan application to disbursement, and payback period. Additionally, the researchers discovered that defaulters differed significantly in terms of age, family size, number of dependents, company experience, recurrent borrowing, and supervision.

Ogundipe, Akintola and Olaoye (2020) examined the relationship between interest rates and loan repayment in Nigeria using data from three banks (United Bank for Africa, First Bank of Nigeria and Guaranty Trust Bank) and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) statistical database. Descriptive, correlation and regression analyses were used to evaluate the data. From the results, interest rate and loan repayment, as determined by credit quality (non-performing loan ratio), are significantly correlated. This suggests that a rise in interest rates will probably result in a comparable rise or fall in the credit quality. It also demonstrated that non-performing loans will rise in response to even a little adjustment in the lending rate.

Wafula (2017) examined the relationship between interest rate, corporate membership and loan repayment in micro-financial institutions in Nakuru County of Kenya. Primary data was analysed utilizing correlation and multiple regression models. The study's outcomes indicate that interest rates did not influence loan repayment in Nakuru County's micro-financial institutions,

leading to the conclusion that interest rates have no bearing on loan repayment. Additionally, the study discovered that corporate membership had no discernible impact on loan repayment in Nakuru County's microfinance institutions.

Methodology

Data: This study focuses on the connection between interest rate and loan repayment performance in DMBs in Nigeria. The population of this study comprises the fourteen (14) DMBs listed on the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) as at December 2023. The study employed a census sampling technique**,** selecting all fourteen (14) listed DMBs as the sample. This method is appropriate because these banks are regulated by the CBN and are required to publish financial reports, ensuring data availability and reliability. The selection of the DMBs is justified by their significant representation of the Nigerian banking sector in terms of asset size, market share, and financial activities. These banks account for a significant part of the loans granted within the economy, making them a critical subset for understanding the dynamics of loan repayment performance in response to interest rate changes. Additionally, this manageable sample size allows for in-depth analysis while maintaining the reliability and generalizability of the findings. The dataset spans 2004 to 2023, a twenty-year timeframe, giving room for a thorough analysis of trends and patterns in loan repayment performance against the backdrop of fluctuating interest rates. This period is particularly significant, as it reflects various economic conditions and interest rate policies that have impacted the banking sector. The data was extracted from the annual financial reports of the selected DMBs, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Statistical Bulletin, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reports, and the World Bank.

Model Specification

To analyze the impact of interest rates and other macroeconomic variables on loan repayment performance, the study adopts the following regression model. The functional form of the model is specified as:

$LRP=f(INTR,INFLR,LDUR,GDP)$.....*(1)*

The econometric form of the model is specified as:

$LRP_t=\beta_0+\beta_1 INTR_t+\beta_2 INFLR_t+\beta_3 LDUR_t+\beta_4 GDP_t+\epsilon_t$.....*(2)*

Where: LRP_t = Loan Repayment Performance (measured by Non-Performing Loans (NPL) ratio); $INTR_t$ = Interest Rate (CBN benchmark rate and average lending rate); $INFLR_t$ = Inflation Rate (annual percentage change in CPI); $LDUR_t$ = Loan Duration (average tenure of loans issued by DMBs); GDP_t = Economic Growth Rate (measured by annual GDP growth rate); β_o = Intercept; β_1 - β_4 = Regression coefficients; ε_t = Error term

The a priori expectation is: $\beta_1, \beta_3, \beta_4>0; \beta 2<0$

Estimation Procedure

This study used the Fully Modified Ordinary Least Squares (FMOLS) technique. The unit root test was employed to evaluate the stationarity properties of the data in order to prevent spurious regression outcomes while cointegration test is used to ascertain whether there is a long-term relationship amongst the variables. We utilize the fully modified ordinary least squares (FMOLS) estimator, which is typically chosen over the OLS estimate due to its ability to handle endogeneity and small sample bias by using the leads and lags of the first-differenced regressors. Additionally,

the FMOLS requires that the regressors themselves not be cointegrated and that all variables be integrated of the same order [i.e., I(1)].

Results and Discussion

Unit Root Analysis: The unit roots are examined using the Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) test. Table 1 displays the results in terms of levels and first difference. Each variable's ADF test statistic is displayed in the second and fifth columns of the result, while the third and sixth columns, respectively, display the 95 percent critical ADF value. The result shows that all the variables are not stationary at levels, except INTR that was stationary. Nonetheless, after the first difference was taken, all the variables were now stationary. This suggests that the variables achieve stationarity after their first differences, indicating that they are in fact difference-stationary. Therefore, the hypothesis that the variables have unit roots would be accepted. In fact, the variables are integrated of order one (i.e., I[1]).

Table 1: Unit Root Tests

Variables	At Levels			At First Difference		
	ADF Test Statistic	95% Critical ADF Value	Remark	ADF Test Statistic	95% Critical ADF Value	Remark
LRP	-3. 022734	-3. 459970	Non-Stationary	-7.988271	-3.052169	Stationary
INTR	-5.233114	-3.040391	Stationary	-3.338778	-3.052169	Stationary
INFLR	-1.239817	-3.02997	Non-Stationary	-3.667638	-3.040391	Stationary
LDUR	0.937817	-3.02997	Non-stationary	-4.24057	-3.040391	Stationary
GDP	-2.461832	-3.02997	Non-Stationary	-4.639605	-3.052169	Stationary

Source: Authors' Computation (2025)

Cointegration Test

We used the Johansen Cointegration Test to check for cointegration. The two primary test statistics that form the basis of the panel test are the eigenvalue test (λ-max) and the trace test statistics. There are around six (6) significant cointegrating vectors of interest rate and loan repayment performance of DMBs in Nigeria based on the trace test statistics, as shown in Table 2. This suggests that the variables have a long-term relationship. Therefore, Table 2 below provides a summary of the results of the cointegration test.

Table 2: Johansen Cointegration Tests Results

	Trace Test			Maximum Eigenvalue Test		
Null Hypothesis	Statistic	0.05 Critical Value	Prob. Value	Statistic	0.05 Critical Value	Prob. Value
r = 0*	151.3342	69.81889	0.0000*	72.33128	33.87687	0.0000*
r ≤ 1	79.00295	47.85613	0.0000*	39.71953	27.58434	0.0009*
r ≤ 2	39.28342	29.79707	0.0030*	28.59653	21.13162	0.0037*

r ≤ 3	10.68689	15.49471	0.2315	10.18762	14.26460	0.1999
r ≤ 4	0.499276	3.841466	0.4798	0.499276	3.841466	0.4798

Source: Authors' Compilations (2025).

The Fully Modified Ordinary Least Squares (FMOLS) Estimates

Table 3 below shows the results of the fully modified ordinary least squares (FMOLS) estimation of the relationship between interest rates and DMBs loan repayment performance in Nigeria. The R squared value of 0.5 indicates that the model has demonstrated a good predictive ability. This indicates that changes in the explanatory variables account for more than half of the systematic fluctuations in loan repayment in DMBs. The model's R-squared value of 0.5 suggests that it has good predictive ability, and its adjusted R-squared value of 0.25 percent is modest.

Table 3: Interest Rates and Loan Repayment Performance in DMBs in Nigeria (FMOLS)

Variables	Coefficient	T-Ratio	Prob.
INTR	0.56886	1.6188	0.1314
INFLR	-1.2132	-2.5200	0.0269*
LDUR	0.0006	0.6823	0.5080
GDP	-1.3200	-4.6197	0.0006**
C	42.6903	4.1840	0.0013**
@TREND	4.9206	2.6959	0.0195
@TREND^2	-0.2364	-2.8632	0.0143
R^2 = 0.50 $\bar{R}2$ = 0.25			

Source: Authors' compilations (2025): Note: ** significant at 1% level; * significant at 5% level.

With respect to the individual results obtained, we observed that the coefficient of interest rate (INTR) exerts a weak positive relationship with loan repayment performance (LRP) of DMBs in Nigeria. The variable failed the 5 percent significance level. By implication, the result suggests that the aggregate interest rate measured as bank's prime lending rate does not play any important role in loan repayment performance (LRP) of DMBs in Nigeria during the investigating period.

The coefficient of inflation rate (INFLR) exerts a statistically significant negative impact on loan repayment performance in DMBs in Nigeria and passes the 5 percent significance level. This implies that inflation rate in the country is a major determinant of loan repayment performance in DMBs. Indeed, as inflation rises, loan repayment performance in DMBs decreases by approximately -1.2132%. This means that high inflation rate is repugnant, and inhibitive to the ability of customers to repay loan promptly in DMBs in Nigeria overtime.

The coefficient of loan duration (LDUR) which represents the period of time in which loans taken by banks' customers are expected to lapse is seen not to exert any significant impact on the level of loan repayment performance of DMBs in Nigeria overtime. The variable indeed, failed the 5 percent significance level.

The coefficient of gross domestic product (GDP), a measure for economic growth is seen to have a significant negative relationship with loan repayment in DMBs in Nigeria. The variable passes the 1 percent significance level; suggesting that as the magnitude of general economic activities

increases by the day, aggregate loan repayment performance in DMBs weakens or reduced by approximately -1.3200 percent. This finding however contradicts theoretical expectation of a positive and significant association between economic growth and loan repayment capacity of banks' customers. Probably this is due to the high level of inflation in Nigeria as rightly suggested by the high impact of inflation rate on loan repayment above.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The role of interest rate in the loan repayment capacity of DMBs' borrowers cannot be over emphasized. Theoretically, interest rate is expected to be positively related to loan repayment performance in DMBs. However, where it is compromised, and excessively become high, it discourages customers, investment and indeed borrowers from taking loans for investment purpose because of the envisage difficulties in repaying the loans given a high inflation environment. Thus, in order to ascertain to the extent to which interest rates (INTR), inflation rate (INFLR), loan duration (LDUR) and gross domestic product (GDP) have affected loan repayment performance in DMBs in Nigeria over the period 2004 to 2023, this study was undertaken. The fully modified ordinary least squares (FMOLS) technique was utilised in analyzing the data and the outcomes generally revealed that, interest rate (INTR) and loan duration (LDUR) exert a weak positive connection with loan repayment performance (LRP) of DMBs in Nigeria. On the other hands, inflation rate (INFLR) and gross domestic products (GDP) have a significant negative impact on loan repayment performance in DMBs in Nigeria. The study therefore concluded that, in the determination of loan repayment performance in DMBs in Nigeria, interest rate (INTR) is not a relevant factor to be considered. Rather, it is inflation rate (INFLR) and gross domestic products (GDP) that are critical determining factors to be considered and which must not be disregarded by banks' management and regulatory authorities (CBN and NDIC) in this regard. From the findings of the study, the following specific recommendations for policy decisions are made:

i. The significant negative effect of inflation rate (INFLR) on loan repayment performance in DMBs suggests that the monetary authority (CBN) should up their regulatory and monetary oversight in the management of inflation rate in the country. They must put in place the right policy that will minimize the continuous rise in general price level. Inflation targeting measures should be proactively deployed to stabilize inflation level as this will enable customers and indeed borrowers to be able repay any amount of money borrowed to do business from the DMBs.
ii. The significant negative impact of GDP on loan repayment suggests that the monetary authority (CBN) should formulate appropriate policy that would minimize interest rate to make it more attractive to borrowers so that more productive investment can be embarked on in the real sector of the economy and in the general economy so that borrowers can make profits and in turn be able to promptly repay their loans on agreed terms.

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Article **Open Access**

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY ACTION RECOVERY AND ECONOMIC STIMULUS (KG CARES) PROGRAMME TO LOCAL MARKETS AND DISTRIBUTION NETWORKS IN KOGI STATE

Osebi Sophia Balogun [1]

Abdullahi Mohammed Yamma [2]

Mohammed Bello Baban'Umma[3]

Department of Political Science, Federal University Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria [1]

Department of Political Science, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria [2 & 3]

Corresponding Email: osebi.balogun@fulokoja.edu.ng [1]

Abstract

Food is paramount for the continual survival of the living. This is why countries around the globe formulate short-term and long-term policies and strategies to ensure their citizens are food-secured. Nigeria is one of such countries that battles food insecurity which is felt in every region within the nation. Kogi state, which is part of the country's north-central region, is not spared. Despite policies initiated by past state government administrations, the menace of inadequate food remains. The introduction of the Kogi Community Action Resilience and Economic Stimulus (KG CARES) programme by the immediate past administration of the state was to help reduce the state's hunger level. The policy's main objective is to expand access to livelihood support and food security services. The study examines role the programme, KG CARES contributed to ensuring food security by improving the abilities of local markets and distribution networks. The study adopts the Social Exchange theory which assists research in understanding the cost-benefit relationship between partners that shape decision-making processes and resource allocation for promoting food security. Data was collected through questionnaires (the distribution of 400 questionnaires to randomly selected poor households from six local government areas) as primary sources and secondary sources (books, journal articles, and internet information), focusing on household food security and market access in Kogi state. The findings reveal that while the policy, KG CARES, provided temporary relief, challenges remain in enhancing food security due to disruptions in food supply chains and limited access to essential resources. The study recommends that the Kogi State

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government make targeted policies to strengthen local food systems, and enhance the lives of vulnerable livelihoods, local farmers, and food producers.

Keywords: Food Security, KG CARES, Local Markets, Distribution Network, Vulnerable Households.

Introduction

Food is essential for the survival of any population, which is why it occupies the top tier of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Only those who are nourished can think clearly and function effectively, both mentally and physically. This underscores the crucial role food plays in societies around the world. However, merely having food available is not enough; the food's nutritional quality ensures food security within a community. Food security is a complex issue involving global availability, access, utilization, and stability of food resources. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines it as a condition in which all people always have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for a healthy and active life (FAO, 2021).

The concept of food security has gained significant attention, especially considering global challenges such as climate change, population growth, economic inequality, and geopolitical tensions. At its core, food security revolves around the relationship between food production and the socio-economic conditions that allow people and communities to access that food (Pinstrup-Andersen & Watson, 2011). While the world produces enough food to feed everyone, access and distribution are disproportionately uneven. Poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and political instability can severely impede food access, leading to malnutrition and hunger in various regions. With the global population projected to reach approximately 9.7 billion by 2050, food production systems face considerable challenges (Godfray et al., 2010). To meet rising demand, food production will need to increase by an estimated 70%. Achieving this goal requires not just boosting agricultural output but also ensuring that food systems are sustainable and resilient to external disruptions. Climate change is another crucial factor affecting food security, as it impacts agricultural productivity through shifting weather patterns, more frequent extreme weather events, and changes in pest and disease dynamics. These alterations threaten the livelihoods of countless farmers, particularly in vulnerable areas dependent on stable climate conditions (Meyer, 2019).

Additionally, food security is closely linked to economic stability. In many low-income countries, economic limitations restrict individuals' ability to buy sufficient and nutritious food. Global economic policies, trade agreements, and market fluctuations can further influence food prices, intensifying food insecurity for the most disadvantaged populations (Thorn-Lyman, 2010). Addressing food security requires a multifaceted strategy that promotes sustainable agricultural practices, invests in rural infrastructure, improves food distribution networks, and creates social safety nets for vulnerable communities. International cooperation and policy platforms, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals—particularly Goal 2, which aims to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture are essential for tackling food insecurity worldwide (HLPE, 2017). Food security remains a critical issue requiring united efforts from governments, organizations, and communities around the globe. It is not solely about the availability of food; it is also about ensuring that every individual can access and use the food necessary for a healthy life. Effectively addressing the complexities of food security is vital for achieving broader objectives related to health, economic stability, and social equity.

In Nigeria, food security is a significant concern shaped by various factors such as economic conditions, climate change, conflict, and agricultural practices. As Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria faces substantial challenges in ensuring that its citizens reliably access sufficient, safe, and nutritious food. One of the key obstacles to food security in Nigeria is poverty. A large segment of the population lives below the poverty line, severely limiting their ability to afford food. Reports indicate that around 40% of Nigerians live in extreme poverty, further exacerbating food insecurity (Adebayo & Adebayo, 2020). Climate change is also a crucial factor affecting the largely rain-fed agricultural sector. Variations in weather patterns, including inconsistent rainfall and extended droughts, have reduced agricultural productivity. Kogi state, in the Middle Belt of Nigeria, has a significant proportion of households' experience food insecurity. This could be because of the poverty level, limited access to and affordable foods, poor distribution networks, among others.

Statement of the Problem

Despite various measures, programmes and projects formulated and implemented by countries across the globe, the menace of food insecurity still rages, and Kogi State, Nigeria is no exception. In Kogi, existing challenges in food security are already influenced by factors such as poverty, inadequate infrastructure COVID-19 pandemic, and climate change. All these affected farmers' ability to access markets, purchase inputs, and engage in agricultural activities. This disruption has led to reduced agricultural productivity and a subsequent decline in food availability. This has resulted in increased food prices, making it difficult for low-income households to afford basic food items. Many families in Kogi rely on daily wages for their livelihoods; thus, reduced incomes from sales of farm produce and compromised their ability to secure adequate nutrition. Additionally, the disruption of supply chains has resulted in food spoilage and waste, particularly for perishable goods. The impact on food systems has been compounded by the challenges of accessing health care and nutrition education, which are crucial in ensuring food security and promoting healthy diets. One major objective for the implementation of the Kogi Community Action Resilience and Economic Stimulus (KG CARES) programmes is to reduce the hunger level of its citizens, among others. The study, therefore, seeks to examine the effectiveness of the KG CARES programme on food security in Kogi State.

Research Questions

i. What roles have local markets and distribution networks, in collaboration with KG-CARES, played in ensuring proper food utility in Kogi State?
ii. How effective has the KG CARES programme been in restoring livelihoods and stabilizing the food supply chain in Kogi State?

Research Objectives

i. To examine local markets and distribution networks' role in ensuring food utilization in Kogi State in collaboration with KG-CARES.
ii. To understand KG CARES programme has been restoring livelihoods and stabilizing the food supply chain in Kogi State.

Conceptual Framework

Food Security: Food security is defined as the condition in which all individuals have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. This concept encompasses several dimensions, including availability, access, utilization, and stability of food supplies. The Food Agricultural Organization (FAO), provides a widely accepted definition, stating that food security exists “when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 1996). It is largely accepted because it is not only concerned with the availability of food but also magnifies the importance of accessibility and utilization of food. Amartya Sen has contributed significantly to the understanding of food security by emphasizing entitlements and access. In his work, “Poverty and Famine” (1981), Sen argues that food security is not solely about the supply of food but is closely linked to individuals’ ability to acquire food through various means, including purchasing power and social safety nets. His analysis reveals that famine can occur even when food is available, illustrating the importance of accessibility as a key factor in food security. Furthermore, the World Food Summit (1996) reinforced the importance of food security as a global issue, defining it in terms of ensuring that food is available, accessible, and utilized in a way that maintains a healthy and active life. This definition has been adopted and adapted by various governments and international organizations to guide policies and interventions aimed at enhancing food security at national and worldwide levels. The dimensions of food security can be further elaborated as follows: Availability: The physical presence of food in sufficient quantities. Access: The economic and physical access to food, which includes income, purchasing power, and distribution systems. Utilization: The proper use of food, which involves nutritional quality and dietary diversity. Stability: The consistency of food availability and access over time, ensuring that fluctuations do not lead to insecurity.

Food Availability: Scholars define food availability as the physical supply of food in desired quantities and quality within a specific geographical area. Food availability is a key component of food security, along with access, utilisation, and stability. Production, distribution, and storage factors influence food availability. Scholars have studied this complex concept extensively in various fields, including agriculture, economics, nutrition, and public health. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) defines food availability as "the supply of food available for human consumption, taking into account factors such as production, stocks, imports, exports, and losses" (FAO, 2001). This means that the presence of food is key to human survival. The World Food Programme (WFP) defines food availability as "the amount of food available for consumption per person per day" (WFP, 2010). This definition differs from that of the former. It is concerned with daily consumption per person. Another definition is given by The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and which defines food availability as "the amount of food produced, stored, and imported, minus losses and exports" (IFPRI, 2014)

Food Accessibility: Food accessibility, a critical component of food security, refers to the ability of individuals and households to acquire adequate amounts of food. It encompasses both physical and economic dimensions. The World Food Programme (WFP) (2010) defined Food Accessibility as "the ability to acquire sufficient quantities of food of acceptable quality to meet dietary needs." Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (2001), defined "Ensuring that all people,

at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) (2014) also defined food accessibility as "the ability to obtain sufficient quantities of food, of appropriate quality, to meet dietary needs." By understanding these definitions and factors, researchers and policymakers can develop strategies to improve food accessibility and address food insecurity.

Food Affordability: This is a critical component of food security, referring to the capacity of individuals and households to purchase enough inexpensive, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs. It's a complex issue influenced by various economic, social, and environmental factors. The World Food Programme (WFP) (2010) defined food affordability as "the capacity to pay a market price for food compared to the proportion of a household's income and other expenses." Furthermore, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) (2014) also explained food affordability as “the ability to acquire sufficient quantities of food, of appropriate quality, to meet dietary needs." The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) (2015) opined that food affordability is "the ability of at-risk households to afford available foods."

Food Stability: Food stability is a crucial dimension of food security, ensuring consistent access to food over time. It involves the reliability of food supplies, the resilience of food systems to shocks and stresses, and the predictability of food prices. The World Food Programme (WFP, 2020) defined food stabilization as "the ability to access sufficient quantities of food consistently." Food Stability deals with the problems of ensuring that food security is free from fluctuations of food supply over time. It deals with food supply adjustment to meet change in population and adequacy in food supply through dynamics in time (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2001),

Food Utilization: This refers to the body's ability to use the nutrients from consumed food to support growth, development, and overall health. It encompasses various factors, including dietary intake, nutrient absorption, and metabolic processes. Though there is no single universally accepted scholarly definition, the concept is often explored within the context of food security and nutrition. It is closely intertwined with the other dimensions of food security: availability, access, and stability. While there may not be a specific definition, food utilization is often discussed in the context of food security and nutrition. Several organizations and researchers have contributed to this body of knowledge. The World Food Programme (WFP, 2020) emphasizes the importance of adequate dietary intake and nutrient utilization for achieving food security. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2001) views food utilization in the role of food in promoting health and well-being, which includes proper use of food available and proper diet combination. Also, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) addresses issues related to nutrition, including dietary intake and nutrient absorption. It's important to note that food utilization is influenced by various factors, including individual health status, genetics, and environmental conditions. Understanding these factors is crucial for addressing malnutrition and promoting optimal health outcomes.

Literature Review

The presence of sufficient food and getting these foods is subject to how often the people can get food. This is dependent on the distribution network available. Such as local markets and accessible roads to these markets for farmers and traders. Ajibade, Onimisi, Yusuf and Achor (2022), in their study on fishmongers in the Ofu local government area of the state, observed that it was a major trade for women in that area. The study used the multi-stage sampling technique to randomly select 120 respondents from three major markets in the Local Government Area. Primary data was used for the study through a well-structured questionnaire. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, gross margin analysis, multiple regression model and mean score. Also, the results indicated an average household size of 6 persons per household and a mean marketing experience of above 10 years. Furthermore, 55.0% of the marketers had primary education. The results derived from the study indicated that marketing experience and household size had a significant influence on fish profitability, and the major challenge faced by these fishmongers (marketers) is inadequate credit facilities. It suggests that the state government provide them with soft loans to expand their trade (Ajibade et al, 2022). This will enhance the ability of the traders to market their products not only in the Ofu local government area but other parts of the state. Davies et al (2022) argued on the importance of local markets in rural areas, particularly in sub-Saharan African societies, in ensuring food security. They opined that, aside from providing more affordable and physically accessible food to low-income consumers, traditional markets serve as wholesalers to street vendors, create market entry points for smallholder farmers, and provide essential employment opportunities for sellers. The study adopted Ostrom's design principles for enduring common-pool resources in investigating the study area, which is 81 urban cities in Zambia, which assisted the researchers in understanding the role of markets and government institutions in sustaining food supply. This, they say, is prevalent in most sub-Saharan African societies, for which Kogi state, Nigeria, is a part.

The above works of literature indicate that more needs to be done by researchers and policymakers in creating awareness regarding the role of local markets in ensuring food security. This is because they are necessary to meet the needs of low-income earners. Also, it is an avenue where small-scale farmers of different farm produce could trade their goods. Policy actors, too, have a tremendous role to play in resuscitation the economy. As Ojide, Ogu, Ohalete and Chinanuife (2021) opined that those who influence policymaking in one way or the other are required in any venture to uplift the downtrodden Nigerian economy if success is to be achieved. In their study, they sample policy actors randomly from Civil Society Organizations, the Private sector, the public sector, Academia, Research Institutes, Non-governmental organizations, NGOs, etc., by interviewing 35 persons from the above groups. They used a participatory development theory in explaining the part played by policymakers in Nigeria's economy. These include the provision of employment, improved educational technology and export substitutes apart from crude oil to diversify the nation's economy. The results were descriptively analysed. The study then recommended that direct cash transfers be made to households, and small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) to be encouraged as the policy option that would have a huge impact in reducing the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the people and the economy. However, they were not clear on the medium this cash can be made available to the extremely poor societies in the country with no financial institutions or those without bank accounts.

Chinonso and Uwajumogu (2020), in their study, tried to review the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic on the nation's food supply and the measures taken to solve the problem.

The study adopted the Rentier State Theory and Qual-dominant approach to explain the strategy the government of Nigeria were employing in tackling the consequences of the pandemic in the nation. It sourced its data from secondary sources, comprising both qualitative and quantitative data, which were descriptively analysed. The results of the study indicate that though the price of oil had plummeted because of the pandemic, the nation's economy still depended on oil rents to recover its economy, and this slowed down the recovery process. Furthermore, the research shows that agriculture, which is the main sector for ensuring a constant food supply, was one of the sectors given the least attention, with only ₦ 110.24bn of the 2021 budget. (Chinonso and Uwajumogu, 2020). The work recommended that more attention be given to crucial sectors such as agriculture, science and technology and promote the growth of domestic and home-made industries, which is vital to economic growth and development. Although the foregoing dwells on the general recovery of the Nigerian economy, ensuring that a society is nutritionally secured should be stressed, without which full economic recovery will be hampered.

Kalu (2023) opined in his study that measures to reduce the consequences of COVID-19 in Nigeria should not be limited to food security alone. The study was aimed at discovering the reasons for the rapid spread of the virus in Nigeria and how it was managed by the government. The study relied on the conventional content analysis method. During the research, it was observed that most of the help that was received from the international community in the form of aid or loans was towards food provisions and health care services. It suggests that there is a need for the government to enact a clearly defined public policy for economic recovery and for household dignity to be restored. Notably, Kalu's (2023) argument is like that of Chinonso and Uwajumogu, (2020), in government concentrating its energy and resources in major areas which be more beneficial to the citizens and the nation's economy in post-pandemic Nigeria. Mawani et al. (2021) carried out a comprehensive study on post-pandemic societies across global, regional, and national levels. The study aimed to find out various interventions that were implemented and used in different countries as a response to the coronavirus. The method adopted was that the study gathered data from academic pieces of literature such as the Science citation index, Social Science citation index, and Emerging sources citation index. Other online databases used are the Public Affairs Information Service (PAIS) index, International Bibliography of Social Science, Left index, Gender Studies database etc. Grey sources of literature are the United Nations Digital Library, International Labour Organization (ILO), Factiva, International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Monetary Fund, World Bank Open Knowledge Repository, WHO Library etc.

The findings of the study were analysed in three parts: socio-economic interventions, protecting jobs, enterprises, and workers, to identify areas that have not been covered by the research. Importantly, the first part is related to the current study: increasing food security and safe functioning of food supply for countries post-pandemic era. The gaps identified by the study showed that more still needs to be done by various countries towards rapid economic recovery. The study therefore suggests better interventions in designing, implementing and evaluating recovery policies, effective evidence-based socioeconomic interventions, and equity-focused, redistributive, and transformative interventions. Broadly, the above works of literature have shown the nature, the cause and the consequences of the pandemic on society. They also provide the measures, programmes, and policies that have been taken by the government, particularly in Nigeria, to revive the economy. Despite the efforts made by these works of literature, very little has been done in checking the implementation levels of the programme in states, nor are there specific

pieces of literature on the implementation of the Covid-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus programme in various states. This is one of the purposes of this current study.

Empirical Review

KG CARES and Stabilization of Food in Kogi State: Reviving the economies of countries across the globe is very important post-lockdown in the situation. This initiated the implementation of numerous domestic and international economic policies depending on the financial strength of each of these nations. One of the international policies adopted by Nigeria to revive its economy is the COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (CARES), initiated by the World Bank and adopted by Kogi state. This is because the nation's mainstay, the exportation of crude oil, and its price had dwindled due to the pandemic. Like Nigeria COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (NG-CARES), which had specific procedures for implementation. According to (Environment and Social Systems Assessment, 2020), each State in the Federation is expected to institute a State Steering Committee comprising Commissioners and Permanent Secretaries of the key sectoral Ministries and Heads of Agencies will be constituted to provide oversight and policy guidance to the programme. The report suggests that each state's steering committee is to set up a State CARES Coordinating Unit (SCCU), which will be responsible for serving as the secretariat of the State CARES Steering Committee:

i. undertaking periodic collation of results from delivery units; and
ii. monitoring the progress of implementation and disbursements against results.

However, as explained in the ESSA (2020) report, States were allowed the leverage of choosing their implementation agency for the programme execution. Kogi CARES chose the Kogi State Social Investment Program (KG-SIP) as its implementation agency, on the platform of the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) in all three Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIS). The report used existing materials sourced from the staff of the Bank of Agriculture through a combination of reviews of existing program materials and available technical literature, interviews and extensive consultations with government staff, non-governmental organizations, regulatory agencies, farmers, private sector organizations and sector experts. The report suggests that since States are weak in delivering a comprehensive assessment of their environment, which is required in determining policy implementation and evaluation, State governments should institute a scheduled program to build and strengthen the capacity of the technical staff of the various ministries within the state.

Theoretical Framework

The Social Exchange theory is a sociological and psychological theory that studies the social behaviour in the interaction of two parties that implement a cost-benefit analysis to determine risks and benefits. Some of the proponents of the theory are Thibaut (1917-1986) and Kelley (1921-2003), who were psychologists, and Homas (1910-1989) and Blau (1918-2002), and Levi-Strauss were sociologists among others (Cook and Rice, 2006). This theory proposes that behaviours can be thought of as the result of cost-benefit analyses by people attempting to interact with society and the environment. If a person believes they can extract more of a reward through behaviour than they lose by performing it, then the person will perform it. Conversely, the behaviour will not be performed when the person feels the cost outweighs the benefit. If someone does not value

maintaining a relationship or is distrustful and does not expect others to follow through with the reward, then the balance would be shifted toward anticipating a lower worth to any social exchange. The relative costs would be higher, and the anticipated rewards would be lower. (Stafford, 2008). This theory can be used to analyze the interactions between different stakeholders in Kogi state involved in the Community Action Resilience and Economic Stimulus efforts, including policymakers, government agencies, NGOs, community groups, and individuals. It can provide insights into the social dynamics and exchanges that shape decision-making processes and resource allocation for promoting food security in the region. With the aid of this theory, the study examines the extent to which the implementation of KG CARES has helped improve food security among poor livelihoods in the state.

Methods

This study sourced both qualitative and quantitative data to aid its analysis. The research design used for analysis is the thematic analytical method for the qualitative data and the descriptive method for the quantitative data, respectively. Below is the summary of the data collected in bar chart form.

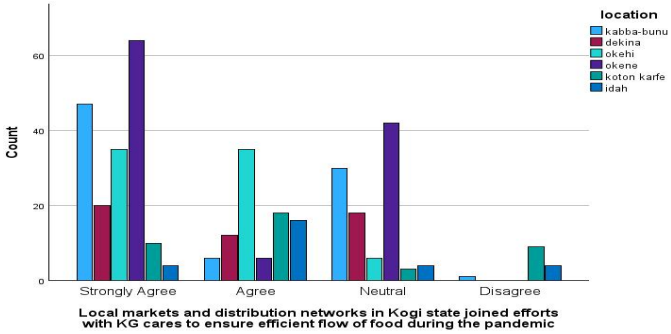
Questionnaire Summary

Local Govt	No of Questionnaires	Questionnaires Received
Kabba-Bunu	84	84
Dekina	51	50
Okehi	76	75
Okene	112	112
Koton Karfe	40	40
Idah	28	28
Total	**391**	**389**

Data Presentation and Analysis

Objective 1: The role of Local markets and distribution networks in collaboration with KG CARES played in ensuring food availability and accessibility in Kogi state:

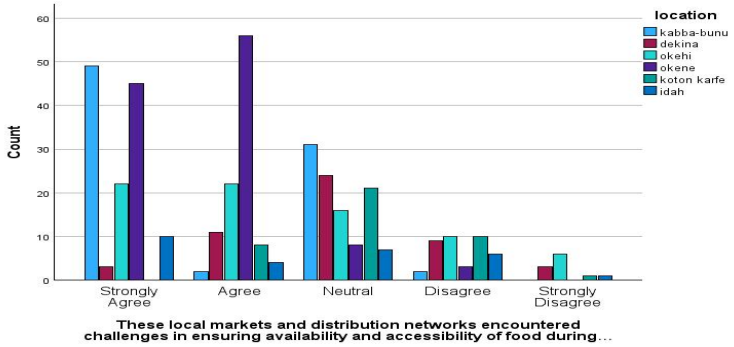
i. Local markets and distribution networks in Kogi state joined efforts with KG CARES to ensure efficient flow of food



The above indicates that 46.2% of respondents strongly agreed that local markets effectively partnered with KG CARES their respondents expressing certain level of satisfaction with these

collaborative efforts of the programme. However, at varying levels in suggest that the perceived impact of these efforts was notable in these local governments. In addition, 23.8% of respondents agreed with the statement, showing a more moderate but positive view of the collaboration. likely because a larger share of respondents in these local governments had already expressed strong agreement. Neutral responses made up 26.4% of the total respondents while disagreement responses were relatively low overall, with only 3.6% of respondents disagreeing with the statement. This illustration indicates that the KG CARES programme enhanced significantly to the flow of food products in its local markets.

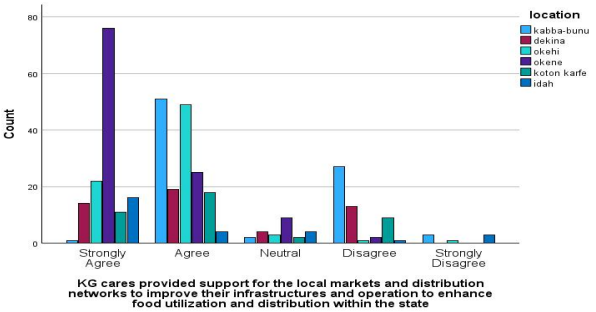
ii. These local markets and distribution networks encountered challenges in ensuring the availability and accessibility of food during the pandemic



33.1% of the total respondents strongly agreed that local markets faced significant obstacles. Kabba-Bunu had the highest rate of strong agreement, with 58.3% of respondents indicating that these challenges were pronounced, suggesting that disruptions in food distribution may have been particularly impactful there. In addition, 26.4% of respondents agreed that local markets faced difficulties in maintaining food access during the pandemic.

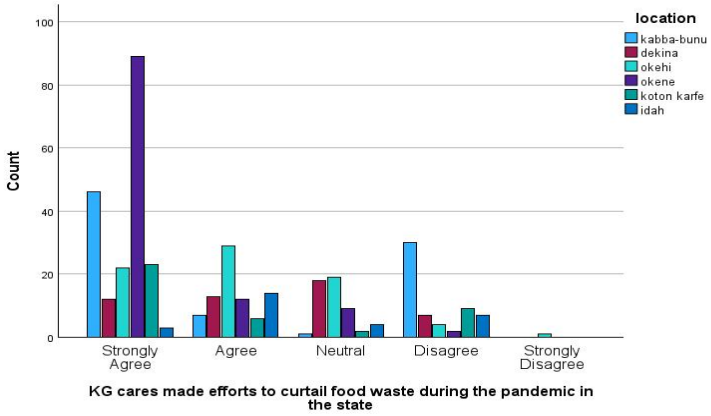
Neutral responses accounted for 27.4%. This high rate of neutrality in these local governments suggests that a significant portion of respondents were uncertain about the impact of the programme or did not observe pronounced challenges, indicating some mixed perceptions within the local governments areas being studied. Respondents who disagreed was relatively low overall, with only 10.3% of respondents disagreeing that local markets faced challenges.

iii. KG CARES provided support for the local markets and distribution networks to improve their infrastructure and operations to enhance food utilization and distribution within the state



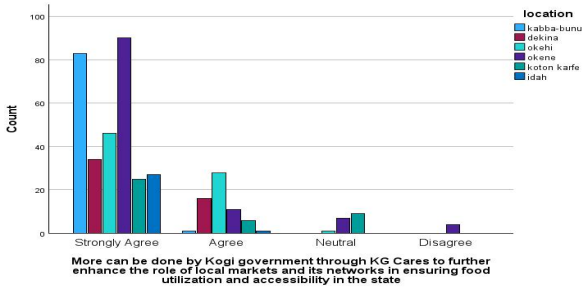
Overall, 35.9% of respondents strongly agreed that KG CARES offered substantial support for improving food distribution infrastructure. Some areas with an overall of 28.5% of the respondents agreed moderately that the KG CARES programme provided some level of support for the market and distribution networks infrastructure. Therefore, though varying in at different percentages in the various areas of the study, the result above indicates that majority of the respondents there perceived less impact from KG CARES in supporting its local markets. Neutral responses from the study area were low, with a small portion of 6.2% of total responses. This category showed relatively even distribution across local governments. Respondents who disagreed were notable in certain local governments, with 13.6% of respondents overall disagreeing that KG CARES provided adequate support. This indicates that respondents in these areas were less convinced of the program's effectiveness in improving market infrastructure.

iv. KG CARES made efforts to curtail food waste in the state



Overall, 50.1% of respondents strongly agreed that KG CARES took effective measures to curtail food waste. While the remaining percentage was shared among other respondents who had different opinions, indicating that respondents in these areas may have observed fewer noticeable improvements. In addition, 20.8% of respondents agreed with the statement, showing moderate support for the food waste reduction efforts. Neutral responses accounted for 13.6% of the total, and a smaller portion of respondents, with varying percentages across the local government areas of the study. While only 0.3% of respondents, all from Okehi, strongly disagreed with the statement, which represents minimal overall dissatisfaction with KG CARES' efforts in waste reduction.

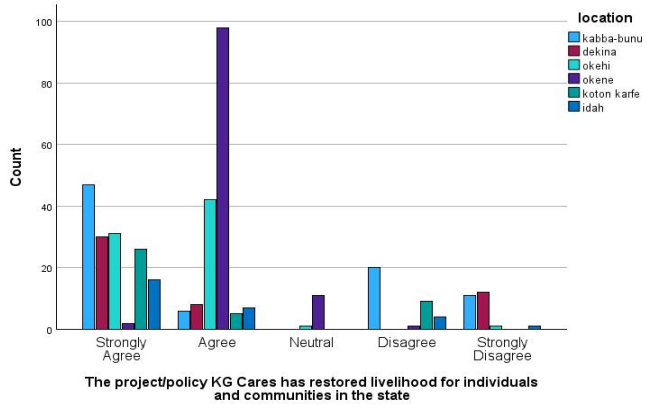
v. More can be done by the Kogi government through KG CARES to further enhance the role of local markets and its networks in ensuring food utilization and accessibility in the state.



An overwhelming majority, 78.4% of respondents, strongly agreed that more should be done, indicating broad support for additional government efforts either by the ongoing programme, KG CARES or future programmes to achieve food security in the state. In addition, 16.2% of respondents agreed that further efforts by KG CARES were necessary. A small proportion of respondents, 4.4% overall, were neutral, indicating that some respondents were uncertain about the need for further improvements. All disagreement responses came from Okene (3.6%), indicating that a small minority in this Local government felt that the current efforts were sufficient and that further measures were unnecessary. This means that though KG CARES is noted to have positive effects on food availability and access, more efforts needs to be done by the agency in this regards

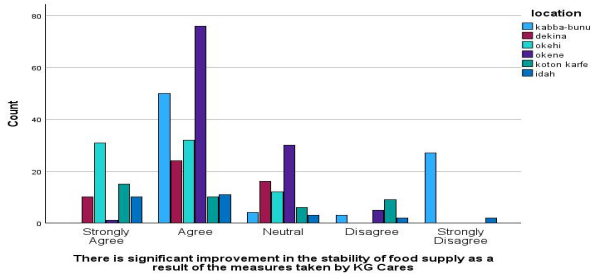
Objective 2: The government of Kogi state, through KG CARES program is ensuring livelihoods and stabilizing the food supply chain in Kogi state post Covid-19:

i. The project/policy KG CARES has restored livelihoods for individuals and communities in the state



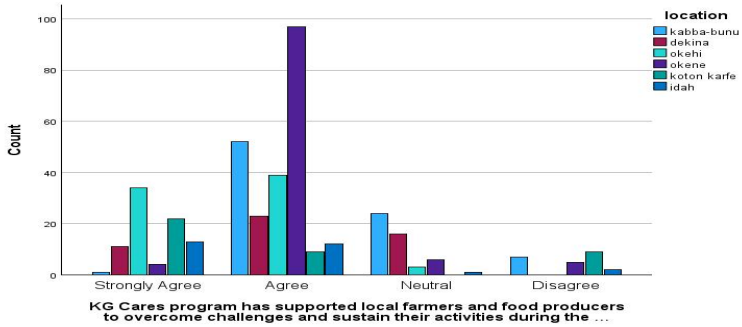
Overall, 81.8% of respondents agreed that KG CARES had successfully contributed to livelihood restoration. Although different local government areas of the study, such as show varying agreement levels of respondents recognizing KG CARES impact on livelihoods. KG CARES restored livelihoods, indicating a low perceived benefit from the program in that region. A small proportion of respondents, 3.1% in total, were neutral on the effectiveness of KG CARES in restoring livelihoods. The respondents that disagreed that the KG CARES programme had assisted in improving vulnerable livelihoods accounted for 14.1.7% of responses.

ii. There is a significant improvement in the stability of food supply because of the measures taken by KG CARES



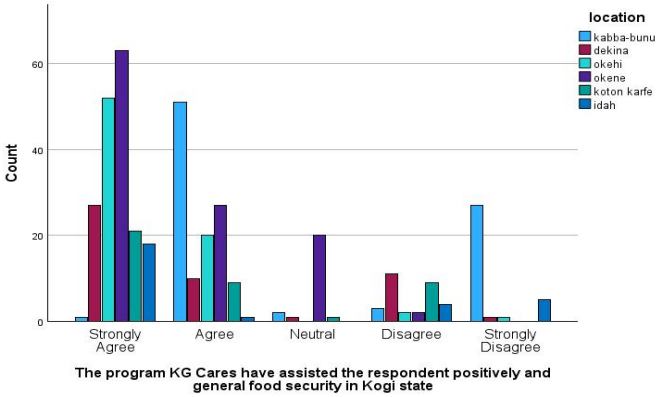
Generally, only 69.4% of respondents agreed that KG CARES led to significant improvements in food supply stability. of respondents overall agreeing that KG CARES positively impacted food supply stability. Neutral responses accounted for 18.3% of the total, indicating that a substantial portion of respondents were uncertain about the impact of KG CARES on food stability. Disagreement with the statement was relatively low, with 19.9% of respondents overall disagreeing that KG CARES improved food stability.

iii. KG CARES program has supported local farmers and food producers to overcome challenges and sustain their activities during the pandemic



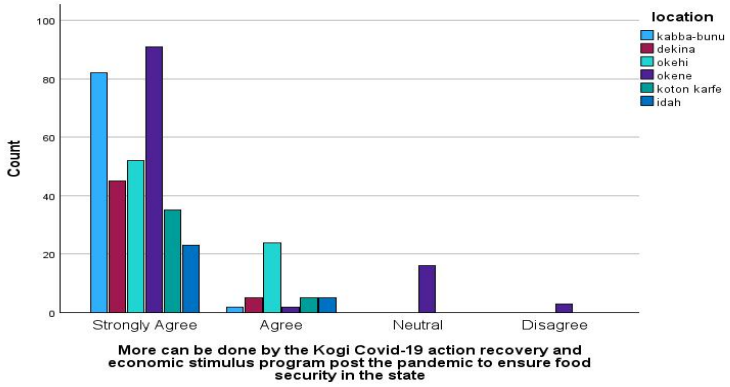
Most respondents from all Local Governments agreed that the KG CARES program helped overcome challenges. Specifically, 232 respondents (59.5% of the total) "Agree" that the program was effective. A significant proportion of respondents also "Strongly Agree" with the statement, with 85 people (21.8% of the total) indicating they strongly felt the program supported farmers in the state. Also, those with indifferent feelings were 50 responses (12.8% of the total), with notable neutral opinions. These responses suggest that while some individuals recognized the program's efforts, they were either uncertain about its full effectiveness or did not perceive it as significantly impactful in their area. There were relatively few respondents who "Disagree" with the statement precisely, (23 people or 5.9% of the total respondents) indicating that in these local governments, some farmers and food producers felt that the support measures were not sufficient to help them.

iv. The programme KG CARES has assisted the respondent positively and general food security in Kogi state



Most respondents in most Local Governments agreed that the program had a positive impact on both their situation and food security. Overall, 77.1% of respondents agreed that KG CARES assisted them positively. This suggests that in these areas, the programme was viewed as very effective in improving food security. In total, 300 people agreed with the statement, which highlights a significant perception of positive impact across the state. A total of 24 respondents (6.2%) gave neutral responses. This suggests that some individuals were uncertain about the effectiveness of the program in enhancing food security. Those who disagreed were numbered 31 respondents (8.0%). This showed that there are some in these local government areas of the study, there were dissatisfied with the program's impact, as a portion of respondents felt it did not positively affect their situation.

v. More can be done by the Kogi Covid-19 action recovery and economic stimulus program post the pandemic to ensure food security in the state



A significant majority of respondents (84.1% of the total) believe that more can be done by the Kogi Covid-19 program to ensure food security, with the highest level of agreement in Kabba-Bunu (97.6%) and Dekina (90.0%). These percentages reflect strong support for further action by the program in these areas. In total, 328 respondents (84.1% of the total sample) strongly agreed with the statement, indicating a widespread belief that the program could continue to contribute positively to food security beyond the pandemic. This sentiment is particularly strong in Kabba-Bunu, where nearly all respondents expressed the need for continued efforts, as well as in Dekina and Okene, where large majorities (90% and 81.3%, respectively) agreed. In contrast, a smaller percentage of respondents (11.0% of the total) agreed. The highest agreement rate was found in Okehi (31.6%) and Idah (17.9%), showing that while these areas are supportive, the level of urgency or commitment expressed is somewhat less than in other regions like Kabba-Bunu and Dekina. The "Neutral" and "Disagree" categories account for a very small portion of the responses. Only 16 respondents (4.1% of the total) were neutral, with all of them coming from Okene (14.3% within the Local Governments), which suggests that in Okene, some individuals were uncertain about the effectiveness or necessity of further action. Also, only 3 respondents (0.8% of the total) disagreed, all of whom were from Okene, indicating minimal opposition to the idea of further program involvement.

Summary

The data above shows that local markets and distribution networks, in collaboration with KG CARES, played an essential role in maintaining food accessibility during COVID-19**.** However, significant challenges persisted, especially in areas like Kabba-Bunu, where food availability was a more pressing issue. KG CARES made notable efforts to improve infrastructure and reduce food waste, with effectiveness varying across regions. Despite these efforts, a substantial majority of respondents believe more can be done to reinforce the role of local markets in ensuring food accessibility and minimizing waste during crises. Furthermore, the study suggests that KG CARES made significant strides in restoring livelihoods and stabilizing the food supply chain in Kogi State after the COVID-19 pandemic**,** but the program's impact varied by Local Governments. While areas like Koton Karfe and Okehi showed strong positive responses to KG CARES' initiatives, other regions, especially Kabba-Bunu, felt the measures were less effective or needed further enhancement. Overall, there is broad consensus on the need for ongoing and increased support from KG CARES to fully address food security challenges and reinforce the state's food supply chain stability.

Discussion of Findings

The Role of Local Markets and Distribution Networks in Collaboration with KG CARES Played in Ensuring Food Utilization in Kogi State: The data shows that 50% of respondents credited financial support for boosting food availability and affordability. Cash transfers have been shown to reduce poverty and food insecurity by increasing household purchasing power (Hidrobo et al., 2014). The 41% of the respondents who cited advanced farming techniques reflect a growing understanding among farmers that modern methods, such as improved seeds, fertilizers, and mechanization, enhance yields. Feder et al. (1985) argued that such technologies are essential for productivity growth in low-income countries. However, it is worth noting that uptake of new techniques often depends on farmers' education, extension services, and risk perception, suggesting the need for comprehensive support systems (Doss, 2006). These findings further align with the assertion by Dercon and Gollin (2014) that targeted rural interventions, including access to credit and modern agricultural practices, are pivotal for food security in developing economies. Similarly, Feder et al. (1985) emphasized that access to finance can significantly improve productivity by enabling farmers to adopt better inputs and technologies.

Kogi State Government and the KG CARES programme in Restoring Livelihoods and Stabilizing the Food Supply Chain: According to Kogi Enterprise Development Agency Report (KEDA 2024), KG CARES programme provided for over 1,826 smallholder farmers across the 21 local government areas of Kogi State received support. Inputs that were delivered were approximately 180 metric tons of improved seeds (rice, maize, and cowpea), 350 metric tons of NPK and urea fertilizers, and 5,000 litres of herbicides were distributed. Furthermore, capacity-building sessions were organized in partnership with state extension agents to train farmers on modern agronomic practices, ensuring the effective use of inputs. Support was also provided through collaboration with cooperatives and aggregators to guarantee off-take of farmers' produce at fair prices, reducing post-harvest losses and stabilizing farm incomes. The findings from the beneficiaries in this regard reveal that 39.1% of the total respondents strongly agreed that CARES initiative had successfully contributed to livelihood restoration. In summary, the data obtained from both the questionnaire and the interview reveals a mixed impact and perception on food stability in the state, with

disparities in the LGAs highlighting both the positive and negatives of the program. Though high level of respondents believed the program had a positive impact, the relatively low strong agreement and a significant level of neutrality points to areas that needs improvement.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the CARES from the data gathered, it is evident that there was a significant impact and level of success on the program as its impact has been said to be positive on the beneficiaries with a large percentage of the total respondents as indicated above either agreeing or strongly agreeing to its effectiveness. It is also imperative to address the significant variation in response from other local government areas of the state that had negative responses as regards the effectiveness of the program. This calls for future social programs to ensure that consistent and transparent implementation of initiative goals must be well articulated and taking care of while also ensuring the need for addressing local concerns.

Recommendations

i. The study suggest that Kogi State government need to take cognisance of local markets located in local government areas in the state where the KG CARES programme has given little or no assistance since the programme is still on going to ensure every part of the state feels the positive impact of the programme which is to provide food security and help vulnerable households.
ii. Kogi State government and KG CARES need to do more apart from giving cash grants for vulnerable livelihoods in the state that will be sustainable for such households over a long period of time. This could include, providing hybrid seeds, fertilizers, for local farmers and soft loans for small-scale business owners in these areas.

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FROM "WRETCHEDNESS" TO "SELF-RELIANCISM:" RETHINKING FANON AND OGUNDOWOLE ON AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

Abayomi Temitayo Onifade

Department of philosophy, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Oyo, Nigeria

Email: atonifade@lautech.edu.ng

Abstract

This work attempts a comparative analysis of two significant indigenous philosophical contributions in the area of Africa's development discourse: Frantz Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth and E.K. Ogundowole's Self-Reliancism. Although both writers are from different historical contexts, yet, they are united in their quest and their objective of charting a transformative path toward Africa's socio-political and economic advancement. Fanon, in The Wretched of the Earth, presents a radical critique of colonialism and its psychological impact, advocating for decolonial violence, cultural renaissance, and the liberation of African consciousness as necessary conditions for meaningful development. Ogundowole, on the other hand, articulates a philosophy of Self-Reliancism, which emphasizes Africa's autonomy, the reclamation of indigenous knowledge systems, and a progressive-oriented commitment to internal self-sufficiency as necessary for building sustainable growth for Africa's development. The study employs a critical analysis methodology and a review of relevant literature to assess the philosophical foundations, practical implications, and points of convergence between these two frameworks. It argues that an integrative approach that synthesizes Fanon's decolonial praxis with Ogundowole's constructive self-reliance offers a compelling indigenous paradigm for African development. Such a synthesis demands not only the epistemic decolonization of thought and institutions but also a praxis-driven reorientation toward cultural authenticity, structural transformation, and cognitive liberation. Through this philosophical focal lens, this paper advocates a comprehensible, Africa-centered model of development that challenges dependency and reclaims African agency.

Keywords: African Development, Decolonization, Fanon, Ogundowole, Indigenous Knowledge, Neocolonialism; Self-Reliancism.

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Introduction

The African continent continues to grapple with enduring and complex developmental challenges, including poverty, political instability, economic dependency, ecological degradation, and cultural dislocation. While such issues are not exclusive to Africa, their persistence and intensity across many African states are often attributed to entrenched systems of corruption, weak governance structures, and externally imposed development paradigms that fail to align with indigenous realities (Ake, 1996; Rodney, 1972). Despite significant interventions by national governments, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector, development efforts have frequently fallen short, undermined by structural inequalities and a reliance on Western-centric models of growth and governance (Ekeh, 1975; Fanon, 1963). In this context dependent philosophical inquiry, efforts is made to provide a powerful means of rethinking Africa's developmental trajectory. Following similar approaches as advocated by Hountondji (1983); and Wiredu (1996), this research utilizes the frameworks as tools not only to critique the inherited legacies of colonialism and neocolonialism but also to propose indigenous, context-sensitive alternatives. Thus, the engagement of the thought of these two critical African philosophers, namely, Frantz Fanon and E. K. Ogundowole as a framework, though historically and methodologically distinct, they have a meeting ground on the need for African self-liberation and autonomy.

Fanon's writing was in the period of anti-colonial struggle and he critically analyzed the psychological, structural, and cultural consequences of colonial domination. His reflections in *The Wretched of the Earth* reveal how colonialism fractures the native psyche, distorts identity, and replaces indigenous systems with exploitative hierarchies (Fanon, 1963). While Fanon focused primarily on decolonization as a means of reclaiming political and cultural agency, Ogundowole addressed the enduring grip of neocolonialism, especially its epistemic and economic dimensions. Ogundowole through his concept of Self-Reliancism, advocated a forward-looking African philosophy grounded in indigenous knowledge, critical rationality, and socio-political independence (Ogundowole, 2011). Due to the difference in their periods and the focus of their eras, Fanon's work had centered on the breakdown of colonialism, while Ogundowole was on the persistence of neocolonialism. However, both thinkers had a meeting point in their critique of externally imposed domination and their call for a fundamentally autonomous African future. In the work of both scholars lies detailed expositions of how colonial and neocolonial systems fractured Africa both physically and spiritually, carving the continent into artificial regions that justified European exploitation (Fanon, 1963; Rodney, 1972). This paper argues that the synthesis of Fanon's decolonialism, with Ogundowole's self-reliancism provides a compelling indigenous paradigm for Africa's development. It finds its root in an epistemic self-determination, structural reform, and cultural reawakening, which are integrated approaches that foresee a future where Africa's development is not externally dictated but internally constructed through the reclamation of its philosophical, political, and existential agency (Ogundowole, 2011; Fanon, 1963; Hountondji, 1983).

Fanon's Decolonial Praxis and the Quest for Liberation

In Fanon's ideological disposition, his work, *The Wretched of the Earth* serves as the cornerstone of his postcolonial theory. Its underlying perspective is in its critiquing of the material and psychological violence of colonialism; and its advocation for violent resistance as a means of reclaiming agency and selfhood (Fanon, 1980). Fanon sees colonialism not only in the guise of

political domination but also as epistemic and cultural annihilation. His critique is a thoroughgoing emphasis on the three themes he describes as core characters: Revolutionary Violence; Critique of the National Bourgeoisie; and Cultural Reclamation. In Fanon's position, the process of decolonization cannot be violent, stating that the occasion of colonialism itself was a violent one. As such, the actualization of liberation itself, cannot be devoid of violence. Liberation for Fannon cannot be negotiated but must be seized through force.

Fanon sees the "national bourgeoisie" not as a new entrant in the entire affair, rather, they have always existed in every post-colonial state. In Africa, they are a definition of European-based education and culture and are the recipients of the credit for founding the political parties, which are responsible for the crop of leaders that African countries have today. They were the leaders and carried out the negotiation for the terms of decolonization with the colonist country. The focal trend of Fanon's thought reflects the National Bourgeoisies as the "extended arm" of the colonialists who have always been the link between the colonialists and the colonized. They were for him those who were after independence responsible for the perpetuation of colonial economic and political structures. They are elites who formed alliances with the former colonizers and the new neocolonial arrangements ensured the continuity of the colonialist agenda. Thus, at that point, they were drivers of political units or parties that had assumed the role of achieving national unanimity. This was followed by a strategic emergence as the principal negotiator for independence. In Fanon's thought, the Colonialists had adopted "delay tactics" in their negotiation to create a timeline that allowed for the actualization and self-transform of the Bourgeoisies into the "entity" the nation need. Fanon had described this path to decolonialization as "a cloaked" form of the former colonialism since the Bourgeoisies were young, inexperienced and dependent. They did not possess the skills or experience needed to provide either capital or sophisticated economic guidance to the new country. Thus, they had no option but to rely on the colonials for finances, loans and equal advice establishing the new neocolonialism role (Fanon 1980: 135). Central to Fanon's approach is the call for a psychological liberation of the colonized. He foresees cultural revitalization as essential to the reconstruction of the African identity and the best option for overcoming the inferiority complex implanted by colonial ideologies. He had established his revolutionary ideology on the idea that the freedom or liberation sought has to transform both material conditions and mentalities (Fanon 1980).

Fanon's critical push for violence allowed his ideologies to be criticized as he was adjudged to have "underestimated the potentials of non-violent resistance and democratic transformation" (Towa, 1989). However, unlike Fanon, Ogundowole does not subscribe to revolutionary violence, rather he emphasizes ethical self-mobilization and structural transformation from within. This perspective from the standpoint of this work appears complementary to Fanon's position. Ogundowole's further outline of a post-decolonization reconstruction in Self-Reliancism thus provides a philosophical response to the persistent underdevelopment of postcolonial Africa. By identifying and decrying the overreliance on Western aid, models, and ideologies and identifying it as the reason behind dependency underdevelopment and progress, Ogundowole had taken a nuanced stand (Ogundowole, 2011). In his view, Self-Reliancism is "a set of purposive activities directed toward self-realization, holistic competence, dedication, confidence, national awareness, originality, inventiveness, and creativity" (Ogundowole, 2011, p. 72). His criticalness on a way forward for development is centred on such core social autonomy as: economics; epistemic; capacity building; and innovation. In this perspective, Ogundowole (2011) argues for not only the

control of African resources alone but also for the independence of our institutions of knowledge. In this way, he advocates for the promotion of our indigenous knowledge systems. Ogundowole's position is that the only source of holistic and true development is from within, and no culture will advance based on an epistemic culture outside its culture (Ogundowole, 2011).

Ogundowole's Self Reliancism and the New World Order

In his positioning, Ogundowole approaches development for the continent as a product of internal capacities, creative reasoning, and pragmatic self-determination. In Ogundowole's "Philosophy of a New Order" is found a demand for a new world economic and political structure which has its source in the continent's development prospects and problems. It is a fight against neocolonialism and the foreign struggle for foreign domination and alienation on home soil. The Self-Reliancist theory is an attempt to eliminate the economic dependence of African states, ending abruptly any advancement or agenda of neocolonialist capitalism, thus, positioning African states in exercising full control over their economic activities and natural resources and enhancing their national *self-affirmation* and *self-realization*. Ogundowole's position, if critically appraised is a complimentary ideology to Fanon's, and if merged as a continuation of Fanon's objectives in the "Wretched of the Earth" exposes problems of certain paths toward further decolonization and avoiding the pitfalls of neo-colonialism. His Self-reliancism comes as "a set of purposive activities directed toward self-realization," emphasizing features such as "competence, dedication confidence, national awareness, originality, inventiveness and creativity" (Ogundowole 2010: 72). In more economic understanding, it is "the ability of a people to control their resources and consequently their economic and socio-cultural destiny". This he says is a necessary condition in evolving a self-reliant society.

Self-reliance presupposes self-determination. It is "an act of faith in man's ability to transcend the barriers imposed by nature, to blaze, by sheer force of the intelligence, new frontiers of progress, new paths to prosperity, and new avenues for a better standard of life for all within the political entity. Thus, for Ogundowole, the self-reliancist ideology is more of a universal process; a universal orientation destined to liberate, not only the people of the new states but also the peoples of the advanced capitalist society (Ogundowole 2010: 79). An appraisal of Ogundowole's *Self Reliancism* looks to observe an undoubted stimulation of a holistic development aimed at: elevating human reasoning in such a way that it results in a commiserating growth in self-confidence and mastery on the part of the individual. For him, holistic social growth adopts a shared growth of the composing elements. For this, he argues that when engulfed in the feelings of self-confidence, there is a proportionate chance that individuals will take responsibility for themselves towards their self-actualization (Ogundowole 2011: 133). In the real sense of it, a pragmatic observation will reflect that the creativeness of the people is stunted when core aspects of the state are entrusted into the hands of foreigners. This is evident in contemporary African states' dependency on countries like China, Korea, India, British, UAE, America etc.

A Synthesis Towards a Holistic Indigenous Developmental Paradigm

It is vital to recognize that both Fanon's and Ogundowole's attempts share a fundamental concern with Africa's liberation and self-actualization, even in their different methodologies. Fanon's approach attempts a more radical liberation for the continent, while Ogundowole promotes a sustainable reformative process grounded in indigenous logico-epistemic creativity. Fanon comes to the typical highlight of a revolutionary ideology. While Ogundowole's conception of a self-

reliancist philosophy is often seen as an offering that stands in contrast to the common trajectory and approach to Africa's development of his era. Both men also agree in their works that foreign-adopted models will not generate the desired results required for achieving sustainable development in Africa. In both authors' works, can be found the weariness of the challenges of Africa's developmental struggles, which they see as being compounded by systemic issues. Evident in both Fanon and Ogundowole's work are issues such as that of "Global Economic Asymmetries" acknowledged. This was fingered out by Rodney (1972), who indicated that the position of Africa in global economics remains a relationship where it is merely integrated into global capitalism, as a raw material supplier, suffering from unfair trade terms and dependency. The effect is what is reflected in Ake (1996), as a position of being restricted to an "unholy dependency of conditional aids and debt. In this case, nations are compelled to depend on international loans, which are often tied to so-called structural adjustment programs, reduce fiscal sovereignty etc.

Attempts at indigenous philosophies by both Fanon and Ogundowole offer alternatives that are both critical and constructive. They challenge the moral authority of Western prescriptions and re-centralise African agency. There is a departure from what is applicable to postcolonial states, where the Government is often a mimic of colonial administrative structures, which its reinforcing elite dominance (Ekeh, 1975). A synthesis of Fanon and Ogundowole's ideological positions when critically appraised will lead to an articulation of a coherent indigenous developmental paradigm comprising four pillars, namely: Epistemic Decolonization; Institutional Autonomy; Economic Self-Sufficiency; and Cultural Renaissance. By epistemic decolonization, it is necessary to adopt Fanon's position that Africa must liberate itself from mental colonialism. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) highlights this in the areas of integrating Africa's indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) from languages, histories, and worldviews into education and public discourse. This, as this work recognizes, is the real decolonization and the first step towards a holistic Institutional Autonomy. For Ogundowole, "Institutional Autonomy" is the bedrock of building institutions rooted in African values and accountable to local needs. This includes decentralization, community-based governance, and participatory democracy. It is only when this is achieved, that real development that is internally driven can begin. From the position of Ogundowole's Self Reliancism, if this is not first taken care of, any investment in agriculture, local industry, and indigenous technology will not replicate its projected results. The necessary step is to aim towards an economic self-sufficiency that emerges from eradicating the dependency on imported goods and ideas.

Recommendations and Conclusion

African societies like other human societies have evolved over the years. African societies have grown over various ages; having their version of the "stone age"; hunting and gathering age; crude Agriculture and Mechanized farming; enlightenment and industrialization; info-tech revolution, etc. However, an underlying factor through the ages and shift in paradigm is the African's revivalism i.e. the desire or tendency to renew interest in something old such as custom belief or local technology with the sole intent of producing a synergistic result. Embedded in this and not exempting our own indigenous culture is the doctrine of man's conscious purposive activity to advance. This as discussed in this work is evident in Fanon and Ogundowole's works. The integration of Frantz Fanon's decolonialism critique with E.K. Ogundowole's Self-Reliancism offers the African continent a powerful framework for rethinking Africa's developmental trajectory. By addressing both the legacies of colonial violence and the dangers of neocolonial dependency, this synthesis provides a

roadmap for genuine transformation. While routing for an indigenous African philosophy of development, findings in this work advocate that true African development for Africans must be rooted in cultural affirmation, economic autonomy, epistemic liberation, and ethical self-determination. As Africa navigates the complexities of globalization, such a philosophy provides the intellectual and moral compass necessary to reclaim agency and forge a future defined not by imposed models but by African ingenuity and resolve. The Indigenous paradigm for Africa's development will not be actualised unless critical concerns as discussed in this work are fully embraced. These steps are pragmatic and achievable.

Critical is an educational reform, that requires a revamp of the curricula to de-emphasize the centralization of Western culture and education and offer a re-direction towards a more African philosophy, languages, and epistemologies (wa Thiong'o, 1986). This achieved, it is a necessity for nations to assume a national resource control policy, where resources are nationalized and internally managed for the nation's benefit. Moreso, citizens must be ready to be involved in participatory governance. In other words, they must be ready to promote accountability and prepare the next generation to also do so through their early and proper engagement with civic education, institutional checks, and community engagement, while also supporting arts, oral traditions, and language preservation to foster cultural pride and continuity. In all this, it is expedient that African states come together, reason together and be united towards continental solidarity.

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POWER-SHARING AND INSTITUTIONAL DESIGNS FOR STABILITY IN NIGERIAN STATE

Joseph Emmanuel [1]
Rahila Elisha Zacharia [2]
Enoch Hassan Kure [3]
Center for Peace and Security Studies, Modibbo Adama University Yola, Nigeria [1, 2 & 3]
Corresponding Email: Josephemmanuel199000@gmail.com [1]

Abstract
Despite the adoption of various power-sharing mechanisms aimed at managing Nigeria's complex ethno-religious and regional diversity, the country continues to grapple with persistent political instability, violent conflicts, and deep-seated grievances among its constituent groups. Institutional frameworks such as federalism, the federal character principle, and the informal practice of zoning political offices were designed to promote inclusiveness, equitable distribution of resources, and a sense of belonging among Nigeria's diverse populations. It is against this backdrop that this study investigated the effectiveness of power-sharing mechanisms in fostering national integration and mitigating ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria, a country marked by deep-seated ethnic, religious, and regional divisions. The research was guided by four specific objectives and four questions focusing on the historical rationale for power-sharing, the effectiveness of the Federal Character Principle, the impact of federalism and state creation, and the extent to which these mechanisms have addressed conflict and secessionist agitations. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The population included political officeholders, public servants, academics, and civil society actors. A total of 250 respondents were purposively and stratifiedly selected from the six geopolitical zones to ensure regional and group representation. Data were collected using a 60-item structured questionnaire titled "Institutional Power-Sharing Assessment Questionnaire (IPSAQ)" rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The instrument was validated by experts and pilot-tested in Kogi and Abia States, yielding a reliability index of 0.84. Questionnaires were administered physically and electronically over six weeks, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics like means and standard deviations. The findings revealed that while power-sharing is historically justified—rooted in

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Nigeria's colonial legacy, civil war, and constitutional reforms—its practical impact remains limited. The Federal Character Principle provides symbolic inclusion but is undermined by corruption, weak enforcement, and perceptions of regional dominance. Similarly, federalism and state creation enhance minority representation but deepen inter-state inequality and economic dependence. Power-sharing arrangements have had minimal success in resolving ethno-religious tensions and secessionist pressures, largely due to elite manipulation and failure to address underlying socio-economic grievances. The study concludes that while power-sharing has contributed to a degree of stability, it must be reformed and complemented by broader structural changes to foster genuine national cohesion.

Keywords: Power-sharing, Federal Character Principle, Federalism, National Integration, Rotational Presidency, Institutional Design

Introduction

Nigeria is a nation marked by extraordinary ethnic, religious, and regional heterogeneity. With over 250 ethnic groups and more than 500 languages, the country is often described as one of the most culturally diverse in the world (Suberu, 2001). The three dominant ethnic groups: the Hausa-Fulani in the North, the Yoruba in the Southwest, and the Igbo in the Southeast have historically played central roles in national politics, shaping the country's federal structure and competing for control over the state apparatus. These ethnic blocs are often aligned with religious identities: the North is predominantly Muslim, the South largely Christian, and the Middle Belt a mix of both, creating a complex ethno-religious landscape (Mustapha, 2006). This diversity, while a potential source of strength, has often been a catalyst for division, especially when manipulated by political elites for partisan gain. From the colonial era to the present, Nigeria's political evolution has been characterized by contestation among ethnic groups over access to power and resources. During the colonial period, the British administration adopted an indirect rule system that reinforced ethnic and regional divisions, setting the stage for future fragmentation (Afigbo, 1989). At independence in 1960, Nigeria adopted a federal constitution aimed at balancing the interests of the major regions, but this arrangement soon collapsed under the weight of inter-ethnic rivalry and electoral violence.

The First Republic (1960–1966) was marred by political instability, rigged elections, and ethnic mistrust, culminating in the January 1966 military coup and a counter-coup in July of the same year. These events laid the foundation for the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970), a secessionist conflict that cost over a million lives and further exposed the fragility of national unity (Nwolise, 2003). In the aftermath of the war, the federal government adopted the slogan "No victor, no vanquished" and introduced reconciliation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction policies. However, the fundamental structural imbalances that contributed to the conflict remained largely unaddressed. Over the decades, various regimes have introduced institutional frameworks intended to manage diversity and foster unity. One of the most notable of these is the federal character principle, enshrined in Section 14(3) of the 1999 Constitution, which mandates the equitable representation of the various ethnic and regional groups in public institutions and appointments (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). Another is the state creation policy, which increased the number of states from 3 at independence to 36, theoretically to bring governance closer to the people and reduce ethnic tensions (Suberu, 2001).

Additionally, informal mechanisms like zoning and power rotation whereby political parties alternate leadership among regions have been adopted to reduce political exclusion and ensure a sense of belonging across the federating units (Ibeanu & Egwu, 2007). For example, since the return to democratic rule in 1999, Nigeria has witnessed an unofficial agreement to rotate the presidency between the North and the South, as seen in the successive presidencies of Olusegun Obasanjo (Southwest), Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (Northwest), Goodluck Jonathan (South-South), Muhammadu Buhari (Northwest), and Bola Ahmed Tinubu (Southwest). Despite these mechanisms, however, Nigeria continues to experience recurrent episodes of violence and instability, such as the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast, farmer-herder clashes in the Middle Belt, and separatist agitations by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the Southeast. These events highlight the limitations of current institutional arrangements in achieving genuine national integration and political stability (Akinola, 2013; Onuoha, 2014). Critics argue that while power-sharing arrangements have helped to avert total state collapse, they have also entrenched ethnicity and mediocrity in public administration. The federal character principle, for instance, is often perceived as undermining meritocracy, thereby weakening institutional effectiveness (Ojo, 2009). Furthermore, elite manipulation of these frameworks has fostered patronage politics and deepened the exclusion of marginalized groups, especially women and minority ethnicities outside the dominant tripartite structure. In this context, the central question emerges: Does power-sharing genuinely work in Nigeria? That is, do the institutional designs intended to manage diversity and promote unity contribute meaningfully to sustainable peace and political stability, or do they merely provide short-term fixes that obscure deeper systemic dysfunctions? This study seeks to explore this question by critically assessing Nigeria's power-sharing institutions, using both historical analysis and contemporary examples.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the adoption of various power-sharing mechanisms aimed at managing Nigeria's complex ethno-religious and regional diversity, the country continues to grapple with persistent political instability, violent conflicts, and deep-seated grievances among its constituent groups. Institutional frameworks such as federalism, the federal character principle, and the informal practice of zoning political offices were designed to promote inclusiveness, equitable distribution of resources, and a sense of belonging among Nigeria's diverse populations. However, the recurrence of secessionist agitations (e.g., IPOB in the Southeast), ethno-religious violence (particularly in the Middle Belt), and insurgencies (such as Boko Haram in the Northeast) suggests that these mechanisms may not be delivering their intended outcomes effectively.

Scholars have argued that while power-sharing arrangements in Nigeria have been moderately successful in preventing outright state collapse, they often reinforce elite dominance, ethnic clientelism, and a culture of entitlement rather than fostering true national integration and democratic stability (Suberu, 2001; Ojo, 2009). The federal character principle, for instance, is widely criticized for promoting mediocrity and inefficiency in public institutions, as appointments are often based on ethnic representation rather than competence (Mustapha, 2006). Similarly, zoning arrangements, though intended to reduce inter-group competition, have been manipulated by political elites and lack constitutional backing, resulting in tensions during leadership transitions (Ibeanu & Egwu, 2007). Furthermore, many of these power-sharing mechanisms are reactive rather than preventive, lacking the structural depth to address historical injustices, marginalization, and

the socio-economic roots of conflict. The prevailing model of elite-driven accommodation often excludes grassroots participation, and this top-down approach has failed to quell growing distrust between ethnic and regional groups. The persistence of political unrest, despite decades of experimentation with various forms of institutional power-sharing, raises a critical question: Does power-sharing genuinely work in ensuring stability in Nigeria's divided society, or are these arrangements merely superficial remedies that obscure deeper systemic issues? This study, therefore, seeks to critically assess the effectiveness of Nigeria's power-sharing designs in managing diversity and promoting political stability.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to critically assess the effectiveness of power-sharing institutional designs in promoting political stability and national integration in Nigeria's deeply divided society. The study is specifically designed to:

i. Examine the historical context and rationale behind the adoption of power-sharing mechanisms in Nigeria.
ii. Assess the effectiveness of the federal character principle in promoting inclusiveness and national integration.
iii. Evaluate how federalism and state creation have influenced inter-ethnic and regional relations in Nigeria.
iv. Investigate the extent to which power-sharing arrangements have mitigated ethno-religious conflicts and secessionist agitations.

Research Questions

i. What is the historical context and underlying rationale behind the adoption of power-sharing mechanisms in Nigeria?
ii. How effective is the federal character principle in promoting inclusiveness and fostering national integration in Nigeria?
iii. In what ways have federalism and the creation of new states influenced inter-ethnic and regional relations in Nigeria?
iv. To what extent have power-sharing arrangements helped to mitigate ethno-religious conflicts and secessionist agitations in Nigeria?

Literature Review

Power-sharing refers to institutional arrangements aimed at managing societal divisions, particularly in pluralistic or divided societies. Arend Lijphart (2018) defines consociationalism as a model that emphasizes grand coalitions, segmental autonomy, proportionality in political representation, and minority veto rights. It is particularly suitable for societies with deep ethnic, linguistic, or religious cleavages. In contrast, Donald Horowitz's integrative model (Horowitz, 2017) critiques consociationalism for entrenching divisions and instead proposes electoral incentives and institutional designs—such as vote pooling and cross-ethnic alliances - to foster intergroup cooperation and reduce sectarianism. Federalism, another power-sharing approach involves territorial decentralization that allows subnational units (like Nigeria's states) to exercise autonomy. As noted by Suberu and Diamond (2018), federalism has been deployed in Nigeria to manage diversity and reduce tensions by providing ethnic groups with some control over local affairs.

Key Concepts

i. **Ethnic Fragmentation** refers to the presence of multiple identity groups with competing interests. It complicates governance, especially in states like Nigeria, where no single group has demographic or political dominance (Adeniran & Ibrahim, 2020).
ii. **Institutional Design** is the configuration of political institutions (electoral systems, federal structures, appointment processes) aimed at ensuring inclusion and stability (Omede & Bakare, 2018).
iii. **Elite Bargaining** involves informal negotiations among powerful actors to share political offices and state resources, often underpinning zoning and rotational agreements (Ojo & Adebayo, 2021).

Historical Context of Power-Sharing in Nigeria

Colonial Legacy and the Foundation of Ethnic Politics: British colonial rule institutionalized ethnic divisions in Nigeria primarily through the policy of indirect rule, which relied on existing traditional authorities to govern on behalf of the colonial administration. This system, first implemented in Northern Nigeria and later extended to the West and East, entrenched local ethnic identities by empowering emirs, obas, and chiefs to administer justice, collect taxes, and manage local affairs. In effect, this fostered the development of parallel administrative structures based on ethnic and regional lines, creating minimal interaction across ethnic groups and stifling the emergence of a unified national consciousness. Furthermore, the colonial practice of administrative compartmentalization - governing the Northern, Western, and Eastern regions as separate political entities with distinct policies - reinforced the perception of Nigeria as a union of disparate groups rather than a single nation (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2017). This structure contributed significantly to the politicization of ethnicity, as access to political power and economic resources became increasingly tied to regional and ethnic identity. Consequently, in the lead-up to independence, political mobilization occurred largely along ethnic and regional lines. This culminated in the formation of regionally dominant and ethnically aligned political parties such as the Northern People's Congress (NPC), representing mainly the Hausa-Fulani North; the Action Group (AG), based in the Yoruba-dominated Western Region; and the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), drawing support primarily from the Igbo East. These parties not only mirrored the colonial administrative divisions but also deepened inter-regional rivalries, laying the groundwork for post-independence political instability and the eventual breakdown of the First Republic. The long-term consequence of this colonial legacy was a weak foundation for national integration, as politics in Nigeria remained centered around ethnic patronage and regional competition. The inherited structure made it difficult to develop national institutions that could transcend identity cleavages, ultimately complicating efforts at inclusive governance and sustainable democratic development.

Nigeria's First Republic and the Failure of Elite Consensus: The First Republic (1960–1966) marked Nigeria's initial attempt at democratic governance following independence from British colonial rule. However, the period was characterized by intense regionalism and ethnic-based politics. The three dominant political parties—the Northern People's Congress (NPC) in the North, the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) in the East, and the Action Group (AG) in the West - were closely aligned with the major ethnic groups: Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba, respectively. These parties functioned more as regional hegemons than national platforms, resulting in a fragmented

political landscape devoid of national consensus or integrative leadership (Olasupo & Fayomi, 2018). Efforts to form coalitions were largely opportunistic and unstable. The NPC and NCNC formed an alliance at the federal level, marginalizing the AG, which was then confined to the Western Region. This exclusion, coupled with allegations of electoral manipulation and corruption, led to widespread disillusionment. The Western Region crisis of 1965 - commonly referred to as the "Wild Wild West" - was marked by violent protests, electoral fraud, and political assassinations. These tensions further deteriorated inter-regional trust, ultimately setting the stage for the military coup of January 1966. The failure of political elites to transcend regional loyalties and build a unified national project culminated in the breakdown of civilian rule and the eruption of the Biafran War (1967–1970), which exposed the fragility of Nigeria's national cohesion.

Post-Civil War and the Emergence of the Federal Character Principle: In the aftermath of the civil war, the Nigerian government, under General Yakubu Gowon, initiated a "Reconciliation, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation" agenda to heal the deep wounds left by the conflict. One of the major structural outcomes of this post-war initiative was the formal institutionalization of the **Federal Character Principle**. Introduced in the 1979 Constitution and retained in the 1999 Constitution (Section 14[3]), this principle was designed to prevent ethnic domination by ensuring that appointments to public service and distribution of government resources reflected the diverse character of the Nigerian federation (Ayoade, 2020). The rationale behind this policy was to promote national integration by giving every state and ethnic group a stake in the federal structure. It sought to address the perceived marginalization that had fueled the Biafran secession. However, while the Federal Character Principle has contributed to a more inclusive representation in federal institutions, critics argue that it has often prioritized ethnicity over merit, encouraged tokenism, and reinforced sectional identities rather than national unity.

Military Regimes and Constitutional Engineering: Between 1966 and 1999, Nigeria experienced a series of military governments that significantly altered the structure and philosophy of governance. One of the most impactful strategies adopted by the military was the aggressive creation of new states and local governments. From the original 3 regions at independence, the country evolved to 12 states in 1967, 19 in 1976, 21 in 1987, 30 in 1991, and finally 36 states by 1996. The justification was to weaken the dominance of the major ethnic groups, accommodate minorities, and bring governance closer to the people (Ezeibe, 2020). In parallel, military rulers engaged in constitutional engineering, introducing new constitutions or revising existing ones to reflect their vision of centralized but supposedly inclusive governance. While the structures adopted during these regimes retained the façade of federalism, in practice, the central government held excessive power, particularly over fiscal and security matters. As such, the military's interventions were often contradictory: they promoted administrative devolution through state creation, yet simultaneously centralized political authority in the presidency or military high command. These conflicting tendencies created enduring tensions within Nigeria's federal system.

Fourth Republic and Informal Power Rotation Arrangements (Zoning): With the restoration of civilian rule in 1999 and the commencement of the Fourth Republic, Nigeria adopted a new form of elite consensus through informal power rotation, popularly known as zoning. While not constitutionally codified, zoning refers to the practice of rotating key political offices - especially the presidency - between Nigeria's six geopolitical zones (North-West, North-East, North-Central,

South-West, South-East, South-South). This mechanism was devised to manage inter-ethnic competition and ensure a sense of inclusion for all regions in the national leadership structure (Ogundiya & Baba, 2022). The People's Democratic Party (PDP), Nigeria's dominant party from 1999 to 2015, pioneered this arrangement by alternating presidential candidates between the North and South. This informal practice helped defuse elite-level tensions and prevented the monopolization of power by any single region. However, its lack of legal backing has made it vulnerable to manipulation. Disputes over zoning have become flashpoints in party primaries and national elections, as seen in the controversies surrounding presidential nominations in 2011, 2015, and 2023. While zoning has contributed to relative political stability by encouraging elite compromise, it remains contentious and is criticized for prioritizing regional balance over competence and democratic choice.

Institutional Designs and Power-Sharing Mechanisms in Nigeria

Nigeria's institutional framework reflects a combination of formal and informal power-sharing arrangements designed to manage its deep ethno-regional divisions and promote national cohesion. These mechanisms include federalism, the federal character principle, political zoning, representational structures within state institutions, and electoral rules that seek to foster inclusivity and integration.

Federalism and State Creation as Mechanisms of Devolution

Nigeria operates a federal system consisting of 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), a structure intended to manage ethnic plurality and ensure subnational autonomy. The federal arrangement allows individual states to exercise considerable powers in local governance, such as education, infrastructure, and law enforcement. State creation has been one of the most significant tools used by both military and civilian regimes to accommodate demands for minority inclusion and to decentralize power from the dominance of the three major ethnic groups—Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo (Suberu & Diamond, 2018). Successive military governments, particularly from 1967 to 1996, strategically increased the number of states to create a more balanced federation. This process gave ethnic minorities greater access to political representation and federal resources, thereby reducing secessionist tendencies in certain regions (Ezeibe, 2020). However, critics argue that while state creation has enhanced representation, it has also led to fiscal dependence on the federal government, administrative inefficiency, and the proliferation of weak subnational units.

Federal Character Principle and the National Character Commission

The Federal Character Principle, first introduced in the 1979 Constitution and retained in Section 14(3) of the 1999 Constitution, aims to reflect Nigeria's diversity in the distribution of public offices and national resources. It mandates that no ethnic group or state should dominate federal appointments, thus institutionalizing inclusion and proportional representation. The Federal Character Commission (FCC), established in 1996, oversees compliance with these requirements across all ministries, departments, and agencies. This principle has been instrumental in diffusing perceptions of marginalization and enhancing national unity by ensuring that all states and regions feel represented in the national framework. Nevertheless, scholars have raised concerns that this approach sometimes undermines meritocracy, encourages mediocrity, and entrenches ethnic patronage in public institutions (Ali & Umeh, 2019). Moreover, implementation is often inconsistent

and subject to political manipulation, raising questions about its effectiveness as a sustainable power-sharing tool.

Political Party Zoning and Informal Elite Agreements

Beyond formal institutional arrangements, Nigeria also relies on informal elite agreements to share power. Zoning, a practice popularized by the People's Democratic Party (PDP), involves rotating political offices - particularly the presidency - among the six geopolitical zones to ensure equitable regional representation. Though not constitutionally enshrined, zoning has become a widely accepted political norm and is also used in appointments to ministerial and legislative leadership positions. The All Progressives Congress (APC) and other parties have adopted similar arrangements to balance regional interests during party primaries and national elections (Ojo & Adebayo, 2021). Zoning helps reduce inter-group political rivalry and elite-level tensions by assuring marginalized regions of eventual access to national power. However, it has been criticized for being undemocratic, as it restricts political competition and prioritizes geographic origin over competence. Disputes over the interpretation and rotation of zoning arrangements have also triggered internal party crises and national debates, particularly during the 2011 and 2023 elections.

Structure of the Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary

Nigeria's governance architecture is tripartite, consisting of the executive, legislature, and judiciary, all of which are designed to reflect the country's federal character. The executive branch, headed by the president, is required to appoint ministers from each of the 36 states, thereby ensuring broad national representation. The legislature is bicameral, comprising the Senate (where each state has equal representation with three senators) and the House of Representatives (with membership based on population). This structure provides both equality of states and population-sensitive representation, theoretically balancing the interests of larger and smaller states. However, political appointments to executive and judicial offices often reflect ethno-regional considerations rather than professional merit. According to Ibrahim and Nwachukwu (2020), appointments to high-level judicial and security positions have at times mirrored the ethno-political preferences of the president in power, thereby undermining public trust in the neutrality of state institutions.

Electoral Systems and Inclusivity

Nigeria's electoral system incorporates features designed to encourage national integration. Specifically, the presidential election employs a two-tier threshold: a candidate must secure not only a simple majority of votes but also at least 25% of votes in two-thirds of the 36 states. This provision is intended to ensure that elected presidents possess a broad national mandate and appeal across ethnic and regional lines. Despite these integrative mechanisms, the electoral process is often marred by violence, vote-buying, and regional polarization. Adeniran and Ibrahim (2020) argue that elections in Nigeria are typically contested along ethnic and religious divides, with parties mobilizing voters based on sectional identities. Consequently, while the system encourages geographical spread in theory, it has not completely eliminated divisive politics in practice.

Methodology

Research Design: This study employed a descriptive survey research design, which is appropriate for collecting detailed information on people's opinions, perceptions, and experiences with power-

sharing institutions in Nigeria. The design enabled the researchers to examine how formal and informal power-sharing mechanisms (such as federalism, federal character, and zoning) contribute to political stability and national integration in Nigeria's divided society.

Population of the Study: The population comprised key stakeholders in Nigeria's political and administrative system, including political officeholders, public servants, scholars of political science and public administration, and civil society actors. These groups were selected due to their firsthand experience and informed perspectives on the implementation and outcomes of power-sharing mechanisms in Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Technique: A sample of 250 respondents was selected from six geopolitical zones of Nigeria to ensure regional representation. The sample included: 60 public servants in federal ministries, 50 members of political parties (PDP, APC), 40 academics in political science and related disciplines, 50 civil society actors, and 50 local government officials. Purposive and stratified random sampling techniques were employed. Purposive sampling was used to identify participants with relevant knowledge and experience, while stratified random sampling ensured proportional representation from each geopolitical zone and group.

Instrument for Data Collection: A structured questionnaire titled "Institutional Power-Sharing Assessment Questionnaire (IPSAQ)" was used to collect data. The questionnaire consisted of 60 items. The items were rated using a 5-point Likert and rating scales.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument: The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in political science and research methodology from the University of Ibadan and Ahmadu Bello University. Their feedback was used to refine ambiguous items. A pilot study was conducted with 30 respondents from two non-sampled states (Kogi and Abia). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient yielded a reliability index of 0.84, indicating high internal consistency of the instrument.

Method of Data Collection: The researcher administered the questionnaire physically and electronically (via email and Google Forms) to reach a wider demographic and reduce geographic limitations. Data collection lasted six weeks to ensure adequate response rates.

Method of Data Analysis: Data were analyzed using both **quantitative and qualitative techniques**. Descriptive statistics such as **means, and standard deviations** were used to summarize responses.

Research Question 1: What is the historical context and underlying rationale behind the adoption of power-sharing mechanisms in Nigeria?

Table 1: Historical Context and Rationale for Power-Sharing Mechanisms

S/N	Questionnaire Statement	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
	Sub-cluster 1: Colonial Legacy & Post-Independence Conflicts			
1	Power-sharing was adopted to manage ethnic rivalries inherited from British colonial rule.	4.20	0.80	Agreed
2	The 1966 coups and civil war (1967-1970) necessitated power-sharing to prevent recurrence.	4.50	0.60	Agreed
3	The 1979 Constitution institutionalized power-sharing to address regional	3.90	0.90	Agreed

	dominance.			
4	Fear of Northern hegemony motivated Southern demands for rotational presidency.	4.10	0.85	Agreed
5	Power-sharing emerged as a compromise to unify fragmented groups after independence.	4.00	0.95	Agreed
	Sub-cluster 2: Constitutional & Institutional Design			
6	The federal character principle (Section 14(3)) mandates equitable power distribution.	3.80	0.75	Agreed
7	Zoning in political parties ensures diverse representation in leadership.	3.60	0.85	Agreed
8	Revenue allocation formulas were designed to reduce inter-regional resource conflicts.	3.40	0.95	Disagreed
9	Quota systems in education/employment aim to rectify historical exclusion.	3.70	0.80	Agreed
10	Power-sharing mechanisms were embedded to stabilize military-to-civilian transitions.	3.55	0.70	Agreed
	Sub-cluster 3: Socio-Political Objectives			
11	Power-sharing prevents marginalization of minority ethnic/religious groups.	3.65	0.90	Agreed
12	It promotes national cohesion by ensuring all groups "have a stake" in governance.	3.45	0.85	Disagreed
13	The rationale includes mitigating secessionist pressures (e.g., Biafra).	4.30	0.65	Agreed
14	Power-sharing was adopted to balance Muslim-Christian political influence.	3.95	0.75	Agreed
15	It seeks to reduce patronage networks by diversifying bureaucratic appointments.	3.30	0.95	Disagreed

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents (10 out of 15 items) agreed to a high extent that power-sharing in Nigeria has strong historical and rational foundations. Key justifications include managing ethnic rivalries from colonial rule ($\bar{x}$ = 4.20), addressing civil war trauma ($\bar{x}$ = 4.50), and constitutional efforts like the federal character principle ($\bar{x}$ = 3.80). However, lower mean scores for revenue allocation ($\bar{x}$ = 3.40), national cohesion claims ($\bar{x}$ = 3.45), and patronage reduction ($\bar{x}$ = 3.30) suggest concerns over implementation effectiveness. Overall, while the rationale for power-sharing is widely supported, gaps in practice remain evident.

Research Question 2: How effective is the federal character principle in promoting inclusiveness and fostering national integration in Nigeria?

Table 2: Effectiveness of Federal Character Principle in Promoting Inclusiveness

S/N	Questionnaire Statement	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
	Sub-cluster 1: Representation & Access			
1	The principle ensures ethnic diversity in federal appointments.	3.30	0.90	NE
2	It provides equitable access to public sector jobs for minority groups.	3.40	0.85	NE
3	Quotas in universities improve educational opportunities for disadvantaged states.	3.10	1.00	NE
4	Federal character reduces dominance of major ethnic groups (Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, Igbo).	2.90	0.95	NE
5	It guarantees ministerial positions for all 36 states.	4.00	0.75	E
	Sub-cluster 2: National Unity & Perception			
6	The principle fosters a sense of belonging among Nigerians.	3.20	0.80	NE
7	It is perceived as a tool to weaken ethnic distrust.	2.85	0.90	NE
8	Citizens view federal character as promoting "unity in diversity."	3.00	0.85	NE

9	The principle enhances loyalty to the nation over ethnic identity.	2.75	0.95	NE
10	It reduces inter-group competition for federal resources.	3.10	0.80	NE
	Sub-cluster 3: Implementation Challenges			
11	Federal character appointments prioritize quota over merit.	4.20	0.70	E
12	Corruption undermines equitable implementation of the principle.	4.40	0.65	E
13	Compliance is enforced more in theory than practice.	4.10	0.75	E
14	Minority groups still feel excluded despite the principle.	3.90	0.80	E
15	It has failed to address perceptions of Northern overrepresentation.	4.00	0.85	E

Table 2 shows that respondents largely perceive the Federal Character Principle as ineffective in promoting true inclusiveness and national integration. While it ensures basic geographic representation (e.g., ministerial slots for all states, $\bar{x} = 4.00$), it falls short in areas like equitable job access, reducing ethnic dominance, and fostering unity. Most statements on national cohesion and fairness scored below 3.50. However, respondents strongly agree that implementation is undermined by corruption ($\bar{x} = 4.40$), quota-over-merit practices ($\bar{x} = 4.20$), and weak enforcement. Thus, the principle's impact is seen more as symbolic than substantive.

Research Question 3: In what ways have federalism and the creation of new states influenced inter-ethnic and regional relations in Nigeria?

Table 3: Influence of Federalism and State Creation on Inter-Ethnic/Regional Relations

S/N	Questionnaire Statement	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
	Sub-cluster 1: Conflict Mitigation & Autonomy			
1	State creation reduces agitation by granting autonomy to minority groups.	3.80	0.75	Agreed
2	New states ease resource control tensions (e.g., Niger Delta).	3.40	0.90	Disagreed
3	It minimizes ethnic clashes by separating rival groups into distinct states.	3.30	0.85	Disagreed
4	State boundaries align with ethnic identities, reducing internal conflicts.	3.10	0.95	Disagreed
5	Fiscal federalism allows states to develop at their own pace.	2.90	0.80	Disagreed
	Sub-cluster 2: Political Representation			
6	More states increase minority access to federal resources.	3.70	0.70	Agreed
7	State creation balances power between North and South.	3.50	0.75	Agreed
8	It strengthens state-level governance over local issues.	3.20	0.85	Disagreed
9	New states empower historically marginalized communities.	3.85	0.65	Agreed
10	It dilutes the political influence of dominant ethnic groups.	3.00	0.90	Disagreed
	Sub-cluster 3: Socio-Economic Effects			
11	State proliferation deepens inter-state inequality due to uneven resources.	4.10	0.60	Agreed
12	Competition for statehood fuels ethnic resentment (e.g., Middle Belt).	4.00	0.75	Agreed
13	Smaller states improve grassroots service delivery.	3.30	0.80	Disagreed
14	Over-dependence on federal allocations stifles state economic innovation.	4.20	0.70	Agreed
15	State creation fragments social cohesion by emphasizing sub-ethnic identities.	3.95	0.65	Agreed

Table 3 shows that respondents have mixed views on how federalism and state creation have shaped inter-ethnic and regional relations in Nigeria. While there is agreement that new states grant autonomy ($\bar{x} = 3.80$), increase minority access to resources ($\bar{x} = 3.70$), and empower marginalized groups ($\bar{x} = 3.85$), many disagree that they effectively reduce ethnic clashes or improve governance. Socio-economic concerns ranked high, with strong agreement that state creation has led to inter-state inequality ($\bar{x} = 4.10$), ethnic resentment ($\bar{x} = 4.00$), and fiscal

dependence ($\bar{x} = 4.20$). Overall, federalism brings limited unity benefits but also deepens economic and ethnic fragmentation.

Research Question 4: To what extent have power-sharing arrangements helped to mitigate ethno-religious conflicts and secessionist agitations in Nigeria?

Table 4: Impact of Power-Sharing on Conflict Mitigation and Secessionist Agitations

S/N	Questionnaire Statement	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
	Sub-cluster 1: Ethno-Religious Conflict Management			
1	Power-sharing reduces violence by including all groups in decision-making.	3.30	0.85	Low Extent
2	Rotational presidency prevents religious polarization (e.g., Muslim-Christian divide).	3.60	0.80	High Extent
3	It de-escalates farmer-herder conflicts through inclusive dialogue.	2.90	0.95	Low Extent
4	Quota systems in security forces build trust in conflict zones.	3.20	0.90	Low Extent
5	Power-sharing pacifies volatile regions (e.g., Middle Belt).	3.10	0.85	Low Extent
	Sub-cluster 2: Secessionist Agitations			
6	Power-sharing weakens separatist movements (e.g., IPOB, Yoruba nation).	3.40	0.75	Low Extent
7	It addresses grievances driving Biafra resurgence.	2.80	1.00	Low Extent
8	Resource control concessions reduce Niger Delta militancy.	3.70	0.70	High Extent
9	Inclusive policies diminish support for Oduduwa Republic agitation.	3.10	0.80	Low Extent
10	Power-sharing integrates secessionist leaders into mainstream politics.	3.50	0.65	High Extent
	Sub-cluster 3: Structural Limitations			
11	Elite manipulation of power-sharing fuels resentment (e.g., "cabal" influence).	4.10	0.60	High Extent
12	Power-sharing ignores non-ethnic triggers (e.g., unemployment, poverty).	4.00	0.75	High Extent
13	It fails to resolve deep-seated historical injustices.	4.20	0.70	High Extent
14	Inconsistent application heightens distrust (e.g., breached zoning agreements).	4.30	0.65	High Extent
15	Power-sharing is a superficial solution to systemic governance failures.	4.00	0.80	High Extent

Table 4 shows that respondents perceive power-sharing as having limited impact on reducing ethno-religious conflicts and secessionist agitations in Nigeria. While mechanisms like rotational presidency ($\bar{x} = 3.60$) and resource control in the Niger Delta ($\bar{x} = 3.70$) received moderate support, most items in conflict and secession clusters were rated low. In contrast, respondents strongly agreed that elite manipulation ($\bar{x} = 4.10$), inconsistent application ($\bar{x}$ = 4.30), and failure to address poverty and historical grievances ($\bar{x} = 4.00$–4.20) undermine power-sharing's effectiveness. Overall, it is viewed more as a cosmetic fix than a lasting solution to Nigeria's deep-rooted divisions.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that power-sharing in Nigeria is historically justified by colonial legacies, civil war trauma, and constitutional efforts to unify the country. This aligns with the assertions of Olasupo and Fayomi (2018), who emphasized that Nigeria's colonial administrative system entrenched ethnic divisions, making post-independence governance highly fragile. The Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) further exposed the dangers of exclusionary politics, necessitating power-sharing mechanisms to prevent recurrence (Ayoade, 2020). Scholars like Ezeibe (2020) argue

that these historical factors laid the groundwork for consociational designs such as federalism and the Federal Character Principle. However, implementation gaps persist, as power-sharing often functions more in theory than in inclusive practice (Ali & Umeh, 2019). The findings of the study revealed that the Federal Character Principle provides symbolic representation but remains ineffective in fostering true inclusiveness and national integration. Although the principle mandates geographical spread in appointments (Section 14(3) of the 1999 Constitution), it has often been manipulated, prioritizing quota over merit (Ibrahim & Nwachukwu, 2020). Respondents viewed the principle as ineffective in addressing ethnic distrust and marginalization. This supports the position of Ogundiya and Baba (2022), who found that despite institutional attempts to balance representation, feelings of alienation and overrepresentation -especially of the North-persist. Moreover, Suberu and Diamond (2018) note that compliance is uneven, and corruption has eroded the principle's credibility, reducing its integrative potential.

The findings of the study revealed that federalism and state creation have enhanced political inclusion for minority groups but have simultaneously contributed to ethnic fragmentation, inequality, and overdependence on federal allocations. This reflects the arguments of Ezeibe (2020), who noted that while state creation grants minority regions a sense of autonomy and political voice, it also leads to intense competition for federal resources and fosters ethnic resentment. Similarly, Adeniran and Ibrahim (2020) argue that the logic of state proliferation, rather than promoting unity, often results in administrative inefficiency and financial dependence. The rise of identity politics and increased inter-state inequality, especially between resource-rich and resource-poor states, underscores the structural imbalance within Nigeria's federal arrangement (Ojo & Adebayo, 2021). The findings of the study revealed that power-sharing arrangements have had limited success in mitigating ethno-religious conflicts and secessionist agitations due to structural, political, and socio-economic limitations. Despite efforts like rotational presidency and resource control concessions, respondents believe these measures only partially reduce secessionist pressures (e.g., from IPOB or the Oduduwa movement). According to Ibrahim and Nwachukwu (2020), such arrangements do not address deeper grievances related to injustice, poverty, and historical marginalization. Furthermore, the elite manipulation of power-sharing agreements, as discussed by Ogundiya and Baba (2022), has undermined public trust. Horowitz's (2019) critique of consociationalism is relevant here, as he warned that power-sharing without accountability often reinforces elite dominance rather than resolves conflict.

Conclusion

The study concludes that while power-sharing in Nigeria - through federalism, state creation, the Federal Character Principle, and zoning - was introduced to manage ethno-religious and regional divisions, its effectiveness is limited. Though historically justified, these mechanisms often suffer from poor implementation, elite manipulation, and failure to address deeper structural issues like poverty and injustice. As such, power-sharing has only partially promoted stability and unity. For lasting impact, it must be complemented by reforms that ensure equity, merit, and inclusive governance.

Recommendations

The study recommends as follows:

i. The Nigerian government should ensure the full and transparent implementation of existing power-sharing provisions - particularly the Federal Character Principle - by empowering the Federal Character Commission with greater autonomy and enforcement authority. This will help reduce elite manipulation and restore public confidence in equitable representation.
ii. While inclusiveness is essential, the current quota-based system should be restructured to incorporate merit-based criteria, especially in sensitive sectors like education, security, and public service. This reform should aim to balance equity with competence, addressing both historical disadvantages and performance gaps.
iii. Power-sharing alone is insufficient to ensure national unity. The government should tackle underlying structural issues including poverty, unemployment, and historical injustices through inclusive development policies, job creation, and youth engagement programs. This will reduce the appeal of secessionist movements and ethno-religious conflicts.
iv. There is a need to re-evaluate Nigeria's state creation model, focusing on economic viability, governance efficiency, and service delivery, rather than ethnic balancing alone. A review of the revenue allocation formula should also be conducted to reduce overdependence on the center and encourage fiscal responsibility and innovation at the state level.

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ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS IN GOMBE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA

Haruna Usman Modibbo [1]
Nasiru Inuwa [2]
Aminu Bello [3]
Mohammed Bello Sani [4]
Department of Economics, Gombe State University, Nigeria [1, 2, 3 & 4]
Corresponding Email: haroongombe@gmail.com [1]

Abstract

This study assessed the impact of covid-19 pandemic on socio-economic status of private school teachers in Gombe Local Government Area of Gombe State, Nigeria. The sample size of 384 respondents was determined using purposive sampling procedure and the data obtained were analysed using multinomial logit regression technique. On the whole, the results revealed that age, other jobs engaged in, and palliatives received during lockdown have positively and significantly impacted on the socio-economic status of private school teachers in the study area. However, educational qualification is found to have positive but insignificant impact. Contrarily, marital status and family size were reported to impact the socio-economic status of private school teachers negatively and significantly in the period of covid-19 lockdown. Based on these findings, the study recommends the adoption savings culture and diversification of income sources by private school teachers as a key to reducing economic hardships in a period of uncertainties and difficulties. Also, private school proprietors should be compassionate to their teachers in life-challenging periods through institutionalizing teachers' welfare packages and establishing functional welfare committee.

Keywords: Covid-19, Pandemic, Socio-Economic Status, Private Schools, Teachers, Lockdown, Gombe.

Introduction

The outbreak of covid-19 pandemic has unequivocally resulted to distressing damages on people's social and economic conditions across the world. This is largely intensified by stiff measures,

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notably lockdown of all socio-economic activities, adopted by governments with a view to halt the spread of the virus. However, the consequences of these measures on social and economic welfare of people across different sectors and fields of endeavours have underscored the importance of improved health status on individuals' productivity and economic development. This strongly supported Luft's (1978) analysis on the relationship between health and welfare that "while numerous people fall into poverty due to ill-health, certain number of individuals may be sick solely because of being poor". This assertion has demonstrated how covid-19 pandemic subjected many people to harsh economic conditions, while at the same time making few individuals and firms to experience economic gains from the disruptions caused by the pandemic. For instance, pharmaceutical companies were reported to benefit significantly from the covid-19 turmoil notably those producing antibiotics, vaccines, facemasks, sanitizers, and other essentials products (Modibbo, Inuwa and Sani, 2024).

On the contrary, certain sectors such as education, health, tourism, aviation, and consumer goods companies experienced huge setbacks due to supply chain disruptions resulting from travel bans and lockdown measures. Reference to education sector for example, virtually all strata of educational attainment were halted across the country with varying effects on students, parents, teachers and school management in both public and private schools. This has resulted to not only business discontinuity, unemployment and loss of income but also intense anxiety and depression which captured the psychological dimension of the effect. Consequently, researchers from diverse fields of study generated interest to investigate and analyse the impact of the pandemic on the socio-economic welfare of individuals and society. However, most of the studies were skewed toward how school closure affected the psychological disposition of learners (e.g. Chauke and Obadire, 2024; and Wang, et al., 2020) or centred on how lockdown measures affected teacher education and school administration in Nigeria (see Kalu-Ezema, 2024; Andaregie and Astatkie, 2021; Orji and Omoni, 2021, Zubair, 2020, etc).

Thus, debate on how covid-19 affected the wellbeing of private school teachers is largely overlooked. Only few community-based studies were advanced to assessed how the pandemic impacted on socio-economic conditions of private school teachers in different regions of Nigeria (e.g. Jacob, 2020 and Ifenna and Blessing, 2020). Above all, none of these studies examined how socio-economic characteristics of private school teachers influenced their living conditions during covid-19 crisis, which is the novelty of this study. In Gombe state, the far-reaching consequences of the lockdown measures on social and economic life of private sector employees had not been ascertained or at best received less attention. Hence, further studies to explore the extent to which the pandemic affected the socio-economic status of teachers in private schools cannot be overemphasized. This study therefore, takes the challenge in order to add to the existing literature by empirically assessing the impact of covid-19 pandemic on socio-economic status of private school teachers in Gombe Local Government Area (LGA).

Literature Review

Although much of the studies put forward to examine the impact of covid-19 pandemic on the socio-economic status of stakeholders in education sector focused on students and school management, some studies attempted to investigate how teachers' social and economic wellbeing were affected also. According to Sekiwu and Ocan (2022), compulsory lockdown of schools has forced private school proprietors to stop or cut down teachers' salaries on the pretext that schools

had no enough funds. This has created a huge income-lag that undermined teachers' social and economic welfare. Empirically, Andaregie and Astatkie (2021) conducted a study on the impact of covid-19 on jobs at private schools and colleges in Northern Ethiopia using Heckman two-step regression model. The findings revealed that schools closure during covid-19 resulted to significant job and income losses among teachers in private schools and colleges. Also, the results showed that age is one of the significant factors influencing school management's decision for teachers' retention or otherwise in Northern Ethiopian's private schools and colleges. In another study by Zaman and Idrees (2022), the impact of covid-19 on livelihood and social life of rural private school teachers in KPK village, Pakistan was examined and analysed on 117 private school teachers using descriptive statistical techniques. The overall results revealed that difficulties in meeting daily needs, reduction in spending on food and non-food necessities, decreased in saving, and psychological imbalance were the adverse effects felt by private school teachers following schools' closure in the study area.

Similarly, in Nigeria, Jacob (2020) examined the impact of Covid-19 on 180 private secondary school teachers in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Based on simple descriptive statistical methods inform of tables and percentages, the results of the study revealed that in addition to not receiving salaries during the lockdown period, government failed to consider them when providing welfare packages in terms of loan and food palliatives. This may be due to lack of association among private school teachers which may hinder their access to these welfare packages provided by government, the study concluded. Also, Ifenna and Blessing (2020) have analysed the effects of covid-19 pandemic on 59 private school teachers in Ekwusigo Local Government Area of Anambra State. The sample size was randomly selected from 5 private schools and simple descriptive statistical techniques as well as ANOVA were used by the study to conduct the analysis. On the whole, the results revealed that private school teachers were affected adversely by the pandemic in terms of loss of job, stoppage in income, hunger, anxiety, depression, and frantically search for new sources of income to cater for their personal and family needs. However, the perception of these effects significantly varied among teachers in rural, sub-urban and urban areas. Also, it was revealed that private school teachers received little or no assistance from government over the period of the lockdown. The notable coping strategies adopted by these teachers involved initiating new business, borrowing, and seeking/receiving assistance from friends and family. Furthermore, Adewale and Potokri (2023) examined how teachers' attrition was influenced by covid-19 in private schools as well as school managements' response to teachers' welfare. The study analysed the data obtained from 11 private school teachers using QSR NVivo software version 1.7.1 and the results showed that poor salaries and lack of concern for teachers' welfare during covid-19 have significantly contributed to teachers' attrition in private schools.

Methodology

The study covers Gombe LGA with 177 total number of private schools (Gombe State Ministry of Education, 2024). The choice of Gombe LGA is premised on the fact that it has a relatively high concentration of private schools in the state. However, only private schools (and teachers) that were established (and employed) at least one year before the outbreak of the pandemic are considered.

The sample size of the study is determined using Cochran's (1977) formula for unknown population. On the assumption that at least 50% of teachers were affected by the pandemic with 5% (α) level of significance, the sample size is given as follows:

$$n = \frac{z^2 \times p \times (1-p)}{\alpha^2}$$ where z is the Z-table value (1.96); α is the desired level of precision; and p is the fraction of the population that displays attribute. Therefore, the sample size is:

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 384.16 \approx 384$$

Having determined the sample size, the study employed purposive sampling technique in administering well-structured questionnaires to 384 respondents and the data obtained are analysed using Multinomial Logit regression model expressed as follows:

$$ecs_i = \phi_0 + \phi_1 age_i + \phi_2 mst_i + \phi_3 fsz_i + \phi_4 eduq_i + \phi_5 nemp_i + \phi_6 ojob_i + \phi_7 pal_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

Where:

ecs = economic status during Covid-19 lockdown;
age = age of the respondents;
mst = marital status;
fsz = Family size;
$eduq$ = educational qualification;
$nemp$ = nature of employment;
$ojob$ = other jobs engaged in;
pal = palliatives received during lockdown; and
ε_i = error term.

The description and measurement of the above variables are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Variables Description and Measurement

Variable	Description	Measurement
Dependent variable		
Socio-economic status during Covid-19 lockdown	Salary received by respondents during lockdown	1 = received in full 2 = partially received 3 = not received
Independent variables		
Age	21-30; 31-40 …; 61 and above	Ordinal scale
Marital status	Single; married; separated/divorce; widowed	Ordinal scale
Family size	1-4; 5-9; 10 & above	Ordinal scale
Educational qualification	SSCE; NCE/ND; Degree; Higher degree	Ordinal scale
Nature of employment	Permanent; Part-time; Casual; Volunteer	Ordinal scale
Other jobs engaged in	Yes or No	Binary: Yes = 1; No = 0

Palliatives received during lockdown	Yes or No	Binary: Yes = 1; No = 0

Empirical Results

This section reports the analysis of the surveyed data for 384 respondents using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 2. The age categories revealed that 238 respondents fall within the age of 31-40 years of age representing 61.98 percent of the total sample. However, only 4 respondents were within the age of 51-60 and 60 and above which respectively stood at 1.04 percent. In relation to respondents' gender, 240 standing for 62.50 percent are male while 144 are female, representing 37.50 percent. For indicator of marital status, majority of the respondents, 227 representing 59.11 percent of the sample size, were single followed by 146 respondents, 38.02 percent who are married. However, those who are separated/divorced and widowed were reported to be 8 and 3 respondents which stood at 2.08 and 0.78 percent respectively.

In terms of family size of the respondents, 194 respondents revealed to have a family size of 1-4 representing 50.52 percent of the sample size. This is followed by 123 and 67 respondents standing for 32.03 and 17.45 percent who have a family size of 5-9 and 10 and above respectively. With respect to respondents' educational qualification, majority of them possessed either NCE/ND or degree. In specific term, 201 respondents were NCE/ND holders representing 52.34 percent and 136 respondents standing for 35.42 percent possessed degree certificates. In addition, 35 respondents (9.11 percent) and 12 respondents (3.13 percent) have SSCE and higher degree certificates respectively. Finally, the nature of employment is also analysed and the statistics revealed that majority of the respondents were employed on either part-time or casual basis. For instance, 133 respondents representing 34.64 percent were employed on part-time basis, whereas 79 respondents which stood at 20.57 percent were casually employed. While 141 respondents standing for 36.72 percent were permanently employed, 31 respondents which represents 8.07 percent of the sample size were volunteering.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
21-30	115	29.95
31-40	238	61.98
41-50	23	5.99
51-60	4	1.04
61 and above	4	1.04
Gender		
Male	240	62.50
Female	144	37.50
Marital status		
Single	227	59.11
Married	146	38.02
Separated/Divorced	8	2.08
Widowed	3	0.78
Family size		
1-4	194	50.52
5-9	123	32.03

10 and above	67	17.45
Educational qualification		
SSCE	35	9.11
NCE/ND	201	52.34
Degree	136	35.42
Higher degree	12	3.13
Nature of employment		
Permanent	141	36.72
Part-time	133	34.64
Casual	79	20.57
Volunteer	31	8.07

Source: Authors' computation

Having analysed the demographic features of the respondents, the estimation of multinomial logit regression is conducted. However, for robustness check, multinomial probit model is also computed and both results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Regression results

Variable	**Multinomial Logit**	**Multinomial Probit**
Age	.4215854*	.3168126*
	(.249)	(.186)
Marital status	-1.330461***	-.9244426***
	(.424)	(.293)
Family size	-1.727018***	-1.266944***
	(.308)	(.211)
Educational qualification	.0306349	.0258935
	(.286)	(.201)
Nature of employment	-1.385005***	-.8923779***
	(.271)	(.165)
Other jobs engaged in	1.28608*	.866809***
	(.414)	(.296)
Palliative received during lockdown	.8080951**	.5444285**
	(.390)	(.283)
Constant	4.348342***	3.095516***
	(1.192)	(.827)
Pseudo R2	0.1719	-
Observations	384	384

Source: Authors' computation

Note: ***, **, and * denotes level of significance at 1%, 5%, and 10% respectively.

Table 3 presents the results of multinomial logit and multinomial probit regressions. However, the interpretation and analysis are conducted based on the results of multinomial logit. Beginning with age, the results showed that it has impacted positively on the economic status of private school teachers during Covid-19 lockdown. This is to be expected because increase in age translates to higher experience and therefore higher chances of being retained in work place. It also supported the findings of Andaregie and Astatkie (2021) that age is one of the significant factors influencing school management's decision for teachers' retention or otherwise in Northern Ethiopian's private schools and colleges. On the contrary, the results revealed that marital status and family size have negative impact on economic status indicating that those who are married and have high family

size or dependents among the private school teachers are more likely to experience decline in their economic status.

Going further, educational qualification is reported to have positive but insignificant impact on economic status. However, the nature of employment has negative and significant impact suggesting that teachers who were engaged on either part-time, casual or volunteer basis stood a chance of being disengaged during Covid-19 lockdown thereby worsening their economic and social vulnerabilities due to loss of livelihood sources. This conformed with the works of Andaregie and Astatkie (2021) who found that schools closure during covid-19 resulted to significant job and income losses among teachers in private schools and colleges in Northern Ethiopia; and Adewale and Potokri (2023) whose findings showed that poor salaries and lack of concern for teachers' welfare during covid-19 have significantly contributed to teachers' attrition in private schools. The coefficient of other jobs engaged in, is found to be positive and statistically significant. This conforms with the a priori expectation that engaging in other income-generating ventures will offer more opportunities for getting higher income and diverse skills which in turn, improves carrier prospect and financial safety net of private school teachers. This corroborated with the argument of Ifenna and Blessing (2020) that engaging in other businesses offers support to private school teachers during lockdown measures in Ekwusigo Local Government Area of Anambra State. On the palliatives received during lockdown, the outcome showed that it has positive and significant impact economic status of private school teachers. This suggests that the higher the supports accorded to teachers during pandemic, the more likely it is to reduce their economic hardship. This is to be expected because palliatives provide both financial and material support that can reduce the strain caused by decrease in salary, job losses, and high cost of living. This contradicted the findings of Ifenna and Blessing (2020) who found that private school teachers in Ekwusigo Local Government Area of Anambra State received little assistance with no significance on their economic status.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study therefore, assessed the impact of covid-19 pandemic on socio-economic status of private school teachers taking Gombe metropolis as a case study. The sample size of 384 respondents was determined using purposive sampling procedure and the data obtained were analysed using multinomial logit regression technique. On the whole, the results revealed that age, other jobs engaged in, and palliatives received during lockdown have positively and significantly impacted on the socio-economic status of private school teachers. However, educational qualification is found to have positive but insignificant impact. Contrarily, marital status and family size were reported to impact the socio-economic status of private school teachers negatively and significantly in the period of covid-19 lockdown. Based on these findings, the study offered the following recommendations:

i. Private school teachers should adopt savings culture and diversification of income sources as a key to reducing economic hardships in a period of uncertainties and difficulties.
ii. Also, association of private school teachers should be formed by teachers in private schools to ease access to welfare packages provided by government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

iii. Also, private school proprietors should be compassionate to their teachers in life challenging periods. This can be achieved through institutionalization of teachers' welfare packages and establishing strong welfare committee to make it function efficiently.

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Article **Open Access**

EFFECTS OF POLITICAL CONFLICTS ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF EBIRALAND, KOGI STATE OF NIGERIA

Muhammad Idris Japa [1]
Basil O. Ibebunjo [2]
Charles Omotola Olusanya [3]
Department of Peace Studies & Conflict Resolution, National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja [1, 2 & 3]
Corresponding Email: cnwosu@noun.edu.ng

Abstract
This study examines the effects of political conflicts on the socio-economic development of Ebiralan din Kogi State, Nigeria. It explores how persistent political rivalries and power struggles have disrupted economic activities, weakened governance, and strained social cohesion. Using a mixed-methods approach, interviews and analysis of socio-economic data, the research highlights how conflict has contributed to poor infrastructure, unemployment, and limited access to education and healthcare. The findings reveal that political instability occasioned by an array of unemployed youths remains a major barrier to development in Ebiraland. The paper not only brought to the fore the causes of political conflicts but also their effects on the socio-economic development. The study concludes that fostering inclusive governance and strengthening local conflict resolution mechanisms are critical to reversing the negative trends. These insights contribute to the broader discourse on the nexus between political stability and development in Ebiraland.

Keywords: Political Conflicts, Socio-economic Development, Political Instability, Communal Tension, Ebrialand.

Introduction
In Ebiraland, conflicts, particularly political conflicts, have pervaded the society to such an extent that the land appears helpless. Japa (2015) believes that the people of Ebiraland are today haunted by a paradox of their inability to harness the potential and aggregate ideas for stable growth; rather, they resort to self-immolation. If it is not one community against another, it is one youth gang

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versus another. The political conflicts in Ebiraland became a recurring issue since the first republic, where the Igbira Progressive Union (IPU) and Igbira Tribal Union (ITU) had frontal confrontations. These conflicts were expressed using different platforms. These included youth gangsterism, restiveness, and clannishness. These became veritable avenues where scores were settled. The self-serving politicians of the land use these platforms to fan the embers of their political interests, which were hardly corporate (Audu, 2010). The dawn of party politics of the 1940s and 1950s in Ebiraland brought about bitter rivalry between the Igbira Progressive Union (IPU), which later metamorphosed into the Tribal Union (ITU) and the Northern People's Congress (NPC). The violence that characterised this bitter rivalry spilt over to the Second Republic, where the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) became bitter enemies. The same scenario played out during the ill-fated Third Republic of the Babangida era, where the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) became sworn enemies. Similarly, the People Democratic Party (PDP) and All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP) pitched against each other before the decline of ANPP in 2003 with its loss of the gubernatorial election in Kogi State and in its place came the emergence of Action Congress (and later Action Congress of Nigeria). Thuggery, maiming, killing and burning of houses of political opponents became the striking features of these periods.

The political conflicts during this period of the first, second and fourth republics also witnessed the influx of sophisticated weapons, arms and ammunition into the land (Bello, 2016). Most important was the emergence of militant groups made up of idle and unemployed youths who were ready tools in the hands of the partisan political players and exclusivist clan irredentists. These militant groups were well-structured and well-organised. The leaders of these militant groups, through the use of arms and coercion, carved a cliche for themselves. The militant groups also adopted various military tactics and strategies during the crises to intimidate and overcome their perceived enemies. The activities of these militant groups largely had an unprecedented impact on the political and socio-economic activities of Ebiraland during the period under review. The impacts are what this study intends to assess vis-à-vis the remote and immediate causes of the crises, the course and effects. The aftermath of the assessment will generate some recommendations that, if adopted, will help mitigate the emergence of similar crises either in Ebiraland or elsewhere.

Conceptual Analysis

Conflict: Conflict constitutes an inevitable aspect of human interaction and cannot be avoided. At the heart of social and political interactions are two constant and opposing tendencies – conflict and cooperation. Therefore, an inherent difference of people who live and interact with one another and pursue conflicting interests makes conflict inevitable (Ibrahim, 2022). Ibrahim (2022) opines that as human beings interact with each other in a social setting, and seek to promote their material well-being and survival amid scarce resources, they either cooperate for mutual benefits or disagree over the usage of factors of production and the process of production. However, when incompatible goals are pursued simultaneously by individuals, groups, or communities, conflict is said to exist (Ibrahim, 2022). Sadiq (2022) defines conflict as a situation in which two or more human persons desire goals which they perceive as being obtainable by one or the other, but not both. Conflicts can be explained through a dimensional lens. These include conflict as a form of

perception, conflict as a feeling and conflict as an action. As a perception, Ibrahim (2022) and Sadiq (2022) identify that conflict is often the conviction that one's own needs be expressed through several emotions, including fear, anger, bitterness, sadness, hopelessness or the combination of these. They highlight that conflict involves action, which may be violent or destructive. The context of the above analysis shows that conflict is a product of disagreement or differing interests between individuals or groups that takes a violent dimension, with the attendant consequence of loss of life and property. In his view, Herbert (2017) says disagreement and conflicts are inevitable everyday occurrences; their resolution can result in constructive change. He says conflicts are often analysed at different levels – interpersonal, group/community and national – and in terms of how the levels interact with each other. They can turn into violent conflict when there are inadequate channels for dialogue and disagreement, when dissenting voices and deeply held grievances cannot be heard and addressed; in environments of instability, injustice and fear (Herbert, 2017)

Socio-Economic Development

The socio-economic development is a process of quantitative, qualitative and structural changes as a result of actions undertaken as part of societal (economic) practice. These changes affect: material living conditions, economic structure and entrepreneurship, access to public goods and services, relations within a social system, the condition of the natural environment, and life satisfaction (Litwinski, 2017). The socio-economic development can generally be defined as a process of changes or improvement to social and economic conditions that affect an individual, organisation, or an entire country (Litwinski, 2017). Socio-economic development is the process of social and economic development in a society. Socio-economic development is measured with indicators, such as GDP, life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment. Socio-economic development can further be understood from the context of unemployment and income indices. If the unemployment rate is high, people have to work for industries that are lower than their abilities on a way lower pay scale. Changes brought about by socio-economic development in less-tangible factors are also considered, such as personal dignity, freedom of association, personal safety and freedom from fear of physical harm and the extent of participation in civil society (Szirmai, 2021). The principles of socio-economic development depend on the health, education, geographical and social environment, and political system. There are three core values of development: (a) sustenance, (b) self-esteem, and (c) freedom. Socio-economic status is typically broken into three levels (high, middle, and low) to describe the three places a family or an individual may fall in relation to others. Socio economics is primarily concerned with the interplay between social processes and economic activity within a society. Social economics may attempt to explain how a particular social group or socio-economic class behave within a society, including their actions as consumers.

Theoretical Framework

The Relational/Vengeance Theory was adopted for this study. This theory attempts to explain violent conflicts between groups by exploring sociological, political, economic, religious and historical relationships between such groups. The belief is that cultural and value differences as well as group interests all influence relationships between individuals and groups in different ways. Thus, several conflicts grow out of a history of conflict between groups that has led to the development of negative stereotypes, racial intolerance and discrimination (Lamorde and Ibebunjo,

2022). The differences in value invariably create the "we" and "others" dichotomy: The fact that "others" are perceived as different makes us feel they are entitled to less or are inferior because of values. This disrupts the flow of communication between us and them and, to that extent, twists perceptions that we have about each other (Lamorde and Ibebunjo, 2022). Okereke (2011) notes that sect members attracted several descriptions where they operated based on the perceptions of the local population. In some communities, where it existed, the sect and its members were described as terrorists and persons with psychiatric challenges (Okereke, 2011).

The state and other members of West African Societies who are targets of terrorist groups' violence may indeed find it difficult to understand the sects penchant for blood-letting on the one hand, the former group becomes in this context the "we" and all efforts are being made to secure it from savagery of the "others", the terrorists. On the other hand, the latter groups bond either by the common purpose of fighting the "unbelievers" for Allah, or a feeling of deprivation or both, see the remaining members of the West African Societies as the "others". In this circumstance, mutual antagonism exists and can be violently expressed. On the part of the terrorist groups, the killing of members by government security forces, the "others" attracts reprisal from it, the "we". In the context of Ebiraland, political rivalries are frequently driven by personal vendettas, clannish alignments, and a desire to avenge past political losses or marginalisation. These vengeance-based conflicts undermine social cohesion, disrupt governance, and divert resources from development initiatives. Thus, the theory aptly explains how the persistence of politically motivated feuds hampers socio-economic development in the land.

Background to Political Conflicts in Ebiraland

Political conflicts in Ebiraland that snowballed into perpetual orgy of violence, bloodletting and terror took its root from the down of party politics. This became accentuated between 1999-2007 when political parties in Ebiraland. PDP, ANPP and alter ACN began frontal confrontation, Ebiraland was to say the least, sacked several people were coldly hacked down, some number of people were maimed and deformed; properties particularly houses, vehicles, shops and other valuable were burnt down and wasted as they were casted into atavistic nonsensity (Okene, 2008).

Various modes of conflict management intervention were employed (i.e formal and informal modes), yet the conflicts did not abate. Aside from the usual deployment of law enforcement agents to the troubled spots, Tribunals, panels, and committees were also put in place by the Kogi State government to investigate, identify culprits and come up with possible recommendations that could mitigate future occurrences, such possible recommendations that mitigate future occurrences, such includes the Justice Ochimana Panel on the violent conflicts of 2002, that of Chris Ali Committee who probed the recurring conflicts in Ebiraland and came up with a ban on masquerade activities in Ebiraland; Reverend Anthony Akande Peace Committee on the 2008 conflicts in Ebiraland, etc were of no effect, perhaps recommendations from these panels and committee were not implemented, and so, the conflicts persisted. In addition to the above panels, concerned Elders of Ebiraland under the aegis of Kogi Central Elders Forum met to chart ways of resolving the conflicts. The Kogi Central Media Practitioners Association equally did their bit to make peace reign. Ebira Youth Congress (EYC), Ebira Peoples Association, Front For Ebira solidarity, the Club 10 of Nigeria, Kogi Central Community Forum, etc, have all made frantic efforts to put Ebira back on track, to no avail. Therefore, this work is to critically examine the causes of the conflicts, their impacts on the socio-economic development of Ebiraland.

Although scholarly work about various forms of conflicts in Ebiraland abound, none has focused the impact of such conflicts on socio-economic development of the land on the period of this study beyond the existence of newspaper reports on conflicts in Ebiraland, no systematic study dealing with political and related conflicts in Ebiraland that have existed since 2007. We had a PhD thesis on the "Political Leadership and Conflicts in Ebiraland" by M.S. Audu, "Crises and Militancy in Ebiraland" by Bello, M.A. and "History of Party Politics in Ebiraland" by Suberu, O.A.

Causes of Political Conflicts in Ebiraland

There seems to exist a permanent feature in Ebira politics that has continued to increase the level of violent conflict in the land. The tendency for the party members to factionalize has created opportunity for the recruitment of thugs to defend factional interest. The intra-party rivalry in Ebiraland has introduced more violence in the society than any other factor (Bello, 2016). Sanni (2004) says the seeds of internecine "warfare" and the use of violence to secure and retain power, however defined, were sown in the ITU/IPU days of bitter rivalry and congenital hatred. The major national political parties that took over in succession from these precursor political parties regrettably inherited this syndrome of politics with bitterness. The point being made here is that bickering, mutual rancour, and bloody violence became part and parcel of partisan politicking in Ebiraland, and all the processes leading to ascension to power in all facets of violent conflicts are a common feature of a state of high unemployment, high-level poverty, and idleness. As earlier observed, this provides a fertile recruitment ground for thugs and other miscreants by politicians to intimidate, harass and physically assault political opponents. The proliferation of arms in Ebiraland gives the impetus to these miscreants to unleash mayhem on themselves and innocent people in what they label an "attack". It was a situation where one gang of a ward or quarter mobilised its colleagues to attack another quarter to show supremacy.

Poor family upbringing has also been fingered to be a reason for the army of irresponsible youths that are all over the place. Some of these children had the misfortune of not being given proper training to uphold Ebira's valuesystem of being hardworking, honest, respectful of constituted authority, and being one's brother's keeper. The high rate of divorce among couples causes the offspring of such couples to grow into miscreantsoften linked to these spates of violence. Ebira chieftaincy institutions have also come under scrutiny. Unfortunately, our recent history hardly gives any hope that we can learn to live peacefully together. If it is not a clash over Ohinoyi stool, it is Ohi stool. If one clan is not accusing the other of trying to establish its hegemony over it, it is in disagreement over nomenclature. In many communities, both political leaders and traditional rulers work in harmony for a common goal. In Ebiraland, both do not enjoy such synergy; they are always suspicious of one another. Ebira traditional festivals, hitherto peaceful and entertaining ones, have been taken over by hoodlums. The celebration of the festival now serves as an avenue to settle scores between one gang or club and another. Despite government's clampdown on the celebrations, the hoodlums defied the orders and went ahead to celebrate the festivals that would always end up in bloody clashes.

Impact of Political Conflicts on Socio-Economic Development

An average Ebiraman cannot be said to be happy over the frequent political conflicts in Ebiraland, as it's a drawback on the polity. The image of Ebiraland and its people has been battered seriously. Ebira's highly prized cultural festivals are not only adulterated but bastardised. This is what

Suleiman (2017) refers to as a cultural nuisance. These conflicts have resulted in the denial of job placement for Ebira indigenes at Obajana Cement Company in Kogi State. A non-Ebira is wary of an average Ebiraman whom he sees as vandalistic and violent. No sane person would encourage a tourist to visit the land during the celebration of a festival, which ordinarily would have fetched the area money from the tourist. There is no denying the fact that the areas affected are depopulated. By implication, Ebiraland is depopulated. Apart from the massive loss of lives, some have migrated to neighbouring towns and vowed never to return. Some have temporarily relocated from troubled spots, while some have become refugees and hostages in their own homes (Suleiman, 2006). The aesthetic value of Ebiraland, which caused the former Governor Audu of Kogi State to refer to it as "small London" (Graphics 1999), is almost gone. Magnificent buildings have been lost to inferno ignited by the miscreants. At the slightest misunderstanding, for which dialogue would have resolved, the beautiful buildingsthat make the site of Ebiraland to behold were usually the first target. Economic investment in Ebiraland is now looking difficult. No one in the right frame of mind goes to a place where there is no peace to have a business investment. The series of conflicts, particularly political conflicts in Ebiraland, had scared away potential investors. Some who were already there are now having a rethink whether to continue staying inspite of the situation or not (Japa, 2011).

Managing Conflicts in Ebiraland

The world over, particularly in Africa, there are various mechanisms for managing conflicts. These include traditional, formal or official mechanisms and informal mechanisms. Conflict as a phenomenon has become an inevitable part of human existence, so its management has also become imperative, and since not all conflicts can be resolved via traditional mechanisms, the conflicts in Ebiraland require a high level of mechanisms to manage. Traditional mechanisms that involve the mediation of the elders require the willingness of the parties in conflict to agree to the dispute settlements. In most cases, this method in Ebiraland over time proved to be ineffective due to the magnitude and incessant nature of the conflict and the delay in the core value system of the land. But it was sometimes used depending on the degree and the magnitude of the conflict. However, the conflicts in Ebiraland had grown beyond the limit of traditional mechanisms as means of mediation; hence, all the various mechanisms of conflict management, which included force, were employed.

Traditional Intervention: The traditional rulers in Ebiraland under the headship of the Ohinoyi of Ebiraland, Alhaji (Dr.) Ado Ibrahim set up a committee for the crisis in Ihima. There was also an ad hoc committee on the reconciliation of all warring clans in Ihima; the committee was headed by his eminence Alhaji Ahmad Badamasi. All these efforts yielded no positive result as the crisis continued unabated.

Individual and Organisational Intervention: The concerned elders of Ebiraland under the aegis of Kogi Central Forum (KCF), chaired by Dauudi Alhaji Musa Etudaye, met at the Abdulrahaman Okene Town Hall, Okene in 2009 when the crisis had almost engulfed the land to explore means of resolving the conflicts. However, their resolutions fell short of what the community needed for peace to prevail. Ebira Youth Congress (EYC), more than any socio-cultural organisation in Ebiraland, organised services of conferences, seminars and symposia where prominent and seasoned scholars like Professors Abere, Mariyetu Teunfe, Abdulsalam, etc were brought to chart a way forward. EYC

also engaged the government at all levels for a permanent solution. Organisations like Pal Collective of Ebiraland, De Club 10 of Nigeria, Front for Ebira Solidarity (FES), Ebira Social Front (ESF) and several others woke up to the challenge via writings and physical delegations to the government just to see to the amicable settlement of the crisis.

Role of the Kogi State Government: Put a committee in place comprising the Ohinoyi of Ebiraland who was the paramount ruler and chairman of Ebira Traditional Council, the local government chairmen, Area Commander of police, Chief of State Security Services (now known as DSS), Head paramilitary agencies - Customs services, immigration services, Prison services and Civil Defence to come up with meaningful suggestiosn that would mitigate future occurrence. It was believed by concerned Ebira indigenes that this security structure could not maintain law and order, either that they compromised their responsibilities, or the local government chairmen starved the committee of the much-needed funds to accomplish their mission.

Disarmament Approach: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) was essentially developed and enhanced by the United Nations Peacekeeping Doctrine to sustain peace support operations, leading to military containment of war with long-term expectations in areas of rehabilitation and rebuilding the society politically and economically (Bello, 2016). In Ebiraland, the proliferation of light weapons, sophisticated arms and ammunition made the conflicts more difficult to contain. The police became inconsequential in the internal security operations during the conflicts in Ebiraland, because of their inability to manage security information, on the other and, and their tendency towards corruption. The Ebira Peace Initiative Movement was floated for the sole aim of disarming the youth. Appreciable effort was accomplished on this. A good number of actors on the field were demobilised with the cooperation of the executive chairman of Okene Local Government Council (Audu, 2009). Army Task Force in Ebira Conflicts: More successes in bringing to an end the crises with the setting up of the Army Task Force. It made a following to the success recorded by the Okene local government council, and happily, the area began to enjoy relative peace.

Findings

The following are the findings of the study:

i. One of the major findings of this study is the division of the Ebira polity along clan lines for political gains.
ii. The unleashing of violence on innocent and suspected persons by the masquerades and the youths is also connected to political gains.
iii. The army of unemployed, able-bodied, and hungry ones was exploited by the politicians for political gains.
iv. The chains of political conflicts have negatively impacted the socio-economic development of Ebiraland.
v. The victims of violent political conflicts in Ebiraland are mainly women and children. Several women turned widows with added responsibilities of children's upbringing, in addition to industrious women having their properties and markets destroyed when properties and markets were torched by irate youth groups.
vi. The state has limited capability to fashion and implement appropriate policies that can address the social malaise.

Conclusion

The study has examined the complex relationship between political conflicts and socio-economic development in Ebiraland, revealing that persistent political instability has significantly hindered progress in key areas such as education, infrastructure, public service delivery, and economic growth. The findings indicate that political rivalries, clannish tension, and exclusionary governance practices have not only weakened development initiatives but also deepened social divisions with the land. The evidence suggests that sustainable development in Ebiraland cannot be achieved without addressing the root causes of political conflict. Promoting inclusive governance, empowering traditional institutions and fostering civic education are critical steps towards peace and stability. Moreover, youth empowerment, institutional reforms, and transparent political processes must be prioritised to restore peace, public trust, and encourage community-driven development. Ultimately, resolving political conflict is not merely a political necessity but a socio-economic imperative. Without peace and stability, the aspirations of Ebiraland and its people for meaningful development will remain elusive.

Recommendations

For Ebiraland to return to what it used to be, a peaceful and prosperous land, the following suggestions are made:

i. Political stakeholders in Ebiraland should adopt inclusive governance practices that reflect the diverse interests of the local population. Power-sharing mechanisms and equitable political representation can help reduce tensions and promote stability.
ii. Traditional leaders and community-based organisations like Ebira Renaissance Group (ERG), Ebira Youth Congress (EYC), Front for Ebira Solidarity (FES), Ebira Peoples Association (EPA), among others, should be empowered to mediate conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence. Their roles in dialogue conflict resolution and grassroots mobilisation are vital for social cohesion.
iii. Government civil society actors like Ebira Human Rights Defence should establish mechanisms for detecting early signs of political conflicts and responding proactively to prevent escalation.
iv. A high rate of youth unemployment is both a cause and a consequence of political instability. Targeted vocational training, entrepreneurship programmes, and youth inclusion in governance can reduce their vulnerability to political manipulation.
v. Enhancing transparency in resource allocation and political processes can help rebuild public trust and reduce grievances that often fuel conflict.
vi. Regular inter-community forums and civic education campaigns should be conducted to promote mutual understanding, tolerance, and political maturity among the populace.
vii. Ensuring that political crimes and electoral violence are persecuted without bias can deter future offenses and reinforce the role of the law.

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF LAND CULTIVATORS-HERDERS CONFLICT IN ISI-UZO AND UZO-UWANI LGAS, ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

Ibrahim Abdulganiyu Jawondo [1]
Adewale Mathew Ogungbenro [2]
James Clifford Nwakaji [3]
Odunayo Elizabeth Akomolafe [4]
Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Nigeria [1 & 3]
Department of Peace and Conflict Resolution, Faculty of Library Studies, Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria [2]
Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria [4]
Corresponding Email: adewale.ogungbenro@unisoun.edu.ng [2]

Abstract
Land cultivators-herders conflict is a conundrum in Nigeria, increasingly generating a peak of loss of lives and property in many communities. The causes of the conflict include destruction of farmland and crops, contamination of water points by herdsmen, blockage of official grazing routes and reserves, illegal arms proliferation, climate change and bush burning, among other factors. The effects of the conflict on the socio-economic livelihood of farmers and herders include food insecurity, unemployment, loss of lives, damage to private and public property, poverty, and social dislocation of the citizenry. This paper, therefore, examines the Land cultivators-herders conflict and its socio-economic impact in Isi-Uzo and Uzo-Uwani LGAs of Enugu State, Nigeria, using a mixed method. Through Key Informant Interview (KII), primary data were collected while secondary data were sourced from published and unpublished materials and internet (online) materials. Theoretically, the study is anchored on Eco-Violent Theory (EVT) by Thomas Homer-Dixon. Findings of the study showed that destruction of farmland/crops, blockage of grazing routes and reserves and contamination of water points were the major factors precipitating the pervasive conflict between farmers and herders in Isi-Uzo and Uzo-Uwani of Enugu State. The study concludes that land cultivators-herders conflict is responsible for food and insecurity, poverty and lawlessness

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across the affected communities in Enugu State and other parts of Nigeria and recommended the establishment of ranching system in all the affected LGAs where nomadism and cattle rearing thrive as a mitigation to curb the menace of land cultivators-herders conflict in Enugu State in particular and Nigeria in general.

Keywords: Conflict, Enugu State, Land Cultivators, Herders and Land Cultivators-Herders, Socio-economic Impact.

Introduction

Conflict in all senses of judgment is an intrinsic and inevitable part of human existence. According to Ibeanu (2014), conflict is the pursuit of incompatible interests and goals by different groups, while armed conflict is the resort to force and armed violence to achieve interests and goals in a given system. Internal conflict is one of the peculiar characteristics of West African States, including Nigeria. However, there has been an increasing number of conflicts in Nigeria recently, which is linked to the Farmers-Herders interaction (Akerjiir, 2018). This conflict appears devastating and has caused several humanitarian losses such as killings, loss of lives and destruction of property (Tsuwa & Odigbo, 2019). Indeed, internal conflicts in West African States have manifested in communal clashes, land and boundary disputes, mineral and resource control disagreements, coup d'état, separatist agitation and civil wars. Some of these conflicts have caused enormous setbacks, including bad governance, underdevelopment, retrogression, spread of epidemic diseases, poverty and inequality among other negative impacts to West African States (Rikarnob, 2015). In buttressing the above assertion, Obi (2019) averred that civil unrest and terrorism are some of the internal conflicts that have challenged peace and security in the West African states in the 21st century.

Akpen (2019) argue that one of the conflicts that has torpedoed the contemporary Nigerian State is the conflict between farmers and herders. He further identified that conflicts among farmers and herders include damage to farmlands and crops, cattle rustling and the use of water points between herdsmen and farmers during dry-season grazing. The use of protected areas led to crises between farmers and herders in the communities and local government areas of Enugu State. In addition, the encroachment by herders on these areas has led to land degradation and destruction of farmlands, thus causing tension between farmers and herdsmen in the host communities (FAO, ECOWAS, 2012). Adeleke (2019) revealed that conflicts between farmers and herders generated immense social tension and violence in Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Benin Republic, Cameroon, Mali and Chad and resulted in several losses of lives and massive destruction of property, including herds, farmlands, and public edifices. The loss of livelihoods, loss of income, social and family dislocation and insecurity are some of the characteristics of the conflict.

Land cultivators-herders conflict (FHC) skyrocketed and spread to all the Geo-Political Zones of the Country in recent times. Out of internal strife in Nigeria, farmers-herders' conflicts accounted for 35% of deaths, thus taking centre stage across the country (Fasona and Omojola, 2005). In addition, the conflicts have also spread tentacles to other regions of the country, such as South/South, South West, and South-East regions. Okoro and Okoro (2018) is more specific in this direction by identifying the worst ravaged states amidst the conflict including Zamfara and Kaduna States in the North-West, Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa and Plateau States in the North central, Adamawa, Taraba and Yobe in the North East, Oyo, Ondo and Ogun States in the Southwest, Edo and Delta in

the South/South and Enugu, Abia and Imo states in the South Eastern region of the country. Enugu State had the taste of farmers-herders conflict in 2005, and since then, it has become a prominent feature in Nkanu West, Isi-Uzo, Uzo-Uwani and Udi LGAs. Factors such as climate change, population growth, migration of herders, and struggle over land as inducement contributed to the persistence of conflicts between farmers and herders. The split over effects from neighbouring states, such as Benue and Kogi States, contributed to conflict escalation in this study area. These LGAs border with Agala, Ador and Okpokwu LGAs in Benue State and Igalamela/Odolu and Ibaji LGAs in Kogi State (Akerjiir, 2018).

Audu (2013) asserted that the reason for the conflict in Enugu state remains climate change induced by less rainfall and increased sunshine, thereby exacerbating high temperature, which led to water scarcity in some parts of the LGAs mostly affected by the conflict. Important to note is that water is a causal factor that triggers the armed conflict. Other factors identified by (Mayah et al,2016; Akerjiir, 2018 and Oli et al, 2018) as the root causes of the conflict include unfavourable climatic condition and encroachment, coordinated reprisal attack by herdsmen, massive killing, misconducts by laborers, cattle rustling and criminal tendencies exhibited by herdsmen in their host communities. According to Bello and Abdullahi (2021), the major causes of the conflict include the destruction of farmland and water points by cattle. Indeed, it is worth noting that the farmers–herders' conflict has reached a crescendo and assumed a dangerous dimension in Enugu state, especially Isi Isi-Uzo and Uzo-Uwani LGAs. This is because there have been invasions and attacks on farm settlements, displacement of innocent residents, destruction of their farmland and crops and by extension, created security breaches in the affected LGAs and communities in the state. The government's responses to this persistent armed conflict have been low-key and include kinetic and non–kinetic measures, including a peace committee to mediate between the two warring parties, deployment of law enforcement agents to maintain peace and order, and creation of a community vigilante. The government established a green wall agency, an inter-ministerial committee on grazing reserves, a livestock development plan, cattle colonies, and national grazing bills represented the measures to mitigate the conflict. The proposal to create a cattle ranch system, the RUGA initiative and anti-open grazing bills in Enugu State are ineffective measures. Against these measures, this study examines the socio-economic impact of farmers-herders conflict in Isi-Uzo and Uzo-Uwani LGAs of Enugu State, Nigeria, to recommend strategies to address the effects of the conflict on the livelihood of the people in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Causes of Land Cultivators-Herders Conflict: The preponderance of the aged long clashes between land cultivators-herders in different states of the Federation, Enugu inclusive, is attributable to many factors which are remote and immediate causes (Akerjiir, 2018; Bashir & Mustapha, 2021; Udemezue & Kanu, 2019; Ofem & Iyang, 2014; Akerjiir, 2018; Olaniyan, 2015; & International Crisis Group, 2017). Akerjiir (2018) contends the overwhelming climate change and population growth in the Sahel region of northern Mali, Chad, Niger, Libya and Nigeria as parts of the remote causes propel the migration of herders Southward geopolitical zone of the country. Similarly, Ogungbenro (2024) argued extensively and noted that water scarcity, one of the impacts of climate change in Sub-Saharan Africa, is a crucial factor responsible for farmers-herders' clashes in the region. He further averred that water, an essential resource, is required for agricultural production and

livestock development; climate change triggers water scarcity, leading to conflict between farmers and herders.

In the past, migration of herders was usually seasonal, with herders spending December to May in the southern and central zones before returning northward. In recent times, however, pastures have been dwindling in the far north, which has led herders to stay back in the south and central zone of Nigeria. This forced migration led to a massive influx of herders in the south, thereby increasing the number of violent clashes among farmers, herders and host communities in Enugu state (International Crisis Group, 2017). Also, Akerjiir (2018) stated that the inadequate livestock diaries and beef meat, which cannot sustain or meet the gr owing population, contribute to increased land cultivators-herders conflict in many communities and LGAs in Enugu State. Consequently, Oli et al (2018) revealed that reprisal attack, a wound difficult to heal in the minds of farmers and herders, remains a remote trigger of the armed conflict. However, reprisal attack is a revenge tactic and defensive mechanism for farmland and livestock deployed by Farmers and Herders in their respective communities and has triggered the conflict in many parts of Enugu state, including Uzo-Uwani and Isi-Uzo LGAs.

In another development, Ofem & Inyang (2014) identified the immediate causes of land cultivators-herders conflict in Enugu state, including destruction of farmland and crops by cattle. According to them, the damage created on the farmland and crops remains the immediate cause of land cultivators-herders conflict across communities and LGAs of Enugu state. Bashir & Mustapha (2021) argued that sexual harassment of women, indiscriminate defecation and contamination of water sources by cattle are the commonest factors responsible for land cultivators-herders clashes in Enugu State, Nigeria. Relatedly, Ogungbenro, Gbadeyan, Abodunrin, Towobola, Adediran & Yusuf (2025) identified encroachment on farmland and crop destruction, drought and massive killing of land cultivators-herders as the predisposing factors intensifying conflict in the state. Ofuoku & Isife (2009) identified that overgrazing, desecration of customs and traditions of the host communities and burning of range land or grazing areas are aiding the persistent farmers-herders conflict in Enugu State.

Consequently, Okpara (2023) identified the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and a ban on open grazing in the rural communities and LGAs of Enugu State as the predisposing factors causing the incessant scuffles between farmers and herders in Uzo-Uwani and Isi-Uzo LGAs of the state. In addition, the activities of the Eastern Security Network (ESN) and the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) are aiding the circulation of arms and ammunition for the execution of this conflict in the state. The menace of the land cultivators-herders crisis has had negative effects not only on the socio–economic relations of the people of Enugu State in particular, but also on other parts of Nigeria in general. However, evidence of violent conflict so far from Uzo-Uwani and Isi-Uzo LGAs indicates that several lives, including farmers and herders, have been lost and property worth billions of naira destroyed. Agricultural activities have also been abandoned as a result of increased destruction of farmland and killing of innocent people, as well as sustained attack on livestock and their owners in the affected LGAs. Other effects of the conflict include increased unemployment due to the displacement of farmers and livestock owners, hunger and starvation, increased criminality, underdevelopment and the absence of mechanised farming, especially in the affected rural communities of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This treatise is underpinned by Eco-Violence Theory, conceptualised by Thomas Homer-Dixon (1999). The basic assumptions of this theoretical framework remain that, under certain circumstances, scarcity of renewable resources such as cropland, fresh water, oil, minerals, and forest creates civil violence and instability among the contending parties dwelling in the ecosystem. This is the commonest characteristic of the Nigerian states and other West African Third World Countries (TWCs) that lack human and financial capabilities to manage their resources but are dependent on developed nations such as America, China and Japan. Homer-Dixon (1999) maintains that the shortage of these renewable resources in any environment creates what is known as environmental security problems (violent conflicts). As an environmental security expert, Homer viewed ecological issues and the presence of natural resources as a catalyst that propels violent conflict, which in turn affects human security. Humans depend on the ecosystem and the services it provides. These include provision of services such as food and clean water, regulating services such as disease and climate, cultural services such as Spiritual fulfilment and Aesthetic enjoyment, and also supporting services such as primary production and soil formation. The degradation and eventual scarcity of these services often causes human security problems such as farmers-herders conflict, communal clash, land disputes and oil and gas resource conflict (Homer-Dixon, 1999).

This theoretical exposition, therefore, revealed that Third World Countries (TWCs), for example, Nigeria and the rest of African countries, are more vulnerable to environmental violent conflicts than the developed countries and thereby experience large-scale violence as a result of a shortage of natural resources. These pressures include reduced agricultural production, economic decline, overpopulation or population growth, demographic displacement, infrastructural development on the landscape and so on. However, when these atmospheric environmental pressures occur and trigger an increase in population growth and match with scarce resources, without government proactive interventions to resolve them, it is likely to lead towards environmental security problems. This is the central vocal point of Homer-Dixon (1999). Generally, environmental scarcity is caused by degradation, unfavourable climate change, depletion of renewable resources, unequal distribution and population explosion. This treatise also explained that the social effects of environmental scarcity are due to human or natural activities, which in turn causes constrained economic productivity, population movements, social segmentation, and thus weakens institutions and states leading to ethnic or resource violent conflict, insurgency and uprising among other violent upheavals (Homer-Dixon,1999). Undoubtedly, competition over scarce ecological resources such as grass and pastures, cropland and grazing range between farmers and herders in Enugu State has created several insecurities such as farmers-herders clashes, communal uprising and ethnic violence between the Igbo farmers and Fulani herders. The pressure over arable land and its attendant resource conflict worsens due to the ever-shrinking resources, livelihood crisis, policy deficiencies on grazing and pastoral governance by the past and present administrations. Thus, population increase has continued to exert greater pressure on available land resources with varying environmental and socio-economic implications (Ruben and Verhagen, 2001).

This treatise is criticised by Ruben & Verhagen (2001) because sustainable and equitable Management of shared natural resources alone cannot avert environmental insecurity. The incident of insecurity and terrorism debunked the claim that the world's classic countries and developed countries, such as America, Japan, and Russia, do not have the abundant natural resources as found

in the West African Continent. This theory also received wider criticism and rebuke from Deudney & Dalby (1999). The duo wondered how and why the scarcity of renewable natural resources can cause insecurity. These proponents critique Homer-Dixon's theory and state that conceptualising the environment as a national security issue perpetuates the kind of us versus them and zero-sum thinking that leads to conflict rather than cooperation. The theory failed to explain the entire range of possible causes of conflict and does not provide an alternative explanation, thus ignoring instances of peace and cooperation that lead to environmental security.

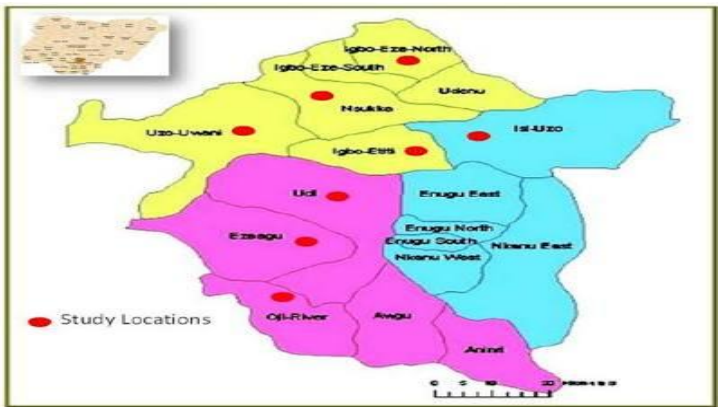
Study Area/ Methodology

The study was conducted among farmers, herders and host communities in Isi-Uzo and Uzo-Uwani LGAs, Enugu State (Fig. 2). It is one of the 36 states in the Federation, which derived its name from Enu Ugwu, meaning top of the hill. Enugu State was created from old Anambra State in 1991 with Enugu City as the capital. It has a population of 3,267,837, with 1,671,795 females and 1,596,042 males. NPC (2006). Structured in 17 local government areas such as Aniri, Ezeagu, Enugu East, Igbo Eze South, Igbo Etiti, Igbo Eze North, Isi-Uzo, Nkanu East and West, Nsukka, Oji River, Udi, Udenu and Uzo-Uwani, Enugu State is known for its large deposit of a mineral deposit known as coal, hence regarded as the Coal city of the Nation (Author's field work, 2023). As an agrarian State, situated in the tropical rainforest zone with fertile soil for agricultural endowments and the State has good climatic conditions all year round, with about 223 Meters (732 ft) above sea level and a daily mean temperature of approximately 26.7 °C and an average night temperature of about 11 °C cooler than other states in the region. The relative humidity is high, mostly from March to November, while the mean daily humidity is around 70% during the dry season. The annual rainfall is about 2,000 millimetres (79 in) per annum, paving the way for quality greener pastures, hence a cynosure of all eyes for herdsmen and cattle grazing range. The major crops cultivated by farmers in the state are Cassava, Rice, Yam, Beans, Maize, Soya Beans and Vegetables. Despite its agricultural endowments of arable land and favourable weather conditions for farming and animal husbandry, the State has suffered tremendous crises, which have negatively impacted food insecurity, prominent among them is the farmers-herders conflict. The primary areas of study are Isi-Uzo and Uzo-Uwani LGAs with semi-boarders aligning with Benue, Kogi, Anambra, and Ebonyi states, prevalent with farmers-herders' conflicts. The major communities affected by the farmers-herders conflict are Eha-Amufu, Ikem, Mgbuji, Amuda, Agu-emede, Ukpabi Nimbo, Umuomi, Ebor, Ugwurugu and Ugwuachara.

Methodologically, a mixed research design was adopted with primary and secondary sources of data collection. Purposive sampling techniques were adopted, and Uzo-Uwani and Isi-Uzo LGAs were purposively sampled for the study based on their prevalent cases of land cultivators-herders conflicts. The farmers who had experienced destruction of farmlands or attacks were purposively selected, while the snowball technique was adopted to determine herders due to the spatial nature of the herders. Primary data were collected using observation and key informant interviews with 6 herders and farmers selected from each of the two LGAs, thus bringing the total to 24 respondents. However, interviews, interactions and discussions with respondents were centred on the primary causes of the farmers-herders conflict and its socio-economic implications in the study areas and content analysis was adopted. The secondary data were sourced using policy documents, academic journals and publications, research papers, newspaper articles and internet materials.

Map of Enugu State Showing the Study Areas of Isi-Uzo and Uzo-Uwani Local Government Areas

Fig: 2



Source: www.enuguonline.com

Study Areas

Isi-Uzo Local Government Area, Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area

Discussion of Findings

Causes of the Land Cultivators-Herders Conflict in Enugu State: land cultivators-herders conflict, a resource base and armed conflict in Enugu State has primarily exacerbated negative impacts such as killing, maiming, social and political displacement of families and destruction of farmlands, thereby entrenching food insecurity and untold hardship on the livelihood of Enugu citizens. The findings from key informant interviewees (KII) and respondents revealed that the primary causes of the conflict are attributable to factors such as destruction of farmlands and unharnessed crops, traditional open grazing system, bush burning and deliberate blockage of official cattle routes as well as pollution of water sources in the affected communities of Uzo-Uwani and Isi-Uzo LGAs of Enugu State. According to key informants and respondents interviewed in Isi-Uzo LGA, the major causes of the conflict include, but are not limited to, damage to farmlands and unharvested crops, the traditional open grazing system, indiscriminate defecation by grazing and transhumance herders and crass carelessness exhibited by labourers tending the herds of cattle. The following are extracts from key informants and respondents from Eha-Amufu and Mgbuji communities in Isi-Uzo LGA of Enugu State;

> What causes conflict between farmers and herders in this community remains deliberate or unintentional destruction of farmlands and unharnessed crops by cattle, traditional open grazing system, defecation by cattle along the highways and major streets in Eha-Amufu township and pollution of water sources and sexual harassment of female farmers by the marauding herders (Farmers /KII/ Isi-Uzo LGA).

Similarly, another key informant from the farmers group interviewed in NimboUkpabi community in Uzo-Uwani LGA indicated as follows;

> The herders do not have respect for our customs and traditions. They do things with impunity, encroach on our farms and destroy our crops. The Fulani herders have invaded the sacred and traditional lands reserved by our elders and ancestors for sacred activities. Their cows eat up and destroy our farmlands, and we cannot farm again, and we cannot harvest our remnant crops due to the fear of being killed by the herders. There were no positive results from the government or security agencies when we reported this matter. No compensation is made to the farmland and crops destroyed, the Fulani herders will not pay; instead, they will point their guns at us (Farmer/KII/ Uzo-Uwani LGA).

The above extracts from the key informant and respondent are in alignment and consonant with the views of Ofem & Inyang (2014), Oli et al (2018), Ofuoku & Isifu (2018) and Okpara (2023) who are of the views that the root causes of farmers-herders conflict in Enugu state are destruction of farmlands by cattle, reprisal attack, proliferation of small and light weapons, blockage of official grazing routes and reserves as well as traditional open grazing system. Another key informant interviewee and herders' respondent group disclosed that the main causes of the conflict in Uzo-Uwani LGA are attributed to bush burning and blockage of cattle routes and reserved areas by the community farmers. The key informant opined:

> The farmers accused us of destroying their farmland and unharnessed crops, and that our cattle eat up their cassava, yam and rice plants. They will not mention and refuse to understand that some of the pathways and farmlands where they planted cassava and rice are designated cattle routes meant for the movement of our cattle during transhumance. They also burn the bushes that nature has created to graze our cattle (Herder /KII/ Uzo-Uwani LGA).

However, the above extract from the respondents depicts destruction of farmlands and crops, blockage of cattle routes and bush burning as the factors responsible for the recurring conflict of farmers-herders conflict in Enugu state.

Socio-economic Impact of Farmers-Herders Conflict

Findings from key informants and respondents revealed pervasive and persistent clashes between farmers and herders and negative socio-economic impacts on the livelihood of people in many communities of Uzo-Uwani and Isi-Uzo LGAs of Enugu State. When asked about the socio-economic impact of the conflict on the livelihood of the people of Enugu State, the key informants responded as follows:

> The effects of the conflict are numerous and have hurt our socio-economic livelihood. We have no food again to eat, our indigenes are killed on daily basis by the marauding herders, our farmlands are being destroyed and Fulani herders are pointing their guns at us, everybody has deserted the community to hide elsewhere, our markets have been shut down and remain dormant, and there is hardship in the land, we cannot even move freely because we are afraid and our lives are in danger (Farmer/KII/Isi-Uzo LGA)

In a nutshell, the above responses from a key informant and interviewee from Eha-Amufu community in Isi-Uzo LGA reflect a scenario of killing, destruction, proliferation of arms and

ammunition, food insecurity and shortage, breakdown of law and order and social displacement, and untold economic hardships as the impact of the conflict(See fig. 1) This is in consonant with the views of Erondu (2018), Jonathan (2021), Nwakaji (2021) and Okpara (2023) who disclosed in their various studies that social displacement, hardship, farmland encroachment, food and environment of insecurity, proliferation of arms and ammunition, and breakdown of law and order as the major impacts of farmers-herders conflict in the affected communities of the study areas in Enugu state. In another development, a key informant and a leader of herder groups from NimboUkpabi in Uzo-Uwani LGA revealed as follows:

> In 2016, we witnessed a major conflict between farmers and herders, and everybody deserted the community. My brother Aminu Babuga was killed by erring youths, and his Ruga settlement and other property were burnt down. Markets, Churches and Mosques were shut down. Since then, we are to recover from the shocks of the disaster (Herder/KII/Uzo-Uwani LGA).

However, the above extract from the key informant and respondent connotes social displacement, family dislocation, killings, destruction and hardship, essentially witnessed in one of the farmers-herders' conflicts in Nimbo Ukpabi Uzo-Uwani LGA.

Conclusion

The rising cases of farmers-herders conflict in Enugu State, in particular, and Nigeria in general have posed a dangerous threat to the lives and property of the Nigerian citizenry. This study examined the Farmers-Herders conflict and its socio-economic effects in Isi-Uzo and Uzo-Uwani LGAs of Enugu State, Nigeria. The study identified some of the causes of the armed conflict in the areas, which include climate change, illegal migration by foreign herders and uncontrolled human population. Other causes include destruction of farmland and crops, pollution of water points (dams), reprisal attacks, sexual harassment, and cattle rustling, among others. The study further uncovered killings and destruction, social dislocation of citizens, breakdown of law and order, food insecurity and proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, environment of insecurity, economic hardship and stunted developmental growth as some of the socio-economic effects of Farmers-Herders conflicts in Isi-Uzo and Uzo-Uwani LGAs of Enugu State. Indeed, the heightened cases of farmers-herders conflict and major attacks that resulted in devastating numbers of casualties were recorded in Mgbuji, Ugwunesi, Nimbo-Ukpabi, Ugwuachara, Ikem, Eha-Amufu, Nimbo-Ngwoko, and Agu-Amede Communities of Isi-Uzo and Uzo-Uwani LGAs of Enugu State. Following the environment of insecurity caused by the armed conflict in Enugu State, the study concluded that the farmers-herders conflict posed a dangerous and alarming security threat to the progress and development of the State, including food insecurity.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

i. Based on the foregoing, the need for various stakeholders, including the State and Federal Governments as well as the International Communities, to muster the political will to eliminate the menace of Farmers-Herders' conflict and its attendant security threats to the lives and property of Enugu People becomes imperative.
ii. On this note, the researcher suggested the following policy options in mitigating the land cultivators-herders conflict in Enugu State through monitoring and securing by the law

enforcement agencies through facilities such as high tensions, crude oil pipelines, railway lines and National grazing routes and reserves that enable the migration of herders through Benue and Enugu States boundaries.

iii. The study recommended that ranches and grazing reserves for pastures and dams, water points by the Federal, State Governments and private individuals be established as major priorities in bringing lasting solutions to the Farmers-Herders conflict in Enugu State in particular and Nigeria in general.

iv. It is suggested that the Federal Government establish a National Commission for Farmers-Herders with State branches all over the Federation and charge it with the responsibility of organising conflict resolution, mediation and dispute resolution training among Farmers and Herders. The Commission will be responsible for civic education and awareness for farmers and herders' peaceful co-existence, peace and security of host communities.

v. The study recommended that stringent laws be enacted to discourage the open grazing system across the States of the Federation.

vi. Forest Guard Commission should be established and equipped with modern gadgets and personnel to protect farmers, herders and forest resources in all the States of the Federation.

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Article **Open Access**

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CHALLENGES IN MARRIAGE INSTITUTION AMONG UMUNUMO CLAN IN EHIME MBANO OF IMO STATE, NIGERIA

Vic-Martin Igwe [1]
Victor Bassey Edet [2]
Lumen Christi Academy, Olia, Kogi State, Nigeria [1]
Department of Religious and Cultural Studies, Uma Ukpai School of Theology, Uyo, Nigeria [2]
Corresponding Email: vicbas18@gmail.com [2]

Abstract
Marital conflict is a common occurrence among couples in every society. In Umunumo Clan in Ehime Mbano of Imo State, many marriages are bedeviled with socio-religious challenges and problems such as divorce, separation, quarreling, sorrows, regrets, adultery, and parental neglect among others. Furthermore, differences in approach and preparation also constitute serious challenges in marriage institution in Umunumo Clan. In this paper efforts are made to investigate the socio-religious challenges confronting marriage institution in Umunumo Clan in Ehime Mbano of Imo State. The study employs descriptive and survey methodology. Findings from the study revealed that the institution of marriage supports and maintains social structure of the society. The study further establishes that lack of love and effective communication are some of the major challenges facing marriages in Umunumo Clan in Ehime Mbano. The study concluded that marital success results from a lot of endurance, effective communication, tolerance, patience, love and effective management of individual differences. It is recommended that pre-marital counseling should be organized for would-be couples in Mbano Community.

Keyword: Marriage, Family, Socio-religious, Institution, Challenges, Umunumo

Introduction
Marriage institution is one of the most hallowed and respected institutions of ancient time. It provides social stability, strengthens family solidarity and produces children who ultimately are recipes for population development. The marriage being one of the institutions that support and maintain the social structure of the society is therefore very important to the sociologists because of the influence it has on the survival of the society. Marriage is seen as a relationship between a man and woman. It is also closely related to kinship and family. Most societies see

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marriage as a socially recognized rite for the beginning of a family. Also, the institution of marriage brings into existence affinal relations together with the consanguineal as well as putative considerations (Udoh, 2004 p.34).

The position of marriage therefore has been a crucial issue in every society because of its role as the medium of continuity. Marriage can be compared to drama in which everyone becomes an actor or actress and not just spectator. This confirms Mbiti (1973 p.17) assertion that marriage is an exciting and beautiful dimension whereby the mystery of life is propagated and handed down. It follows from the dimension of sex since without sex there is no propagation of human life. Both churches and African traditional societies emphasize the importance of marriage and regard it as a creative dimension in which one becomes co-creator with God. In different cultures, the institution of marriage is so important such that it is handled with all amount of carefulness. In many societies for instance, after puberty, the major project facing any man or woman is marriage. This cultural phenomenon called marriage has permeated the lives of many people thereby becoming a symbol of love and unity in every society. Marriage custom reflects how individuals share in the group life and the joy of living together as one people. The notion of family as part of the society presupposes marriage to which a lot of importance is attached, one of which is the continuation of the family lineage, and the other is the fact that it is the only natural and lawful means of perpetrating human life on earth. Specifically, as an institution that enhances child-bearing, it embodies certain rights and duties which are based on some laws and customs. These rights and duties are in turn very important aspects of every marriage.

But a survey of marriage institution in Umunumo Clan in Ehime Mbano of Imo State has shown a marked departure from mutual love, commitment, trust, obedience as well as contentment which aid every successful marriage. Marriages are now built on the basis of “as long as we can tolerate each other” while the popular marriage parlance of “for better, for worse” and “till death do us part” are things of the past. Marital challenges therefore, have increased drastically year by year in Umunumo Mbano. Many men and women have had to regret their decisions of getting married while some have had to blame one factor or the other for their marital regrets. Again, children who are supposed to enjoy the loving tender care of their parents are now living a miserable life all through because of the families in which they found themselves. Thus, marriage has become a mockery due to absence of spiritual growth. All these challenges are not theoretical but practical issues that every careful observer can see. Also, they are not particular to one family or home but are seen in almost every matrimonial home.

Concept of Marriage

Like many sociological concepts, marriage has been defined from different perspectives. According to Gough (1971 p.26), marriage refers to a relationship established between a woman and one or more other persons, which provides that a child born into the woman under circumstances not prohibited by rules of the relationship is accorded full status rights common to normal members of his society or social stratum. It is a legally recognized social contract between two people, traditionally based on a sexual relationship and implying a permanence of the union. Marriage is a cultural universal, and like family, it takes many forms. For instance, who gets married, what the marriage means to the couple and to the society, why people get married economic, political, or for love), as well as how it occurs (wedding or other ceremony) vary widely within societies and between societies. Other variations on the definition of

marriage might include whether spouses are of opposite sexes or the same sex and how one of the traditional expectations of marriage (procreation) is understood today.

As opined by Bammeke (2018 p.98), marriage refers to a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are recognized legitimate offspring to both parents. The above definition points to one important function of marriage in most societies: the fact that it confers acknowledged social status on the offspring. This is evidently a matter of great importance in regard to such matters as inheritance and succession. Marriage creates new social relationships and reciprocal rights between the spouses, between each and the kin of the other. It establishes what will be the rights and status of the children when they are born. Marriage is a stable relationship in which a man and a woman are socially permitted without loss of standing in the community to have children. According to Beattie, apart from other marriage laws, regular and normal co-habitation, some degrees of economic co-operations are necessary. From religious point of view, marriage is a divine institution established by God Himself. It is meant to be a permanent union between husband and wife that they might be useful and helpful to each other. Children born by the woman become legitimate offspring to both parents. Moses as Israel's leader presents marriage as the deepest spiritual unity of husband and wife and monogamy as the form of marriage ordained by God. Thus, marriage is divinely ordained union between a man and a woman and which is backed up by the awareness, laws, and customs within a specific context. Okere (1995 p.75) put it more succinctly that this activity of the creatures is really caused by God only. Creatures themselves are only apparently active. Man is not active in his knowing nor doing things or work upon in his sense and intellectual. Therefore, God gave Eve to Adam as a wife. And the Lord said "it is not good for the man to be alone, I will make him a help mate. And so, a man leaves his father and mother and joins wife and they two become one body." Marriage can equally be seen as the state in which man and woman give themselves to each other in their life together and in the procreation and training of offspring together in a happy family. Therefore, in marriage, procreation, training of children and co-operation are very necessary.

Every society regulates marriage and all these regulations are termed into institution of marriage. In the institution of marriage, God himself is the author of marriage and family. Man cannot change marriage. If man does that, it will bring harm to him and the society in general. Vatican II of Roman Catholic Church supports these ideas thus: Marriage has a very important bearing on the continuation of the human race, on the personal development and eternal destiny of the individual member of the family and on the dignity, stability, peace and prosperity of the family itself and the human society as a whole. This trend suggests that marriage on the other hand is a lifetime partnership between a man and woman. The primary purpose of such partnership is to beget children and rear them, to live in mutual understanding by helping one another at all times. This means taking charge of one another's property and exercising right over it. It involves also the exercise of ownership over the body of the others exclusively. Therefore, marriage brings enhanced economic and social status to the spouses concerned. It is more economical for two people of opposite sex to live together in one household as marital partners than for each of them to live singly apart as a bachelor or spinsters. In marriage, there is shared division of labour, accommodation, pieces of furniture or utensils and domestic servants.

The sociological understanding of what constitutes a family can be explained by the sociological paradigms of symbolic interactions as well as functionalism. These two theories indicate that families are groups in which participants view themselves as family members and act accordingly. In other words, families are groups in which people come together to form a

strong primary group connection and maintain emotional ties to one another. Such families may include groups of close friends or teammates. In addition, the functionalist perspective views families as groups that perform vital roles for society-both internally (for the family itself) and externally (for society as a whole). Families provide for one another's physical, emotional, and social well-being. Parents care for and socialize children. Later in life, adult children often care for elderly parents. While interactionism helps us understand the subjective experience of belonging to a "family," functionalism illuminates the many purposes of families and their roles in the maintenance of a balanced society (Parsons and Bales, 1956 p.33). Irrespective of what form a family takes, it forms a basic social unit upon which societies are based and can reflect other societal changes. According to Fontain (2012 p.59), marriage enhances a woman's status and feeling of independence. She is now the mistress of her household and is free to run it to her taste. If she is lucky to marry a rich husband, she may find herself controlling a large household establishment, owning a number of cars, each car driven by a professional driver but in course to time, she is proficient in driving and drives her own car herself. She is most likely to accompany her husband to attend important functions. This implies that marriage elevates a woman's status. When married, she is addressed as Mrs, which means a married woman is free from the control of her parents, and now has freedom to control her behaviour. If her husband loves her, he may not like to take important decisions without asking her to make some inputs into them.

Concept of Family

The family can be conceptualized in numerous ways; underlying each is a fundamental idea about the structure of the family and its function in society. Some scholars define a family purely in terms of sharing a household, a collection of individuals living together. Others define the family based on kinship. According to Chibundu (2007 p.18), a family is a group of people who share common ancestors or a basic social unit comprised of parents and their children. Some scholars argued that biological kinship is the defining element of family, while opponents of this idea assert that families can be a blended collection of individuals related by marriage, adoption, partnership, or friendship. On the other hand, another school of thought, especially in the social sciences, indicates that the family is the oldest and the most basic of all social institutions ever recognized by man throughout history. This is probably because there was the necessity for kind of cooperation and complementarily among human beings to ensure production and continuity species throughout generation (Ukommi, 2013 p.45).

Basically, the family of human institution is a cluster of social values and norms, as well as activities built around the care of children and old people. Marshal (1992 p.93) defined family as a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction, and includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship and one or more children owned or adopted by the sexually-cohabiting adults. Human Social theorists have questioned the nature of family since the ancient times. The modern era has witnessed numerous transformations of prevailing concepts of family in Western society. Sociologists are interested in the relationship between the institution of marriage and the institution of family not only because families are the most basic social unit upon which society is built but also because marriage and family are linked to other social institutions such as the economy, government, and religion. For Ukommi (2013 p.45), the family refers to the basic unit of social organization in which members are constituted by marriage, blood or other social arrangement (adoption) and which relationships are structured by a dense network of social norms, rules, traditions, customs and conventions. The above definition

indicates that family is a group of people related by marriage, blood as well as adoption and as a result enjoys affinal and consanguineal relationships. It is also worthy to note that marriage is the foundation of the family and the pivot of its legitimacy. The question of legitimacy therefore draws a line between marriages as recognized and approved by society and that which is not. Whether a family is legitimate or not, the world concept of family has both the biological as well as social context.

Family is, indeed, a subjective concept, but it is a fairly objective fact that family (whatever one's concept of it may be) is very important to people in every society. For instance, in a 2010 survey by Pew Research Center in Washington, DC, 76 percent of adults surveyed stated that family is "the most important" element of their life-just one percent said it was "not important" (Pew Research Center 2010 p.87). It is also very important to society. It was in line with this that the President Ronald Reagan notably stated, "The family has always been the cornerstone of American society. Our families nurture, preserve, and pass on to each succeeding generation the values we share and cherish, values that are the foundation of our freedoms" (Zeitzen, 2008 p.91). Furthermore, Nwangwu (2009 p.104) maintains that the family performs several functions in the society which include procreation and sustenance of the human race, sexual gratification, emotional and economic support to members, socialization of the young ones, development of the individual personality and self- concept, social security and welfare, conferment of status and name among others. It is therefore pertinent to note that the family functions in a number of ways as an active agent rather than a passive medium.

Purpose of Marriage

People marry for several reasons. In recent years, scholars have attempted to outline the purpose of marriage. As rightly opined by Dopamu (2007 p.45), many people marry for procreation. Procreation is one of the major functions of marriage that brings about the birth of children and preservation of the family name. Marriage is highly revered among the Igbo people. The longing to have sons (for family perpetuation and property inheritance) and family value made marriage an important institution in Igboland. Marriage helps cultural groups to have a measure of control over population growth by providing proscribed rules about when it is appropriate to have children. Regulating sexual behavior helps to reduce sexual competition and its attendant negative effects. This does not mean that there are no socially approved sexual unions outside of marriage. Marriage fulfills the economic needs of marriage partners. According to Chibundu (2007 p.28) Marriage provides the framework within which people's needs are met. Such needs include shelter, food, clothing, safety, among others. Through the institution of marriage, people know for whom they are economically and socially responsible. Therefore, marriage is a unit of economic production. All the households constitute the greatest single economic unit in the society. Marriage is a unit of inheritance because it provides the basis for an orderly sharing of prosperity which makes one belong in the family.

Furthermore, marriage is a beautiful picture of the relationship between Christ and His church. A body of believers that make up the church are collectively called "Bride of Christ". As Bridegroom, Jesus gave His life for His bride, "to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word" Eph. 25-26, and His selfless act provide an example for all husbands. At the second coming of Christ, the church will be united with the Bridegroom, the official "wedding ceremony" will take place, and with it the eternal union of Christ and His bride will be actualized Rev. 19: 7-9. The parenthood gives the individual a social status by which he can keep whether lower or higher and provide support and sustenance to the individual through his long period of need and dependency. Marriage provides intimate circle of affection

and companionship. The individual is relieved from psychological insecurity and other personality problems associated with alienation. An individual without proper parental love in infancy may grow up to be "useless" in adult life. It provides the individual with socialization. It equips the individual with knowledge, mores, ethos, and customs of the society. Marriage is a socially accepted unit within which sexual activities and parental drives are legitimized; child-birth is legitimized only in marriage.

Madu (2004 p.16) stated that marriage is the sole agent for the perpetuation of the group, carried out through procreation or bringing forth of young and new members, thereby increasing the population of the society. It cares for the young ones and protects them from dangers. In regard with the above statement of Dopamu and Madu, the researcher agrees with them and adds that people with happy marriage come from happy homes. This is because when a husband and wife pool their resources together; there is division of labour in a household among couples, the children and housemaids, if any. It is more economical for a husband and wife to live together than to live separately. Married couples have incentives to work together in a team to acquire more wealth and resources. They are happy that the members of their households are enjoying their acquired wealth. In other words, they are happy that their daily labours are not in vain. They have got children and are happy that when they leave this mundane world at the end of their lives, they will leave behind their children to enjoy the fruits of their labours and not people from outside their households, who did not contribute in any way to acquiring their wealth.

Furthermore, the Bible has a lot to say about this topic. Since the first marriage was between the first man and the first woman, it is assumed that marriage is God's will for most people. It was instituted in the dispensation of innocence and is therefore a holy institution. The first reason that the Bible gives for the existence of marriage is simple: Adam was lonely and needed a helper. This is the primary purpose of marriage-fellowship, companionship, mutual help and comfort. One purpose of marriage is to create a stable home in which children can grow and thrive. The best marriage is between two believers who can produce godly offspring. In Malachi, God tells the Israelites that He will not accept their offerings because they have been unfaithful to the wives of their youth. This shows how much God cares about marriage being kept intact. Not only that, but He tells them He was seeking "godly offspring." This is a puzzling passage, and has been interpreted to mean a) that godly offspring are the purpose of marriage; b) that a good marriage between two godly people will mean that any children they have will tend to be godly as well; c) God wanted the Israelites to be faithful to their wives instead of leaving them for foreign women who would produce for them ungodly offspring because of the idolatry of those nations; and d) that God Himself was seeking His own offspring (the people) to exhibit godliness by their faithfulness. In any of these interpretations, we see a common theme: the children of faithful people will tend to be faithful, too.

Ethnographic Sketch of Umunumo Clan of Mbano

This study was conducted in the five clans of Umunumo Clan of Mbano in Imo State. The Clans are: Umueze, Agbja, Umukabia, Akanumuezala and NneatoUgwumezi.The study area for this research is Umunumo in Ehime Mbano. Ehime Mbano is one of the Local Government Areas in Imo State. Its headquarters is at IsialaMbano. According to Amadi (2000 p.18), Umunumo is an immigrant town who as a result of death penalty after commiting a taboo deserted their parent town Abba in Nkwerre Local Government Area of Imo State. They were said to have killed the royal cow Ehi) in Igbo and roasted it for eating, although they are not the ones who committed the taboo but their sister Umuanunu. Since their sister was asked to go, Umunumo said that

there was no need for them to live in Abba therefore they should join their sister out of Abba in Nkwerre Local Government Area. Duru (2021 p.8) says that the town Umunumo occupies an area of about seventeen square kilometers and has a population of about fifty-eight thousand people. It lies about twenty-six kilometers north-west of Umuahia on the Okigwe, Umuahia trunk"A"road. It is made up of ten villages namely: Ehohia, Ofeke, Alaike, Ogwara, Chima, Umuanunu, DurunaOkiri, Ezealaobom, Ofowerrenaama, and Umuaro. It is bounded in the North by Agbaja, in the east by Nzerem, in the west by Ehime and in the south by Nsu all in Mbano Local Government Area of Imo State. Before the advent of colonial masters, Umunumo had been under the leadership of the "Ofo" holders. It was during the reign of Chief Durukwu that the colonial masters came to Umunumo about 1907. Contact with the Europeans marks the turning point of a new political era. This contact with the Europeans is the contact with education, new social administration and modernity in its gradual unfolding. With the bloody encounter the Europeans had with the people of Umunumo, they won them over and Umunumo surrendered in toto to them. The first imprints of the people's subjection were the construction of roads, the carrying of the Europeans from place to place.

Cyril (2003:86) states that the Europeans began their administration by dissolving the "Öfo" political and administrative system, whereby the "Ofo" holders rule and order are the only main fount of authority. There is a kind of overlapping among religious, political and social systems which were all under the control of the "Ofo" holders. The white people robbed the "Ofo"holders of their power and instituted the "warrant" system. Chief Egeru was the first man whom the whites handed the "warrant" authority followed by Chief Duruaghozie. However, this system was dissolved by the government with the introduction of the chieftaincy system which began with the man, Alozie. After sometime the power was handed over to a ten-man leader from the ten villages in Umunumo. The change of the individuals handling this type of power was made on three consecutive times. The government later abandoned this system in favor of the "Eze" system whereby two men Isaac and Edomobi Ogueri were selected to begin it. Later on, this system was dissolved in favor of "one-man Eze Michael Echeruo one of the ten ministers was elected to enjoy this sole authority which took effect from 30th October 1973. Unfortunately, for him, on the 5th of March 1996, death dealt a big blow on him and as a result of this, he was unable to enjoy the throne to the fullest. The throne was vacant until 2005, when Eze S. C. Okeke took over the throne. Through self-help effort, Umunumo has transcended to the top of the ladder in social, political and economic development. Umunumo Mbano means great men of four letters. Ibe (2016 p.45) recorded that Mbano has an area of about 169 square kms and a population of 130, 931 as at 2006 census.

Socio-Religious Challenges Confronting Marriage in Mbano Community

Marriage breakdown is one of those serious ills that have eaten into the fabrics of our common life. A lot of factors contribute to this warped situation in marriage and family life. Many men and women have had to regret their marriages and some have had to blame one factor or the other for their marital regret. According to Ikeh (2020 p.78), one of the challenges facing marriage is parent in-law factor. Many marriages today are built on the reluctant consent of the parents of one or both partners involved. Several parents oppose the marriage of their children and this owes to a lot of reasons. Sometimes parents do not think their daughter or son is ripe for marriage. Some oppose their daughter's marriage because of where the intending groom comes from, his job, level of education, or just the stories they have heard about the young man, his family or his village. Some parents do not want their daughters to be married outside their tribe or religion. According to Gottman (1998 p.121) the inability of a married woman to have

children usually constitutes a big problem to the family. This is because the chief purpose of marriage for the Africans is to provide opportunity for the unborn members of the family to spring forth. The person who fails, for various reasons, to have children, is one of the most miserable members of the society, since he will be despised and regarded as a disappointment. For instance, the people of Mbano value procreation so much in marriage and when infertility sets in, it is conceived of as a negation of life. Thus, Kunhiyop (2008 p.12) argues that:

> Infertility is not necessarily the same as sterility. Someone who is sterile is incapable of procreating; infertility is an impairment of normal reproductive capacity that can sometimes be corrected…it is also important to refute the traditional belief that infertility
> was always the woman's fault. This belief led to much abuse of barren women.

Two things are deduced from the above observations. Firstly, it is noted that infertility is sometimes an impairment that may be corrected. Secondly, it has been traditionally believed that infertility is always the fault of the woman but this has over time proven to be a false belief. This false belief has led to the unnecessary abuse of some women. Such women are often regarded as monstrosities and generally look upon as*chiojoo*. Most times the woman is accused of having lived a reckless life and may have had series of abortions in her younger days. This may or may not be true. Therefore, she is constantly nagged by her mother in-law. No wonder most women prefer not to have mothers-in-laws; they go to the extent of wishing their prospective mother-in-laws dead. How could they wish the mother of their husband dead? Such wishes could boomerang in the future as their own daughters-in-law could wish them dead too. Mother-in-law would like the son to have a second wife in order to have children.

Again, in Umunumo Clan in Ehime Mbano, people always go extra miles to proffer solution to the shame of infertility. Even Christians sometimes consult native doctors in a bid to solve this marital problem because any childless marriage is a source of disappointment and becomes a big problem between couples. However, many of the physical causes of infertility in both men and women such as impotence, problems with ejaculation, hormonal problems, diseases and vaginal infections, and others can be corrected by medical procedures or by medication. It is therefore instructive to note that although the problem of infertility is distressing, couples and their families as well as community should bear in mind that marriage is not defined by procreation but by the loving, permanent, committed and trusting union of a man and woman who have come together to live a life pleasing to God. Children are wonderful gifts from God, but when they do not come, couples should not respond to infertility in ways that displease God. Instead, they should seek God's grace to help them deal with it. More so, both the husband and wife should undergo a thorough medical examination to determine whether a physical problem is preventing conception and child-bearing. Such problems can sometimes be treated by modern reproductive technologies. Furthermore, it is a common custom in most societies that marriage should follow in order of seniority. The eldest son or daughter is expected to get married first before the second, the third, and so on as the case may be. It has been observed that many men find themselves in situation of either to postpone the idea of marriage until their eldest have tied the knot or to go ahead with marriage without the blessings of their families. And in the case where the situation applies to a girl, most of her suitors would prefer to leave her and marry outside such tribe if they cannot wait for her elder sisters to get married first. Because of this, couples sometimes quarrel over the issue of their children not marrying on time and will be blaming each other. This is a problem in the society because it brings about disintegration in marriage since sometimes the younger ones who have

the opportunity of getting married will be impatient in waiting for the elder siblings to get married before them.

Apart from this, divorce is one of the major challenges facing marriages in Mbano community. Divorce has generally been frowned at particularly in the African society. It is a term used in reference to a separation that occurs in marriage. Shields (2004 p.63) considers divorce as the dissolution of the bond of marriage. It brings a marriage to an end and makes persons who were previously husbands and wife no longer so. Similarly, Kunhiyop (2008 p.12) sees marriage from the African perspective to be a union not only between the man and woman, but also a union between communities, clans, etc. This signifies that when divorce takes place, it is not only the unity between the man and the woman that is separated, but also the unity of communities stands nullified. Dada (2016 p.88) has equally identified "childlessness" as one factor that causes a quick divorce in marriage". This is never an exception in the community of Mbano. In Mbano community, one of the most important reasons for getting married is traditionally for procreation and thus, any marriage (no matter how satisfactory a wife may be in all other respects) is likely to face either divorce or the marrying of additional wives for the sake of producing children. When divorce takes place, it generally brings social and religious disunity among families in the community who previously were united because of the bond of marriage. This disunity can sometimes end up in hatred, quarrel, fights, bitterness, anger, and in its extreme case, it can lead to the death of community members.

In Igbo tradition, it was forbidden for a woman to get pregnant before marriage. Obi (1989 p.25) opines that traditionally, marriage comes before pregnancy but in recent times, there seems to be a turn in the tide as people appear to have made a shift to pregnancy before their marriage. Pregnancy out of wedlock is still considered unacceptable in Umunumo clan marriage was considered in the traditional Umunumo clan. Although there seems to be a shift in this traditional value thus bringing about the constant desire and persistence of getting pregnant before marriage among intending couples. This has been a problem in Umunumo in that the religious and moral values are lost to the waves and influence of global changes. Today in Umunumo, people no longer see nor are they ashamed of getting pregnant before marriage; because for them, this is the best way of testing fertility so as to take necessary precaution to avoid making the mistake of marrying a couple who is not fertile. Being that pregnancy before marriage is a breakdown of traditional values, the researcher is of the opinion that intending couples should not always be in a haste of testing whether they are fertile or not since they will surely be living together forever. Moreover, in African context, it is traditionally required for a woman to be submissive to the husband in matters pertaining to the home because the man is always considered as the head of the home. In Umunumo Clan in Ehime Mbano, obedience of the wife to the husband is paramount. While making deliberate decisions in the house, for instance, the wife's decision(s) is expected to be in line with the husband's desires and his advice should not be taken lightly. In the society of today, this seems to be unusual because of the fast and increase in women's education, new gender roles, and labour force participation. This has led to the problem of struggle for equality among spouses. Some women in Umunumo Clan in Ehime Mbano today seem not to be submissive to their husbands and this is clear in that some of them are constantly flouting their husbands' orders, and sometimes going as far as taking crucial decisions in the home without consulting their husbands. To this end, the researcher believes that women irrespective of their educational exposure, should not consider submission as a way of being subordinate to their husband but should always see submission to their husband as a way of showing love and respect towards them.

Another great challenge confronting marriage institution in most societies is expensive marriage procedure. For instance, Umunumo clan has a peculiar expensive marriage procedure where a list of items must be presented before the marriage can take place. Aside from the physical money to be paid, these gift items can sometimes cost up to five hundred thousand naira and it gets more expensive if the girl is a bachelor degree holder or more. This has led to a collapse in a lot of courtships after the man realizes that he cannot meet up with the requirements of marriage due to the expensive marriage procedure from the lady's extended family. Because of this, if the marriage ever takes place, the husband will not be happy with his wife because of the high bride price that his in-laws required from him. Thus, it is instructive to state that expensive marriage procedure should be avoided or curtailed in order not to scare prospective suitors away from marrying from. Infidelity has been a way of describing marital unfaithfulness, disloyalty, and betrayal. This crime is either perpetuated by the wife or the husband and is often generally depicted with the term "extramarital affairs". Marshal (2002 p.79) has observed that often, dissatisfaction with sex is one of the causes of spouses entering into extramarital affairs. What they are not getting at home they look for it elsewhere. That is to say, the inability of one spouse to satisfy the other can lead to infidelity. Thus, any sexual relation outside of the marriage union is sinful and is identified as "adultery". The term "adultery" refers to any sexual intercourse between a married person and a partner other than the lawful husband or wife. This is further seen as a breach of marriage contract. In Mbano, this act is a threat to married couples. Husband and wife's cheating is perceived to be a generational issue. Ekeopara (2011 p.32) mentions that cheating seems like a deed passed on from one generation unto the other. Some of these men and women grew up in polygamous homes. Again, majority of Igbo men and women are proud of money *ego.* Some men in Igbo community believe themselves to be lords, commanders, or heads at all times even in their homes. They always fall dominant in their relations. So, they can do whatever they like because it is a man's world. Thus, they feel alright having mistresses outside their marriages. To some of them, marriage is a means to have someone they trust give and raise up their kids properly and they are free to do anything else and should not be questioned.

Gottman and Ogelu (2007 p.59) maintain that in Igbo Community, the position of a wife in her husband's family remains shaky and unpredictable until she begets a male child. Once a male child arrives she becomes really secure and now gains her respect in the society, among her folks and most importantly in her husband's family. Male preference is therefore one of the major challenges facing marriage in Umunumo clan. This is because according to the people the male child is very important to the family; he would inherit the family's properties. It is believed in Umunumo as well as most African communities that only the male children can succeed their father and also inherit his properties after his death. Also, it is the believe that only male children take care of the family since female children are seen as belonging to another man. In cases where there is male child preference over female, it becomes a problem for married couples who are blessed with only female children. Although the male children have been traditionally believed to be the most appropriate in maintaining family linage and properties, it should be noted that with the emancipation of women in the present generation, many women have proven that such traditional belief is no longer applicable. In the researcher's point of view, couples should understand and appreciate the fact that children (whether female or male) are gifts from God to bless their marriage. They should also train them up (whether male or female) in godly ways so that at the end, the child will become a point of reference and blessing to the family.

Again, the real family tension has over time been more frequently between the wife and her mother-in-law in traditional Umunumo clan. Invariably, the difference between the two women's opinions, personalities, and life views become evident the more they spend time together. The problems of both is usually how much money to spend, issues of values, jobs, where to live, how to live, attachments on her son's or daughter's property, money and children. The core of the tension is a tough battle between the two women for the husband's love. The wife is watching to see whether her husband backs her or his mother. The only way out of this tension is for the husband to side with his wife against his mother. This may sound hash, but one of the basic tasks of a marriage remains the establishment of a sense of wetness between husband and wife. Apart from this, incompetence is another major challenge confronting marriages inUmunumo Clan in Ehime Mbano. Incompetence of the wife can manifest in her inability to cook, inability to be neat, inability to be organized, take care of the family, and do other domestic chores. In Umunumo, it is expected of the female folks to be able to prepare their local delicacies such as *Ukwa*- Breadfruit, *Ofe Onugbo* bitter-leaf soup, *Ofe Ukazi* - Okazi soup, etc. This is always meant to equip them for marriage because failure or inability to prepare these local delicacies for the husband can become a problem in the marriage. When a woman is incompetent or unskillful in cooking, for instance, those traditional foods to the satisfaction of the husband's appetite, it forces her husband to go outside in search of satisfaction to his appetite and this in turn creates a gap in the marriage union. Finally, marriage has always been a platform of showing love and commitment. Love and commitment create a sense of oneness in marriage. Where love and commitment are lacking, there is sure to be chaos. In Umunumo, one of the problems facing married couples is lack of love and commitment wherein couple although living together as husband and wife, are totally living separate lives from one another. Kunhiyop (2008 p.72) stated that marriage is a fundamental human institution ordained by God, who intended it to be a permanent relationship between a man and woman. In such ordination, God also intends that in this permanent relationship, love and commitment should be nurtured but however, this has not been the case with some couples in Umunumo clan.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that successful marriages are not those in which there has never been challenges but those in which conflicts have served useful purposes. Although marital conflicts are inevitable, they can be managed or prevented from resulting to partial or total collapse of homes. This will depend largely on the couple's mutual understanding and handling. However, marital success results from a lot of endurance, tolerance, patience and effective management of individual differences. Again, in order to foster marital stability and satisfaction, couple should learn to be fair, objective and realistic when dealing with their partner's behaviors. Couples need to create a nurturing relationship in their marriage. This can be done by communicating their feelings of love, admiration, likes and dislikes to each other.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are put forward for the prevention and control of marital conflicts:

i. Government should provide adequate preventive, remedial, and rehabilitative counseling interventions through marriage and sex guidance in Umunumo Clan in Ehime Mbano.
ii. Religious bodies should organize pre-marital counseling for would-be couples in order to help them understand themselves and each other before marriage. They should be exposed to some of the problems that could lead to conflicts and how to manage them.

iii. Government at various levels (Federal, state, and local councils), religious bodies e.g. Churches, Mosques, and nongovernmental organization (NGOs should organize regular seminars and workshops for couples on issues that have to do with conflict resolution and marital harmony.

iv. There should be training and re-training of conflict resolution mediators/facilitators by government at various levels. Training should be based on the comprehensive conflict resolution strategies.

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EFFECTS OF FINANCIAL DISPARITIES BETWEEN THE APC AND PDP ON THE ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE OF THE TWO PARTIES IN MALUMFASHI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

Muhammad Muhammad
Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina, Nigeria
Email: muhammadmuhammadmono@gmail.com

Abstract
The study examined the effects of financial disparities between the APC and PDP on the electoral performance of the two parties in Malumfashi local government area, Katsina state of Nigeria. The study employed a cross sectional descriptive survey research design to examine the effects of financial disparities between the APC and PDP on the electoral performance of the two parties. The targeted population was 351 APC officials and 222 PDP officials. Disproportionate stratified random sampling was used to select 39 party officials, ensuring representation across both parties. Data were gathered through a validated closed-ended questionnaire. Quantitative data were analysed through simple frequency tables and percentages, means and standard deviation, and SPSS version 23 was used in running the analysis. The findings of the study reveal that the APC's superior financial resources significantly influenced its electoral performance in Malumfashi during the 2023 general elections. This finding aligns with broader scholarly discussions on the role of money in politics. Financial disparities significantly shaped the electoral performance of APC and PDP in Malumfashi, with APC consistently rated higher in funding-related activities such as media outreach, mobilization, and campaign organization. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that there is need for Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to enhance oversight by implementing stricter limits on campaign spending and requiring full disclosure of political donations and expenditures. Regular audits and penalties for violations would discourage excessive or opaque funding practices, ensuring a more level playing field for all political parties.

Keywords: Effects, Financial Disparities, APC and PDP Parties, Electoral Performance.

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Introduction

One of the key institutions underpinning liberal democracies globally is the political party. Political parties serve as essential intermediaries between the electorate and the government, helping to structure political choices, foster participation, and consolidate democratic governance. Their role is not merely confined to elections; they are central to organizing government functions, mobilizing public opinion, and aggregating societal interests. Without political parties, the modern democratic polity would struggle to function effectively, as they are foundational in promoting political pluralism and ensuring representation across diverse social groups (Etzioni, 2021). In Nigeria, political parties have historically functioned as the principal vehicles for contesting elections and shaping political outcomes. The All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), as the two dominant parties, have significantly influenced national and local political dynamics. These parties are not only instrumental in nominating candidates and forming governments but also in mobilizing resources for electoral campaigns. According to Gallego and Wantchekon (2017), political party finance defined as the use of funds for electioneering, campaigns, membership drives, and secretariat maintenance is a critical determinant of a party's electoral capacity and internal democratic structure.

However, a major challenge within Nigeria's democratic landscape is the growing financial inequality between political parties, which has implications for electoral integrity and democratic fairness. Wealthier parties like the APC and PDP often benefit from more substantial funding sources, including party member contributions, elite donations, and sometimes questionable sources of income. Helmky and Levitsky (2021) note that such disparities not only skew electoral competition but also enhance the potential for vote buying, voter manipulation, and other undemocratic practices. These practices are more pronounced during elections, where financial inducements are used to sway voter decisions, especially in economically marginalized communities. Vote buying in particular, has emerged as a significant issue in Nigerian elections. As Mendilow (2018) observes, financial abuse in politics undermines democratic principles by prioritizing wealth over public service and civic merit. Electoral frameworks in many democracies, including Nigeria, have attempted to regulate political party finance to prevent the misuse of funds and protect the sovereignty of the electorate. Nevertheless, enforcement remains weak, and the persistent financial dominance of certain political parties continues to erode public trust in the democratic process (Donovan & Karp, 2017). This leads to a scenario where financial capability, rather than policy or performance, becomes the major determinant of electoral success.

The situation is particularly concerning in local contexts such as Malumfashi Local Government Area in Katsina State, where economic vulnerability makes voters more susceptible to financial inducements. The disparity in campaign spending between the APC and PDP in such areas can significantly influence electoral performance, defined here as the ability of a political party to mobilize votes, secure election victories, and maintain political relevance. The more financially endowed a party is, the greater its ability to dominate campaign narratives, host larger rallies, and distribute financial or material incentives, thereby directly impacting voter choices and election results (Corduwener, 2019). Given the implications of financial inequalities for electoral performance, internal democracy, and public trust, there is a strong justification for conducting research into how such disparities affect elections at the grassroots level. This study specifically focuses on Malumfashi Local Government Area to examine how differences in the financial strength of the APC and PDP influence their political fortunes. Understanding these dynamics will not only contribute to academic discourse but also inform policymakers and

electoral bodies about the need for effective regulation of political party financing to ensure fairer and more credible elections.

Statement of the Problem

Ensuring good governance across the world is closely linked to the credibility and integrity of a country's electoral system, particularly within democratic frameworks. A credible electoral process forms the backbone of democratization, promoting transparency, accountability, and political stability. However, in many democracies like Nigeria, this ideal is undermined when electoral performance is largely influenced by the financial strength of political parties rather than the popularity of their policies or the competence of their candidates. When campaign success becomes a function of financial power manifested through vote buying, extensive media control, and the mobilization of large-scale rallies it distorts the democratic process and weakens public confidence in electoral outcomes. Although multiple studies like (Mendilow, 2018; Helmky and Levitsky, 2021 and among others) have explored the general effects of financial inequality on elections in Nigeria, there remains a significant gap in localized assessments of this phenomenon. This study therefore seeks to examine how financial disparities between two major political parties the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) affect their electoral performance within Malumfashi Local Government Area of Katsina State.

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

i. To what extent did financial inequalities (disparities) between the APC and PDP influence their electoral performance in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections?
ii. What role did political party financing play in the electoral performance of the APC and PDP in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections?

Literature Review

Political parties are a cornerstone of liberal democracies, playing a vital role in simplifying electoral choices, fostering political participation, and facilitating governance. Scholars such as Corduwener (2019), Aiyede (2022), and Mendilow (2018) emphasize that the effective functioning of political parties in modern democracies is heavily reliant on adequate finances. Political party finance referred to by Etzioni (2021) as "money for electioneering" encompasses not only campaign expenditures but also the costs of maintaining party offices, conducting research, raising political awareness, and other routine activities. Kevin Casas-Zamora (2008) and Mendilow (2018) expands this definition, noting that political finance covers both electoral and non-electoral spending by parties and candidates, distinguishing it from the narrower concept of campaign finance. In many parts of the world, including Western Europe, political finance leans more toward public funding of political parties rather than individual candidates (Gallego & Wantchekon, 2017). However, in both developed and developing democracies, adequate and transparent financing is essential for political parties to effectively participate in democratic processes. As Sulaiman (2017) pointed out, political party finance is increasingly viewed as a critical issue that must be handled with transparency to uphold the integrity and fairness of democratic processes.

In emerging and dysfunctional democracies like Nigeria, political party finance plays a central yet controversial role in shaping electoral performance and democratic governance. Traditionally, mass parties relied on widespread grassroots support and voluntary activism, but

declining membership has made political parties increasingly dependent on financial resources to run campaigns and maintain operations. In this context, the use and misuse of money has become a major influence on election outcomes. While political party financing is essential for political engagement, it frequently lacks transparency, especially in Nigeria where funds are often sourced through illicit means and used for vote buying, bribery, and coercion. Scholars like Sule and Kwarah (2018) argue that such financial practices distort democratic processes, entrench corruption, and erode public trust in elections. INEC's weak enforcement of political finance laws has allowed political actors to manipulate outcomes with impunity. The heavy influence of money in Nigerian politics, especially in the Fourth Republic, has led to systemic political corruption, poor representation, and weakened democratic institutions. As observed by Sule (2023) and Helmky and Levitsky (2021) this phenomenon not only undermines electoral credibility but also amplifies the development challenges by empowering "moneybags" and side-lining genuine democratic choice. Consequently, unregulated political party finance in Nigeria remains a major impediment to credible elections and sustainable democratic governance.

In Nigeria's Fourth Republic, electoral politics has become deeply entangled with political party finance, resulting in the dominance of money politics and the erosion of democratic ideals. Political parties and politicians often prioritize winning power at all costs, deploying vast financial resources, human capital, and political strategies, which has led to unprecedented spending during elections (Kura, 2014). Rather than promoting ideology or national development, parties are often controlled by wealthy individuals and godfathers who sponsor candidates for personal gain, turning political sponsorship into a business investment (Sule & Kwarah, 2018). This financial advantage enables elites to siphon public funds, manipulate electoral outcomes, and recycle power, regardless of their performance in office. The chronic poverty, illiteracy, and weak regulatory institutions further fuel this trend, making vote buying, bribery of electoral officials, and electoral violence common features of Nigeria's elections (Nkechi & Innocent, 2014; Omilusi, 2016). A 2023 post-election survey revealed that 85% of respondents identified political parties as the most corrupt institutions in Nigeria, citing excessive and illegal spending, vote buying, and collusion with security forces. Consequently, political party finance has become a tool for perpetuating elite control, shielding corrupt actors, and undermining free and fair elections, thus posing a serious threat to good governance and democratic consolidation in the country.

In Nigeria's Fourth Republic, the financial disparities between the two major political parties the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC) has played a decisive role in shaping their electoral performance and dominance. Historically, the PDP, which held power from 1999 to 2015, had significant access to state resources, allowing it to outspend other parties in campaigns and political mobilization (Kura, 2014). However, following the APC's emergence and electoral victory in 2015, the financial tide shifted. The APC, now controlling the federal government, gained similar advantages in terms of access to public funds and elite patronage, widening the financial gap with smaller parties and even outpacing the PDP in certain regions (Sule, 2023). This disparity is not just about campaign funding but also reflects deeper structural inequalities, including unequal access to media, logistical resources, and influence over public institutions. As observed by Sule, Azizuddin, Sani and Bakri (2017). both parties heavily rely on wealthy donors, political godfathers, and questionable funding sources, but the ruling party whether PDP in the past or APC presently tends to dominate the financial and political landscape, thereby undermining fair competition and reinforcing money-driven electoral outcomes.

Research Method and Design

This study employed a cross sectional descriptive survey research design to examine the effects of financial disparities between the APC and PDP on electoral performance in Malumfashi Local Government Area. The targeted population was 351 APC officials and 222 PDP officials. Disproportionate stratified random sampling was used to select 39 party officials, ensuring representation across both parties. Data were gathered through a validated closed-ended questionnaire, with the reliability of the questionnaire confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha (0.798). Quantitative data were analysed through simple frequency tables and percentages, means and standard deviation and SPSS version 23 was used in running the analysis.

Data Analysis

RQ1: To what extent did financial inequalities (disparity) between the APC and PDP affect their electoral performance in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections?

(Scale: SD=1, D=2, UD=3, A=4, SA=5)

Statement	SD	D	UD	A	SA	Mean	SD
APC raised and spent more money than PDP in buying media airtime	3 (3.8%)	13 (16.7%)	5 (6.4%)	30 (38.5%)	27 (34.6%)	3.90	1.15
APC performed better than PDP in electoral mobilization across 12 wards	1 (1.3%)	4 (5.1%)	3 (3.8%)	30 (38.5%)	40 (51.3%)	4.32	0.86
APC organized more campaign rallies than PDP	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	-	-
APC used resources to reach all Polling Units; PDP did not	3 (3.8%)	6 (7.7%)	5 (6.4%)	41 (52.6%)	23 (29.5%)	3.90	1.00
Party received grants from friends, supporters, and well-wishers	1 (1.3%)	7 (9.0%)	2 (2.6%)	33 (42.3%)	35 (44.9%)	4.14	0.94
Party received financial donations from supporters and well-wishers	0 (0%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0%)	36 (46.2%)	41 (52.6%)	4.51	0.55
Party organized a well-planned fundraising campaign	1 (1.3%)	3 (3.8%)	1 (1.3%)	30 (38.5%)	43 (55.1%)	4.41	0.82
Party initiated a well-organized levy-based fundraising campaign	3 (3.8%)	4 (5.1%)	4 (5.1%)	43 (55.1%)	24 (30.8%)	4.03	1.00

The survey results clearly indicate that financial disparities significantly influenced the electoral performance of the APC and PDP in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections. Respondents strongly agreed that APC raised and spent more money on media airtime (Mean = 4.00, SD = 1.10), which enhanced its communication and mobilization efforts. Additionally, APC was perceived to have performed better in electoral mobilization across all 12 wards (Mean = 4.38, SD = 0.79), and to have organized more campaign rallies (Mean = 4.08, SD = 1.07). Respondents also agreed that APC effectively used both human and material resources to reach all polling units (Mean = 4.01, SD = 1.04). Furthermore, most respondents agreed their parties received grants and financial donations (Means = 4.29 and 4.49, SDs = 1.01 and 0.60 respectively), with well-planned fundraising campaigns organized to support electoral activities (Mean = 4.35, SD = 0.88). The ability to generate levies was also acknowledged (Mean = 4.15, SD = 0.97). The consistent means above 3.0 across all items and relatively low standard deviations reflect a strong consensus that APC's superior financial resources translated into better electoral performance, underscoring the decisive role of financial inequality in shaping political outcomes.

The financial advantage of the APC over the PDP in Malumfashi had clear implications for democratic fairness and electoral competitiveness. The ability of APC to mobilize more funds allowed it to dominate media presence, organize frequent rallies, and maintain widespread voter outreach factors critical to electoral success. This imbalance raises concerns about equitable political competition, as political parties with lesser financial resources may be marginalized regardless of their policies or popularity. Persistent financial inequality undermines voter choice and risks entrenching patronage systems where money, rather than merit or ideology, determines political power. Without effective regulation and enforcement of political party finance laws, such disparities could weaken Nigeria's democratic institutions, erode public trust, and perpetuate political exclusion and corruption.

RQ2: What role did political party financing play in the electoral performance of the APC and PDP in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections?

Statement	SD	D	UD	A	SA	Mean	SD
APC raised and spent more money than PDP in buying media airtime to communicate and mobilize electorates.	3 (3.8%)	13 (16.7%)	5 (6.4%)	30 (38.5%)	27 (34.6%)	3.82	1.16
APC had more vehicles to transport supporters to wards for campaigns and election mobilization than PDP.	9 (11.5%)	12 (15.4%)	8 (10.3%)	26 (33.3%)	23 (29.5%)	3.46	1.33
APC possessed more financial resources than PDP.	0 (0%)	4 (5.1%)	3 (3.8%)	53 (67.9%)	18 (23.1%)	4.10	0.76
APC had more logistics support to take care of its needs than PDP.	12 (15.4%)	10 (12.8%)	5 (6.4%)	27 (34.6%)	24 (30.8%)	3.33	1.44

The data show that political party finance played a critical role in influencing the electoral performance of APC relative to PDP in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections. The respondents largely agreed that APC raised and spent significantly more on media airtime (Mean = 3.82, SD = 1.16), which was essential for communication and voter mobilization. Similarly, APC's advantage in logistical support, such as having more vehicles to transport supporters (Mean = 3.46, SD = 1.33) and possessing greater overall financial resources (Mean = 4.10, SD = 0.76), underscores the financial disparity between the parties. Though agreement was somewhat lower for logistics support (Mean = 3.33, SD = 1.44), it still points to APC's relative strength in campaign infrastructure. All mean scores above the threshold of 3.0 reflect a consensus that financial and material advantages allowed APC to mobilize more effectively, contributing to its electoral success in the area.

The findings imply that financial strength and effective resource mobilization significantly influenced the electoral outcomes in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections. APC's ability to outspend PDP in key areas such as media airtime, transportation, and logistics gave it a substantial advantage in reaching and mobilizing voters across all wards. This financial disparity likely skewed the level playing field, undermining the principles of fair competition and possibly limiting the electorate's freedom of choice by amplifying the voice and visibility of the wealthier political party. Furthermore, it highlights systemic issues in Nigeria's political landscape, where monetary power often dictates electoral success rather than ideology or governance records, potentially perpetuating a cycle of patronage, political inequality, and weak democratic consolidation.

The findings reveal that APC's greater financial resources and logistical support gave it a significant advantage over PDP in voter mobilization during the 2023 elections in Malumfashi. This financial disparity undermined fair competition and influenced the electoral outcome in

favour of the better-funded political party. The findings of the study, which reveal that the APC's superior financial resources significantly influenced its electoral performance in Malumfashi during the 2023 general elections, align with broader scholarly discussions on the role of money in politics and the findings reveal that financial disparity significantly shaped the electoral performance of APC and PDP in Malumfashi, with APC consistently rated higher in funding-related activities such as media outreach, mobilization, and campaign organization. High mean scores (all above 4.0) and low standard deviations indicate strong consensus that APC's financial strength gave it a decisive advantage in the 2023 general elections.

Discussion of Findings

i. **To what extent did financial inequalities (disparity) between the APC and PDP influence their electoral performance in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections?** The findings reveal that APC's greater financial resources and logistical support gave it a significant advantage over PDP in voter mobilization during the 2023 Malumfashi elections. This financial disparity undermined fair competition and influenced the electoral outcome in favor of the better-funded party. The findings of the study, which reveal that the APC's superior financial resources significantly influenced its electoral performance in Malumfashi during the 2023 general elections, align with broader scholarly discussions on the role of money in politics. Mendilow (2018) argues that financial inequality among political parties distorts democratic processes by creating uneven playing fields, particularly in developing democracies. This is evident in Malumfashi, where APC's funding advantage translated into superior media access, campaign logistics, and voter mobilization, mirroring Mendilow's assertion that money amplifies political messaging and outreach. Similarly, Gallego and Wantchekon (2017) emphasize that in low-income electoral contexts, financial strength not only boosts campaign visibility but also influences voter behavior through patronage and logistical efficiency both reflected in APC's performance relative to the PDP

ii. **What role did political party financing play in the electoral performance of the APC and PDP in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections?** The findings reveal that financial disparity significantly shaped the electoral performance of APC and PDP in Malumfashi, with APC consistently rated higher in funding-related activities such as media outreach, mobilization, and campaign organization. High mean scores (all above 4.0) and low standard deviations indicate strong consensus that APC's financial strength gave it a decisive advantage in the 2023 general elections. The study is in line with the position of Helmke and Levitsky (2021), who found that informal institution and the ways in which unwritten rules and power work shape electoral outcomes. The study's evidence of APC's financial dominance creating an unfair advantage demonstrates how informal practices such as unequal access to campaign finance can undermine formal democratic norms. Etzioni (2021) further critiques the moral implications of such disparities, warning that when money becomes the primary determinant of political success, democratic legitimacy is eroded. The perception among respondents in Malumfashi that financial power outweighed political ideas or meritocracy echoes Etzioni's concerns about the ethical decline in electoral competition. Together, these scholars provide a critical lens through which the Malumfashi case exemplifies the broader consequences of unchecked financial effect in electoral politics.

Conclusion

The 2023 general elections in Malumfashi revealed that the APC's electoral success was largely driven by its superior financial resources, which enabled more effective voter mobilization, media outreach, and campaign logistics, giving it a clear advantage in party finance over the PDP. This financial dominance significantly influenced the outcome and highlighted a deeper issue: the disparity in campaign funding not only shaped electoral performance but also compromised the fairness of the competition. These findings reinforce broader concerns that unequal access to political finance can distort democratic processes and undermine genuine electoral choice.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and conclusions drawn, the study is here by recommending the followings:

i. There is a need for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to enhance oversight by implementing stricter limits on campaign spending and requiring full disclosure of political donations and expenditures. Regular audits and penalties for violations would discourage excessive or opaque funding practices, ensuring a more level playing field for all parties.

ii. To reduce the effect of private wealth in elections, government-backed support such as public campaign grants and subsidized media time should be stopped among all registered political parties. This would help less financially dominant parties engage effectively with voters and promote more issue-based, competitive, and inclusive elections that contribute to accountable governance.

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PRINCIPAL ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES AND TEACHERS' COMMITMENT TOWARDS UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE) IN SOUTHWEST, NIGERIA

Taofeek Oyesola Lamidi [1]
Senimetu Ileuma [2]
Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Lead City University Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria [1 & 2]
Corresponding Email: ileumasenimetu@gmail.com [2]

Abstract
This study investigated principal administrative practices and teachers' commitment towards Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Southwest, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses were raised. Descriptive research design was employed. Population included 54,870 teachers and 2,398 principals. 3013 teachers and 911 principals were sampled using multi-stage procedure. Teachers' Commitment Questionnaire (TCQ) (α = .876)", and Principal Administrative Practices Questionnaire (PAPQ) (α = .805)" were used to collect data. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results showed high level of teachers' commitment to the school ($\bar{x}$ = 2.542) and students ($\bar{x}$ = 2.535) but low commitment to teaching/profession ($\bar{x}$ = 2.459). Principals highly adopt supervision ($\bar{x}$ = 2.564) and involvement of teachers in decision-making ($\bar{x}$ = 2.550) for teachers' administration. In conclusion, principals' administrative practices significantly influence teachers' commitment in universal basic education. It was recommended among others that attention should be given to improving teachers' commitment by organising mentorship meetings to improve principals' administrative practices.

Keywords: Principals Administrative Practices, Teachers' Commitment, UBE

Introduction
Teachers' commitment is paramount in universal basic education as it plays a major role in making them to perform their assigned duties diligently. Since teachers' performance is vital for the achievement of universal basic educational goals and objectives, it therefore becomes imperative for school organization and those at the helm of educational affairs to do all that is necessary to ensure that the teachers are committed in a bid to boosting their performance.

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Universal Basic Education (UBE) is defined as "early childhood care and education comprising of the nine years of formal schooling, adult literacy and non-formal programme and the education of special groups such as nomads, migrants, girl child and women, street children and disabled persons. The vision and mission is to build numeracy, communication, and life skills that are able to make individuals employable, useful and possessing relevant ethical, moral and civic values (Asuk, 2023; Lawal et al., 2024). However, commitment of teachers is needed for the vision, mission and objectives of the UBE programme to be attained. Teachers' commitment is their ability to engage, accept, loyal and identify with the universal basic education (UBE), its vision, mission, goals, as well as have a desire to remain teaching in it (Akanbiemu, 2021). Universal basic education teachers' commitment is categorized into: commitment to the school of the UBE, commitment to the learners of the UBE and commitment to teaching and their profession in UBE (Shu, 2022). Teachers' commitment to the school is their belief, and acceptance of the schools' goals and values and desire to remain in the school of the UBE programme (Moraal et al., 2024). Teachers' commitment to the learners of the UBE is their willingness to exert great efforts on behalf of both low and high performing learners, work with them in both curricular and extra-curricular activities with the aim to helping them connect to the school and academic activities (Ogunjide & Odeleye, 2022). UBE teachers' commitment to teaching and profession is their love for teaching, and high interest in engaging in refresher courses that would help them stay abreast of happenings in the profession (Moraal et al., 2024; Ogunjide & Odeleye, 2022).

Despite the crucial role of teachers' commitment to the UBE, it has been observed by the researcher that some teachers are not commitment to teaching in the UBE, school, and learners of the UBE nor their teaching profession in the UBE in Southwest, Nigeria. This is reflected in form of rampant absenteeism, late coming, failure to assess students' work in time, part-time teaching in more than two schools to top up their salary, need, and satisfaction, negligence in examination malpractice by students and low performances among others. Studies have also shown poor teachers' commitment and shortage in the UBE in Southwest, Nigeria (Ekundayo & Akinsuroju, 2022; Ojeniyi & Adegbesan, 2021). Consequently, the desire and the ultimate goal of UBE seem to be in jeopardy. The persistent low commitment among teachers towards the UBE in Southwest, Nigeria often appears in the minds of psychologists, educators and researchers as they try to unravel factors that could be the cause. Some researchers reported facilities, teachers' preparedness and work attitude (Ekundayo & Akinsuroju, 2022; Ojeniyi & Adegbesan, 2021). However,a salient factor that may predict commitment of teachers towards the UBE and considered in this study is principals' administrative practices.

Principals' administrative practices are activities performed by principals which improve quality teaching and learning in UBE. It involves principals' use of expert knowledge to coordinate, influence and check teacher's day-to-day activities towards enhancing their instructional performance in UBE (Igoni, 2020). These practices could affect teachers' commitment to the UBE. A study showed a positive relationship between principals' administrative practices and teachers' job performance in Enugu State (Oguejiofor, 2023). However, another research revealed no significant relationship between principals' administrative strategies and teachers' commitment in Delta State public and private secondary schools (Onafowope et al., 2023). Studies are however not sufficient sprincipals' administrative practices and teachers' commitment. Within the context of this study, principal's administrative practices include supervision, involvement of teachers in decision-making and staff development practices (Mbithe, 2022). Supervision involves all efforts by principals directed towards providing leadership to the teachers in the improvement of instructional activities,

method of teaching and evaluation of instructions in UBE. It is exercising some degree of control, assigning tasks, directing, guiding, stimulating, improving, refreshing, encouraging, overseeing, monitoring and evaluating UBE teachers to determine whether or not their activities are performed as scheduled or whether progress is made towards the achievement of UBE objectives and deviations are corrected and effected accordingly (Ateb et al., 2021).

Principals' supervision of teachers could be high or low and may influence teachers' commitment to the UBE. For instance, a study revealed positive significant relationship between principals' supervisory roles and teachers' job performance in UBE junior secondary schools in Ekiti State (Gladys et al., 2021). Another study showed a high and positive significant influence of principals' supervisory strategies on teachers' effectiveness in UBE junior secondary schools in Anambra State (Ozioma & Ezeala, 2022). Principals' involvement of teachers in decision-making refers to teachers' participation in critical decisions that directly affect their work as it gives them the opportunity to express their ideas, knowledge and skill in solving school problems (Shikokoti et al., 2023). When teachers are allowed to participate in decision making, it could help to improve their level of job satisfaction, commitment, morale, support and inefficiency in the work place (Bahtilla & Hui, 2021). Studies are however scarce on the influence of principals' involvement of teachers in decision-making on teachers' commitment. Staff development practice is a planned and continuous lifelong process of appraising teachers' performances and identifying their key skills and competence that need development or training to improve their skills and knowledge for better performance in the UBE. Staff development practices of principals respond to UBE teachers' requirements and improve supervisory competence. Better staff development practices shape teachers with respect to human relations and development which could help to improve their commitment (Chukwueze, 2021; Mbithe, 2022).

Studies have shown that teachers' development programmes significantly impact their job performance in UBE junior secondary schools in Abia and Anambra States. Teachers who participated in staff development programmes were more effective in their job performance than those who did not, in terms of knowledge of subject matter, classroom management, teaching methods and evaluation of student's work (Chikwado & Nwuba, 2021; Chukwueze, 2021). Another study revealed a significant relationship between principals' staff development and disciplinary practices and teachers' job productivity in Anambra State UBE junior secondary schools (Unachukwu & Orji, 2021). Studies are seriously lacking on the influence of principals' staff development practices on teachers' commitment. In a bid to closing the identified empirical gaps in knowledge and literature, this study examined the impact of principals' administrative practices on teachers' commitment to the UBE.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that teachers' commitment in Universal Basic Education in Southwest, Nigeria seems to be grossly inadequate. This is reflected in the form of late coming, failure to assess students' work in time, part-time teaching in more than two schools to top up their salary, low performances, low emotional attachment towards the school, students and profession and high turnover intention among others. Low commitment of teachers towards teaching is a cause of serious concern in other words, it's a big deal because it could portray danger for education in the region. To avoid or overcome this, steps must be taken to ensure that the teachers are committed to their job. In every school of learning in any country, proper principal administrative practices are extremely important in order to make teachers satisfied and committed to their duties. However, some principals seem to ignore supervision of teachers and

organizing training for their development. Teachers are also often neglected in the decision-making process and even when they are involved and consulted, the decisions are not properly evaluated and implemented. This study therefore sought to investigate the extent to which principal administrative practices predict commitment of teachers in the UBE in Southwest, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this research was to examine principal administrative practices and teachers' commitment towards Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Southwest, Nigeria. The specific purposes were to;

i. ascertain the level of teachers' commitment (to the school, students and teaching/profession) in universal basic education in Southwest, Nigeria;
ii. identify the level at which principals adopt administrative practices (supervision, involvement of teachers in decision-making and staff development practices) for administration of teachers in universal basic education in Southwest, Nigeria;

Research Questions

This study answered the following questions:

i. What is the level of teachers' commitment (to the school, students and teaching/profession) in universal basic education in Southwest, Nigeria?
ii. What is the level at which principals adopt administrative practices (supervision, involvement of teachers in decision-making and staff development practices) for administration of teachers in universal basic education in Southwest, Nigeria?

Significance of the Study

This study would provide great awareness on the research topic. This study would contribute immensely to principals, teachers and government. The study should serve as means of informing the school principals on the importance of administrative practices in the universal basic education. This should enable them to make sure there is proper administrative practices such as supervision, involvement of teachers in decision-making and staff development practices in the school in order to enhance teachers' commitment. To the teachers, the findings of the study would create awareness on how administrative practices such as supervision, involvement of teachers in decision-making and staff development practices is affecting their commitment in school. The findings would also make them move into action into ensuring that their principals adopt right administrative practices. The findings of the study would make the government swing into action in ensuring that principals are well trained to carry out their administrative practices. The study would also provide useful data to researchers and educators who desire to carry out future studies in the subject area.

Scope of the Study

The geographical scope of the study covered all UBE junior secondary schools (universal basic education) in Southwest, Nigeria. The population scope consisted of all the UBE junior secondary school UBE teachers and principals in Southwest, Nigeria. The methodology scope covered descriptive survey research design, questionnaires as instrument for data collection and descriptive and inferential data analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The variable scope of this study consisted of one independent variable which is 'principal administrative practices' and one dependent variable which is teachers' commitment towards universal basic education (UBE). Principal administrative practices was studied using supervision practice, practice of

involvement of teachers in decision-making and staff development practice. Teachers' commitment towards UBE was studied using measures such as - commitment to the school of the UBE, commitment to the learners of the UBE and commitment to teaching/profession in the UBE.

Literature Review

Theoretical Underpinning

Path-Goal theory of administration was propounded by House in 1971 (House, 1971). The theory emphasises that teachers' actions are carried out based on the administrative practices of their principals in the universal basic education. The path-goal theory of administration is a "process in which principals select specific practices of administrating based on his or her beliefs, observations and what he or she feels is best suited to the teachers' needs and the working environment so that they may guide the teachers through their path in the attainment of their daily work activities (goals and tasks)". This implies that the principal adopts an administrative practice, strategy or behaviour that he or she considers the most appropriate in his/her administration to suit the workers/staff needs and the working environment so as to attract the best action of the staff in the universal basic education. The principal adopts this practice based on his or her beliefs on how teachers should be handled in order to enhance their job commitment and performance (House, 1971; Northouse, 2018). In the context of this research, these practices include – supervision, involvement of teachers in decision-making and staff development practices.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model shows the relationship between principals' administrative practices and teachers' commitment to the UBE as depicted in figure 2.1:

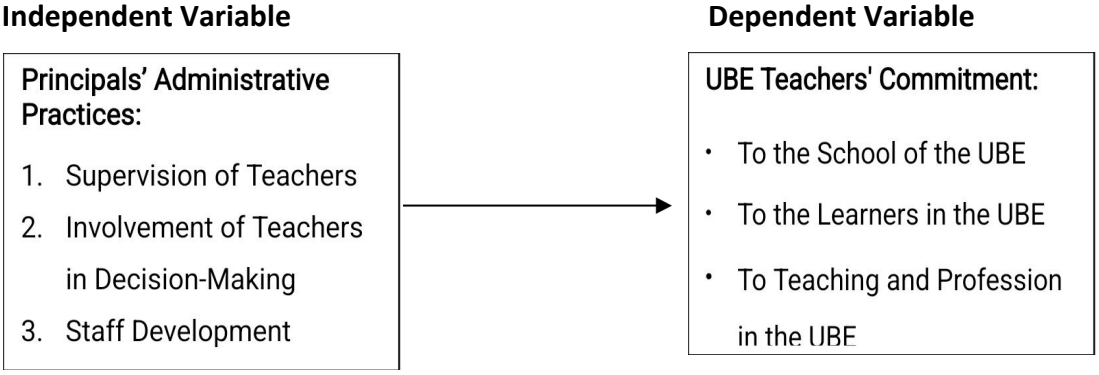

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Model (**Source:** Researcher, 2024)

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population consisted of 2,398 principals and 54,870 teachers in all 2,398 UBE junior secondary schools in Southwest, Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling procedure comprising of stratified random sampling technique, Yamane (Slovin) sample size determination technique and proportionate to size sampling technique were used to select 911 UBE junior secondary schools, 911 UBE junior secondary school principals and 3,013 UBE junior secondary school teachers. Data were collected primarily through the use of two self-constructed questionnaires titled: "Teachers' Commitment Questionnaire (TCQ)" and "Principal Administrative Practices Questionnaire (PAPQ)".

Teachers' Commitment Questionnaire (TCQ) consisted of a section used to elicit responses on the level of UBE teachers' commitment. The rating scale was Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 2; and Disagree (D) = 1. Principal Administrative Practices Questionnaire (PAPQ) also consisted of a section used to elicit responses on the level at which principals adopt administrative practices (supervision, involvement of teachers in decision-making and staff development practices) for administrating teachers in UBE. The rating scale was Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 2; and Disagree (D) = 1.

The questionnaires were subjected to face and content validity type while Cronbach's alpha reliability method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instruments. Coefficient reliability values of .876 and .805 were obtained for Teachers' Commitment Questionnaire (TCQ) and Principal Administrative Practices Questionnaire (PAPQ) respectively. These values were reliable. Teachers' Commitment Questionnaire (TCQ) was administered on 911 principals but 901 were retrieved and valid. Also, Principal Administrative Practices Questionnaire (PAPQ) was administered on 3013 teachers but 2998 were returned and valid. Bio-data of the respondents were presented using frequency counts and percentages. Research questions were answered using frequency, percentages, mean, and standard deviation while multiple regression was used to analyse the hypotheses one and two at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 4.1: Instrument Response Rate

Title of Questionnaire	Number Distributed	Number Retrieved	Number Valid	Response Rate
"Teachers' Commitment Questionnaire (TCQ)"	911	908	901	98.9%
"Principal Administrative Practices and Employee Benefit Questionnaire (PAPEBQ)"	3,013	3004	2998	99.5%

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Two researcher-constructed questionnaires titled - "Teachers' Commitment Questionnaire (TCQ)" and "Principal Administrative Practices and Employee Benefit Questionnaire (PAPEBQ)" were produced into to several copies and distributed to nine hundred and eleven (911) public junior secondary school principals and three thousand and thirteen (3,013) teachers respectively both personally and the help of three research assistants for a period of four weeks in the three chosen Southwest States (Lagos, Oyo and Ekiti States). Out of the nine hundred and eleven (911) "Teachers' Commitment Questionnaire (TCQ)" distributed to the principals, nine hundred and eight were retrieved, and nine hundred and one (901) were valid and used for the study. This produced a high response rate of 98.9%. Also, Out of the three thousand and thirteen (3,013) "Principal Administrative Practices and Employee Benefit Questionnaire (PAPEBQ)" distributed to teachers, three thousand and four (3,004) were retrieved while two thousand, nine hundred and ninety eight (2,998) were found to be valid. This also produced a high response rate of 99.5% as shown in table 4.1.

Answer to Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the level of teachers' commitment (to the school, students and teaching/profession) in universal basic education in Southwest, Nigeria?

Table 4.1: Level of Teachers' Commitment to the School in UBE in Southwest, Nigeria (n = 911)

S/N	**Items** (My Teachers)	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.
1	believe and accept the goals and values of the school	210 (23.1%)	306 (33.6%)	208 (22.8%)	187 (20.5%)	2.592	.740
2	are willing to exert effort to act upon the goals of the school	198 (21.7%)	308 (33.8%)	225 (24.7%)	180 (19.8%)	2.575	.761
3	have a strong desire to maintain membership in the school	96 (10.5%)	247 (27.1%)	368 (40.4%)	200 (22.0%)	2.262	.843
4	are willing to contribute when necessary to curricula and extra-curricular activities, all in the bid to move the school forward	200 (22.0%)	270 (29.6%)	271 (29.7%)	170 (18.7%)	2.549	.792
5	are ready to protect and defend the school	220 (24.1%)	317 (34.8%)	202 (22.2%)	172 (18.9%)	2.642	.701
6	find it easy to cope with school's policies, laws and regulations	287 (31.5%)	216 (23.7%)	195 (21.4%)	213 (23.4%)	2.633	.716

Indicator Mean = 2.500; Weighted Mean = 2.542; S.D = .759; Final Decision = Agreed (High Level)

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Key: Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4; Agreed (A) = 3; Disagreed (D) = 2; Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1; $\bar{x}$ = Mean; Std. Dev. = Standard Deviation

***Threshold:** mean value of 1.000-1.750 = Strongly Disagreed (Very Low Level); 1.751-2.500 = Disagreed (Low Level); 2.501-3.250 = Agreed (High Level); 3.251 - 4.000 = Strongly Agreed (Very High Level)

In table 4.3, the weighted mean ($\bar{x}$ = 2.542) and standard deviation (.759) indicated a high level of teachers' commitment to the school in universal basic education in Southwest, Nigeria as generally "agreed" by their principals.

Table 4.3: Frequency Distribution of Demographic Characteristics of Teachers (n = 2998)

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	1247	41.6
	Female	1751	58.4
Age	21-30 years	218	7.3
	31-40 years	695	23.2
	41-50 years	1362	45.4
	51 years and above	723	24.1
Highest Educational Qualification	NCE	308	10.3
	Bachelor's degree	1426	47.6
	PGD	557	18.6
	Master's degree	529	17.6
	MPhil/PhD degree	178	5.9
Years of Teaching Experience	1-7 years	524	17.5
	8-14 years	855	28.5
	15-21 years	637	21.2
	22-28 years	563	18.8
	28 years and above	419	14.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 4.2: Level of Teachers' Commitment to the Students in UBE in Southwest, Nigeria (n = 911)

S/N	**Items** (My Teachers)	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.
1	are willing to work with students in both curricular and extra-curricular activities which help students to connect to the institution and its academic activities	256 (28.1%)	234 (25.7%)	239 (26.2%)	182 (20.0%)	2.619	.752
2	are willing to help the weak students in the class in order to be able to match up with their high flier counterparts in the class academically	197 (21.6%)	304 (33.4%)	239 (26.2%)	171 (18.8%)	2.578	.760
3	are willing to exert efforts on behalf of both low and high achieving students	158 (17.3%)	296 (32.5%)	210 (23.1%)	247 (27.1%)	2.401	.880
4	enjoy working with students	212 (23.3%)	267 (29.3%)	230 (25.2%)	202 (22.2%)	2.537	.823
5	have a strong desire to help each student develop his or her full potential	219 (23.0%)	251 (27.6%)	225 (24.7%)	216 (23.7%)	2.519	.851
6	find it easy to spend extra time in preparing for the class	228 (25.0%)	249 (27.3%)	233 (25.6%)	201 (22.1%)	2.553	.792
Indicator Mean = 2.500; Weighted Mean = 2.535; S.D = .810; Final Decision = Agreed (High Level)							

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Key: Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4; Agreed (A) = 3; Disagreed (D) = 2; Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1; $\bar{x}$ = Mean; Std. Dev. = Standard Deviation

***Threshold:** mean value of 1.000-1.750 = Strongly Disagreed (Very Low Level); 1.751-2.500 = Disagreed (Low Level); 2.501-3.250 = Agreed (High Level); 3.251 - 4.000 = Strongly Agreed (Very High Level)

In table 4.4, the weighted mean ($\bar{x}$ = 2.535) and standard deviation (.810) indicated a high level of teachers' commitment to the students in universal basic education in Southwest, Nigeria as generally "agreed" by their principals.

Table 4.3: Level of Teachers' Commitment to the Teaching Profession in UBE in Southwest, Nigeria (n = 911)

S/N	**Items** (My Teachers)	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.
1	loves teaching in the UBE	196 (21.5%)	224 (24.6%)	257 (28.2%)	234 (25.7%)	2.419	.828
2	are proud of the teaching profession	213 (23.4%)	255 (28.0%)	240 (26.3%)	203 (22.3%)	2.525	.792
3	readily defend the teaching occupation when necessary	224 (24.6%)	288 (31.6%)	203 (22.3%)	196 (21.5%)	2.593	.718
4	are happy to stay long in the teaching profession	206 (22.6%)	241 (26.5%)	238 (26.1%)	226 (24.8%)	2.469	.812

5	have affective attachment to the teaching profession	182 (20.0%)	231 (25.4%)	260 (28.5%)	238 (26.1%)	2.392	.870
6	engage in refreshers' courses that will help them stay abreast of happenings in the profession	185 (20.3%)	212 (23.3%)	254 (27.9%)	260 (28.5%)	2.353	.887

Indicator Mean = 2.500; Weighted Mean = 2.459; S.D = .818; Final Decision = Disagreed (Low Level)

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

KEY: Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4; Agreed (A) = 3; Disagreed (D) = 2; Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1; $\bar{x}$ = Mean; Std. Dev. = Standard Deviation

***Threshold:** mean value of 1.000-1.750 = Strongly Disagreed (Very Low Level); 1.751-2.500 = Disagreed (Low Level); 2.501-3.250 = Agreed (High Level); 3.251 - 4.000 = Strongly Agreed (Very High Level)

In table 4.5, the weighted mean ($\bar{x}$ = 2.459) and standard deviation (.818) indicated a low level of teachers' commitment to the teaching profession in universal basic education in Southwest, Nigeria as generally "disagreed" by their principals. The answer to research question one is that teachers have high level of commitment to the school and students but low level of commitment to the teaching/profession in universal basic education in Southwest, Nigeria.

Research Question Two: What is the level at which principals adopt administrative practices (supervision, involvement of teachers in decision-making and staff development practices) for administration of teachers in universal basic education in Southwest, Nigeria?

Table 4.4: Level at Which Principals Adopt Supervision Practices for Administration of Teachers in UBE in Southwest, Nigeria (n = 2,998)

S/N	**Items** (My School Principal)	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**	**$\bar{x}$**	**Std. Dev.**
1	engages in routine classroom visitation to improve on teachers delivery of instruction	890 (29.7%)	795 (26.5%)	567 (18.9%)	746 (24.9%)	2.610	.726
2	uses constructive criticism to correct teacher's lapses on delivery of instruction	807 (26.9%)	771 (25.7%)	600 (20.0%)	820 (27.4%)	2.522	.791
3	checks teachers lesson notes to make sure they are up to date	601 (20.0%)	934 (31.2%)	893 (29.8%)	570 (19.0%)	2.522	.790
4	takes regular attendance of teachers' activities in the classroom to ensure teachers' commitment	688 (22.9%)	899 (30.0%)	784 (26.2%)	627 (20.9%)	2.550	.761
5	demonstrates new methods of delivering of instructions to the teachers	670 (22.3%)	1001 (33.4%)	821 (27.4%)	508 (16.9%)	2.613	.713
6	evaluates the outcome of instructional activities	958 (32.0%)	624 (20.8%)	580 (19.3%)	836 (27.9%)	2.568	.732

Indicator Mean = 2.500; Weighted Mean = 2.564; S.D = .752; Final Decision = Agreed (High Level)

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Key: Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4; Agreed (A) = 3; Disagreed (D) = 2; Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1; $\bar{x}$ = Mean; Std. Dev. = Standard Deviation;
***Threshold:** mean value of 1.000-1.750 = Strongly Disagreed (Very Low Level); 1.751-2.500 = Disagreed (Low Level); 2.501-3.250 = Agreed (High Level); 3.251 - 4.000 = Strongly Agreed (Very High Level)

In table 4.6, the weighted mean ($\bar{x}$ = 2.564) and standard deviation (.752) indicated a high level of adoption of supervision practices for administration of teachers in UBE in Southwest, Nigeria.

Table 4.5: Level at Which Principals Adopt the Practice of Involving Teachers in Decision-making for Administration of Teachers in UBE in Southwest, Nigeria (n = 2,998)

S/N	**Items** (My School Principal)	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.
1	adequately includes teachers in the school's governance activities such as budgeting process, supervision duties, drawing up the school calendar of events, duty allocation processes among others	587 (19.6%)	795 (26.5%)	867 (28.9%)	749 (25.0%)	2.407	.801
2	allows teachers to participate in school curriculum planning	599 (20.0%)	757 (25.3%)	921 (30.7%)	721 (24.0%)	2.412	.791
3	allows the teachers the chance to participate in designing work methods and objectives	788 (26.3%)	896 (29.9%)	702 (23.4%)	612 (20.4%)	2.620	.705
4	allows the teachers the opportunity to use their initiative and make contribution	851 (28.4%)	997 (33.3%)	649 (21.6%)	501 (16.7%)	2.733	.638
5	makes adequate consultations with the teachers before making key decisions in the school	792 (26.4%)	901 (30.1%)	698 (23.3%)	607 (20.2%)	2.626	.693
6	ensures teachers are adequately represented in the schools' decision making organs such as PTA etcetera	735 (24.5%)	800 (26.7%)	695 (23.2%)	768 (25.6%)	2.501	.771
Indicator Mean = 2.500; Weighted Mean = 2.550; S.D = .733; Final Decision = Agreed (High Level)							

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

KEY: Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4; Agreed (A) = 3; Disagreed (D) = 2; Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1; $\bar{x}$ = Mean; Std. Dev. = Standard Deviation
***Threshold:** mean value of 1.000-1.750 = Strongly Disagreed (Very Low Level); 1.751-2.500 = Disagreed (Low Level); 2.501-3.250 = Agreed (High Level); 3.251 - 4.000 = Strongly Agreed (Very High Level)

In table 4.8, the weighted mean ($\bar{x}$ = 2.550) and standard deviation (.733) indicated a high level of adoption of the practice of involving teachers in decision-making for administration of teachers in UBE in Southwest, Nigeria.

Table 4.6: Level at Which Principals Adopt Staff Development Practices for Administration of Teachers in UBE in Southwest, Nigeria (n = 2,998)

S/N	Items (My School Principal)	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.
1	identifies the specific areas requiring retraining for teachers	532 (17.7%)	714 (23.8%)	982 (32.8%)	770 (25.7%)	2.336	.861
2	organizes in-service courses for teachers to attend	441 (14.7%)	626 (20.9%)	998 (33.3%)	933 (31.1%)	2.192	.910
3	mentors teachers to improve in their profession	544 (18.1%)	630 (21.0%)	976 (32.6%)	848 (28.3%)	2.290	.891
4	ensures seminars and workshops involving experts/keynote speakers are regularly organized for teachers within the school premises	578 (19.3%)	601 (20.0%)	853 (28.5%)	966 (32.2%)	2.336	.859
5	allows teachers to attend conferences in their area of profession	600 (20.0%)	721 (24.0%)	869 (29.0%)	808 (27.0%)	2.371	.843
6	creates meetings and study groups for teachers to help them improve in their knowledge and skills	580 (19.3%)	702 (23.4%)	850 (28.4%)	866 (28.9%)	2.332	.860

Indicator Mean = 2.500; Weighted Mean = 2.310 ; S.D = .871; Final Decision = Disagreed (Low Level)

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Key: Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4; Agreed (A) = 3; Disagreed (D) = 2; Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1; $\bar{x}$ = Mean; Std. Dev. = Standard Deviation

***Threshold:** mean value of 1.000-1.750 = Strongly Disagreed (Very Low Level); 1.751-2.500 = Disagreed (Low Level); 2.501-3.250 = Agreed (High Level); 3.251 - 4.000 = Strongly Agreed (Very High Level)

In table 4.9, the weighted mean ($\bar{x}$ = 2.310) and standard deviation (.871) indicated a low level of adoption of the staff development practices for administration of teachers in UBE in Southwest, Nigeria. The answer to research question two is that the level at which principals adopt administrative practices is high for supervision and involvement of teachers in decision-making but low for staff development practices for administration of teachers in universal basic education in Southwest, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

This research work study investigated principal administrative practices and teachers' commitment towards Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Southwest, Nigeria. Research question revealed that teachers have high level of commitment to the school and students but low level of commitment to the teaching/profession. This finding partially aligns with that of Ogunjide and Odeleye (2022) which showed low level of teachers' commitment to the school, students and profession in public secondary schools in South-west, Nigeria. This study's finding almost completely disagree with that of Akinwale and Okotoni (2019) which revealed that the

commitment of teachers to the teaching profession, teaching and learning and to the school was generally low in Osun State secondary schools. This finding is almost completely supported by that of Lawal (2020) which showed that teachers' commitment to school in areas of class attendance and preparation of lesson were always good (very high) while their commitment to students in areas of extracurricular activities, students discipline and students' assessment were found to be moderately good (high) in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Research question two revealed that the level at which principals adopt administrative practices is high for supervision and involvement of teachers in decision-making but low for staff development practices for administration of teachers. This findings is supported by that of Ogunjide and Odeleye (2022) which showed low level of principals' motivational strategies in areas of in-service training but high in consultation of teachers in decision-making in public secondary schools in South-west, Nigeria. This result is partially supported by that of Eze et al. (2023) which showed a high level of principals' administrative strategies in areas of involving teachers in decision making, delegation of duties, open communication and staff development practices in public secondary schools in Obollo-Afor Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. This study's result is in consonance with that of Adegun and Animashaun (2022) which revealed a high level of principals' administrative roles in areas of supervision, staff motivation, school facilities maintainance and participation of teachers in decision-making processes in secondary school schools, Southwest Nigeria. This study's findings almost completely disagrees with that of Bamikole et al. (2024) which showed high level of adoption of administrative strategies in areas of committee system, mentoring (staff development), team work, delegation of duties and participatory management in secondary schools in Osun State.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that principals' high level of adoption of supervision and involvement of teachers in decision-making practices and low level of adoption of staff development practices could be responsible for the high level of teachers' commitment to the school and students but low level of commitment to the teaching profession.

Recommendations

i. Efforts should be made specifically to understanding why teachers still have low level of commitment to the teaching profession. This should be done by organising indoor meetings for teachers and administrators to discuss and pour out their thoughts and reasons for low commitment among them.
ii. In this study, the commitment of teachers to the school and students was high. However, efforts should still be made to ensuring that teachers' level of commitment to the UBE schools and students improve from a high level to a very high level to ensure greater performance and productivity of the teachers. This can be done by increasing various incentives that would motivate teachers to be more loyal to the school and their students.
iii. Principals should be encouraged to improve their level of supervision and involvement of teachers in decision-making and management from a high level to a much higher level as this is needed for thorough administration of teachers in UBE. They should also do all they can to ensure that they drastically seek and improve staff development through seminars, workshops, conferences, mentorship and overall education. Whatever the principals need to ensure they improve their administrative practices in areas of supervision, participatory management and staff development should be provided to them by the government and various educational stakeholders so they can improve their administrative practices and invariable improve teachers' commitment.

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CONTESTING SOVEREIGNTY: CHINESE NONINTERFERENCE AND GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA?

Ibukun David
Department of International Relations, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
Email: davidi@oauife.edu.ng

Abstract
This study examines the implications of the limited concept of sovereignty that frames China's policy of noninterference for governance in Africa. It argues that while this policy has allowed China to expand its presence in Africa, it has also raised serious concerns for governance in the latter. While the concept of sovereignty has noticeably evolved, China has continued to build and sustain relations with Africa on a policy of non-interference framed in a limited understanding of sovereignty. This stance, which is consistent with the realists' international relations, raises questions about intentions and implications for governance and development in Africa. Therefore, this study interrogates the motivations for China's insistence on noninterference in engagement with Africa. It also interrogates the implications of this policy stance for governance in Africa. The paper relies on evidence from extant literature, including statistical data gleaned from reputable resources. Essentially, the study found that the non-interference policy that rests upon China's limited concept of sovereignty supports allows China not only to insulate its domestic politics against global scrutiny, it also allows China to pursue its economic interests in Africa in ways that undermine governance and sustainable development in the latter. Given that this caged and state-centric understanding of sovereignty presents both real and potential challenges for governance and sustainable development in Africa, the paper therefore argues that the absolute understanding of sovereignty that frames China's non-interference policy has become untenable in light of the emergence of new norms of international relations like citizenship participation, human rights promotion and good governance. This is particularly important in light of the realization that sovereignty can no longer be detached from the interests of the people. Crucially, an unshackled concept of sovereignty will allow public scrutiny of engagement between China and Africa, and thereby promoting constructive bilateral relations.

Keywords: China, Africa, Governance, Non-Interference, Development, Depoliticization, Re-Politicization, Sovereignty

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Introduction

China has an outstanding history of commitment to the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other sovereign states. Non-interference as a Chinese principle of foreign policy dates back to the 1950 alliance treaty between China and the USSR. However, the principle became a well-articulated part of China's foreign policy when it was listed as one of the so-called Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence between China and India in 1954. Over the years, this principle has become a cornerstone principle of China's foreign policy and international engagements (United Nations, 2014). In its classical context, it means that China pursues a foreign policy in which it refrains from meddling in the internal affairs of other states and it expects other states to reciprocate by not meddling in the domestic affairs of China. Former Chinese president, Hu Jintao, echoed this Chinese sentiment in the "Report to the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China (NCCPC) in 2007:

> We maintain that all countries, big and small, strong and weak, rich and poor, are equal. We respect the right of the people of all countries to independently choose their own development path; we will never interfere in the internal affairs of other countries or impose our own will on them (Jintao, 2007).

To underscore the centrality of non-interference in China's foreign policymaking, Gonzalez-Vicente (2015) suggested that the principle of non-interference is to China as democracy promotion is to the external relations of the United States (US). It is therefore not totally unexpected that this principle has over the past 60 years framed official relations between China and Africa. Instructively, the 2006 White Paper on Africa declared that China seeks to develop various exchanges with African countries on the basis of the principle of non-interference amongst other guiding principles (see China's Africa Policy Paper 2006). Overall, China's non-interference is underpinned by the notion of respect for the sovereignty of other states. However, both the concept of sovereignty and that of non-interference raise unresolved questions about meanings, intentions and implications.

The Contested and Evolving Nature of the Concept of Sovereignty

Sovereignty is a hotly contested and imprecise concept. As Muller (2013: 37) remarked, while there is no agreement regarding what exactly sovereignty is or means, there is wide agreement about this lack of agreement. In other words, there is broad consensus about the contested nature of the concept of sovereignty. The concept is therefore framed as an unreconciled conceptual debate. Efforts to reconcile the conceptual disagreement that frames the concept is further complicated by disagreement over the meanings of concepts that are usually deployed to describe what sovereignty means. Muller observed in this context that where there is a certain consensus on what related ideas and concepts sovereignty is about, these concepts and ideas themselves are subject of controversy (2013: 37). A further complication to the concept of sovereignty can be drawn from its transforming and evolving nature. Sovereignty is an evolving and not a static concept. It is a fluid concept that can acquire, and that has indeed acquired, different meanings over time. As a concept, it is characterized by a temporality that predisposes it to conceptual fluidity and evolution. Muller (2013) noted in this regard that sovereignty is under attack and it is transforming under the influence of globalization and increased interconnectedness in the world. Sovereignty is therefore resistant to definitive conceptualization because, as Muller (2013: 38) postulated, it is an idea or a concept and not a fact. As an idea, as evident in history, it has acquired new meanings over time and under changing international circumstances. Many authors acknowledge this temporal nature of the

concept when they differentiate between the traditional and more contemporary contexts of the concept. One thing is however clear, despite its changing and evolving nature, sovereignty has remained an enduring concept in international relations since the earliest usage at the Treaty of Westphalia.

As espoused in Coghlan (2015), exercising territorial control in the context of non-interference is at the heart of traditional understanding of the concept of sovereignty. The traditional concept of sovereignty is exclusive and absolute and it embodies the notion of an uncontrolled state. It means the power of the state to do whatever is necessary to preserve the integrity of national boundaries, including endorsing the use of force to defend the superiority of national interests (see He, 2013). Ayoob (2002) would therefore argue that sovereignty in the context of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states is the very foundation upon which international order and the international system is built. In this regard, sovereignty is a normative concept that is used to signify the standard of behavior among members of international society. As a normative concept, sovereignty is sacrosanct and cannot be questioned. Accordingly, those who, like China, maintain this absolute concept of sovereignty as non-interference in the internal affairs of a state have continued to argue that such normative stance is vital to an international system that is characterized by uneven distribution (see Ayoob, 2002). However, the concept of sovereignty has evolved under changing international conditions that have rendered absolute conceptions anachronistic, especially in light of the centrality of concepts like human rights and participation in contemporary development thinking. In particular, the concept of human rights has assumed an unprecedented importance in today's development thinking and international relations theorizing that renders absolute concept of sovereignty untenable. This is because the imperative of global protection of human rights implies, as He (2013) correctly observed, that states no longer have supreme authority over how they treat the population within their territories. Rather, their actions toward their population must now conform to universally accepted best practices. In this context, the idea of universal human rights contradicts the perspective of sovereignty as non-interference.

He (2013: 209) argued that the human rights discourse has made it immoral and impractical to view the world as consisting of territorial units each exerting supreme authority within their own borders. Accordingly, He (2013: 211) posited that contemporary concept of sovereignty is not sacred, but is a commodity that has an exchange value. For instance, sovereignty is exchanged for economic benefits when states join international organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO) for common management of global prosperity. Similarly, sovereignty can be exchanged for good governance, citizenship participation and human rights promotion, where states are increasingly realizing their inadequacies to meet most of the challenges of a rapidly changing and globalizing world. Failure to treat sovereignty as a commodity that can be exchanged for other values may therefore leave states in a precarious situation in which they are unable to respond to some of the most important challenges of the globalizing world. Interestingly, like the concept of sovereignty, the concept of non-interference has also acquired new meanings in the light of the central stage that the discourse on human rights now occupies in contemporary international relations. The conceptual debate in the intervention literature has now shifted away from the traditional fixation on state sovereignty to what is known as humanitarian or new interventions. Humanitarian intervention implies interventionist actions undertaken in defense of human rights under the assumptions that human rights are universal and that the universality of these rights imposes on the international community the responsibility to protect them. Although some, like Ayoob (2002), have called into question the humanitarian intervention argument by contending that the non-interference

context of sovereignty is the foundation of international order in a world marked by uneven distribution, such conceptual stance must be seen as a further testament to the reality of the evolution of the concept of sovereignty.

Chinese Limited and Depoliticized Concept of Sovereignty

Irrespective of the evident evolution of the concept of sovereignty and its contested and highly politicized nature, China has continued to use it in the same traditional context in which sovereignty is absolute, exclusive and depoliticized. For instance, Pathak (2021) noted that territorial integrity is central to the Chinese concept of sovereignty, as preserving territorial integrity is for China a matter of national pride. In this regard, the concept of sovereignty in China's foreign policy expresses China's determination to preserve national territorial integrity through insistence on the principle of non-interference in international relations. Sovereignty for China therefore encapsulates the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of another state. As Yahuda (2007) observed, the principle of non-interference is at the core of China's concept of sovereignty. This strict view of sovereignty rejects any form of interference, including those done under the tag of human rights or humanitarian intervention that most Western governments and institutions advocate. For China, observance of sovereignty as non-interference is central to international order (Muller, 2013). This strict concept of sovereignty trumps human rights considerations in China's foreign policy, as Chinese leaders usually argue that there would be no human rights to protect without sovereignty (Yahuda, 2007).

Shulong (2001) noted, it is not just that the Chinese concept of national sovereignty is very traditional, it is also more crucially that the Chinese government expends a great deal of effort defending this strict understanding of sovereignty. For instance, during the September 2000 United Nations Millennium Summit, President Jiang Zemin of China argued against the notion that human rights rank higher than sovereignty. For Jiang, national sovereignty is the only guarantee of human rights. Crucially, Jiang conceptualized sovereignty in terms of sovereign equality of all states; mutual respect for the sovereignty of every state; and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. Notwithstanding the obligations states have to protect human rights, Jiang argued that it is this understanding of sovereignty that is at the heart of contemporary international relations. Consequently, Jiang maintained that it is the solemn right of the government of every country to protect national sovereignty and security. Interestingly, China's traditional concept of sovereignty is rooted in the UN Charter, which stipulates non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. Paragraph Four, Article 2 of the UN Charter provides a legal basis for the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states when it stipulates that all members of the United Nations (UN):

> shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

For Jiang, meddling in the internal affairs of other states in the name of humanitarian intervention is against the spirit of the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. Not only that, Jiang contended further that such violation of sovereignty can lead to severe consequences. More crucially, Jiang emphasized that the success of multilateral intervention must be judged by the extent to which such interventions adhere to the principles of the UN Charter, one of which include respecting the sovereignty of other states by not meddling in their internal affairs. Overall, Jiang Zemin maintained that interference can only be justified where consent has been given by the country concerned.

While the UN Charter forbids intervention, it fails to, as Hirono, Jiang, and Lanteigne (2019) observed, state in specific terms what may constitute intervention. This conceptual omission can potentially result in selective interpretation of the Charter provision. Sir Hersch Lauterpach tried to solve this problem of omission by conceptualizing intervention as dictatorial interference (cited in Hirono et al. 2019). Nevertheless, Lauterpach's efforts at conceptual clarification created a problem of its own; it created in the literature a tendency towards differentiating intervention from interference. Specifically, many subsequently interpreted Lauterpach's conceptualization of intervention as dictatorial interference as implying that intervention is distinct from interference. Accordingly, intervention became associated with the use of force or coercion, while interference may not entail coercion, although both take place against the will of the country in question. This conceptual bifurcation was however resolved under the *UNGA Declaration of December 1981 on the inadmissibility of intervention and interference*, where it was stipulated that both intervention and interference constitute the same thing. The Declaration makes no distinction between the two terms and it therefore employs the singular use of the term "principle" of non-interference and non-intervention to refer to the legal obligation of states not meddling in the internal affairs of other states. Essentially, the UNGA Declaration of 1981 remove this distinction and defines both intervention and interference as implying political or military activity that takes place within the territory of another state without the consent of the state in question.

Consistent with the Charter provision of the UN, China has continued to maintain a view of sovereignty that forbids interference in the affairs of other states. In this absolute context, the concept of sovereignty is limited and depoliticized, as it constructs the state as a unitary and undifferentiated actor that exercises unchallenged and uncontested authority over every entity and event within its borders. Maintaining this depoliticized stance that emphasizes state-centric national self-determination and non-interference (Creemers, 2020) despite the contested and evolving nature of the concept begs the question of underlying motivations. This question becomes especially imperative in view of China's characteristic inconsistency in adhering to the principle in actual foreign policy practice (see Yahuda, 2007) and in view of potential implications for Africa's development.

The Symbolism and Political Economy of Non-interference in China's Foreign Policy

China's concept of sovereignty is like a caged dragon and it is important that we understood the Chinese motives for caging this dragon and the potential implications for Africa. China maintains the absolute concept of sovereignty for both historical symbolism and pragmatic (political and economic) purposes. At the symbolic level, it is worth noting that China has a not-too-distant history of imperial intervention in its territorial sovereignty that perhaps explains partly why China is very sensitive to issues of territorial sovereignty as captured in its non-interference foreign policy principle. Carlson (2002) wrote in this regard that memories of this past infringement explain the reluctance of Chinese political elites to commit China to multilateral intervention and the norm of humanitarian intervention. It therefore becomes difficult to disconnect the prioritization of sovereignty in the Chinese foreign policy from the history of imperial intrusion and occupation of China. Sovereignty as non-interference therefore symbolizes China's anti-imperialism ideology and history (see Creemers, 2020). It is however instructive to note that this ideological and historical symbolism has a functional importance in China's foreign policy. For instance, non-interference symbolizes for China and Africa a shared history of colonial domination that helps China to promote the idea that Sino-Africa relations

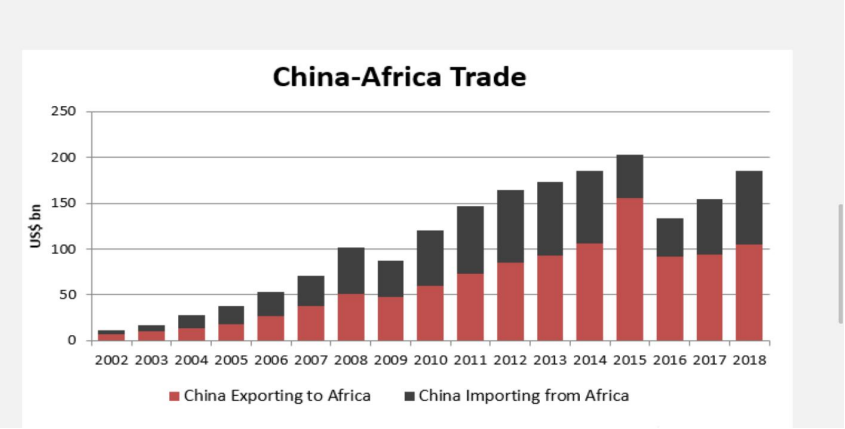
are fundamentally different from Africa's relations with the West (see Kambudzi 2013). The 2006 China's African Policy Paper made reference to this shared history when it asserts that:

> China-Africa friendship is embedded in the long history of interchange. Sharing similar historical experience, China and Africa have all along sympathized with and supported each other in the struggle for national liberation and forged a profound friendship (Paragraph 1, Part II, China's African Policy Paper, 2006).

China's insistence on the concept of sovereignty as non-interference is borne out of the understanding by China that showing respect for the sovereignty of other states can help to build trust and friendly relationship (see Part IV, Paragraph 3, China's Africa Policy Paper 2006). In the context of relations with Africa therefore, the principle of non-interference must also be understood as one of such principles that make China attractive to Africa, especially to authoritarian African regimes that view this policy as essential to regime security and also in view of Africa's enduring history of external meddling in its affairs. For African countries, the Chinese non-interference is a break from their history of external domination and the carryover of this history in the form of imposition of political conditionalities by major Western donors. In this regard, the concept of sovereignty is a tool of diplomacy and statecraft that is deployed by China to present itself as a historical victim of foreign conquest and intrusion (see Pathak, 2021).

This form of victimhood portrayal allows China to justify actions taken in the name of preserving or respecting territorial sovereignty and thereby covering its real intentions. Crucially, some argue that appeal to this historical sentiment allows China to both build strong ties with Africa and justify otherwise unjustifiable practices in its international relations (Sofer 2012). Remarkably, China has grown to become Africa's second largest trading partner after the EU over the last 60 years (Lewis and Schneidman, 2014). Bilateral trade between China and Africa has grown by almost 1000% from as little as below $20 billion in 2002 to over $200 billion by 2015 and dropping slightly at around $180 billion in 2018 (see Fig. 1). More than before, it has therefore become pertinent to interrogate the pragmatic considerations that frame China's engagements with Africa.

Fig. 1: China-Africa Trade (2002-2018)



Source: UN Comtrade, February 2020

At a more pragmatic level, the concept of sovereignty as non-interference is deeply rooted in China's domestic politics. This is not surprising as Weissmann (2015) already clarified that domestic politics is a key determinant of China's foreign policy. According to Weissmann (2015), China's foreign policy is embedded in domestic issues, with the foremost being to ensure domestic political stability and by extension regime survival. For China, domestic political

stability is essential for the survival of its one-party system. In this sense, external interference is perceived as serious threat to both domestic stability and regime survival. Although the principle of non-interference served the purpose of anti-imperialism and conflict resolution in the early years of its formulation as part of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, it is serving a different purpose that is focused on the survival of the Communist regime in China in today's era of globalization (see Yahuda, 2007). While China's international relations today is indeed marked by greater economic interdependence and increased engagement with the international community, its foreign policy is largely shaped by the domestic political consideration of regime survival. Insulating its domestics politics against external intrusion is central to this goal. This may therefore provide a critical explanation for China's strong preference for an insular policy in its international relations. Particularly as it was felt that non-interference will help to advance the "One China" policy with respect to Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang (Weissmann, 2015).

It is however important to note that both domestic political stability and regime survival are, for China, dependent on continuing economic growth. This implied centrality of continuing economic growth to China's quest for domestic stability and regime survival would therefore imply that there is an economic dimension to the discourse on motivations of non-interference in China's foreign policy. Odgaard (2018: 78) drew attention to this economic dimension of the hands-off policy by pointing out that the non-interference policy allows China to establish a global economic engagement irrespective of political, social or economic differences with recipient countries.

Table 1: Showing China's Major Trading Partners in Africa (2010-2019)

Year	Algeria	Angola	DRC	Egypt	Ghana	Kenya	Libya	Morocco	Nigeria	SA	SUDAN
	Import from Africa										
2010	1177.32	22815.05	2505.72	917.93	123.38	39.21	4515.61	452.32	1071.62	8095.83	0.00
2011	1960.89	24922.18	3161.99	1518.34	363.18	59.69	2063.58	475.63	1583.68	12495.81	0.00
2012	2311.91	33561.90	3527.10	1320.74	643.55	52.41	6375.90	558.42	1273.79	10320.51	1554.27
2013	2164.55	31972.67	2745.66	1851.61	1203.33	52.78	2038.93	531.43	1546.60	12047.24	2100.02
2014	1314.68	31106.02	2815.74	1159.33	1452.60	77.03	726.37	517.91	2658.35	8770.89	1521.28
2015	767.36	16001.61	2627.43	917.84	1296.47	98.74	951.55	521.52	1240.70	7420.28	728.39
2016	331.89	13966.12	2084.96	553.21	1309.65	97.14	345.62	553.46	907.01	6812.08	504.71
2017	448.32	20698.71	3289.99	1341.93	1852.94	166.82	1362.66	650.60	1624.05	8672.25	590.80
2018	1178.82	25652.02	5682.94	1834.53	2426.14	174.20	4742.28	711.07	1858.99	8550.85	670.03
2019	1141.66	23308.30	4436.61	996.82	2543.92	181.21	4765.67	635.51	2652.14	9595.42	740.42
Position	7th	1st	4th	8th	6th	11th	3rd	10th	5th	2nd	9th
	Export to Africa										
2010	4000.00	2003.87	353.71	6040.98	1932.87	1786.30	2061.36	2484.47	6696.84	10799.86	0.00
2011	4471.88	2784.15	489.43	7283.23	3109.95	2368.78	720.38	3042.65	9205.57	13362.30	0.00
2012	5416.66	4039.17	520.99	8223.92	4790.75	2788.76	2384.24	3131.19	9296.31	15323.31	2178.61
2013	6023.90	3964.06	779.29	8362.67	3946.03	3217.48	2834.68	3271.65	12042.61	16830.78	2398.43
2014	7395.24	5975.31	984.53	10460.51	4134.57	4930.57	2157.64	2963.01	15393.56	15699.15	1928.61
2015	7583.35	3717.15	1035.42	47834.31	5308.88	5914.32	1892.02	2897.18	13701.24	15857.92	2394.50
2016	7647.85	1680.40	740.63	10436.26	4666.60	5587.65	1184.61	3078.78	9713.91	12849.51	2129.73
2017	6784.75	2257.45	497.84	9485.64	4824.80	5034.65	1027.97	3176.23	12153.16	14808.77	2221.76
2018	7923.38	2234.93	444.88	12020.88	4821.89	5204.94	1433.05	3690.13	13500.04	16337.35	1884.77
2019	6945.57	2057.49	2077.31	12217.15	4906.97	4984.58	2453.89	4030.06	16634.07	16560.93	2292.12
Positio	4th	11th	10th	3rd	6th	5th	8th	7th	1st	2nd	9th

n											

Source: UNComtrade data from 2010-2019, http://comtrade.un.org/data/

Table 2: Showing the state of democracy (political rights and civil liberty) in China's major trading partners in Africa

Countries	Political Rights	Civil Liberty	Total Score and Status
Algeria	10	22	32/not free
Angola	10	21	31/not free
DRC	5	15	20/not free
Egypt	6	12	18/not free
Ghana	35	47	82/free
Kenya	19	29	48/partly free
Libya	1	8	9/not free
Morocco	13	24	37/partly free
Nigeria	21	24	45/partly free
SA	33	46	79/free
Sudan	2	15	17/not free

Source: Freedom House Report (2021) https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores

China's expanding economic ties with Africa is also noticeable in the area of development funding, where the former has gradually emerged as a major source of development assistance for African countries (Stahl, 2016; Brautigam 2011). Although the West remains the most dominant force in development funding in Africa, China is today a major development partner for many African countries (see Mlambo et al. 2016). Africa accounted for more than half (51.8%) of total Chinese aid between 2010 and 2012 (see Stahl, 2016). A report by the Chinese Embassy in South Africa cited by Mlambo et al. (2016: 261) claimed that China had aid agreements with at least 48 African states as of 2013. This is in addition to loan accord with 22 African states (Mlambo et al. 2016). Over the years, particularly since 2000, China has pledged billions of US dollars in aid, loans and debt forgiveness to Africa. For instance, China reportedly in 2009 committed itself to $10 billion low-interest loans to African states over three years (Chileshe 2010, as cited in Mlambo et al. 2016: 261).

Curiously, the driving force of Chinese aid to Africa has transformed over the years from primarily ideology and politics in the early days of the 1950s to largely economic pragmatism from the late 1970s reform and opening-up policy (see He, 2013a; 2010; Samy, 2010). Today, China's aid appears to move in the direction of its economic interests in Africa. This directional convergence of the economic and the developmental in China's engagement with Africa would imply a larger part of China's aid to Africa going to its largest trading partners on the continent; most of these countries are under authoritarian regimes with poor human rights and governance records (see Tables 1, 2 & 3). Perhaps it is not a coincidence that, as shown in tables 1 & 4, that China's major trading partners in Africa are also the biggest recipients of Chinese aid to Africa. This directional convergence of aid and trade provide some credibility for the view that China adopts an aid policy that helps it to build friendship in Africa as well as open up African markets (see Samy, 2010). While Chinese aid policy is consistent with its foreign policy objectives, it is hard to ignore the question of how and where China allocates its aid in Africa.

Table 3: Top-10 Recipients of China's and US Aid in Africa

China		
s/n	Aid Recipient	Value (Million USD)
1	Congo	3006

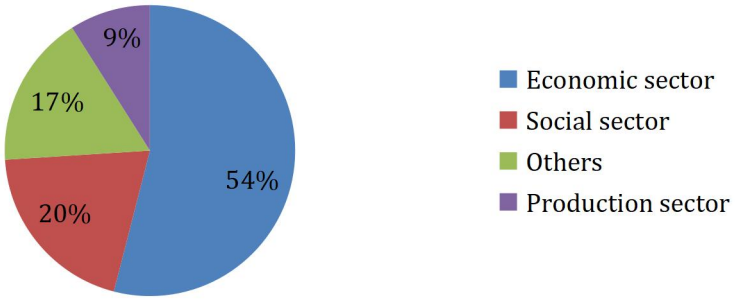
2	Tanzania	1748
3	Ethiopia	1565
4	Nigeria	1258
5	Egypt	1131
6	Cameroon	6579
7	Angola	5158
8	Kenya	3696
9	Mozambique	3257
10	Sudan	2475

Source: UN AidData

Instructive to note, Chinese development aid to Africa usually target the economic sector. For instance, African countries attracted in excess of US$34 billion Chinese official development assistance (ODA) between 2000 and 2014 (see Guillon and Mathonnat 2018), with the economic sector accounting for more than 54% of Chinese ODA allocation (see Fig 2). Specifically, China financed a total of 1592 ODA projects in Africa between 2000 and 2014 at a cost of US$34.8 billion (Guillon and Mathonnat 2018). At the 2018 FOCAC Summit, China committed itself to US$50 billion in development aid to Africa over three years (see Tjonneland 2020). And of the total aid pledge, US$15 billion will come as foreign aid in the form of grants, interest-free loans and concessional loans (Tjonneland 2020). Such huge pledge in foreign aid will make China a major bilateral donor to Africa, and the pledge would also imply that China will overtake the US as the biggest aid donor to Africa (Tjonneland 2020). Despite this seemingly growing importance of China in development funding in Africa, Tjonneland (2020: 4) contended that much of what China classify as development aid do not qualify as such when using the OECD-DAC criteria.

More so, the narrative that China allocates ODA mainly to further its political and economic interests in Africa has persisted (see Guillon and Mathonnat 2018; Dreher and Fuchs 2015). Such perceptions are for example not helped by the observable preference China has shown for funding development in the economic sector relative to other sectors in Africa (see Fig. 2). While China is not alone in dealing with rogue regimes in Africa and across the world (see Table 4), the fundamental question for China is: what China is doing to address governance issues in major trade partners in Africa and around the world. It is clear that China can do better by using the opportunity of increasing exchanges with these states to strengthen governance in Africa by including governance requirements as conditionality for bilateral relations and by making governance promotion a central priority of its development funding in Africa.

Fig [2]: Sectoral Share of Chinese ODA to Africa (2000-2014)



Source: Guillon and Mathonnat (2018)

Implications of Chinese Non-interference for Governance in Africa

China's emotional attachment to the policy of non-interference, based on a strict and narrow concept of sovereignty, in external relations implies that there is very little China can do to enhance governance in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world. For instance, while traditional donors like the US and EU make use of political conditionality to address governance deficit in Africa and other developing regions, China has continued to insist on the non-conditionality principle. This aid principle is borne out of China's preference for a traditional concept of sovereignty that privileges an understanding of the state as a unitary and undifferentiated actor rather than politicize it as an arena of multiple interests and contestations. This form of understanding of the state is what theoretically underpins China's policy of respecting the sovereignty of other countries in international relations by not interfering in their domestic affairs. From the perspective of sovereignty as non-interference, imposition of conditionality, including those that can help to strengthen governance and democracy, would imply infringement on the sovereignty of other states. Therefore, China makes non-conditionality the cornerstone of its economic engagement with Africa. Unlike mainstream donors, China avoids imposing political conditionality as a precondition for aid. While the attractiveness of accessing such unconditional development assistance can facilitate for China smoother access to the markets of recipients, it can undermine governance and sustainable development in recipient countries (Samy, 2010; Nonfodji, 2013).

Many have therefore questioned both the motives and developmental imperatives of Chinese aid policy in Africa. Naim (2007), for instance, called China a rogue donor that is driven more by commercial and political interests than by the development needs of recipients. This view resonates with most Western observers, who hold the view that China aims to lock-in neocolonial ties with African countries through its aid policy of non-conditionality. Given the temporal coincidence between increasing Chinese aid to Africa and increasing Chinese demand for resources to sustain its expanding growth rate since the end of the Cold War, some have argued that aid is for China a tool of economic expansion (Samy, 2010; Rich and Recker, 2013; Asongu and Ssozi, 2015; Guillon and Mathonnat, 2018; Dreher and Fuchs, 2015). More explicitly, Samy (2010) contended that aid, like other packages of incentives offered by China to African countries, are means for the Chinese to secure access to important resources. While claiming no strings attached to attract African countries, Samy (2010) averred that Chinese aid reflects China's appetite for securing long-term supplies of oil and other natural resources. In this regard, more than the desire to preserve respect for the sovereignty of African countries, it is the need to preserve particularistic economic interests that motivates non-conditionality, hence non-interference as a Chinese principle for engaging Africa.

The import of non-interference is therefore located in how this policy principle helps to make China more attractive to Africa relative to traditional donors that usually insist on infusing conditionality in the aid they provide. To underscore the economic pragmatism of China's non-interference, Samy (2010) noted China's silence on the human rights abuses of the Sudanese government at the height of the Darfur crisis. This observation is consistent with Askouri's (2007) suggestion of double standard in the Chinese practice of non-interference. For Askouri, China indeed interfered in the politics of several African countries through the provision of assistance to authoritarian regimes in countries like Sudan, Chad and Zimbabwe. In this regard, China's appeal to non-interference is just an excuse to shy away from its human rights responsibilities. Askouri therefore argued that Chinese non-interference has promoted dictatorships and tyranny in several African countries.

Essentially, the policy of non-interference that allows China to provide aid and development assistance to African countries without the infusion of governance requirements like respect for human rights and rule of law can potentially challenge governance in Africa. For instance, provision of aid without conditionality would imply that are no mechanisms for monitoring how aid provided by China to African countries are spent by recipients. In addition, it would imply that recipient governments cannot be held accountable by their citizens (Samy, 2010). Chinese non-interference therefore encourages an aid policy that discourages transparency and accountability. This transparency and accountability deficit can come with serious implications for aid effectiveness. Perhaps nothing better underscore this point than He's (2013) observation that China does not have an independent aid agency as obtains among traditional donors. The core contention here is that Chinese aid policy lacks both mechanisms of supervision and evaluation that can better guarantee effectiveness in the use of aid. Therefore, for many, non-interference robs Chinese aid policy of the kind of (governance) selectivity that promotes aid effectiveness (see Burnside and Dollar, 1997; 2000; World Bank, 1998). Concerns about the lack of selectivity in China's aid become starker when dealing with African countries under regimes that have built up a reputation for being corrupt and non-accountable. For instance, Cheng (2019) notes concerns that Chinese aid could lead to debt trap for African countries.

Since China gives mainly concessional loans with very low interest rates rather than outright grants, there are concerns that such low-interest loans provided by China may lead to debt traps for many African countries as African countries may be encouraged to borrow irresponsibly. While China is a signatory to the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, its commitment to non-interference would imply in practice a lack of commitment to governance conditionality required for actualizing the goal of aid effectiveness, as such conditionality would imply meddling in the affairs of other countries for China. Scholars like Lancaster (2007) have therefore expressed concerns that the no-strings-attached approach to aid that Chinese non-interference engenders may not encourage the kind of reforms that are needed for sustainable development in Africa. A general concern is that the non-conditionality that springs from China's commitment to non-interference in its external relations can undermine efforts at promoting democracy and good governance in Africa. This concern is not farfetched as the Chinese depoliticized concept of sovereignty as non-interference strips sovereignty of all contestations by making the state a unitary actor with no place for civil society in the development process. China can therefore be charged for adopting an approach to engaging Africa that emphasizes development without democracy (Lonnqvist, 2008). In this context, Lonnqvist (2008) argued that the Chinese model of development without democracy excludes, and implicitly discredits the notion than an autonomous, vibrant civil society is central to development. Chinese aid policy can therefore further compromise the already fragile governance architecture of most African countries. As already noted, disbursement of Chinese aid is governed by other rules other than those that rest on governance conditionality.

Crucially, China's insistence on non-interference and respect for the sovereignty of other states in international relations would imply that China is unable to infuse governance conditionality as part of the eligibility requirements that recipients must meet before they are able to access Chinese development aid. Not only can this become a demotivation and disincentive for the process of democratic governance in Africa, it can also undermine efforts to build the required governance institutions for sustainable development in Africa. This is even as authoritarian regimes may begin to look to China as an escape route from conditionality-based mainstream sources of development assistance. As expressed in He (2013), major concerns

about China's aid border around issues of governance and transparency. For most critics, Chinese aid represents an alternative that allows despotic regimes in Africa to bypass governance requirements in accessing development assistance. For instance, Davies (2007) notes how the provision of $2 billion loans and credits without any political conditionality by China's Export-Import (Exim) Bank to Angola allowed the Angolan government to bypass an IMF financing facility that was tied to meeting governance requirements designed to promote transparency in the latter's oil sector. By potentially providing an escape route from governance requirements for corrupt and despotic African regimes seeking to access development assistance, Chinese non-interference therefore poses both potential and real danger to democracy and democratization as well as sustainable development in Africa. Non-interference therefore raises more questions than answers in relations between China and Africa.

Conclusion

China cannot continue to insist on its traditional sovereignty-framed non-interference policy.

China's limited concept of sovereignty and the non-interference policy that rests on this caged and state-centric understanding of sovereignty presents both real and potential challenges for governance and sustainable development in Africa. Re-politicizing and unleashing the dragon called sovereignty by viewing it as a contested and citizens-centered concept therefore becomes indispensable to overcoming governance and development challenges that are associated with China's engagements with Africa as a whole and with the policy of non-interference upon which these engagements are anchored. This is particularly important in light of the realization that sovereignty can no longer be detached from the interests of the people. Essentially, such unshackled concept of sovereignty will allow public scrutiny of engagement between China and Africa. It is clearer now than ever that the kind of absolute understanding of sovereignty that frame China's non-interference policy has become untenable in light of the emergence of new norms of international relations like citizenship participation, human rights promotion and good governance (He, 2013; Muller, 2013; Coghlan, 2015). It is in this regard He (2013: 214) notably remarked that the exclusive practice of sovereignty, the sacredness of sovereignty, and the use of force to defend sovereignty all belong to a nineteenth century understanding.

The reality of the contemporary world therefore demands a recalibrating of both the concept of sovereignty and intervention. As Ren (2013) rightly observed, while non-interference remains the norm of international relations, it no longer implies that intervention cannot take place. Rather, it now implies the need to justify intervention, whenever they are to take place. As already shown, China's attachment to the non-interference policy is not just emotional but also strategic and pragmatic and laced with political-economic considerations. The non-interference policy that this limited concept of sovereignty supports allows China not only to insulate its domestic politics against global scrutiny, it also allows China to pursue its economic interests in Africa in ways that undermine governance and sustainable development in the latter.

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Article **Open Access**

STATE RESPONSE, ETHNIC NATIONALISM AND THE PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

David Amadike Wokocha [1]
Roberts Osatohanmwen Asemota [2]
Tyover Benjamin Amena [3]
Peace and Conflict Unit, School of General Studies, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Nigeria [1, 2 & 3]
Corresponding Email: da.wokocha@mouau.ed.ng [1]

Abstract
Tensions resulting from ethnic nationalist agitations in the South East region of Nigeria in recent years show that the geopolitical zone has been militarized through the proliferation of arms. Till date little effort has been made by the Federal government of Nigeria to understand the dynamics of the current flow of small arms and light weaponry (SALWs) so as to reduce the presence of arms within the region. The Federal government of Nigeria however, has used tensions in the region to justify internal military operations – sometimes with serious consequences for the civilian population in the region – in its efforts to restore normalcy. In response the ethnic nationalist militia are manipulating the crisis in the region to establish a war-time economy for themselves as they perpetuate illegitimate activities to sustain their agitation. With the absence of any peace agreement or political negotiations the conflict continues hidden away from the international community, engulfing civilians and security personnel alike and in some cases affecting whole communities as it progresses. Armed groups continue to fragment and shift alliances as sub-conflicts between different political groups within the region are increasingly common. This paper argues in favour of engaging in complex negotiations and forging of allegiances in order to establish a culture of peace between the south east, other geopolitical regions and the Federal government. This paper relies on primary qualitative data collected from in depth interviews and also secondary data extracted from materials such as publications and text books. Data collected were content analysed.

Keywords: Ethnic Nationalism, Conflict, Security, Small Arms, State

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Introduction

Across the globe the illegal trade in small arms is such that from Afghanistan to Angola, Somalia to El Salvador, lethal small arms and light weapons (SALWs) could be bought for a little more than US$20 a piece in street markets while, in African and Asian cities automatic weapons could be hired on an hourly basis. Rupesinghe and Anderlini (1998) argue that the legal trade in light weapons is worth an estimated US$5 billion annually while the illegal trade is estimated to be between US$2-10 billion. The financial reward from illegal trade in SALWs is humongous, thus making a multi-billion-dollar enterprise out of what was once a centralized monopoly of the military might of the state. Monopoly of the state as an institution over arms is rapidly being eroded and challenged by smaller, asymmetrical groups vying for economic and military control, since the state no longer has the capacity to solely fight insurgency movements they rely on international coalitions, regional blocs, mercenary groups and private security firms. Consequently, ex-Serbian soldiers have fought in Central Africa, South African mercenaries in Sierra Leone and Papua New Guinea. Their key roles are to operationally support national forces by fighting insurgent groups, and to train and equip conscript soldiers. Much closer home, the South African mercenary outfit called Executive Outcomes had been hired in the past to fight the Boko Haram insurgency in North East Nigeria, likewise a private security company owned by Alhaji Asari Dokubo, an ex-Niger Delta militant, in Rivers State, Nigeria was hired to fight ethnic nationalist militants in South East Nigeria.

Therefore, the global proliferation of arms has led to the emergence of both private security companies who assist State security machinery and a high growth in terrorist organisations and other armed insurgent groups who challenge the State in an attempt to wrestle away the monopoly of violence from government as an institution. These clandestine organisations have one seemingly genuine grievance or the other against the various governments and States with which they are up against in arms. Globally, these conflicts cover a wide range and normally include ethnic conflicts, religious conflicts, separatists, ideological, secessionist, and resource-based conflicts. These conflicts comprise of spontaneous, unplanned acts of violence against targeted civilian and military objectives. Thus, in other parts of Nigeria churches get bombed in Maiduguri, Abuja, and in Owo where church members were machine-gunned down during Sunday service. Likewise, Mosques get attacked, destroyed and worshippers are slaughtered in Yobe, Kano and Kaduna by assailants who showed no premonition or preparedness for such level of violence. This is directly attributed to the deadly characteristics of the type of weapons used in these attacks. Small arms and light weapons such as AK 47s, Kalashnikovs, 9mm automatic pistols, hand grenades all have the ability to be effectively concealed and transported to their place of use without any form of stress or hullabaloo. Also, military patrol vehicles and convoys have been attacked, unprovoked, resulting to high casualties in the process. The attackers had the element of surprise and the concealment of automatic weapons going in their favour. Contrary to common opinions on why the conflict broke out in the South East, we strongly believe that these secessionist crises can be traced and linked to the failure of governance in Nigeria.

Conceptual Analysis

This paper gives a definition of concepts related to this research to enable us understand the context under which they were used.

Ethnic Nationalism

Ethnic nationalism can best be understood by defining certain terms or concepts that surround it. These surrounding concepts include first and foremost *nationalism* which has been broadly

defined as a political ideology which insists that the State be controlled by the nation. Scholars like Anderson (2006) argues that print-languages laid the bases for national consciousness and by extension nationalism in Europe by positing that the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation[1]. The second concept is the state. The *State* is a legal and political organisation with sovereignty over a designated territory and population. The State itself, exists simultaneously as an internationally recognised member of the community of states and as a compulsory organisation run along bureaucratic lines with control over the legislative, administrative, judicial, and coercive functions of society (Anderson, 1983). The third concept would be that of an *ethnic group*. Armstrong (1982) defines an ethnic group as that human collective with a common myth of descent, shared culture, an association with a specific territory and sense of solidarity. The fourth concept which needs defining is the nation[2]. This conception is a politically mobilized ethnic group seeking to secure state power. Members of such a movement are expected to give their highest political loyalties to the nation in an attempt to establish a unified nation-state: where the apparatus of the state is firmly under the control of the nation[3].

Therefore, ethnic nationalism is the concept or ideology behind the agitation of statehood by ethnic nationalist movements in South East Nigeria. The umbrella movement for ethnic nationalist movements in the South East is the Indigenous People of Biafra IPOB. These groups politically define the Igbo nation in terms of ethnicity. The central political tenet of IPOB's method of ethnic nationalism is that the Igbo ethnic group can be identified unambiguously, and that such an ethnic group is entitled to self-determination or statehood. The quest for statehood by these ethnic nationalist groups in the South East has pitched them against the sovereignty of the Nigerian state. The outcome of this conflict of right to self-determination may vary, from calls for self-regulated administrative bodies within an already-established society, to an autonomous entity separate from the host society to a sovereign state removed from its host society.

The challenge of the sovereignty and military might of the state in most cases across the globe has resulted in endemic armed conflict. Violent conflicts occur when States respond to ethnic nationalism by forcefully clamping down on them militarily. From a global and international perspective on ethnic nationalist movements, Brian *et al* (2008) argues that nearly two dozen ethnic nationalist movements are active worldwide with at least seven of them violent and reflect ethnic or religious differences with the mother country[4]. Some violent cases of ethnic nationalism include, the conflict between ethnic nationalist group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the government of Sri Lanka was carried out as a war until mid-May 2009, when the Sri Lankan Army (SLA) defeated the Tamil Tigers militarily; armed conflict concerning the secession of Western Sahara between the Popular Front of the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO Front) and the Moroccan government; violent conflict over self-government between the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK/KONGRA-GEL) and the Turkish government; armed violence between the Irish Revolutionary Army (IRA) and the

[1] Anderson, B. 2006. *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.

[2] Armstrong, John. 1982. Nations before nationalism. Chapel Hill NC: University of North Carolina press.

[3] Suzman, Mark. 1999. Ethnic nationalism and state power: the rise of Irish nationalism, Afrikaner nationalism and Zionism. London. Macmillan.

[4] Brian, Beary. et al. 2008. Separatist movements, should nations have a right to self-determination? Global researcher. Exploring international perspectives. Vol 2. No.4. Date accessed 02 December 2017. http://www.globalresearcher.com.

Northern Irish government; secessionist conflict between Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) and the Spanish government[5]. This shows that ethnic nationalist movements span the globe and just like the conflict in south east Nigeria, these violent conflicts are fuelled and sustained by the proliferation and availability of SALWs.

Small arms and light weapons (SALW): Small arms and light weapons are conventional weapons, in that they are not weapons of mass destruction. These types of weapons have an additional set of characteristics that set them apart from major conventional weapons--characteristics that can play a part in developing the ways and means used to prevent their excessive accumulation because they are typically smaller, weigh less, cost less, and are more portable and less visible than major conventional weapons. However, these are the same set of characteristics that in recent years have transformed SALWs into deadly tools mass annihilation. Consequently, Annan (2000) as cited in Bourne (2007) argues that the death toll from small arms dwarfs that of all other weapons systems and in most years greatly exceeds the toll of the atomic bombs that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In terms of the carnage they cause, small arms, indeed, could well be described as 'weapons of mass destruction[6]. Historically, the transfer of SALWs to theatres of conflict began with the 1956 Suez crisis with the British, French and Soviet bloc's shipping weapons to both sides of the conflict since then this has been a tool of warfare and diplomacy used by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, particularly, the USA and Russia. In the earliest forms of military aid, weapons were shipped to Greece and Turkey to checkmate pro-Communist partisans with the onset of the Cold War. Hartung (2008) states that during the Cold War period, the Soviet Union made substantial arms exports, often in the form of military aid. The receiving parties are of interests to this paper because the Soviets armed and militarily supported ethnic nationalist liberation movements in South Africa, Angola and Namibia[7].

In Africa, huge Soviet transfer of SALWs also benefited nationalist regimes like in Libya by the mid-1980s[8]. Importantly, these arms out-lived the various conflicts they were assigned to perpetuate because of their durability, and have found their way to fuel internal conflicts in Nigeria. Arms from Angola were used by a rebel faction from Nigeria's oil-producing Niger Delta. Henry Okah, a leader of an ethnic nationalist group named the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in Nigeria's South South region, was arrested in September 2007 by Angola's national police and charged with trafficking of arms and explosives. He has been described as a powerful arms dealer, who led a faction of the MEND whose armed attacks on oil production facilities in early 2006 shut down roughly a fifth of Nigerian output[9].

In what was called the Niger Delta insurgency, 2003-2010, Nigeria's South South region witnessed the rise of several ethnic nationalist militia groups demanding resource autonomy from the Nigerian State. These groups visited unspeakable violence on security agencies, oil producing companies, their staff, local communities and government organisations. This resulted in the region being a washed with SALWs as the currency for perpetuating the conflict was in arms. Arms were also introduced into the Boko Haram insurgency via the Sahel, as the

[5] ibid

[6] Bourne, Mike., 2007. Arming conflict: the proliferation of small arms. New York. Palgrave Macmillan.

[7] Hartung, William D., 2008. International arms trade, in Williams, Paul. D. ed. Security studies: an introduction. New York. Taylor & Francis.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Reuters news agency by Shirbon Estelle titled "Nigerian rebels say leader extradited from Angola". Feb 15, 2008. Www.reuters.com. Date accessed 20th November 2023.

overrun armouries of the Libyan strongman (Col.) Gadhafi, who was deposed in an orchestrated NATO coalition operation. Arms from these store houses in Libya fuelled conflicts in Mali, Niger, Chad, Nigeria and Cameroon. For the secessionist militia in the South East*, The Cable* stated that the Attorney-General of the Federation, Abubakar Malami, in a press statement on 21th October, 2021 after receiving the report of a presidential committee setup as a result of secessionists' attacks, said that the separatist group had killed 175 security operatives comprising of 128 police men, 37 soldiers and 10 other security operatives. He further stated that 164 police stations and formations, including police headquarters, Owerri, Imo state, were attacked by secessionist militia while 396 firearms and 17,738 ammunition were carted away during the attacks and 628 vehicles destroyed.

The United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms defined small arms and light weapons (SALW) as follows[10]:

Small arms:

i. Revolvers and self-loading pistols;
ii. Rifles and carbines;
iii. Submachine guns;
iv. Assault rifles;
v. Light machine guns.

Light weapons:

i. Heavy machine guns;
ii. Handheld under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers;
iii. Portable antiaircraft guns;
iv. Portable antitank guns, recoilless rifles;
v. Portable launchers of antitank missile and rocket systems;
vi. Portable launchers of antiaircraft missile systems;
vii. Mortars of calibres up to less than 100-mm inclusive.

Ammunition and explosives:

i. Cartridges (rounds) for small arms;
ii. Shells and missiles for light weapons;
iii. Mobile containers with missiles or shells for single-action antiaircraft and antitank systems;
iv. Antipersonnel and antitank hand grenades;
v. Land mines;
vi. Explosives.

Theoretical Framework: Theory of the State

During the Enlightenment era, in 17th century, philosophies such as individualism, secularization and government based on a social contract were propagated by classical liberals such as Thomas Hobbes, who demanded a more representative government based on parliamentary rule to replace the state of nature. Andrain and Apter (1995) argue that Hobbes position on the modern political state was that the modern State was not a natural organisation ordained by Divine providence but rather a synthetic one established or invented by persons[11]. Andrian and Apter (1995) posit that the social conditions of the state of nature contained violent conflict, physical insecurity, anarchy and the war of every man against every man.

[10] Bourne (2007).

[11] Andrain, C.F. and D. Apter. 1995. Political protest and social change: analyzing politics. London: Macmillan.

Consequently, Hobbes argue that individuals were inspired by self-interest, prudence, desire and reason as they agreed to leave the state of nature wherein life was brutish and short, to establish what is known today as the modern political state. In contrast to the state of nature, a political state where a modern sovereign rules, individuals experience greater peace, better interpersonal cooperation, security, self-preservation and order. Hobbes argument was that in a competitive global society where conflicts among self – interested individuals over scarce resources are a part of life, the encumbrance rests on government or the state to guarantee security, productive lives and personal survival of its citizens.

Hobbes position on the responsibilities of the modern state towards its citizens tallies with that of Rotberg (2003)[12] though the latter takes the debate a notch higher. Rotberg (2003) posits that in our contemporary world, the modern state exists to provide a decentralized method of delivering political public goods to those living within its borders. These public goods are those tangible and hard to quantify entitlements that citizens make on states. Importantly, they give content to the social contract between rulers and the ruled which is at the core of regime/government and citizen relations. As such there is a hierarchy of political goods though there is none as essential and critical as the provision of security, particularly human security[13]. The pecking order for the provision of political goods are as follows – security (human & state), rule of Law, freedom and rights, health, educational, financial and physical infrastructure in this form. Thus, Rotberg (2003) argues that an individual or groups of individuals can come together to organize and procure goods and services that maximizes their sense of security in this manner providing private security, but this cannot in any way be substituted for the broad spectrum of public security as provided by the state. This is because the range and spectrum of provision of state security is too broad, wide and complex a scope for the private sector to handle[14]. Thus, only the resources of the megalomaniac state can adequately provide that political good of security.

Traditionally, some of the ways by which the state secures its citizens are by preventing, cross-border invasions and infiltrations, any loss or breakaway of territory, eliminating domestic threats or attacks on the national order and social structure, crime and any related dangers to human security and any recourse to taking up arms to resolve disputes or other forms of physical coercion (Rotberg, 2003). Importantly, this bundle of political goods, particularly security, establish a set of criteria which rank modern states and classifies them as either strong or weak. For South East Nigeria, the neglect of security and proliferation of small arms and light weapons within the region have become an indicator of weakness of the Nigerian state. However, ethnic nationalist violence in the South East alone does not condition or establish the weakness of the Nigeria state. It is necessary to examine the weakness of the Nigerian state through the profile of its component parts.

Consequently, other component parts of Nigeria have been engulfed in series of armed clashes between insurgent groups and the armed forces, thus effectively threatening state security. Pockets of armed non-state actors such as bandits, armed herdsmen, terrorists, ethnic militias and other armed groups, operate across Nigeria without interference and perpetuate murders, kidnappings and other terror related activities. Whether, these groups are united in purpose is beyond the scope of this paper but, these non-state actors are well armed and are in the process of wrestling the monopoly of violence from the State, which gives an insight to the

[12] Rotberg, I. Robert., 2003. Failed states, collapsed states, weak states: causes and indicators in ed. Robert. I. Rotberg. *State failure and state weakness in a time of terror*. Brookings institution press. Massachusetts.

[13] Rotberg (2003)

[14] ibid

intensity of proliferation of SALWs across most parts of Nigeria. This paper argues that for these groups to sustain their onslaught on Nigeria and her people there must be multiple caches of SALWs across the country and their much-needed supply routes and conduit pipes for weapons. This must be an important focus of the Nigerian authorities i.e. a robust and effective effort to impose restrictions on the production, circulation and transfer of arms and weapons to deny armed non-state actors any easy of operation. The Nigerian State's ability to stifle the flow of weapons to de-escalate the high level of insecurity, by imposing an effective arms control policy, categorizes it as a strong state.

State Response and the Proliferation of SALWs in South East Nigeria

In the last three decades ethnic nationalism has proved it is far from being a declining force in the world today. Since the collapse of the old Ottoman Empire, the defunct USSR and the former Yugoslavia republic old ethnic nationalist movements have been invigorated as new ones have proliferated across Europe, Asia and Africa. Importantly, ethnic nationalist movements no matter where they exist or operate are faced with the challenge of confronting the formidable powers of the megalomaniac state. A State is a legal and political organisation with sovereignty over a designated territory and population. It exists simultaneously as an internationally recognized member of the community of states and, as a compulsory organisation run along bureaucratic lines with control over the legislative, administrative, judicial and coercive functions of society. In every case of movements regarding ethnic nationalism across the globe such movements must contend with the international and national status of the state.

Thus, governments worldwide depend on a range of measures, including political, economic, and military power, as well as diplomacy, to safeguard the security of the state which they govern and as such apply these range of measures to also respond to the issue of ethnic nationalism within their borders. Suzman (1999) argues that alterations to the prevailing political and economic environment create disequilibria within a state which in turn creates structural opportunities for ethnic nationalist groups to emerge[15]. They also help define the way ethnic nationalist movements shape their operational responses and general strategies. The rise of the current Biafra agitators is based on a sense of historical grievance against a state that they say does not represent them. Although States differ in their approach and response to ethnic nationalism, some begin by prioritizing non-military actions to tackle systemic drivers of insecurity, others rely on various forms of coercive power which predominate in most cases, particularly military capabilities, in responding to ethnic nationalism. The scope of these capabilities has advanced. Conventionally, military capabilities were mainly land or sea-based, and in smaller countries, they still are. Elsewhere, the response to ethnic nationalism now includes the air, cyberspace, and psychological operations.

This paper argues that the wide spread insecurity situation the South East has been experiencing since 2017 resulted to the escalation of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. This is directly linked to the Nigerian state's response to the emergence of ethnic nationalism in the region. The group, Indigenous People of Biafra IPOB, formed in 2012 by its leader Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, is the key driver for ethnic nationalist ideology in the region. This separatist group has over the years gathered a large following and membership which cuts across all strata of socio-political life in the region in their bid to actualise the establishment of the sovereign state of Biafra. Marginalisation, exclusion, inequality, and governance neglect

[15] Suzman, Mark. 1999. Ethnic nationalism and state power: the rise of Irish nationalism, Afrikaner nationalism and Zionism. London. Macmillan.

were the major causes that led to the emergence of IPOB, which now seeks separation of the south east region from the Nigerian state. The ethnic nationalist movement IPOB initially adopted a nonviolent approach to its agitations for a sovereign state, thereby using rallies, peaceful marches, its radio station and the use of leaflets to create awareness and demand a state of its own.

In response, the Nigerian state took a kinetic approach as the use of the military and police forces were extensively applied to checkmate the rise of ethnic nationalist ideology and the group behind its spread, IPOB. Though there are several attacks on IPOB and her members by the security agencies, this paper focuses on the military aspect of the exercise code named Operation Python Dance. The Nigerian Army set up a military exercise cipher named Operation Python Dance II (Egwu Eke II) in the south eastern part of the country. The exercise, which officially covered all the five states in the south east zone lasted from November 28 to December 27, 2016, and according to the Vanguard newspaper, the Army public relations department issued an official statement that the exercise was to nip in the bud, criminal activities in the geo –political zone, particularly, kidnapping, armed robbery, as well as threat to security and peaceful coexistence in the country[16]. In practice the exercise which was supposed to be a confidence building one for the ordinary citizens, became characterized by fear for life by residents of the south east. The fear was fuelled by frightening messages trending on social media as purported laid down conditions for the people of the south east on how they should comport themselves during the one-month military operation. Besides, the unfolding events in Aba and Umuahia IPOBs acclaimed headquarters, both cities in Abia State resulted in people remaining in-doors.

The leader of IPOB Nnamdi Kanu having been arrested several times was released from detention on bail. He was granted bail on the April 25th, 2017 by Justice Binta Nyako of the Federal high court, Abuja.[17] During his time in Abia state serving his bail, Kanu became very popular, inciting his followers and inflaming old secessionist sentiments. This led the Nigerian Army to re-launch the Operation Python Dance in September 2017. The Military raided Kanu's home in Afara-Ukwu, Umuahia in what was known as Operation Python Dance II on the 14th of September, 2017 and later declared IPOB a terrorist organisation. Kanu fled the country and a year later, footage of Kanu emerged in Israel, where he told reporters he was forced to escape Nigeria and that the Nigerian Army killed over 50 IPOB members in its attempt to arrest him at his home during the military operation[18]. Operation Python Dace II was a military exercise carried out in response to IPOBs ethnic nationalism.

These two events were instrumental to the proliferation of SALWs as IPOB which was initially non-violent now mutated from adopting non-violence to embracing acts of violence. Consequently, by December 2020, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, leader of IPOB announced the establishment of a paramilitary wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), allegedly to protect the Igbo against the attacks of armed Fulani herdsmen and to protect IPOB rallies from attacks of the armed forces. Unfortunately, the introduction of IPOB's paramilitary wing has led to an escalation in indiscriminate use of firearms within the region resulting to low intensity armed conflict between ESN and government forces. One of the observed methods of acquiring arms and ammunition is by ambushing unsuspecting military or police personnel, killing them and dispossessing them of their service weapons. This has led to large scale attacks on security

[16] Jimitota, E.M. *et. al* .2016. *South-East burns as Biafra day turns bloody*. Vanguard*,* 31 May

[17] https://www.channelstv.com/2017/04/25/breaking-nnamdi-kanu-granted-bail/

[18] https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/291452-breaking-nnamdi-kanu-confirms-new-video-showing-him-in-jerusalem-lawyer-says.html?tztc=1

personnel in the South East. Resultantly, killings, kidnapping for ransom, high profile assassinations, murder and all sorts of violent crime usurped the stability of the South East geo-political zone. Unfortunately, in the process of this conflict, members of the armed forces became legitimate targets for these militia attacks as they were killed, kidnapped and ambushed seamlessly across the South East and vice versa. The extent to which lives were effortlessly destroyed was made evident in the exposing of the Lokpa Nta cattle market mass killing site[19], at Okigwe LGA along Enugu – Port Harcourt express way, where over eighty decomposing bodies of men, women and children were discovered, some of them headless.

Conclusion

In peace studies, the use of violence to checkmate violence has shown to be a conflict management style with a zero-sum outcome, hence a lose-lose situation. The Nigerian State must as a matter of urgency jettison the Cold War security mentality whereby states approach conflicts within their borders using hard power or military might to portray a powerful image of themselves. Since the collapse of the Iron Curtain and proliferation of armed non-state actors, these armed groups despite their small size have shown ability of destabilising whole regional blocs. Therefore, powerful modern states normally exhaust all diplomatic and peaceful means before engaging militarily. They put human security as their utmost priority, the safety of their citizens and even the offenders amongst them. Hence, Nigeria must see dialogue as a better option to achieving durable peace in the south east region despite the fact that violence has been introduced into the conflict. Peacefully disarming and dialoguing with these separatist groups remains the best option to sustainable peace. This is the position of this paper because unfortunately, the kinetic approach of the Nigerian State is yet to bring peace to the South East rather it has created multiple problems for the region, one major problem being the proliferation of small arms and light weapons which is also linked to widespread drug abuse of Crystal Meth, a banned substance abused by youths of the region.

To end conflict, one must understand its underlying causes, the weakness of the Nigerian State reflects in its lack of political will to negotiate a peaceful settlement to the crisis in the South East due to what scholars in the field term entrapment. Entrapment is one of the dynamics of protracted conflict, which can lead adversaries in a conflict, especially the leadership, into a course of action that involves intensifying the conflict with no chance of changing policy or backing away. Since the Civil War 1967 – 1970, the Nigerian state has sacrificed time, effort, resources and lives in its armed conflict against the ideology of ethnic nationalism in the South East region, yet it persists in the continuation of the conflict, probably, in an effort to save face or the state not admitting to have made a costly mistake in policy making. The end result of the Nigerian State being caught in the dynamics of entrapment is that there is greater difficulty in changing from what Zartman (1985) describes as a winning mentality to a negotiating mentality[20]. Thus, the Nigerian government must re-think is response to ethnic nationalism in the South East region as armed conflict breeds arms proliferation therefore conflict becomes endemic and protracted in nature.

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ACCOUNTABILITY, ETHICAL ORIENTATION AND DEMOCRACY AS PILLARS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Austin A. Mbacchu [1]
Johnson U. Ofoegbu [2]
Kenechukwu K. Makwudo [3]
Department of Philosophy, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria [1]
Department of Educational Foundations/Administration, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri, Nigeria [2]
Philosophy Department, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Nigeria [3]
Corresponding Email: audraustin@gmail.com [1]

Abstract
In the history of Nigeria, there have not been a real and a clear demonstration of accountability, ethical orientation and democracy in Nigeria's to embrace sustainable development. If Nigeria is experienced governance, why should they strongly to survive for development. It is essential to achieving social sustainable development if and only if these three pillars are properly guarded. Accountability, ethical orientation and good governance are ensuring that leaders are responsible for their actions and decisions. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the needs of accountability; ethical orientation and democracy are properly effective to guides decisions-making, promoting integrity and fairness. The three pillars are its principles of participation and transparency that allows citizens to hold their leaders responsible. The paper adopts analytic method and stress the need of a prospective relevance for Nigeria's sustainable development. The paper, argues that the three are inseparable; and where they are divorced, the consequences can be catastrophic. It further argues that democracy constitutes more than just voting. This is possible if citizens exercise their rights as well as impose principles that promote and strengthen democracy. The findings of this paper reveal that it is obvious that accountability, ethical orientation, and democracy occupy a pride of place in the reconstruction of the Nigeria's public sectors. In this light, it is recommended that for Nigeria to function properly, trustworthy leaders who have robust education and have risen above corruption and selfishness are needed to achieve good governance in Nigeria. For this articulated reasons, the paper concluded that, it is reasonable for citizens to expect professional behaviour from public officials, especially the President and his cabinet ministers. For this to happen there is need to

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establish an ethical foundation or moral framework in government, which goes beyond ethical codes of conduct.

Keywords: Accountability, Ethics Orientation, Democracy, Good Governance, Sustainable Development

Introduction

Presently, Nigeria is facing the challenges of accountability, ethical orientation, democracy and good governance among public office holders. It is important to note that Nigeria will find it difficult to thrive with the context of the several crises that could affects accountability, ethical orientation, good governance and democracy in today's leaders in the public sectors. This situation is at variance with the philosophies and legacies of past leaders and nationalists who have contributed to the development of democracy in Nigeria. The world we live in is guided by rules and regulations. They are meant to measure the level of human compliance of our interaction with one another. The institutionalization of this basic legal system contributes greatly to the wellbeing of man in his immediate society. No wonder man is always at the centre of every human activity. When dealing with ethical issues one is faced with the task of appraising, evaluating and analyzing the actions of others.

In Nigeria, majority of the citizens are beginning to give upon the country for very obvious reasons. There is high spread of unethical practices in the country. All the ills are possible because of the presence in corruption. But issues of good governance and public service predate the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This is evident in the writings of Plato and Aristotle, respectively, translated by Lee (1988) and Ross (1992). In the Republic, Plato defended the necessity of government by stating that it enforced laws and resolved disagreements among citizens. For Lee 1988; 2014, Government also make deliberates decisions about public policy. Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics maintained that there is a relationship between politics and ethics. For Aristotle, human beings are social and political animals; therefore, it is necessary to live and participate actively in the society and influence public policy. Taken this idea from Aristotle's prescriptions on how politic and ethical presentation seems to believe, it means that Nigeria should embrace some instance of living in Aristotle's presentation. In the Nicomachean ethics, Aristotle understands and defines politics simply as the highest good attained by action. Therefore, action is the final end for citizens or humans to flourish. For him, human flourishing meant the good life or living well. Held (2008) argues that for ancient Greek philosophers, citizenship had everything to do with active participation and involvement in government matters which will attract sustainable development.

Clarification of Concepts

Democracy: Etymologically, the term "democracy" is a combination of two Greek words, demos, meaning "people" and kratein meaning "the rule" (McNeese 2015:1). Thus, the original meaning of democracy was the "rule of people by the people" (McNeese 2015). Understood from this perspective, democracy involves the will of the governed through active participation. However, as much as democracy seems to be the generally accepted system of governance, this has not been always the case, especially in the time of the Ancient Greeks. For instance, Plato and Aristotle among others had their reservations about adopting democracy as the best system of governing and for the good reasons (Held 2008). Therefore, people should not naïvely accept that democracy which is the best system of governing. Democracy as a system of governance ensures that citizens participate in decision-making and hold their leaders accountable. It

provides mechanisms for citizens to express their opinions choose their representatives and participate in the legislative process. Democracy also fosters transparency and accountability as elected officials who are directly responsible to their people. The concept of democracy is arguably that which is most used in politics and social philosophy and many other disciplines. However, democracy is not easy to define as there are many definitions as there are political systems.

One of the most eminent political scientists of all time, Machiavelli (1983), concluded that all systems of government could promote a tenable political system which is civic in nature. Therefore, it is practical to use the plural form and refer to "democracies". Consequently, Akindele et al (2012) correctly assert that democracy means different things to different people given their diverse socio-political, socioeconomic, ideological and cultural backgrounds. In his work entitled *Strategic Political Planning*, Duvenhage (1998:2) rightly observes the interconnectedness between democratization and democracy. According to him, democratization means transformation brought about by a government when moving from an undemocratic dispensation into a new democratic order. Duvenhage (1998:11) further articulates that a democratic dispensation is characterized by the following: limited government; responsible government; constitutionalism; political and other freedoms as well as regular free and fair elections.

Ethical Orientation: Ethical governance is the foundation of responsible and fair decision-making. It involves upholding ethical principles, including justice, equality, and rule of law. This includes maintaining the integrity of public institutions and promoting good governance practices. This three pillars such as accountability, ethical orientation, democracy and good governance work together to create a system where governance is responsive to the needs of the people, promotes social justice and fosters sustainable development, by ensuring, that leaders are accountable, ethical and democratic in nature. Nigeria can build a more sustainable and equitable society for all its citizens. Democratic ethics can also be viewed as ethics of democracy, this can be defined as "those considerations of morals and rights upon which democracy must be founded and according to which it must be built to be right or wrong" (Clancy, n.d.) Democratic ethics are the ideals, principles that guide the practice of democracy in any human society.

Good Governance: Good governance is a way of managing public affairs and resources to ensure equitable and sustainable development while upholding human rights and the rule of law. It involves transparent and accountable processes, participation of all needs of the society. Ultimately, good governance aims to create a just and prosperous society through effective and ethical leadership**.** In essence, good governance is about creating a system where power is used responsible, resources are managed effectively and all members of society have a voice and a state in their collective future. There are extensive and pluralistic definitions of the term governance. Sharma, Sadana and Harpect define governance as authority, controls or power of government is exercised in mobilizing a society's social and economic resources, to add the issues of public interest. As governance, leadership and development in Nigeria strives to meet with its expectation, the attachment of good governance will definitely propel it to the forefront. There is the need to apply new public management. Good governance entails balance governance with conducive and uninterrupted relationship between the government and the civil society as active player. The challenge of good governance requires government activities to be reinvented, bureaucracy to be re-positioned, civil society activities to be re-energized with a social motive. Re-invented governance should be visionary, egalitarian and energized in a

manner with less machines like and less hierarchical structure and procedure. To be true, most countries in Africa is not developing but under developing: for the little development in Nigeria is fast dilapidating

Accountability: This is the principle that requires that leaders should be held responsible for their actions, decisions and the outcomes of public policy. It includes the promotion of citizen's rights. Accountability promotes transparency where information is accessible to the public and allowing them to scrutinize government actions. There is no way good governance can be discussed without introducing the ethical principle of accountability. This point to the importance of accountability in modern democracy and the role it plays in promoting good governance. The absence of accountability in talks on democracy is like running a motor-vehicle on a flat tyre. What then is accountability, and what role does it play in modern democracy? Put differently, what does it mean to say citizens should hold government accountable? To answer these questions, it is necessary to begin by defining the concept of accountability. This section interrogates the concept of "accountability" within a moral and legal framework. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 subsections 91(1) and 92(2) calls for accountability from the President, Deputy President and cabinet ministers as individuals and collectively. For the sake of clarity, the Constitution states: The President and the deputy President and each minister are individually accountable to Parliament and the entire nation for the exercise and performance of their power and duties. The Constitution is explicit about what individual accountability entails. According to Rautenbach & Malherbe (2004:178), individual accountability entails the following:

i. A duty to explain to Parliament how the powers and duties under his or her control have been exercised and performed.
ii. A duty to acknowledge that a mistake has been made and to promise to rectify the matter.
iii. A duty to resign if personal responsibility has been accepted. Hossain (1999:84) contends that accountability means the ability to "accept responsibility for decisions and the foreseeable consequences of actions and inactions and for setting examples for others". Accordingly, wherever, the term "accountability" is used, it will be in accordance with these two closely connected definitions. Accountability implies that Parliament must be provided with full disclosure in order for citizens to know the truth. In any society, holding citizens responsible for their actions in public service and the private sector is significant to ensure some level of accountability. With regard to public officials participants pointed out those mechanisms must be devised to hold leaders responsible when they use public resources in ways that society considers unacceptable. To that end, they noted that any public accountability system should include periodic competition and a clear set of rules and expectations. Participants emphasized the notion that the principle of accountability essential to democracy requires exposing the truth with stated and enforced consequences for violating the rules without exception even for those in power. The lack of accountability in Nigeria has led to the gross misuse of public resources. For example, single-party systems in Nigeria do not allow for much in the way of accountability. The effect has been rampant corruption and the deterioration of socioeconomic conditions—indications that people in Nigeria were governed without being able to control their governors. One participant argued: "Besides financial and economic accountability, there is also a need for electoral accountability for the right to recall representatives if they do not deliver on their promises and don't govern well."

Lack of Accountability and Transparency

Lack of accountability in politics in many cases causes distortions. In the end, such distortion in combination results in unsatisfactory representation of interests of broad groups of voters. Their relation with the establishment is severed at best, and negative in extreme situations. This unwillingness to take core decisions in the contemporary Western world is referred to as political inertia. Transparency is a value which is it impossible to overemphasize. It is a precondition for real democracy. Voters can only make an informed choice if they are informed about the management of public funds. Publicized information improves not only political competition but also the quality of the decisions. The lowest quality of the decision is associated with deprivation of necessary information, which leads to the collapse of active processes of oversight. In practice, the unlimited right of the public has many restraints. There are legal restrictions and these can be circumvented, e.g. by populist reclassification of information as secret or confidential. After all, unlike a free market, the government processes some elements of secrecy. The process of regulation in a pluralist democracy should be open to full debate, but governments cannot govern effectively without a degree of confidentiality.

Ethical Practice, Morality and Democracy

Tracing the etymology of these concepts Grenz (1997) had written "Ethics is derived from the Greek word *ethos* which means custom or an invocation of the way of life of a given people, while morality is derived from a Latin word *moralis* which means custom or habits. Ethics and morality is often used by scholars interchangeably to mean the something. This usage in ordinary communication may be allowed, but technically they have different meaning. In ordinary language, ethics and morality both mean custom or habit. In order to appreciate the interactive effect of ethics on the practice of democracy, it is imperative to understand the relationship between ethics, morality and democracy. Those who do not link these three variables tend to simply cry of poor governance in Nigeria. Most Nigerians attempts to link democracy with freedom. Freedom is understood in Nigeria as "the opportunity to do what anybody desires". This way of conceiving freedom is erroneous and must have come from ignorance which is the portion of majority of Nigerians. It is based on this misconception that the thread running through the three key concepts must be identified and given the needed interpretations.

To leave the interpretation at this point is to complicate issues. In order to delineate our minds from the outstanding confusion, it is important to state that ethics which is theoretically based is concerned with the use of philosophical methods of investigations to establish rational grounds for either approving or disapproving human actions. According to Cyril O.Imo (2007) morality deals with norms governing human conduct while ethics is the effort to reason or justify these norms". Anjov (2008) writing on this relation argued that "both ethics and morality are critical tools for evaluating the rightness or wrongness of human conduct as such conduct relations to the individual or members of the whole community. What actually makes this study interesting is the fact that it is situated in Nigeria where the people are notoriously religious and indeed epitomizes what John S. Mbiti (1991) wrote of Nigeria: He carries it to the fields where he is sowing the seeds or harvesting a new crop, he takes it with him to the beer parlour (*burukutu joint*) or to attend a funeral ceremony and if he is educated, he takes religion with him to the examination room at school or in the University, if he is a politician, he takes it to the house of parliament. The attitude of the Nigeria reveals that religion permeates the whole of human existence. Every word or deed a person performs is weighed by using the religious scale. This is the bases for which S. N. Ezeanya (1980) summed up the relation of life and religion for

the Africans in these words, "life is religion and religion is life". Relating our understanding of religion and life with what we said of ethics and morality earlier, then it is not out of place to state that religion is a unique determinant of human conduct. Any attempt to remove it from the way we behave, the basis of life and survival is destroyed. There is a very strong assumption that democracy is both a way of life and a form of government. Considering the objectives of our study, we would prefer to go with the description of democracy, "as a way of life". This stand is taken for very obvious reasons. Ethics, morality, religion are all variously considered as "way of life of a people". For all the family social, political, purely religious, interest of this secular life and the permanent enjoyment for every believer in the hereafter, all are embodied in a great complete organ, being protected by Islam and breathing its spirit into it.

Going by this understanding, it becomes symmetrically impossible to divorce ethics, morality and religion from the practice of democracy at least in Nigeria. The simple reason is that ethical practice; moral, religious and democratic values are one and the same thing. When the ethicist, theologian, and political scientist speak of transparency, equality, consultations, fairness and so begin to emerge for proper purposes. They are not dealing with different values. Thus, these values are central to the ethicist, theologian and practitioners of democracy. According to Watt (1977) these values add to the value of human dignity. Hear him: Basic human individual freedom is prerequisite for a healthy well-balanced society and Islam encourages the establishment of such a society in which the following of human personality from types of bondage and slavery is manifested. It declares in the most emphatic terms that no human being has the right to endorse others.

Philosophy for Good Governance in Nigeria's Social Development

Philosopher in the society should make deliberate efforts to address this challenge from the home to the society at larger. In view of the pervasiveness of bad governance in Nigeria, it would take a long time to overcome it. In addition, Philosophers in institutions of higher learning especially should be intentional in re-orienting the youth to desire to change the society for the better and to maximize any future state leadership positions as means of achieving the great objective. In this regard, youth should be encouraged to imbibe discipline and sacrifice, thinking of ways they can make significant contributions to their societies. This is also indicated that youth should be equipped to know that indulging in anti-vices would hinder them from personal development as well as their future usefulness to their societies because they are the future of tomorrow. Social development is a very broad concept requiring impacts from various disciplines. Philosophy underscores the improvement of life for the people of any given society to the development and advancement of the society. Social development requires motivation especially with reference to re-orientation. This is a legacy with Philosophy has bequeathed to history and it is the essence of social development. Philosophy in its practical dimension identifies with the context in which it functions and air at bringing significant to the people and their situation. People needs to be motivated so that the will key into the re-orientation efforts so that the effort would have impact on the society. Philosophy can help in the re-orientation process of the society re-orientation relates to human values which is a part of domain of Philosophy. Several Philosophers has contributed in discussing on how to improve in the political conditions of the times with a few formulating political for governing societies for the time of plate. The higher order thinking speaks of critical thinking, the capacity to ask fundamental questions about realities the development of any society is dependent on quality of their thinking and articulation this ability to think down to the root is a task proper to philosophy.

Nigeria and the Democratic Experience

Democracy in Nigeria has been paradoxical. It means that bargaining and maneuvering are allowed in the contemporary society, particularly among the various interest groups who claim to be born to rule. It means that in Nigeria the few does what smooth the collective interests irrespective of the feelings of the masses. In contemporary Nigerian society, the nation's law-makers are so incompetent and they are corrupt in themselves that they have lost of moral legitimacy to compel Nigerian presidents to make amends. Existentially, democracy is described as the highest form of civilization. For democracy to work there must be a clear expression of the right to freedom of expression, independence of the judiciary, an unhindered opposition and a periodic return to the electorate for assessment in the form of an election. Dividends of democracy are the proceeds for the voters (electorates) who have given something (his/her vote) earlier and must be given something in return. Democracy is based on the tenets of liberty and equality. Equality is the cornerstone of every democratic society which aspires to the attainment of social justice and human rights. The popularity of democracy would suggest that the principles of liberty and equality on which it is based are not just accidents or the results of ethnocentric prejudice, but are in fact discoveries about the nature of man. Democracy is based on the desire for equal recognition or recognition by equals' Democratic constitutionalism as characterized by the principle of liberalism.

Implications of Ethical Lapses in Democracy for Nigeria's Sustainable Development

The problem of development in Nigeria does not result from lack of competent personnel or absence of adequate financial resources. Rather it is more associated with lack of democratic ethics, which is an ethical lapse in democracy. To start with, our democracy is not people-oriented. Democracy is viewed as "a government of the people, by the people and for the people. However, in the Nigerian context, there seems to be an exception to this definition. The people who are supposed to be the fulcrum of democracy are not only marginalized, but also thoroughly alienated. The democracy in Nigeria is therefore, a government of few families, their friends as well as their business collaborators" (frarrigton 2011), as opposed to the democratic virtue of popular participation. These few people live in extreme affluence while the majority of citizens wallow in abject poverty as opposed to democratic virtual of welfarism. Yet, it is business as usual. According to Ayobolu (n.d.) "there is no clear demarcation between democracy and oligarchy in Nigeria. And, there is always an agreement amongst the colluding business class and the ruling elite on how to share the boot of government or what is commonly referred to as the proverbial national cake.

Nigeria's fortune is depreciating, some few individuals at the corridors of power and their cronies are growing fatter at the expense of Nigerians". Another ethical lapse in Nigeria's democracy is the inability of the electoral body to conduct free and fair election. Free and fair is one of the virtues of democracy. Every contestant is determined to rig the election in his own favour. And, where rigging is made impossible, violence, arson, kidnapping and murder of opponents are introduced into the electoral game (Ajayi, 1998). Electoral competition then becomes "a do or die affair" as witnessed in the elections of 1964, 1979, 1983, 1999, 2003, 2007 and to date. In this regard, electoral process becomes an avenue for manipulations and all sorts of electoral malpractices. Electoral officials are bribed before elections so as to guarantee their partial support. The security agents are also bribed to ensure peaceful atmosphere for stealing of peoples votes. Refusal to accept electoral defeat in good faith is a lapse in our democracy, and the absence of rule of law also serves as ethical lapse in Nigeria's democracy. It is to be noted that in Nigeria, democracy has not achieved much success in bestowing to the people

their basic needs or even the requirement of participation in decision making. Neither has it been providing the peaceful atmosphere that can bring about development and the well being of the people (Agagu, 2004). The democratic experiments we have had in Nigeria are only democratic in name and on paper without ethics by which it can be driven. Neither do they meet the demands of liberal democracy foisted on the country by the western world let alone of the inclusive nature expected of a developing country under unique circumstances. The type of democracy operating in the country does not concede any aspect of decision making to the masses. Even the common one which is that of electoral choice is often derived through rigging and harassment. It is not surprising that our own form of democracy does not in actual sense grant concrete political social and economic rights. It is a democracy that heightens conflict crude use of force, intimidation and discord and the underdevelopment of the state and the citizenry (Agagu, 2004).

Recommendations

Accountability, ethical orientation, democracy and good governance are interwoven parameters that will ensure the development of any entity including the Nigerian. Achieving good governance in a developing country like Nigeria requires accountability, ethical orientation and democracy to the people and which it requires the people, especially the leadership at every level to have the systematic capacity to deliver services maintain laws order and manage the myriad of natural human and capital resources effectively. Good governance minimizes the persistence of bad policy and also enhances policy implementation which depends upon the quality of a public institution and better accountability structure. Leader to enhance good governance in Nigeria will be those who are intellectually sound that have robust education and can implement welfare ideologies and activities and this will result in good governance the overall development in Nigeria. Democracy is development imbued. The more democratic ethics in a society is higher the dividends of democracy; is better to the level of sustainable development. Development can hardly be felt or achieved when democratic ethics are not imbibed and adhered to the leaders and administrators. This is because the accommodation of ethics and democracy enhances performance and facilitate development. Democracy, ethical orientation, good governance and accountability are inseparable for developmental sake in Nigeria. This components of development such as; discipline, commitment, honesty, transparency, accountability, ethics, and good governance etc are peaceful co-existence. The success of one leads to the success of the other and vice versa.

Conclusion

In conclusion, accountability, ethical orientation, good governance and democracy are essential as pillars of sustainable development in Nigeria and this contribute to the social sustainability by promoting transparency, fairness and public participation. By strengthening these principles, Nigeria can build a more just, equitable and stable society for all its citizens. This paper concludes and argued that ethical orientations, democracy, good governance and accountability are integral parts of promoting and sustainable in social development in Nigeria. The paper further stresses the importance of the active participation of citizens which is essential in sustaining and strengthening democracy in Nigeria. Absence of democratic ethics and norms has really affected development in Nigeria. The country principally has remained a third world and dependent country in crisis of various kinds which is not making any progress forward or development. The furore over resource control, power shift, revenue allocation, Sharia issue, rotational presidency, creation of more states, terrorism, insecurity etc. are evidences of lack of democratic ethics and norms in Nigerian society. It is therefore the contention of this paper that

for development to thrive in Nigeria, the attitude and orientation of its political elites must be changed. Both the leaders and followers must learn the art and discipline of democracy cultivate the habit and virtue of honesty and imbibe democratic ethos as these remain the only antidote to the crises of Nigeria development.

Nigeria government should achieve this aim and affirmed it. Virtue that is learned through practice until excellence is achieved and becomes habitual. It has been argued that ensuring good governance and democracy imposes obligations on both government officials and citizens must actively play their roles. The moral and political obligation for government is to make deliberations that would benefit larger society; whereas citizens are required to participate actively and challenge governments to explain their decisions and actions. The ideal of good governance through the appointment of competent ministers has been argued for since deficiency in competence undermines good governance and accountability. In order for government officials to abide by the rules, there must be a structure in government that is strictly appointed for advising the president and his cabinet. Also discussed in this paper, is the value of ethical orientation and a virtuous leader in promoting good governance and the view that good leaders come from a good society.

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PROLIFERATION OF PRAYER HOUSES AND HEALING HOMES IN ONNA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF AKWA IBOM STATE: A SOCIO- RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE

John Akpan Johnson
Department of Religious and Cultural Studies, University of Uyo, Nigeria
Email: akpanjohn681@gmail.com

Abstract
There is great concern over the ways in which prayer houses and healing homes are being established in our contemporary society. Proliferation of prayer houses and healing homes entails multiplicity of prayer and healing homes with each founder claiming divine origin of his or her ministry. Thus, the astronomic proliferation of these houses and healing homes in our contemporary society in recent time is so worrisome and has created wrong images for the church in the society. In this paper, effort is made to examine the causes as well as the socio-religious implications of proliferation of prayer houses and healing homes in Onna Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Methods of study adopted for this work are survey and phenomenological methods. Findings from this study revealed that the glamour and flaunting of wealth by many prayer houses and healing homes founders and purveyors have made them to become desperate in establishing prayer houses and healing homes in every nook and cranny in Onna LGA. The result of the findings equally revealed that these houses and homes are regarded as solution centers by many people. However, the study also raised concerns about the potential exploitation of the vulnerable individuals or ignorant members of the public, the blurring of the link/lines between spirituality and commerce, and the implications for public health and social welfare policies in Onna LGA of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Thus, it is concluded from the study that managers of prayer houses and healing homes should guard against commercialization of healings and prayers. Finally, it is strongly recommended that government should also introduce proper licensing of prayer houses and healing homes in Onna LGA to checkmate their excesses.

Keywords: Proliferation, Prayer, Healing, Onna, Exploitation.

Introduction
A survey of religious space has shown that one of the phenomena in Christendom that has steered up concerns among adherents of the faith, onlookers, academics among others is the

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seeming unbridled proliferation of prayer houses and healing homes. Proliferation of prayer houses and healing homes is becoming a world-wide phenomenon in the 21st Century. It has been observed that some of the founders and purveyors of these houses and homes earn a living from there and it seems to be a thriving business as evident in the proliferation. Proliferation of prayer houses and healing homes refers to rapid multiplication of prayer houses and healing homes in the society. It is common knowledge to notice that prayer houses and healing homes are on the increase in our contemporary society. Proliferation of prayer houses and healing homes has therefore brought more chaos and disadvantages than the expected gains that religion is expected to offer. This is because one of the purposes of religion is to bring succor to mankind but in our own idea and worldview it is relatively subjective. Many people see this movement as a "commercial venture". By this act, these houses and homes have been turned to business ventures with different names, missions and ideas without any positive impact on the society. However, Akwa Ibom State like any other region in Nigeria has been witnessing the agglomeration of autonomous and non-centralized Christian religious groups and movement many years ago. Although Church proliferation in a normal sense is not wrong because of Jesus' command in Mathew 28:19-20, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" but many founders of churches are doing so for material reasons, arrogant as well as quest for fame (KJV).

Furthermore, many founders are taking advantages of gullible miracle seekers, who will do anything just to have respite from their troubles. It is very clear that many founders of prayer houses and healing homes are selling religious tokens acclaimed to possess powers capable of bringing solutions to the problems of the users. Such items include oil, salt, handkerchiefs, water among others. Moreover, the astronomic proliferation of these houses and homes in recent time has created wrong images for the church in the society. The majority of people see the church as a "commercial venture". There are also many clear cases where the founders are taking advantages of these prayer houses and their positions to exploit their innocent members. There are many other cases too in which ministers desecrate the sanctuary with jesting and other disdainful behaviours. Some founders of prayer houses and healing homes are noted for various nefarious acts ranging from embezzlement of church funds, extortion of money from members to abuse of positions or offices among others. Thus, Nnadi (2013) writes in this regard that this age has recorded the most explosive religious crusades, the most populous religious pilgrimages, the most resurgence of the phenomenon of proliferation of churches, concrete structure and flamboyant edifices that manifest the existence and physical vitality of various faiths. Yet, the society of this 'religious' magnitude launches herself into the self-destructive forces of moral laxity. With this, one can say without fear of contradiction that our contemporary generation is suffocating in the hands of various shades of religious aberrations fashioned by morally bankrupt deviants who enthrone moral depravity over virtues of the hallowed teachings of Jesus Christ. Based on the above observations, the present researcher became interested in the evaluation of the realities of proliferation of prayer houses and healing homes in Onna Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State on the simple logic that it will bring to light the causes, consequences and other dynamics of proliferation of prayer houses and healing homes in the area.

Concept of Proliferation

Proliferation of prayer house and healing homes describes the multiplicity of Christian religious groups**.** Church proliferation is a process that results in a new (local) Christian church being established. It should be distinguished from church development, where a new service, new worship center or fresh expression is created that is integrated into an already established congregation. For a local church to be planted, it must eventually have a separate life of its own and be able to function without its parent body, even if it continues to stay in relationship denominationally or through being part of a network. Christians especially the missionary and clergy men have always believed that the most effective way to reach the world for Christ is by starting new churches.

The global society today is undergoing significant constant proliferation and planting of churches which have brought not only changing values, but also greater source of solutions to people's problems. This rapid multiplication of churches is borne out of the understanding that, there is freedom of religious worship. Central to the constant planting and proliferation of churches is the issues of its environmental and religious effects on the people in the society. Every Christian Churches are noted to be springing up at an alarming and unprecedented rate in all available spaces, shops, warehouses, hotels, sitting rooms, uncompleted building, both private and public school premises to mention a few. The proliferation of churches in Nigeria today is as a result of numerical strength of churches which was a result of church growth. This rapid multiplication of churches according to Ibiyinka (2011) borne out of the understanding that there is freedom of religious worship in Nigeria. The society is witnessing proliferation of churches which has brought changes in values, created job employment, Western Education by establishing both Elementary and Tertiary Institution and Hospitals. Moreso, it is equally a great source of solution to people's problems.

Concept of Prayer

Prayer is a universal medium of communication between man and God or object of his veneration. According to Onunwa (2005: 54), prayer is an invocation or act that seeks to activate with an object of veneration through deliberate communication. In other words, the term "prayer" refers to an act of intercession or supplication directed towards God or object of man's veneration. Moreover, prayer can also have the purpose of adoration or thanksgiving, and is closely associated with more abstract forms of meditation that required rapt attention and mental concentration. Prayer can take a variety of forms. For instance, it can be part of a set of ritual or liturgy and it can be performed alone or in groups. (Onunwa, 2005: 67). As opined by Ukpong (2019:65), prayer is rooted in the idea of divine providence. It is an affirmation of a superior Intelligence which controls the affairs of the universe. It helps a believer to discover his or her position in God's design and provision. The act of prayer is attested in written sources as early as five thousand years ago. Today, most major religions in the world involve prayer in one way or another; some ritualize the act, requiring a strict sequence of actions or placing a restriction on who is permitted to pray, while others teach that prayer may be practiced spontaneously by anyone at any time. Scientific studies regarding the use of prayer have mostly concentrated on its effect on the healing of sick or injured people. Thus, the efficacy of prayer in faith healing has been evaluated in numerous studies, with contradictory results. Simply put, Prayer is conversing with God or petition and intimacy towards God. It is a communion between God and His creatures (Onunwa, 2005: 66).

Concept of Healing

Healing comes from the meaning and purpose which people attach to life and experience that helps them to cope with pain. When sickness strikes, and people's hope and meaning are crumbling beneath them, they search for something more substantial to anchor them. According to Adigo (2019), healing is a process of bringing together aspects of one's self, body mind and spirit, at deeper levels of inner knowing, leading towards integration and balance with each aspect having equal importance and value. Faith healing is an attempt to use religious or spiritual insights such as prayer to prevent illness, to cure disease, or to improve health. According to Egnew (2005), those who attempt healing by prayer mental practices, spiritual insights, always say that they can summon supernatural help or assistance on behalf of the sick (Adigo, 2019).

Healing may also refer to the process of reconciling broken human relationships, and to the development of a just social and political order among races or nations. Pastoral healing on the other hand is the process of being restored to bodily wholeness, emotional well-being, mental functioning, and spiritual aliveness. Medical healing is defined in terms of developing a sense of personal wholeness that involves physical, mental emotional, social and spiritual aspects of human experience (Egnew, 2005). Here, healing can be either orthodox or traditional, which includes use of herbs. Similarly**,** psychological conception of healing involves reordering an individual's sense of position in the universe and defines healing as a process in the service of evolution of the whole personality towards ever greater and more complex wholeness. Furthermore, the concept of healing among the Africans is derived from their perception of the aetiology of sickness. The Africans have an integral understanding of creation, with a harmonious membership or union between the gods, the ancestors and the living human beings. Life goes on well when this mutual relationship is intact, but when there is a crack in the relationship, there is a consequent disharmony and disintegration. The result is sickness or any other form of misfortune on the part of individual who is believed to be responsible through his or her omission and commission. This is believed to be the principal cause of sickness. Healing therefore follows the process, the restoration of the broken relationship through rite and rituals.

Concept of Prayer Houses and Healing Homes

As opined by Ekarika (2017) prayer houses and healing homes – *Ufok Akam* are offshoots of traditional African healing houses just like the neo-primal movements but they abhor anything diabolic or demonic. They comfortably fit into the mould of religious movement but not as churches properly so-called because often practitioners and adherents have recourse to divine assistance for the cures that are performed. They are similarly eclectic, syncretistic and exogenous and draw from a large range of sources including Christianity, Islam, Occultism, Oriental magic, Astrology and Metaphysics. Some homes are homeopathic and employ botanical medical clinics, physicians among others. According to Hackett (2004), such healing homes have places where patients often stay, the healer having recourse to traditional healing practices and mixing them with whatever religious direction they consider appropriate. During healing session, mysterious invocations are chanted and rituals are performed to ensure the repeal of the ailment which is considered to be a manifestation of evil. Often, the healing is carried out in such a way as can impress upon the patients and the public that the pastor-healer has specific gifts and charisma which come from some other enigmatic sources only acquired by the healer (Ekarika, 2017).

Ethnographic Sketch of Onna Local Government Area

Onna Local Government Area was created out of the larger Eket Local Government Area in 1989 by the Military Administration of Gen. Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, former Military President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Atteh and Umoh, 2014: 35). Its name comes from acronym of the four predominant clans in the area: Oniong, Nnung Ndem, Awa Afaha and Awa. Onna is bounded by the east by Eket, west by Mkpat Enin and south to Eastern Obolo and Ibeno. The people of Onna are predominantly farmers. Onna is not a host to any oil company while search is ongoing for oil discovery. The state government is doing its best to claim neighbouring community ancestral lands and draw it boundary toward the Atlantic Ocean, so as to enhance and benefit from the PIB bill sign by the Federal government (Atteh and Umoh, 2014: 35). The local government is also home to a number of highly intellectual populations who have made numerous impacts in the community, nationwide and in the diasporas.

Onna Local Government is abundantly blessed with natural resources. First of these natural resources worth mentioning is fresh water. Mankind through ages has been struggling for good quality water for use by humans, animals, plant and industries. In Onna, water is always available in flowing streams serving majority of communities. The fairly generous rainfall most of the year' result in flows of the streams given reliance on surface water for domestic uses and industrial purposes. Nature has also endowed Onna people with the presence of a number of minerals. It is part of the basement complex which is important source of minerals and provides rich quality stones for building and engineering construction. It is blessed with various kinds of clay particularly good ceramics and pottery (Atteh and Umoh, 2014). Moreover, the people of Onna by way of worship are predominantly Christians. They believe in the existence of one Supreme Being. Outside this, there are Traditional worshippers with their unique shrines for their *Idiong, Ndem, Ibok* etc. Their belief is that, though they are different they are messengers of Supreme Being that see to the peace stability and well- being of the area.

The villages in Onna are: Ikwe, Ikot Akpatek, Ikot Ebidang, Ikot Ebekpo, Abat, Ndon Eyo, Mkpok. Okat, Ikot Edor, Ukpana, Mkpaeto, Ikot Esor, Ikot Eko Ibon, Okom, Ikot Ndudot, Ikot Ebiere, Ikot Udo, Ikot Nkan, Ikot Ndua Iman, Ikot Obong Ishiet, Ikot Akpan Ishiet, Atiamkpat, Awa Iman, Nnung Oku, Ntan Ide Ekpe, Awa Ndon, Awa Atai, Ikot Abasi Oniong, Ikot Mbong, Afaha Ikot Idem Udo, Afaha Ikot Akpan Mkpe, Afaha Atai, Afaha Ikot Nkan, Abak Ishiet, Ini- Ikwe and Ini- Edor (Atteh and Umoh, 2014: 12).

Before the emergence of Christianity in Onna, there was indigenous religion which was handed over by the fore-bears. The core premise indigenous religion was loyalty to the ancestors and accompanying rituals that is expressed by this loyalty. It has been said that Africa including Onna is a *terra religiosa- religious people*. Religion indeed has a profound impact on the attitudes, behaviour, plans, and destinies of the people. At all levels, collective and individual, the indigenous religions of the people inspire reactions and dictate options. Traditions and customs have been religiously expressed and persist for Centuries (Sidbe, 1991:87).

The Traditional Religion of the people during this period centered mostly on the pouring of libation, sacrifice, worship, consultation, communication and invocation of the God of Heaven (*Abasi Enyong*), God of the Earth (*Abasi Isong*) and the Supreme Being (*Abasi Ibom*) by the constitutional and religious king/head of a particular community who was known from the ancient times as Obong-Ikpaisong (the word 'Obong Ikpaisong' directly interpreted means King of the Principalities of the Earth' or 'King of the Earth and the principalities' or traditional rulers) (Atteh and Umoh, 2014:23). There was also the appeasement of the God of the Heaven (*Abasi*

Enyong) and the God of the Earth (*Abasi Isong)* through various invisible or spiritual entities (*mme Ndem*) of the various Ibibio Division such as *Atakpo Ndem Uruan Inyang, Afia Anwan, Ekpo/Ekpe Onyong, Etefia Ikono, Awa Itam,* etc. The Priests of these Deities (*me Ndem*) were the Temple Chief Priests/Priestesses of the various Ibibio Divisions (Atteh and Umoh, 2014:24). A particular Ibibio Division could consist of many interrelated autonomous communities or kingdoms ruled by an autonomous Priest-King called *Obong-Ikpaisong*, assisted by heads of the various large families (*Mbong Ekpuk*) which make up the Community. These have been the ancient political and religious system of Ibibio people from time immemorial (Talbot, 1967:56).

Tradition as interpreted in Onna language means *Ikpa isong*. Tradition (Ikpaisong) in Onna custom embodies the religious and political system. The word 'Obong' in Ibibio language means 'Ruler, King, Lord, Chief, Head' and is applied depending on the office concerned. In reference to the Obong-Ikpaisong, the word 'Obong' means 'King'. In reference to the Village Head, the word means 'Chief'. In reference to the Head of the Families (*Obong Ekpuk*), the word means 'Head'. In reference to God, the word means 'Lord'. In reference to the Head of the various societies e.g. 'Obong Obon', the word means 'Head or Leader' (Uya, 1994:45).

Roll Call of Prayer Houses and Healing Homes in Onna LGA

1. Utibeabasi Deliverance Ministry, Ikot Eko
2. Bread of Heaven Ministry, Ikot Nkan
3. Quick Recovery Ministry, Ikwe
4. Rock Word Deliverance Ministry, Afaha Ikot Akpan Mkpe
5. Raw Power Ministry, Mkpaeto
6. Royal House of Grace Church, Awa Iman
7. Word of Life Ministry, Ntan Ide Ekpe
8. City of Freedom Ministry, Ikot Abasi oniong
9. Kingdom Lovers Assembly, Ikot Ndudot
10. God of Wonders Evangelical Church, Ukpana
11. Pure Solution Ministry, Ikot Mbong
12. New Life Gospel, Ikot Eko Ibon
13. Providence Ministry, UkpanGarden City Church, Ikot Obong Ishiet
14. Clear Vision Ministry, Ikot Ndudot
15. Heavenly Anointed Ministry, Ikot Nkan
16. Direct Encounter Assembly, Ikot Abasi oniong
17. Hope Celebration Church, Awa Atai
18. Eternal Life Gate Ministry, Mkpaeto
19. The Tree of Life Church, Okat
20. His Word Assembly, Ikot Edor
21. The Zion of Grace Ministry, Ikwe
22. Bread of Believers Assembly, Ikot Edor
23. Holy Ghost Miracle Home, Ikwe
24. Higher Height Christian Centre, Mkpok
25. Obot Uboho Abasi Healing Home, Ikwe
26. Testimony Miracle Healing Home, Ikot Udo
27. God of Power Ministry, Ebanna
28. The Grace Assembly, Ikot Epang

Causes of Proliferation of Prayer Houses and Healing Homes in Onna LGA

i. **Materialism:** The glamour and flaunting of wealth by many prayer houses and healing homes founders and purveyors have made them to become desperate as well as equate success in service to God to mean status and much acquisition of material things. They take advantages of gullible miracle seekers, who will do anything just to have respite from their troubles. The extent some of these houses and homes founders or purveyors go to, in order to satisfy their curious followers and rip them of their monies is dastardly. Essien (2010) puts it more succinctly that the mad craze for money has made some people willing to establish prayer houses and healing homes for their own benefits and interest. Though one might be tempted to say that there is no difference between the quest for money and that of materialism, but the truth of the matter is that, both walk hand in hand. In the early 30s down to late 70s, simplicity and modesty were the watchword of the pastors. The pastors or reverends as the case may be have relatively simple methods of worship and living Spartan lives. It is also expedient to point out here that, they (clerics) do not own properties like houses, fanciful cars and fat bank accounts. All that mattered to them was modesty if and whenever they wanted to acquire any of the basic needs and nothing more. The experience of the church now in Nigeria since say the middle of the 80s down to the present time is a clear indication that there is a sharp departure from the original land mark of reaching the unreached and placing of genuine emphasis on the hereafter. Most of these preachers' message promised health and wealth to those who believe. Most of their programmes are politically inclined, centered on this world rather than eternity. Bulk of their theologies is experiential and emotional, highly influenced by human philosophy and mental psychology, minimizing doctrines and ideas. Their theologies are as well shallow, fraudulent and manipulative in nature. Of a truth, the level of material quest by Nigerian Christians, especially clergy men is radically in deviance, and inimical to the values and life of the early Church. Consequently, the position of Raphael (2013) becomes relevant here in that; "a new kingdom in which treasures are found here on earth is preferred to a delayed gratification, and treasure in the heavenly kingdom of 'the other world'. This scenario places the Nigerian church in a dilemma and frightening challenge. In the beginning, the religious trends and point of emphasis have been that of values of poverty, simplicity, and detachment from this world of illusion. But now, capitalist ideals – which emphasize and esteem individuals and group betterment, which can be measured in material terms and can be paid for with money, now became the order of the day (Sule, 2010). In their campaign, it was believed that promotion of financial success is a means to attaining personal satisfaction. It was against this background that Raphael (2013) lamented that Idea that poverty could be a state of blessedness in itself, a favourite of preachers as recently as a century ago, is now hopelessly discredited. Even the post Conservative Pulpiteers nowadays exhorts their poor to get ahead, but to do it by non-violence means

ii. **Unemployment:** The economic condition of Onna Local Government in particular and Nigeria in general which is depicted by the high level of unemployment rate in the society has led many people into what they would not have done given that all things are in good shape. Immediately people are unemployed, they float their own prayer houses and healing homes, claiming that God has called them. Although our society still needs to be evangelized, people should be aware of false prophets using the name of God to work miracles under black magic. Again, people lose hope due to the harsh social conditions and the lack of political stability needed to revamp the ever-failing economy. Their expectation that politics could solve their economic problem had been crushed. In desperation for

solutions, they turned to religion. And, with the charismatic churches flourishing, many people trooped to them, abandoning the mission churches or mainline ones.

Quest for money

Going by the position of King Solomon, 'money answers all things' (Ecclesiastes 10:19b). A careful look at the activities of prayer houses and healing homes today, it will not be misleading to say that" the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). The early Apostle and believers did all they could to penetrate into the interiors for the purpose of evangelism, but in our society today, there appears to be a great deviation from the example set by early church in the way they go about their preaching and seeking the "lost" . The question that is urgently begging for an answer in the minds of many concerning the proliferation of prayer houses and healing homes in our society today is, why are they operating in the major cities and also charging their members for all the services they rendered?

The plausible answer that readily comes to mind is the fact that, the population density in such locations makes it easier for one to amass wealth there than in the remote areas that is ridden with high level of poverty. What plays itself out is that, with catchy and animating words, founders and purveyors advertise for harvest of miracles, which turn out to be harvest of money. Using both evil and satanic powers to draw large crowds to their churches they convince their followers to sow 'quality seeds' (special levy), and wait for their miracles coming on the way. It was based on this unfortunate development that Raphael (2013) lamented that many have embraced the doctrine of money, wealth and prosperity instead of message of salvation. We should not be surprised if this could also be one of the reasons behind the proliferation of prayer houses and healing homes. Jesus during His days on earth had a similar experience with the Scribes and the Pharisees. He strongly rebuked them. for "Majoring in the minor and minoring in the major" (Matthew 23:23). All that they were pursuing was nothing more than how to get rich and leaving undone what Jesus referred to as *"the weightier matters"* (Matthew 23:23).

Quest for Fame

Competition which is a common feature of business in the secular society has silently masquerades its way into the church it is sad to say that, to some extent, no one is willing to be a "human follower" as taught by Christ (Matthew 18:1-4), but everyone is trying hard to be *seen and heard*. This is the reason why some who are supposed to still be under the tutelage of outhers are now founders, self-ordained bishops and General Overseers (G.O) everywhere especially in our cities. It is germane to posit strongly here that, behind the veil of prayer houses and healing homes proliferation in Nigeria lies silently the quest for fame. The quest for fame has led many preachers into preaching about their church, miracles and not about "Christ" himself and his salvific work. In connection to this ugly trend in the church in our society, Iheanacho (2013) observes that:

> Today, many of our church leaders consciously or unconsciously measure success in life in terms of wealth, prestige and power: the three key principle of stratification, and social mobility in secular society.

What becomes the common trend in proclaiming and fanning the embers of self-fame on the streets today in Onna L.G.A and in many societies at large, is that, bill boards, fliers, banners and posters are reflecting the images of the founders and their wives. Seeing all these, the questions we need to raise are: Was this practice found among the early disciples? Was it part of the early doctrines preached by Jesus himself? Where does this trend come from and how did it find its

way into the Christendom? Without any doubt, we can see that, selfish interest cannot be farfetched from such development.

We must also acknowledge the fact that, the problem of the church went deeper owing to the fact that, the gospel according to radio, Television and as well as the Newspaper tended to become more of "celebrity-driven" and focused on what is "tangible and materialistic". In relation to this, Udoette (2002) appends affirmatively that; "some of the new church founders are those who could not submit to the leadership and instruction of other church leaders, for which reason they broke out to establish and control … for such people, the leadership is always seen as a threat to self-realization and fulfilment.

Socio-religious Implications of Proliferation of Prayer Houses and Healing Homes in Onna LGA

There are both positive and negative effects of the proliferation of prayer houses and healing homes in the society. The following are some of the effects in Onna L.G.A:

Positive Effects of Proliferation of Prayer Houses and Healing Homes

It is a popular opinion that the proliferation of prayer houses and healing homes is bad and nothing good comes out of it. But as much as there are negative effects, there are also positive effects of proliferation of prayer houses and healing homes in Onna LGA. It is important to mention here the positive effects before delving into the negative effects.

Solution to People's Problems

One of the positive effects of prayer houses and healing homes is that they provide solution to people's problems. These houses and homes have helped many people to solve their problems like illness, bareness, misfortune, trauma, witchcraft attack, lack of employment, delayed marriage, lack of progress in one's profession among others. Many souls have been saved and many people have been healed of their different psychological problems in prayer houses and healing homes. There are so many people who believe so much in these houses and homes than even the hospital, and others prefer 'uyere' (spiritual cleansing) in prayer houses and healing homes to medical check-up. Thus, Onyishi (2009) puts it more succinctly that in our contemporary time; the positive result of healing practiced in some healing homes is undisputable. According to him many people have been cured of various diseases of both the body and soul in prayer houses. Again, interview with Blessing Ebong reveals that a woman who was initiated into a demonic cycle by her lesbian lover was delivered through lying of hand in prayer house. Similarly, Many people have benefited from the activities of prayer houses and healing homes.

Spiritual Awakening and Evangelism

The emergence of the prayer houses and healing homes brought spiritual awakening in the mainline churches. Pentecostal churches' emphasis on spiritual gifts, biblical authority and evangelism make them stand out in the society. Most new generation churches are seen carrying megaphones and preaching in different places and converting people, thereby winning more souls for the body of Christ. They try to reach the masses at grassroots level. Their activities have led to the growth of the body of Christ and moral development of individuals. Their activities give way to spiritual transformation. The mode of worship, in these new generation churches gives the worshippers a sense of belonging and exhibition of emotion. According to Nmah (2008) proliferation of religion (churches) in society caused the mother churches to wake up from spiritual slumber. Similarly, Obiefuna et al. (2016:39) affirmed that proliferation of churches has made the authorities of the mainline churches sit up properly and

re-examine their method of operation and sometimes adjust the liturgy to suit the exigencies of the wider society. According to Ojo (2018), the rise of Pentecostal and charismatic movements brought a kind of spirituality into existence, constituting one of the main forms of religion in Nigeria.

Negative Effects of Proliferation of Prayer Houses and Healing Homes in Onna LGA

Deceit and Extortion: It is an indisputable fact that a common notion for the emergence of this houses and homes is commercial reason. Religion has been largely seen as a source of making money. Religion has also been twisted as it were to suit the intents and purposes of the users. Commercialization of religion according to Obiora, is described as "Holy Deceit"- the art of trading in God's name. Thus, in the context of commercialization of prayer houses and healing homes, no service is free of charge including salvation. One must pay for it. For instance, during an interview with Mr. Saviour Akpan in Onna whose wife was barren for 12 years, he narrated how the prophet demanded for two goats and sum of one hundred thousand (N100,000) for the purchase of spiritual items to end the bareness. Similarly, interview with Madam Theresa Akpan showed how a founder of prayer house demanded for the sum of two hundred thousand (200, 00) Naira for spiritual cleansing (Uyere). Moreover, it is no longer news that many founders of prayer houses and healing homes are selling religious tokens acclaimed to possess powers capable of bringing solutions to the problems of the users. Such items include oil, salt, handkerchiefs, water among others. Miracles are also fabricated in some of these houses and homes in order to attract crowds and raise money.

Rivalry and Unhealthy Competition

One of the damaging curses of prayer houses and healing homes is unhealthy competition. There is a high level of competition and envy among founders and purveyors of prayer houses and healing homes in Onna L.G.A as a result of quest for fame, title consciousness and positions. The level of unhealthy competition by these houses and homes' founders is radically embarrassing and inimical to the core values of Christianity. In order to avoid the error of this unhealthy competition or division in the church, Paul warned about this among the believers in 2 Corinthians 10:12, where he admonished that "We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise". Interview with Pastor Clifford Ukpong (2024) revealed that:

> The emphasis of some ministers nowadays is more on the quantitative increase and not the qualitative aspect which should be the main focus. Since everyone wants to be seen and heard, and not being so much bothered about the souls of men that are wallowing in iniquities. The reigning thing now as the result of competition is who is the most eloquent pastor or the G.O with biggest auditorium among others.

This has led to clashes between churches and personalities. There have been a lot of controversies/disagreements and contention between ministers. There is also an unhealthy competition for converts as each of the churches struggle to get their member. In so many cases some indigenous churches will not allow for evangelism, crusade or revival on their land because of the fear of losing their members to other churches. Moreover, there have been several cases of fraud, embezzlements and the likes by church founders. In fact, some churches are not accountable to their members on how the church money is being used.

Heresy/ Misinterpretation of the Scriptures

There have been seeming contradictions to what the bible is teaching and what some prayer houses and healing homes are teaching today. There are different doctrinal believes, different approach to the name of God, and they believe that the pastor, prophet, and evangelist is impeccable (cannot sin) as such some pastors do oppress the church members, some were asked to eat grass, some are to eat dead rat, ants, snakes etc., just to heal them from various diseases and to set them free from their bondages. One of the major effects of church proliferation is noise pollution. In fact, the rate at which churches cause harm and unpleasant environment for people today is alarming.

Conclusion

From the forgoing, it is pertinent to note that proliferation of prayer houses and healing homes in Onna LGA has brought more chaos and disadvantages than the expected gains that religion is expected to offer, this is because one of the purposes of religion is to bring succour to mankind but in our own idea and worldview it is relatively subjective. That is why recently through the media, some African preachers are seen as opportunists because it is believed that most of the founders of prayer houses and healing homes established them not because of any divine mandate, but because they see them opening as a business venture (Raphael, 2013). Most of these prayer houses and healing homes' founders are not interested in salvaging the ugly situation at hand as the good shepherd, but rather, they go on extorting money from the members both from the rich and the poor, those who are ignorant of the business of the so called men of God. However, there is no gainsaying the fact that prayer houses and healing homes could be a blessing to the people of Onna if properly managed and guided because they provide succor to the spiritual needs of people. For instance, Onna people have thronged to them for healing of incurable diseases of all descriptions, especially madness, misfortune, infertility, lack of success in businesses among others. What is required now from the founders of these houses and homes is to operate them in a way that will be able to change moral decadence of the people in other to reduce the corruption and atrocities that are prominent Onna LGA. This is because a situation, where by Bible teaching is used to emphasize material wealth as some of the founders do today, can easily abolish the Christian values or interest in the Bible. But sound teaching of the Bible can promote faith, hope, trust and sound doctrine.

Recommendations

i. The Christian Council of Nigeria (C.C.N) and Christian association of Nigeria (CAN) should establish a registration centre for all the prayer houses and healing homes in Onna LGA and also issued guidelines to them on the modus operandi. They should equally monitor the activities of all the prayer houses and healing homes to avoid abuse of their activities.
ii. Founders of prayer houses and healing homes should guide against commercialization of healing and prayer. They should heed to Jesus' teaching of "freely you received, freely, you must give".
iii. The founders of prayer houses and healing homes should be properly trained on theological education for proper interpretation of the Bible and better dissemination of the gospel.

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Article **Open Access**

THE IMPACT ANALYSIS OF GOODLUCK JONATHAN'S FOREIGN POLICY ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Naomi A. Phinos [1]
Agustine Ukachukwu Opara [2]
Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Abuja, Nigeria [1 & 2]
Email: naomi.phinos@uniabuja.edu.ng [1]

Abstract
This paper examined the **i**mpact analysis of Goodluck Jonathan's foreign policy on economic development in Nigeria. During Goodluck Jonathan's administration, Nigeria was an important participant in global affairs while also tackling pressing economic issues at home. The administration placed a strong emphasis on economic diplomacy, regional stability, and international collaboration. The specific objective of the paper was to; investigate how Goodluck Jonathan's foreign policy decision during his tenure impacted on economic development in Nigeria and ascertain how Nigeria diplomatic relations with major economies impacted on economic development in Nigeria. Liberal institutionalism theory is used as the theoretical framework. The finding shows that Goodluck Jonathan's foreign policy decisions during his tenure had a notable impact on Nigeria's economic development and Nigeria's diplomatic relations with major economies had a significant impact on her economic development. The paper recommended that, Nigeria Government should continue to build robust diplomatic relations with key global economies while also exploring new markets and continue to actively engage and broaden her diplomatic relations with major economies. Secondary sources of data were used in the study.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, diplomatic relations, major economies, National interest, economic development.

Introduction

Under the leadership of Goodluck Jonathan from 2010 to 2015, Nigeria's foreign policy sought to establish the country as an important participant in global affairs while also tackling pressing economic issues at home. The administration placed a strong emphasis on economic diplomacy, regional stability, and international collaboration. Their main goals were to attract foreign

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investments, strengthen trade links, and improve Nigeria's reputation on the global stage. Nigeria had a complex international landscape during this period, which presented both opportunities and challenges. The administration aimed to allure international investment, foster commerce, and enhance Nigeria's economic connections with other nations. An essential element of this approach involved the enlargement of Nigeria's diplomatic posts and the revitalization of its global reputation. The government sought to cultivate more robust alliances with major global powers such as the United States, China, and the European Union, acknowledging the significance of these collaborations in stimulating economic expansion. China became a significant partner throughout Jonathan's time in office. Nigeria utilised its advantageous alliance with China to secure substantial investments in infrastructure, energy, and technology. The trade between the two nations experienced significant expansion, with China emerging as one of Nigeria's major trading allies. Chinese corporations engaged in numerous industries, including telecommunications, construction, and manufacturing, contributing to economic development and employment creation in Nigeria (Adeniyi, 2014).

Under Jonathan's leadership, Nigeria enhanced its engagement with international organizations and adopted multilateralism as a cornerstone of its foreign policy. Nigeria actively participated in the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and other global institutions. This participation attempted to guarantee that Nigeria's voice was heard on crucial global problems, including climate change, trade negotiations, and global health. Nigeria's involvement in international organizations also facilitated access to development assistance and technical skills. For instance, cooperation with institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) offered financial backing for numerous economic reform programs. These collaborations enabled Nigeria enact policies aimed at increasing fiscal discipline, enhancing transparency, and fostering sustainable development (Ogunnubi & Isike, 2015). The Jonathan administration made various steps to boost commerce and investment. The establishment of the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) and the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) sought to streamline investment processes and enhance exports. These agencies tried to encourage foreign direct investment (FDI) by giving incentives, removing bureaucratic bottlenecks, and establishing an investor-friendly environment. One major milestone was the signing of the Nigeria-South Africa Bi-National Commission Agreement, which aimed to improve economic cooperation between the two largest countries in Africa. This agreement encouraged trade, investment, and tourism exchanges, boosting bilateral relations and offering new economic prospects for both countries (Adeniyi, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

The impact of Goodluck Jonathan's foreign policy on Nigeria's economic development is a key topic requiring thorough research. During his tenure, Jonathan promoted economic diplomacy, regional stability, and international collaboration to attract foreign investments and enhance trade. However, the effectiveness of these strategies in supporting sustainable economic growth remains controversial. Key difficulties, such as corruption and security threats, persisted, possibly undermining these advances. Understanding the extent to which Jonathan's foreign policy actions contributed to Nigeria's economic progress is vital for evaluating the performance of his administration and determining future policy approaches. The impact of Nigeria's diplomatic relations with foreign economies on its economic progress under Goodluck Jonathan's government is a key subject of study. Jonathan prioritized establishing ties with countries like the United States, China, and the European Union to attract investments and promote commerce. Evaluating how these diplomatic efforts translated into concrete economic

advantages, such as increased foreign direct investment, infrastructure development, and industrial expansion, is vital. Additionally, recognising the hurdles faced in exploiting these partnerships for sustainable economic development would provide vital findings for guiding Nigeria's future diplomatic and economic initiatives.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the **i**mpact analysis of Goodluck Jonathan foreign policy on economic development in Nigeria. While the specific objectives are to;

i. investigate how Goodluck Jonathan foreign policy decision during his tenure impacted on economic development in Nigeria?
ii. ascertain how Nigeria diplomatic relations with major economies impacted on economic development in Nigeria

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Foreign Policy : There is no agreed-upon definition for what "foreign policy" is. The abundance of definitions offered by experts in international relations is the cause of this. Therefore, an action, strategy, or tenet that directs how governments engage with one another is referred to as foreign policy. The idea of foreign policy is to be a tool for conducting or controlling relations between entities. It is a plan of action or set of guidelines that a state develops to specify and guide its relations with other states, nations, or international organisations. Hermann (1988) defined foreign policy as the external objectives of a country and the means by which they are pursued. His definition places a strong emphasis on the goals a country seeks to accomplish on a global scale as well as the strategies used to get there. It includes international agreements, military involvement, economic assistance, and diplomacy. Furthermore Holsti (1992) explains A state's foreign policy consists of the tactics and measures it uses to further its own interests and shape those of other states. In the international arena, a state takes strategic measures to protect and advance its national interests, influencing the activities of other states to coincide with its own goals. This is emphasised in his definition. Franke (1963) defined foreign policy as a state's set of measures to uphold its interests at home and further its objectives abroad. This definition emphasises how foreign policy is methodical and ongoing, with a focus on upholding national interests and accomplishing particular objectives on the international scene. Modelski (1962) established. The system of actions that communities have developed to influence other governments' behaviour and adapt their own actions to the global context is known as foreign policy. Modelski defines foreign policy as a system that changes to influence other nations and adapt to the global environment, with a focus on its dynamic and adaptive aspect.

In order to increase trade and draw in international investment, economic diplomacy was a key component of Goodluck Jonathan's foreign policy. Jonathan's administration realised that a major factor in Nigeria's economic success may be cultivating strong business links with foreign nations. This strategy included engaging in international economic forums, negotiating trade agreements, and pursuing foreign direct investment (FDI). The improvement of Nigeria's ties with China was one of the major accomplishments in this field. During Jonathan's presidency, Nigeria-China bilateral commerce increased significantly as a result of Chinese investments in vital industries including oil and gas, telecommunications, and infrastructure. China promised to build four airport terminals in Nigeria for $1.1 billion in 2013 and another $500 million for other infrastructure projects (Adeniyi, 2014). China's investment inflow was essential to Nigeria's economic growth, especially in terms of infrastructure development. Jonathan's administration also aimed to lessen Nigeria's reliance on oil in order to diversify the

country's economy. Efforts to advance industrialization and increase agricultural productivity mirrored this goal. To encourage investment in these areas and boost economic growth, the government introduced programmes including the Nigeria Industrial Revolution Plan (NIRP) and the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2015).

National Interest

Every organisation in the global society has some kind of national interest or goals, regardless of geography, economic status, political stance, or history. Scholars and political analysts view the notion of national interest differently, depending on their areas of expertise. Different academics and foreign policy observers have defined national interest in different ways. There is no widely agreed definition for the controversial concept. The phrase "national interest" refers to a state's overall desires or interests, which include the pressing needs of the individuals and communities that fall under its purview. When a nation engages with other nations in the international system, it determines its foreign policy objectives based on these requirements or interests. Mazrui (1986) defined national interest as the strategic aims and objectives that a country pursues in order to preserve its development, security, and sovereignty. Gambari (2008), A state's priorities for maintaining its existence, sovereignty, and growth in the world community are referred to as its "national interest." Gambari highlights the importance of the state in establishing survival and advancement-ensuring priorities. This includes plans to strengthen Nigeria's economic expansion, internal unity, and geopolitical power. Jonathan presided over the 2011 general elections, which were viewed as a critical milestone in the consolidation of Nigerian democracy. Even with all of the difficulties - including claims of violence and electoral fraud—the elections showed that the democratic process had improved from years prior. Gaining international credibility and improving Nigeria's political stability depended heavily on this development (Lewis, 2011). However, Nigeria's political stability and internal security were seriously threatened by the emergence of the Boko Haram insurgency. The way the insurgency was handled by Jonathan's administration drew criticism because it resulted in a great deal of violence and displacement, especially in the northeastern area. In spite of heightened military endeavours and global collaboration to counter Boko Haram, the organization's operations persisted in jeopardising Nigeria's stability (Adebayo, 2015).

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Foreign Direct Investment is now required in Nigeria due to its underdeveloped economy, which ultimately slowed down the country's rate of economic development. Aremu (1997) emphasised that Nigeria, one of the world's developing nations, has implemented a number of policies meant to quicken the pace of economic growth and development at home, including attracting foreign direct investment (FDI). World Bank (1996) defines foreign direct investment (FDI) as an investment made with the intention of acquiring a long-term managerial position (often 10% of voting shares) in a company or enterprise that operates in a different nation than the investor's home country. However, because it influences economic growth by promoting domestic investment, increasing capital formation, and facilitating technology transfer in the host countries, foreign direct investment (FDI) is frequently viewed as a significant catalyst for economic growth in developing nations, (Falki, 2009).

According to Khan (2007), although their share of FDI in the global distribution has remained small or even decreased, FDI has become the most significant source of external resource flows to developing countries over time and has become an important part of capital formation in these countries. It is often known that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) plays a significant role in promoting growth in emerging economies. In his discussion of the advantages

and benefits of foreign direct investment (FDI) to the host economy, Falki (2009) pointed out that the consequences of FDI on the host economy are generally seen as: increased employment, increased productivity, increased exports, and expedited technology transfer. Potential benefits of foreign direct investment (FDI) to the host economy include: making it easier to use and exploit local raw materials; introducing contemporary management and marketing techniques; facilitating access to new technologies; allowing foreign inflows to be used to finance current account deficits; and increasing the stock of human capital through on-the-job training. The Nigerian government's substantial and practical economic changes since the mid-1980s have been directed by the realisation of the significance of foreign direct investment.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted and anchored on the Liberal institutionalism theory as its theoretical framework. Liberal institutionalism is a key theoretical perspective in international relations that emphasizes the role of international institutions and organizations in fostering cooperation among states, thus promoting global peace and stability. A key proponent of modern liberal institutionalism is Robert Keohane, who argued that states could achieve sustained cooperation through international institutions even without a dominant hegemonic power. The adoption of liberal institutionalism as an analytical framework is crucial because it highlights how international cooperation and institutional engagements can drive economic development. Jonathan's foreign policy aimed to integrate Nigeria more deeply into the global economy, enhance its diplomatic relations, and attract foreign investment. By aligning with international norms and participating in global institutions, Jonathan sought to create an environment conducive to economic growth and stability in Nigeria. One significant aspect of Jonathan's foreign policy was Nigeria's increased participation in international organizations such as the United Nations, the African Union, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Liberal institutionalism posits that such involvement in international institutions can mitigate the anarchic nature of the international system by providing frameworks for cooperation and reducing uncertainty. For Nigeria, this meant leveraging these platforms to promote economic interests, secure foreign investments, and enhance trade relationships. By being an active participant in these organizations, Nigeria aimed to ensure that it had a voice in international economic policies and decisions that could impact its economy.

Jonathan's administration also prioritized economic diplomacy, seeking to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) by showcasing Nigeria as an attractive destination for investors. Liberal institutionalism underscores the importance of economic interdependence, where mutual economic benefits create incentives for cooperation and peace. Jonathan's efforts to build stronger economic ties with major economies and international corporations were aligned with this principle. By fostering economic interdependence, Nigeria could benefit from technology transfers, job creation, and increased capital inflows, all of which are critical for economic development. Moreover, Jonathan's foreign policy emphasized the role of international trade agreements in promoting economic growth. His administration worked towards negotiating and signing trade agreements that would open up new markets for Nigerian products and services. According to liberal institutionalism, international trade regimes create a stable and predictable environment that facilitates cooperation and economic interdependence. These trade agreements were designed to reduce trade barriers, increase market access, and promote the competitiveness of Nigerian industries on the global stage. The relevance of liberal institutionalism to this study lies in its emphasis on the role of international institutions and

cooperation in achieving economic development. Jonathan's foreign policy initiatives were rooted in the belief that active participation in global institutions and fostering international cooperation would lead to economic benefits for Nigeria. By adopting liberal institutionalism, this analysis can effectively capture how Jonathan's engagement with international institutions, economic diplomacy, and trade agreements contributed to Nigeria's economic development

The Administration of Goodluck Jonathan (May 6th 2009- May 29th 2015)

Jonathan embarked on a number of diplomatic shuttles, following Yar'Adua's demise to reaffirm Nigeria's commitment and standing in the Comity of States. It was a fiercely disputed polity for Jonathan to seek election, after completing Yar'Adua's term. Jonathan improved the voting procedure and won one of the fairest elections in Nigeria in 2011. Campbell (2011) likens Jonathan to Harry Truman, who became the president of the United States when his predecessor died in a natural death. He was uncharismatic, opaque but did effectively. In the first 100 days of his administration in 2011, Jonathan commissioned the Presidential Advisory Council on International Relations to oversee the revamping of Nigeria's foreign policy to be economic cooperation and investment-driven. He spent time with Nigerians in diaspora and prepared for Nigerians in Diaspora Commission to take care of Nigerians abroad as reservoirs and assured effective use of their inputs in development agenda. His government's foreign policy focused on improved relationships with other military forces to build peace, improved bilateral and multilateral trade relations, cooperation and assistance in curbing health challenges as well as promotion of the welfare of Nigerians abroad to ensure they are treated with respect and dignity (Boma et. al., 2015).

Dora Akunyili, the Information Minister in Yar'Adua and Jonathan governments began the "Rebrand Nigeria" project to mend Nigeria's tattered image which according to Akunyili, was vital as Nigeria's progress is tied to it. At this period, the Department of Homeland Security Special Screening of passengers on international flights to US targeted Nigerians, following Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab's attempted bombing of a US-bound plane in 2009. Jonathan's meeting with the American President led to delist of Nigeria from the list (Boma et.al, 2015; Obayiuwana, 2009). Jonathan signed the inaugural Nigeria-United States Bi-National Commission, as a framework for continued bilateral, high-level contact to foster diplomatic, economic and security ties. The domestic components covered good governance, transparency and anticorruption, investments, etc. This fed into the government's foreign policy initiative, the Transformation Agenda (Alao, 2011; Gyong, 2012) aimed to combat the poor living circumstances and entice investors to Nigeria. Jonathan remarked that as the major function of government is to promote peace, progress and economic development, foreign policy should be utilised to assist these aims and diversify the economy. Foreign policy was therefore redirected to boost internal projects and eliminate poverty (Ashiru in Ojeme, 2011).

Jonathan appointed experienced Nigerians into his cabinet. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, a former World Bank Managing Director was the Finance Minister. Okonjo-Iweala was the Finance Minister of the Obasanjo regime of 1999-2007 and had departed freely when she was reassigned to Foreign Affairs Ministry. In Jonathan's government, Okonjo-Iweala served as the Coordinating Minister of the Economy (Alinyeji, 2011). Olusegun Aganga took Trade and Investments while Oruma Otteh, a former Vice, African Development Bank headed Nigerian Stock Exchange. The former director of Nigerian Food Drugs Administration and Control, Dora Akunyili who recorded tremendous success in the fight against fake drugs (Land, 2008; Larkin, 2006; Lemonick and Gilbert, 2005) retained her position as the information Minister where she continued with the Rebrand Nigeria Project. Akinwunmi' success in the agriculture sector gained

him the Headship of African Development Bank and Noble Prize for Agriculture 2017. Jonathan's administration also reorganised the Foreign Service and empowered the diplomatic missions to work as operators of foreign policy and look for chances and ideas that will improve the situation in Nigeria. Jonathan's administration involved the Organized Private Sector: Nigerian Association of Chambers and Commerce, Industries Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA), Nigerian Association of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises-NASME, Manufacturers Associations of Nigeria (MAN), Nigerian Association of Small-Scale Industries (NASSI), etc. in trade and investment initiatives.

The administration also mobilised Nigerians in Diaspora to support development and investment at home. He also conducted meeting with the over 4000 Nigerians working in the United Nations and asked their ideas in development concerns. Jonathan's administration reestablished diplomatic agreements with many nations, including Czech Republic in 2011. The government simplified immigration laws and signed various Bi-National Commissions-with Canada, Germany, Australia to further strengthen economic links and collaboration. Nigeria-China link was also increased under his reign as investment worth $25 billion was agreed on and five bilateral agreements were inked (Abati, 2012; Akinterinwa, 2014; Boma et.al, 2015; Jayi and Ayotunde, 2016). The government practiced reciprocity in positive and negative shape in her foreign contacts to an extent. In nations where Nigerians were not exposed to abuse in visa applications, Nigeria provided same treatment. In countries where visa applications by Nigerians were hampered by constraints, delays and maltreatment, Nigeria followed comparable technique in her dealings. When Muammar Gaddafi declared that Nigeria should divide up into Muslim north and Christian south, Jonathan recalled Nigerian ambassador in protest and emphasis on Nigeria's unity (Boma et al, 2015).

Nigeria as ECOWAS chairman engineered the ouster of Laurent Gbagbo of Cote d'Ivoire when he refused to surrender office after losing election. Although the African Union opposed foreign interventions in Libya, in 2011, Nigeria along with Gabon and South Africa and other members of the Security Council voted in favour of the UNSC Resolution 1973 which was the legal platform for NATO intervention in Libya and the eventual oust of Muammar Ghaddafi. Again, in August, Nigeria joined the Western countries to recognize the rebels in Libya, but was alone since the AU and South Africa refused. In December 2014, Nigeria under Jonathan also voted on the Palestinian statehood. The vote generated an imbalance in votes and shows to an extent that Nigeria was offering diplomatic latitude to Western states (Akomolafe, 2015). The last three months of Jonathan's term was marred by violent attacks and bombings by boko haram insurgents compounded by Chibok girls abducted. Efforts to purchase weapon to face the insurgency was hindered by America while South Africa also seized the available cash meant for purchase in South Africa which left the government with little hope in defeating the militants (Boma et.al, 2015). In his address, Jonathan stressed that his goal is not worth fighting the results of the 2015 elections despite evidence of malpractices (Associated Press, 2015).

Economic Diplomacy of President Goodluck Jonathan

President Jonathan's foreign policy thrust was anchored on the much-publicized slogan, Transformation Agenda, put in place to transform and energize the critical sectors of the economy, especially public expenditure management, macroeconomic framework and economic direction, job creation, health sector, information and communication technology. Others include Niger Delta issues, transformation of foreign policy, and maintaining the tempo of economic diplomacy. However, at the opening of a retreat on the review of Nigeria's foreign policy organized by the Presidential Advisory on 1st August, 2011, President Jonathan declared

inter alia: …. At a time of massive poverty and youth restiveness in our country, we have no choice but to adjust and adopt the way we conduct foreign policy. As we respond to the forces of globalization, perhaps more than ever before, our diplomacy must be put at the service of our domestic priorities(Akpokighe, & Ejovi, 2020).

Nigeria under President Jonathan gave direct donations to Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea to contain the spread of Ebola pandemic. The UN applauded all these kind gestures by President Jonathan. The then UN Secretary- General, Ban Ki-Moon in 2011 paid a colourful official visit to President Jonathan in Nigeria, apparently to commend and encourage him not to relent in piloting the country's leadership role in Africa. With a sense of elation fulfillment, President Jonathan in his book, My Transition Hours, made reference to the election of Nigeria into the Security Council of the UN at two different times during his tenure as president of the country: 2009-2011; and 2013...2015 out of the five times Nigeria has so far been elected into the Security Council since attaining independence in 1960. To crown it all, the appointment of a Nigerian, Akinwumi Adesina, as President of African Development Bank on 28th May 2015, 24 hours to the end of President Jonathan's tenure, came as a welcome relief to the elated President who saw the appointment as a personal diplomatic triumph and a parting gift to Nigerians.

In all, President Goodluck Jonathan was able to prove his mettle in the prosecution of Nigeria's foreign policy and in projecting the image and status of Nigeria's foreign policy and in projecting the image and status of Nigeria despite the daunting challenges that trailed his government in both the domestic and external environments. Nigeria's foreign policy is now anchored on the realization of this transformation agenda through the attraction of direct foreign investment. Under the new policy thrust, our diplomatic missions abroad have been directed to focus more on attracting aid to support the domestic programmes of government. In any case, President Jonathan's foreign policy thrust did not depart radically from that of his former boss, President Yar' Adua. Under President GoodluckJonathan, some marginal gains were recorded in terms of economic growth to the extent that Nigeria's economy was in 2014 declared the strongest in Africa, beating Egypt and South Africa to it. However, under him corruption in public places and the activities of Boko Haram still reared their ugly heads, thereby constituting clogs in the wheel of progress at the domestic level and in the conduct of progress policy. Potential foreign investors were scared of coming to Nigeria to do business due to the ruthless activities of Boko Haram. Just like under his predecessors, Jonathan's spirited efforts to formulate and implement a robust and pragmatic foreign policy were bedeviled by formidable economic problems at home.

Bilateral Agreement Between Jonathan and other World Leaders

The administration of Jonathan Goodluck related well with ECOWAS member states as well as with the rest of African countries and indeed the whole world. Jonathan, in collaboration with France and the authorities of ECOWAS, succeeded in forcing out the sit-tight President of Cote d'Ivoire, Laurent Gbagbo, from power to pave way for the duly elected person, Alasane Quattara, to be installed as the authentic president of that country following his decisive victory over Gbagbo. Jonathan's administration contributed significantly to the restoration of peace in Guinea Bissau and Equatorial Guinea. He also played a key role in helping Sierra Leone and Liberia to conduct credible elections to usher in democratic governance in those countries.

In the spirit of Nigeria's Afrocentric posture and leadership on the continent, President Jonathan in 2012 waded into the Malian crises with military and logistical support to help restore peace in that country following the military coup d'état that destabilized that country in that year. In

Nigeria, President Jonathan succeeded in breaking the links between Mali and Boko Haram religious sect, thereby weakening the military strength of the terrorists in the country. President Jonathan was honoured with the highest national honour in Mali, the Great Cross of the National Order of Mali, in recognition of the leading role he played in the resolution of the Malian crisis. He also showed sincere commitment to the resolution of crises in Sudan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Arab Spring which affected Egypt and Libya in addition to helping to tackle the menace of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

There was an element of backlash of intolerance in Jonathan's foreign policy as exemplified by the expulsion of 80 South Africans from Nigeria in reaction to the deportation of 125 Nigerians from The Republic of South Africa with the flimsy excuse that the yellow fever certificates of the Nigerians were fake. The xenophobic attacks in South Africa which resulted in the death of several foreigners, including innocent Nigerians, created another round of diplomatic row between the two countries. However, with tact and astute diplomacy, President Jonathan was able to resolve the imbroglio with the government of South Africa. Similarly, there was a protracted diplomatic impasse between Nigeria and Libya rising from Gaddafi's provocative call for Nigeria to divide herself along religious lines, aggravated further by the killings of Nigerians during the political unrest in that country. All these irritated the government and people of Nigeria to the extent that President Jonathan in anger ordered the evacuation of Nigerians from Libya. It must be admitted that despite all the daunting challenges, President Jonathan fared well, on the whole ,in the area of bilateral and multilateral relations with the US and her allies. Jonathan saw to it that the tension that arose from the listing of Nigeria as a terrorist country by the US was finally relaxed as the US under President Obama removed Nigeria's name from the watch-list of supposedly terrorist countries. The signing of an agreement between Nigeria and the US in April 2010 to set up a Bi-national commission "aimed at ensuring good governance and fighting corruption, improving diplomatic and bilateral relations, economic and security cooperation between the two countries"(Nwafor, & Chima, 2023) greatly improved diplomatic relations between both countries.

However, the US refusal 'to sell arms to Nigeria to crush the Boko Haram terrorists on the one hand and the refusal of Nigeria to subscribe to the campaign for "same sex marriage" being orchestrated by the US, UK and other western powers, on the other hand, soured what, on the surface of it, looked like flourishing bilateral relations between Niger and the US. Nigeria's quest to procure military hardware, especially jet fighters and attack helicopters from the US to conquer the Boko Haram terrorists was turned down by President Obama who made reference to the Leahy law relating to human rights violations as an alibi for his refusal to sell arms to Nigeria. Besides, during much of Jonathan's tenure, the US under President Obama drastically and inexplicably reduced the purchase of crude oil from Nigeria. Curiously enough, the US and Britain expressed dismay over the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria that was shifted forward for security reasons. In the face of the US unfriendly disposition to Nigeria, President Jonathan, like General Abacha, made a detour to China and other Eastern European and Asian countries as if to say that Nigeria had an alternative to the US and her allies. Following that, a number of mutually beneficial agreements covering vast areas were signed between Nigeria and China, including: economic and technical cooperation, preferential buyer for credit for Nigeria's four airports expansion project, mutual visual exemption for holders of diplomatic and official passports, and agreement on the prevention of the theft, illicit import and export of cultural property (Ukhami, et al, 2021).

Besides, according to Ogunoiki (2015, p 12), "Jonathan was to secure $1.1 billion low interest loan for the improvement of Nigeria's hydro power, road transportation and high-rail

system as well as airport terminal infrastructure". The cordial relations that flourished between Nigeria and China under President Goodluck Jonathan overshadowed alleged cases of maltreatment of Nigerian migrants to that country. To crown it all, China in 2009 joined other countries to give Nigeria the needed support to triumphantly secure a non-permanent seat on the Security Council of the UN for the fifth time. In terms of functional cooperation, Nigeria under President Goodluck Jonathan showed strong presence and active participation in the affairs and meetings of EWOWAS, the African Union, the Commonwealth of Nations, and the United Nations. Between 2010 and 2014, Nigeria actively participated in every African Union summit, presenting its positions on conflicts in Africa, the spread of illicit small arms, gender equality, and climate change. Under President Goodluck Jonathan, Nigeria supported UN peacekeeping efforts by deploying troops to several African countries and beyond, reinforcing its role in promoting regional stability and development. The country also backed key UN conventions on climate change and biodiversity, reflecting its commitment to global and continental peace, security, and environmental sustainability.

Conclusion

Jonathan's foreign policy actions were essential in boosting Nigeria's economic progress. The administration's proactive approach in creating and strengthening diplomatic ties resulted in higher international investment and trade opportunities, which helped to the country's economic growth and diversification. These efforts underline the vital significance of effective foreign policy in affecting economic outcomes. The diplomatic efforts of Nigeria in forging strong links with key world economies were important for its economic progress. These partnerships permitted considerable foreign investments, enhanced trade dynamics, and reinforced economic stability. Nigeria was able to strengthen its economic performance and lay the framework for sustained prosperity by establishing international cooperation and partnerships.

Recommendations

i. Nigeria should continue to build robust diplomatic relations with key global economies while also exploring new markets. additionally maintain and enhance a transparent and business-friendly regulatory environment to attract foreign investment and support sustainable economic development.
ii. Nigeria should continue to actively engage with major economies while also seeking to diversify its diplomatic and trade partners. Additionally, focus on strengthening institutional frameworks and regulatory environments to attract more foreign investment and support long-term economic growth.

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AN EVALUATION OF THE CONCEPT OF ASYMMETRY IN RELATION TO THE ETHICAL PRINCIPLE OF DISUTILITY

Nwachukwu Maxwell Anyim
Department of Philosophy, University of Uyo, Nigeria
Email: nwachukwuanyim@uniuyo.edu.ng

Abstract
The concept of asymmetry is related to the principle of disutility. Both have their roots in the rejection of positive utility as the criterion for determining the morality of an action. What unites the two is the view that there is an imbalance between pain or suffering and happiness or pleasure. Based on this imbalance or inequality, supporters argue that the morality of an action should be based on evaluating the negative consequences which accrue from an action and not on the positive consequences. The major problem of both asymmetry and disutility is that they both suffer from the same defect of positive utilitarianism which is that it is difficult to measure consequences – whether good or bad ends. The aim of this paper is therefore to evaluate the benefits and limitations of asymmetry and disutility. This paper concludes that the choice between good ends and bad ends may differ from one society to another.

Keywords: Asymmetry, Disutility, Antinatalism, Utilitarianism, Negative utilitarianism, Morality.

Introduction
The notion of value asymmetry is a fallout of the utilitarian ethical theory. Jan Naverson highlighted the implications of utilitarianism with respect to population. He argued that there is an asymmetry involved in the future existence of human beings in relation to whether they will have good or bad ends. In the domain of philosophy, Naverson's views have become part of procreation ethics In his article published in 1967, "Utilitarianism and New Generations," Naverson discussed this asymmetry which Karl Popper had earlier raised in his ethical theory and which R.N. Smart labelled as negative utilitarianism. With respect to the history of the concept of asymmetry in procreation ethics, Jeff McManahan is credited with coining the term in his article published in 1981. McManaham's article, ''Problems of Population Theory'' helped to elaborate the link between concept of asymmetry and ethical consequences of future populations. McManahan stated that he considered the principle of utility on which utilitarianism is based to have a certain air of sophistry. Based on the principle of utility, we are

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morally obliged to promote the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. The implication, as Naverson pointed out, is that: "if utilitarianism is correct, then we must be obliged to produce as many children as possible, so long as their happiness would exceed their misery" (62).

Naverson's evaluation of utilitarianism in relation to procreation raised moral issues which question the validity of the theory. Fundamentally, it raised the moral question of rights or existing human beings and non-existing or future human beings. In addition, it highlighted one of the key objections against utilitarianism which is whether emphasis should be on the promotion or pursuit of happiness for the greatest number of people rather than the reduction of misery or pain. This brings to the fore the distinction between positive value or utility and negative value or disutility. Basically, the utilitarian principle of utility is based on the calculation or measurement of positive utilities accruable to the greatest number of people; the assumption being that an action is morally good if the quantum of positive instances exceeds the negative utilities. Critics have pointed out that it is difficult to measure happiness or pleasure. Thus, the emergence of the concept of asymmetry could be linked to some of the objections against utilitarianism. McManahan stated the notion of asymmetry in the following way:

> Consider the view that while the fact that a person's life would be worse than no life at all (or be worth living) constitutes a strong moral reason for not bringing him into existence, the fact that a person's life would be worth lining provides no (or only relatively weak) moral reason for bringing him into existence (100).

McMahan's notion of asymmetry challenges the utilitarian view that there is symmetry between pleasure or happiness and pain or suffering. There are other formulations of the notion in different fields, including international relations, economics, politics, etc. Essentially, asymmetry value entails that there is an unequal relation between two things or sides. This inequality or imbalance raises moral issues with potential possibilities of future events. However, since our concern is with respect to ethics and based on the relationship with procreation or population ethics, this paper shall be concerned with the status of disvalue as opposed to the utilitarian focus on positive value. Although there are now several literatures on the notion of asymmetry, it is necessary not to lose sight of the fact that this concept is squarely an ethical issue. Indeed, this can be demonstrated by quoting Naverson who provided clarification on the notion of asymmetry. For Naverson, when a miserable child is brought into existence such a child has moral grounds to complain whereas if that were not the case such a child would not come into existence and therefore has no moral grounds to complain.

There are several formulations of this view which will be highlighted in this paper. However, the objective of this paper is to show that there is a link between the concept of asymmetry and negative utilitarianism. Indeed, both theories aim to overcome the objections raised against classical utilitarianism. Somehow, both asymmetry value and negative utilitarianism have their own conceptual problems. The implication is that the notion if disvalue which is part of both value asymmetry and negative utilitarianism, present conceptual and practical problems. In order to overcome these problems, it is necessary to determine whether disvalue or disutility is preferable to positive utility.

The Concept of Asymmetry

There are different formulations of asymmetry but they are all based on the notion of disutility or disvalue. In ordinary terms, asymmetry entails that, in moral terms, there is an imbalance or

inequality between positive and negative utilities. Thus, whereas classical utilitarianism emphasizes that positive outcomes should outweigh negative outcomes, asymmetry stresses that the moral obligation should be on reducing or eliminating negative outcomes or utilities. This means that the emphasis is not on promoting the positive outcomes or utilities of the greatest number of people but on minimizing the pain or suffering of the least advantaged members of the society. In the history of the notion of value asymmetry, it has been pointed out by some scholars that what is called "The Asymmetry" is synonymous with "Procreation Ethics". This is true both of Naverson and McManahan. There are different variants of the asymmetry argument. For instance, there are weak and strong forms of asymmetry. David Benatar, for example, in his book, *Better Never to Have Been: The Harm of Coming to Existence,* stated the strong form of asymmetry by defending the concept of antinatalism. In Benatar's view, there is harm of some sort in being born. Benatar's argument can be seen in the asymmetry between pleasure and pain. The argument is based on the following theses:

i. The absence of pain is good, even if that good is not enjoyed by anyone, whereas;
ii. The absence of pleasure is not bad unless there is somebody for whom this absence is a deprivation (30).

Following from the above theses, it is not surprising that Benatar's view could be said to propose that ethically it is better not to have existed since being born carries the risk of harm or disvalue. In order words, negative consequences are attached to existing. The weak form of asymmetry was stated by Nils Holtug (255) in the following way:

> Everything else being equal, it is better to avoid that a person comes into existence and has a life worth not living (at level-n) than to ensure that a person comes into existence and has a life worth living (at level n).

This weak form of asymmetry is not as extreme or strong as that of Benatar's antinatalism. It is however, still based on some form of disvalue meaning that it is better to avoid pain. It should be noted that both weak and strong forms of asymmetry involve the evaluative principle of avoiding pain for future or yet non-existing humans. This raises serious ethical dilemma with respect to procreation issues. However, it falls into some of the same difficulties which are encountered in positive utilitarianism. This dilemma has been highlighted by some scholars such as Matt Rozas who stated that "the dilemma emerges because most people have conflicting intuitions concerning whether the interests of non-existing beings can outweigh the interests of existing beings when those potential beings are expected to have overall net-good or overall net-bad lives" (41). This dilemma has been formulated in other ways by scholars. For instance, Matthew Adelson claims that "the procreation asymmetry is a widely held view in ethics, claiming that one should make existing people happy but has no reason to make happy people" (338).

In yet another form of the asymmetry argument, Jacob M. Nebel framed it as "asymmetric comparativism" which means that "it is worse for a person to exist with miserable life than not to exist, but it is not better for a person to exist with a happy life than not to exist" (126). Although these different forms of procreation asymmetry may be said to be intuitive, there are also counter-intuitive arguments which challenge the validity of the argument that efforts should be made to make existing people happy rather than be concerned with making future happy people. This explains why Christopher Suhler and Craig Callendar (1) argue that "the value asymmetry is the fact that we prefer future rather than past preferences be satisfied".

From the preceding analysis on the notion of value asymmetry, it is obvious that its origin is linked to population or procreation ethics in philosophy. However, the notion has wider

implications beyond issues of procreation. Within the realm of philosophy, it is applicable in the analysis of value-based ethics and also in suffering-based ethics. It is also applicable in international or global politics. In the realm of international affairs, Brantly Womack's (351) states that "asymmetry theory is a new paradigm that addresses the effects of national disparities on international relations". Even though Womack's analysis of the nature of the disparities is subjective, what cannot be ignored is that there are imbalances or disparities in power relations with respect to development, natural resources and spheres of influence among nations. Thus, from the perspectives of normative ethics, value-based ethics and suffering-based ethics, the notion of asymmetry is tied to the notion of disutility in which the emphasis is on reducing disutility and its effects rather than maximizing the happiness or pleasure of the greatest number of people. Indeed, an important argument for the emphasis on disutility is the view that there is no compelling moral reason to make people happy or even to make happy people. However, an assessment of the different forms of asymmetry must take into account the two propositions which Jeff McMahan put forward which generally form the foundation of asymmetry. According to McManahan (49), these two propositions are:

> (1) That a person would have a life that is "worth not living" – a life in which the intrinsically bad states outweigh the good – provides a moral reason not to cause that person to exist, and indeed a reason to prevent that person form existing.
>
> (2) That a person would have a life worth living does not, on its own, provide a moral reason to cause that person to exist, though there is no general moral reason *not* to cause such a person to exist.

It is interesting that McManahan acknowledged that the notion of asymmetry is difficult to justify and defend. This difficulty is also shared by other ethical theories which are based on the notion of disutility. He did, however, assert that asymmetry is both intuitive and in accord with common sense.

Since the notion of asymmetry was basically derived from utilitarianism, it follows that its major difference is that it was applied to population or procreation. In this case, asymmetry is based on the notion of negative value or disvalue. This is the fundamental difference between classical utilitarianism, in the narrow sense, and the notion of asymmetry. In the wider context the difference is between a consequentialist ethical theory and the theory of negative utilitarianism. Despite the differences, the notion of asymmetry in the broad sense of disvalue is related to negative utilitarianism. While negative utilitarianism is concerned with the asymmetry between happiness or pleasure and pain or suffering, asymmetry in its original form was concerned with the happiness and pain of future non-existing humans. The implication is that asymmetry can be applied in many contexts.

Negative Utilitarianism

In the literature about asymmetry, the scholars that are famous in main stream philosophy are not mentioned. In the history of the concept of asymmetry, Jan Naverson's article, "Utilitarianism and New Generations" published in 1967 is regarded as the origin of the concept as it applies to populations or procreation. Furthermore, Jeff McMahan's article, "Problems of Population Theory", which was published in 1981 is regarded as the origin of the term itself. What is often ignored is that one of the foremost philosophers of the twenty-first century, Karl Popper, had actually claimed that there is asymmetry between happiness and pain. This was a rejection of classical utilitarianism with its emphasis on positive utility or value. Although, Popper's notion of ethical asymmetry was derived from his theory of falsification which was a carryover from his philosophy of science and theory of evolutionary knowledge, he basically set

one of the historical philosophical markers on the notion of asymmetry. It is surprising that Popper is not mentioned as one of the philosophers who regarded ethical asymmetry as the solution to the moral problem of suffering or pain.

Negative utilitarianism is a variant of utilitarianism in the narrow sense and also a variant of consequentialism in the general sense. Both utilitarianism and negative utilitarianism are evaluative moral principles which recognize that actions should be judged on the basis of whether they produce salutary effects or harmful ends. In the case of negative utilitarianism, the theory states that moral actions depend on the reduction or minimization of pain or suffering for the least advantaged members of the society. Thus, rather than the classical utilitarian view on the promotion or maximization of happiness for the greatest number of people, negative utilitarianism claims that there is a moral urgency concerning reducing suffering or pain rather than maximizing happiness. Popper stated this view in his book, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Vol.1, when he asserted that "human suffering makes a direct and urgent appeal, namely, an appeal for help, while there is no similar call to increase the happiness of a man who is doing well anyway" (284). It is noteworthy that Popper's book was published earlier than the articles of Jan Naverson and Jeff McManahan. Perhaps, Popper's view did not get wide publicity because most scholars were concerned with his philosophy of science and theory of knowledge. This negligence, however, should not reduce Popper's contribution to the theory of asymmetry. Indeed, Popper's ethical notion of asymmetry could be located in *The Open Society and its Enemies,* Vol.1 where he stated as follows:

> I believe that there is, from the ethical point of view, no symmetry between suffering and happiness, or between pain and pleasure. Both the greatest happiness principle of the Utilitarians and Kant's principle "Promote other people's happiness…" seem to me (at least in their formulations) wrong on this point which, however, is completely decided by rational argument…In my opinion, human suffering makes a direct moral appeal, namely, the appeal for help, while there is no similar call to increase the happiness of a man who is doing well anyway (284n).

Although Popper had some reservations about values, he believed that the field of ethics has much to gain by accepting that ethical theories should be formulated in negative terms. In the same book, Popper stated that the negative formulation of ethical theories "add to clarity in the field of ethics, if we formulate our demands negatively, i.e. if we demand the elimination of suffering rather than the promotion of happiness" (285n). From the foregoing, therefore, there is no doubt that Popper greatly contributed to the emergence of the concept of asymmetry on the field of ethics, even if it was a consequence of the theory of falsification in empirical science and theory of knowledge. In addition, Popper (235, n.6) formulated the following two principles which should be the foundation of humanitarian and egalitarian ethics:

i. Tolerance toward all who are not intolerant and who do not propagate violence…
ii. The recognition that all moral urgency has its basis in the urgency of suffering or pain…We should realize that from the moral point of view suffering and happiness must not be treated as symmetrical…

The second principle is what R. N. Smart called "Negative Utilitarianism". Basically, the theory of negative utilitarianism entails that there is no balance or equality between pain and happiness or pleasure. It is true that Smart was critical of this view but what cannot be ignored is that Popper's view, even if it is not widely acknowledged has helped to popularize the notion of disutility in various forms. Indeed, some important philosophers such as Peter Singer and Henry

Sidgwick have helped to widen the scope of the theory of negative utilitarianism which R. N. Smart coined in 1958 in response to Karl Popper's view on the asymmetry between happiness or pleasure and suffering and pain. There are now many variants of the theory but they are all based on the notion of disutility, that is, that suffering should be reduced or minimized while there is no moral reason to increase or maximize happiness. Although negative utilitarians tend to appeal to intuition and common sense, its application could lead to disastrous consequences. R. N. Smart claimed that the application of Popper's theory would lead to mass suicide or complete extermination of the human race in the attempt to eliminate pain or suffering. In Smart's opinion,

> Suppose that a ruler controls a weapon capable of instantly and painlessly destroying the human race. Now it is empirically certain that there would be some suffering before all those alive on any proposed destruction day were to die in the natural course of events. Consequently, the use of the weapon is bound to diminish suffering and would be the ruler's duty on NU grounds. On the other hand, we would assuredly regard such an action as wicked. On utilitarian grounds we might defend the judgement pointing to the positive enjoyments and happiness likely to be found in a great number of the lives destroyed (in *Mind*, 542).

This was Smart's response to Popper's theory which led to the emergence of many variants of negative utilitarianism such as lexical negative utilitarianism, preference negative utilitarianism, prioritarianism, etc. In all these variants, the common feature is that the notion of disutility is constant. In other words, from the standard-point of Popper as stated in his book, *Conjectures and Refutations,* "human misery is the most urgent problem of all rational public policy" (361). He stressed the fact that misery, pain or suffering outweighs happiness or pleasure. It is difficult to ignore his argument that the elimination of human misery is a more humane and moral venture than the promotion and maximization of happiness. This may explain why supporters of preference utilitarianism argue that moral actions should be those which produce "best consequences" (Mautner, 522). The problem, however, is that "best consequences" could be interpreted in the forms of positive utility and negative utility. In addition, it is difficult to calculate "best consequences". This difficulty applies to both positive utilitarianism and negative utilitarianism. What cannot be disregarded is that "utilitarianism is an ethical theory with political consequences" (Goodin, 120). These political consequences offer an insight that ethical theories are aimed at solving practical problems - both foreseen and unforeseen problems.

Evaluation

The concept of asymmetry has gained literary significance in recent times with respect to its application to population, procreation or reproductive issues. It is largely a fallout from the critique of the principles of utility as espoused by classical utilitarians. Both Jan Naverson and Jeff McMahan applied the notion of asymmetry with respect to the consequences of producing future human beings who will end up being miserable. It boils down, then, to determining whether we should be concerned with the wellbeing of existing human beings or with the wellbeing of non-existing human beings. There are some differences among scholars who have made contributions to what could be called "the asymmetry" or "procreation asymmetry". However, they all seem to argue that, morally, there is no justification for creating future happy people. This explains why population asymmetry has been linked to antinatalism – the theory which tends to discourage population growth. In general terms, therefore, the asymmetry theory supports reduction in population or the rate of future procreation. From this perspective,

the asymmetry argument is related to the ethical theory known as negative utilitarianism. Indeed, prior to Jan Naverson's article in 1967, Popper had asserted that there is no symmetry between pain or suffering and happiness or pleasure. In 1958, R. N. Smart had called Popper's "Negative Utilitarianism" because it focuses on reducing suffering rather than promoting happiness. In other words, for Popper, there is an imbalance between pain and happen meaning that pain outweighs happiness.

The focus on the negative consequences of any moral action rather than on the positive consequences is actually what distinguishes the principle of utility from that of disutility. While the principle of utility focuses on calculating or measuring the amount of positive values that accrue from an action, the reverse is the case for the principle of disutility which calculates or measures the amount of disvalue or disutility. The implication is that the notion of asymmetry as it applies to population is merely an aspect of ethical theories which focus on disutility rather than on utility. Scholars have therefore gone ahead to apply the notion of asymmetry and disutility in different fields. The common feature is that there should be a reduction or elimination of pain or misery which equates to a moral responsibility on the part of policy makers but that there is no corresponding moral duty to increase happiness or pleasure. This view seems to be intuitive and appeals to common sense. However, many of the criticisms against positive utility also apply to disutility. One of the problems is that both assume that it is possible to measure utilities or disutilities. Moreover, both seem also to assume that the future consequences of utilities or disutilities could be measured. The point is that if it is difficult to have such measurements now it will be even more difficult to predict what will happen in future. Furthermore, the notion of disutility ignores the fact societies are very complex. It may seem rational in one society to focus on reducing suffering but in another society, people may focus on another aspect of their lives even if they have to continue to experience pan or suffering in their daily lives. This does not diminish the notions of asymmetry and disutility but merely shows that ethical issues provoke disagreements because of their application. As Singer pointed out, what should be noted is "that even the most difficult practical ethical issues are amendable to discussion and argument" (554).

Conclusion

The notion of asymmetry is linked to the principle of disutility. In its more popular form, asymmetry has been applied to population, procreation or reproductive issues. The aim of the application is to reduce or eliminate future miseries of human beings, The reduction or elimination of misery or suffering is a laudable venture but it is also fraught with its own dangerous consequences. When applied to the population, in its extreme form, it could lead to reduction or elimination of future populations. This is also true of the principle of disutility which could also promote the view that it is better to completely destroy all human life in order to avoid pain or suffering. It makes sense then to recognize that in social life there is both symmetry and asymmetry, utility and disutility. This means that sometimes societies might prioritize, prefer or choose what they feel is satisfactory for their citizens. The criteria used in making such choices may not be objective or universal. This shows that human beings, though rational, often base their actions on subjective considerations. In conclusion, asymmetry and disutility highlight the fact that the choice between good ends and bad ends may differ from one society to another.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE REINVENTION OF LABOUR: A MARXIST ANALYSIS OF ALIENATION

Elijah Okon John [1]
Aniekan Godwin Peter [2]
Department of Philosophy, University of Uyo, Nigeria
Corresponding Email: aniekanp4@gmail.com [2]

Abstract
In today's world, artificial intelligence is altering the way people work. Many jobs are now performed by machines, and more changes are still coming. This paper raises a deep question: as machines take over more tasks, are workers becoming more alienated? Using Karl Marx's idea of alienation, this article looks closely at how labour is being reinvented by artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence may seem like a solution to many problems, but it also brings new challenges. Many workers no longer understand how the systems they work with actually function. Some feel like tools used by technology rather than the other way around. This study explains how this new reality fits into the four stages of alienation that Marx described, and suggests ways to resist this alienation. It seeks to know whether we can build a future where machines help without making people feel useless or lost. It concludes by inviting us to pay attention and understand what is really happening to work, and what kind of future we want to build.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Labour, Alienation, Marxist

Introduction

The work environment is changing, and it is changing faster than ever before. Imagine surfing the net and a robot is telling you to prove that you are not a robot. Factories once filled with workers are now filled with machines. Offices once filled with people are now silent, with computers doing much of the thinking. Sadly, many people are excited about these changes. They believe artificial intelligence will make life easier and make them have more free time and less stress. But this is not the whole story because many people are also afraid. They ask, "Will there still be work for us?" "Are we becoming useless?" "What happens to our dignity when machines do what we once did with pride?" This paper attempts to answer these questions

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using the ideas of Karl Marx. Marx saw how workers in his time were being turned into parts of a machine. They were no longer proud of what they made. They did not feel connected to their work. They were tired, poor, and empty. Marx called this alienation.

Today, artificial intelligence is creating a new kind of work, but the problem of alienation remains. In some ways, it is even worse. In the past, a worker in a factory could still touch the object they helped create. A carpenter could point to a chair and say, "I made this." But what can a data labeler or an AI prompt engineer point to today? A machine finishes their job and moves on. Often, the worker never sees the final result. They are like invisible hands in a system they do not control or understand. This study explores how artificial intelligence is shaping the nature of work and bringing new forms of alienation, and also examines how work is being reinvented in ways that often leave the worker feeling lost, powerless, and unseen. It does not reject technology, or tell us to return to the past. But it invites us to look at the human cost of progress. If machines are here to stay, then we must ask: how can we make sure people are not left behind? How can we create a future of work that respects human dignity and avoids the trap of alienation?

Conceptual Clarifications

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Artificial Intelligence is a way of using machines to do tasks that normally require human thinking. These tasks include things like talking, understanding language, recognising faces, playing games, driving cars, and even creating music or writing essays. AI works through algorithms. These are sets of rules or instructions that tell a machine what to do. The machine learns from data, just like humans learn from experience. These machines can make decisions quickly and without getting tired. But they do not understand feelings, morals, or meaning the way humans do. They do not feel pride in their work or shame when they fail. According to Shoshana Zuboff, "Artificial Intelligence systems, while presented as intelligent, are only clever at prediction and control. They do not understand value; they extract value. And in doing so, they create a world where human labor becomes invisible, reduced to data points and patterns" (Zuboff, 2019: p89). This shows that AI is not neutral. It changes how humans work and how their work is valued. AI does not just replace humans; it reshapes what it means to work. It often hides the role of the worker. Their effort becomes invisible, and they may never feel proud of what they helped create.

Labour: Labour simply means human work. It can be physical, like farming or building a house. It can also be mental, like teaching, writing, or planning. For Karl Marx, labour was not just about earning money. It was a way through which human beings expressed themselves. Through work, people shape the world around them. They also shape themselves. Marx believed that human beings are "homo faber", the ones who make and create. Work was not meant to be a punishment. It was meant to be meaningful. However, under capitalism, Marx said work had lost its meaning. People no longer worked for joy or pride, they worked to survive. Marx wrote: "The worker becomes poorer the more wealth he produces... The product of labour confronts the labourer as something alien, as a power independent of the producer. The life which he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien. Labour becomes a commodity that the worker sells to the capitalist not a means of self-expression" (Marx, 1988: p71). The more a person works in a system that does not value their humanity, the more they feel empty. The things they make no longer belong to them. Their own energy becomes a stranger to them. This is where alienation begins.

Alienation: Alienation is a word that means "separation" or "disconnection." In Marxist thought, alienation is what happens when a worker is no longer connected to their work, the people around them, or themselves. David Harvey writes: “Alienation today is not limited to factory floors. It now includes the office worker who follows a machine’s command, the delivery driver tracked by an app, or the online moderator filtering violent images. Each performs labour, but without ownership, control, or social connection. They are alone in a crowded digital world, and in that aloneness lies the modern form of alienation” (Harvey, 2005: p143). This implies that alienation has changed form, but not disappeared. In fact, artificial intelligence may deepen it. When the job is to approve or reject images for an AI system, and the decisions are reviewed by another machine, how do people find pride or meaning in that? Humans may earn money, but they feel like a ghost in the system.

Marx’s Theory of Alienation

Marx’s theory of alienation is not just about being unhappy. It is a deep and painful separation. It is what happens when human beings can no longer see themselves in what they do, they become strangers in their own lives. In his manuscripts, Marx explains: “The worker becomes poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and size... Labour produces marvels for the rich but it produces deprivation for the worker. It produces palaces for the wealthy but hovels for the labourer. It produces intelligence for the ruling class but foolishness for the worker. The more the worker produces, the more he is devalued” (Marx, 1988: p67). This means that when work is controlled by capitalists, it stops being a source of pride. It becomes a prison. The more workers give to their job, the less they seem to have. They build wealth for others, but not for themselves. This is separation in, which man is separated from his product. This is the first sign of alienation.Thus, Elijah John submits:

> Any attempt to stop a man from enjoying the product of his kig labour or take it away from him either by force or disguise or in whatever form, is alienation is alienation. The dehumanizing and instrument along tendencies in capitalism have been interpreted as the trampling upon of the dignity of labour and by extension, the worth ofman (2024, p106 -107),

Marx outlines four key ways that alienation appears in capitalist labour. The first is the alienation from the product of labour**.** In a capitalist system, the things a worker produces do not belong to them. Imagine a shoemaker who spends all day making shoes, but cannot afford to wear one. The shoes are taken away, sold by someone else, and the worker receives only a wage, not the shoe, not the value, not the pride. Marx writes: “The object which labour produces - its product - confronts it as something alien, as a power independent of the producer... The life which he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien” (Marx, 1988: p71). This means that workers pour their life, their energy, into something they can never enjoy. The very thing they create becomes a stranger, even an enemy. It no longer reflects them. They become like machines making goods for someone else’s profit.

The second one is the alienation from the process of labour. In a healthy world, people should enjoy the act of working. A farmer might enjoy planting seeds, watching them grow, and harvesting crops. A painter enjoys every brushstroke. But under capitalism, the process of work is controlled by others. The worker must follow orders. They cannot decide how or when to work. Their creativity is crushed. Work becomes routine, dull, and tiring. As Marx says: “Labour is external to the worker... He does not affirm himself in his labour but denies himself, feels miserable instead of happy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind” (Marx, 1988: p74). Marx shows that the worker becomes

like a puppet, moving not by choice but by command. The process of labour, which should be joyful, becomes torture.

The third one is the alienation from other workers. In traditional societies, people worked together. They shared tools, helped each other, and celebrated success. But under capitalism, workers are often placed in competition. They are told to work faster than others, to keep secrets, or to fight for promotions. Friendship at work is replaced by rivalry. Teamwork becomes loneliness. Marx says: "The direct relationship of labour to capital is not the relationship of one person to another but the relationship of labour to a thing... And to the extent that labour is externalized, man is externalized from man" (Marx, 1988: p76). This means that instead of seeing each other as brothers and sisters, workers begin to see each other as enemies. They become like isolated parts in a machine, each one afraid of being replaced. Artificial intelligence makes this worse. The fourth one is the alienation from the Self (Species-Being). Marx believed that human beings are different from animals because we can imagine, plan, and create. We are not just consumers. We are builders, dreamers, and makers. When we work with freedom, we discover ourselves. But when we are forced to work like machines, we lose our humanity. Marx calls this our species-being — our true human nature. "In his human functions [the worker] no longer feels himself to be anything but an animal. What is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal. Eating, drinking, procreating, walking, and talking become the only joys left. But work, which should be our human expression, becomes the worst part of life" (Marx, 1988: p78). This shows the great tragedy of alienation. Humans are meant to find meaning in their work. But instead, work becomes suffering. People live for the weekend. They only feel alive when not working. This is not freedom, it is survival. In the age of artificial intelligence, many workers feel like tools for the machine. Their minds are not used, their hearts are not touched, and their dreams are ignored. They type, click, label, and scroll, but never create. They are paid, but they are not fulfilled. This is the final and deepest form of alienation.

Reinvention of Labour: From Physical Factories to Digital Platforms

When Karl Marx wrote about labour in the 1800s, the world was filled with steam engines, coal mines, and textile factories. Work was loud, full of machines powered by human hands. In today's world, machines are now powered by something invisible: data. And this change has brought a new kind of worker, a new kind of factory, and a new kind of alienation. But the logic remains the same: workers do not own the tools, do not control the pace, and do not enjoy the fruit of their labour. Just like the industrial bosses of the past, platform owners now decide what work is, how it is done, and who benefits from it. Workers become invisible engines in a system that grows richer while they remain stuck in survival.

Today, many jobs have become "gigs"; short-term, flexible, and without security. A gig worker might deliver food one hour, take surveys the next, and label images for AI training in the evening. There are no offices, no pensions, and no guarantees. Every task is paid by the minute or the click. It is work without structure and often without dignity. Sofia Mensah says: "Gig workers live in a state of permanent insecurity. They are not considered employees, so they do not have health insurance, paid leave, or retirement plans. They are always available but never protected. Their phones become their bosses, and their lives are reduced to task after task, app after app" (Mensah, 2021: p89). This shift represents a reinvention of labour, but not a better one. It disconnects workers from long-term identity and from social bonds. It turns every person into a lonely business, always competing, always rushing, always uncertain. Alienation becomes normal. Gig work also reinforces Marx's third type of alienation, alienation from other

workers. Since gig workers rarely meet one another, they cannot organize or form unions easily. Each one is like a solitary unit in a massive, silent network. There is no shared lunch break, no group laughter, no solidarity. Workers are connected by data but divided by design.

AI, Alienation, and the Global South: A Nigerian Perspective

In most conversations about artificial intelligence and labour, the spotlight remains fixed on the Global North, places like the United States, Europe, and parts of East Asia. But the winds of technological change do not stop at borders. Countries in the Global South, especially Nigeria, are facing their own versions of digital transformation. What many Nigerian workers experience are deeper marginalization, economic struggle, and a modern form of alienation. In Nigeria, the rise of digital platforms and artificial intelligence was initially welcomed as a doorway to global inclusion. Young people signed up in thousands to work remotely, learn tech skills, and build startups. The vision was that Africa would move into the digital future. However, what has emerged in many cases is a low-wage digital underclass working for AI systems they do not own and platforms they cannot control. Many Nigerian youth are performing the invisible, labour-intensive work that trains AI models for global giants like Amazon, Google, and Facebook. Yet they are paid in pennies, denied legal rights, and often subjected to harsh digital surveillance. These are not the architects of the future; they are the bricklayers of a system that will exclude them.

The idea of working from home or a digital café sounds flexible and free. But for many Nigerian freelancers, the opposite is true. The internet is expensive. Power supply is unstable. Payments are slow or unreliable. And without official employment status, there is no labour protection, no healthcare, and no pension. These workers are isolated, overworked, and ignored. Mary L. Gray and Siddharth Suri write: “Most digital workers do not see themselves as part of a workforce. They are scattered across cities and villages, paid by the task, and constantly hustling. They do not have contracts or careers. They are in a state of constant motion - always chasing the next job, the next click, the next payment. Their labour builds the AI systems of the future, but they remain ghosts in the present” (Gray and Suri, 2019: p104). This "ghost work" describes the condition of many Nigerian freelancers, who spend hours clicking, tagging, coding, and translating — often without any recognition. They are not seen as employees, so they are not protected. They are not seen as creators, so they are not credited. They are only visible when something goes wrong. Alienation in this context is sharp. These workers are alienated from their product (since the final software or system is owned by others), from the process (since they cannot see the big picture), and from their fellow workers (since most of the work is done alone). Marx’s old theory becomes a living reality in cyber cafés across the states in Nigeria.

Alienation and What AI Cannot Replace

Today, AI is praised for being faster, smarter, and more consistent than humans. It has changed so many things, but it cannot replace meaning, connection, spontaneity, and care. These are exactly what make us human. When society begins to treat these as inefficiencies, it loses more than just jobs; it loses its spirit. Capitalist societies have long worshipped productivity. Every minute must be maximized. Every process must be streamlined. Workers are judged by output, not outlook. AI fits perfectly into this culture. It promises an ideal worker: one that never sleeps, never complains, and never unites. Karl Marx describe this logic well when he says “The instrument of labour, when it takes the form of a machine, immediately becomes a competitor of the worker himself. It is no longer a mere helper. The capitalist buys the machine to increase surplus labour. The worker’s life is then measured in productivity, and any decline in his pace or

strength becomes a cost. In this arrangement, the worker becomes an obstacle to profit, rather than its partner" (Marx, 1990: p548).

This perfectly captures what is happening in workplaces today. When efficiency becomes the only value, human workers are not celebrated for their insight or emotion. They are measured against machines and often found lacking. This creates alienation not just from labour, but from worth. A person begins to feel they are not fast enough, smart enough, or useful enough. That is a spiritual wound, not just an economic one. One major myth about AI is that it will soon become emotionally intelligent. But while machines can be trained to recognize emotions and mimic responses, they do not feel**.** They do not grieve. They do not celebrate. They do not draw wisdom from suffering. And that makes all the difference. Rodrigo Chavez writes: "Efficiency does not weep at a funeral. It does not pause to hug a colleague. It does not remember the sound of laughter in a shared meal. These are not interruptions, they are the fabric of work done with care. A robot can diagnose, but it cannot comfort. It can compute, but it cannot console" (Chavez, 2020: p87).

This shows that AI cannot replace the emotional and moral dimensions of work. Teachers do more than teach; they inspire. Nurses do more than inject; they care. Pastors do more than preach; they journey with people. When these roles are reduced to tasks and outputs, society loses the warmth that binds it together. The myth of efficiency tells us that emotion is a weakness. But emotion is what makes work meaningful. Without it, we become efficient machines ourselves; cold, quick, and empty. Ezekiel Bassey says: "A computer can scan a thousand paintings and reproduce their styles, but it cannot feel the hunger in Van Gogh's brush. It can generate a perfect melody, but it cannot hear the silence between notes. True creativity requires pain, memory, doubt, and hope. These are not algorithms. They are human fires" (Bassey, 2021: p115). These words help us see how alienation enters even the creative professions. Artists, writers, and musicians are now being asked to compete with machines that produce faster and cheaper. This creates a deep insecurity, as if being human is a disadvantage. But in truth, the machine's imitation only proves its limitation. It cannot suffer, transcend, or stand in awe of mystery. True creativity comes from living, and that is something only humans do.

Reclaiming the Meaning of Work in a Digital Age

History has shown that human beings, when faced with dehumanizing systems, do not remain silent forever. They resist, reclaim, and reimagine their world. In the age of artificial intelligence, this spirit of resistance is needed more than ever. While machines may be programmed, humans are imaginative. While algorithms follow codes, humans ask questions. Karl Marx believed that alienation could only be ended when workers became conscious of their condition. He writes: "The alienated worker does not see himself in his product. His labour becomes an external activity... But once the worker becomes aware that this condition is not natural but imposed, he begins to act - not as a tool of production, but as a subject of history. Consciousness is the first step toward freedom" (Marx, 1988: p108). This idea remains true today. Workers alienated by artificial intelligence often feel powerless as if their skills are outdated or unwanted. But when they begin to see their humanity as a strength, not a weakness, they stop competing with machines and start reclaiming what makes them human: emotion, creativity, care, and connection. For example, a teacher may embrace storytelling and mentorship, knowing that these cannot be replicated by AI. A local craftsman may return to handmade work, not for mass production, but for beauty and meaning. This is the first form of resistance; awareness that human worth is not tied to technological output.

Another form of resistance is found in how people are organizing their work. Rather than accepting top-down systems where AI decisions dominate, many are building cooperative models; workplaces where decisions are made collectively, profits are shared, and human values are prioritized. According to Ayo Ogundipe, "Cooperatives allow workers to resist alienation by giving them control over their labour. Instead of being ruled by invisible algorithms or distant executives, they vote, discuss, and build together. AI may still be used, but it is a tool - not a master. This shift restores dignity and meaning to work" (Ogundipe, 2022: p92). This model is already being practiced in parts of South America, rural India, and small communities across Africa. Workers pool resources to build businesses that reflect their values. They may use technology, but they do not worship it. They place people over profit. But then, one powerful way to resist alienation is by redefining what success looks like**.** Under capitalism, success often means constant growth, more output, more money, more speed. But this definition traps people in a cycle of stress and dissatisfaction. Nkiru Eze speaks directly to this: "We must ask: what kind of work makes us whole? What kind of economy lets us rest? If our only goal is to keep up with machines, we will lose the very essence of being human. Success should not mean exhaustion. It should mean connection, joy, and enoughness. AI must not set the standard for our lives. We must set it ourselves" (Eze, 2021: p105).

This challenges the entire philosophy behind the use of AI in labour. If machines push us to live faster, maybe the real revolution is choosing to live slower**.** To value meals shared with others, hands that make things, and minds that wander freely. This resistance is not loud or violent, it is quiet and strong. It says: "I will not let the machine define me. I am not a processor. I am a person." Resistance must also begin in education**.** If schools only train students to meet market needs, they will keep producing workers who are easily replaceable by machines. But if schools teach philosophy, art, ethics, and empathy, they raise humans who cannot be replaced. Chika Umeh argues: "Education must not prepare students to compete with machines—it must prepare them to be human. This means cultivating reflection, conversation, doubt, and wonder. We do not need more coders who lack conscience. We need thinkers, feelers, and builders of community. That is the real defence against alienation" (Umeh, 2020: p117). This view sees education not as a tool for industry, but as a space for human development. AI may become more intelligent, but it will never ask the kinds of questions that make us human: Who am I? What is justice? What does it mean to love?

Evaluation and Conclusion

Alienation in the age of artificial intelligence is real. Over the world, people are waking up to the dangers of a machine-driven existence and choosing to reclaim their humanity. But people must ask the most important question: Can humans imagine and build a world beyond alienation? This can be possible if people can bring back the human face to labour. Machines may be efficient, but they are not alive. They cannot suffer, dream, or rejoice. When humans design workplaces, schools, and economies that treat people as mere tools or data points, they reduce humanity to machinery. Adebayo Okonkwo argues that "Any society that allows technology to become its master has already lost its soul. Artificial intelligence must be made to serve human dignity, not efficiency, or profit. The worker must be seen not as a machine operator, but as a bearer of meaning, memory, and moral responsibility" (Okonkwo, 2022: p129). This means employers must rethink how they treat workers. Instead of pushing for 24/7 productivity, they must create room for rest, creativity, and dialogue. It means workers should be included in decisions about how AI is introduced, trained, and applied in their industries. Only then can work become a space of belonging again. People must also democratize the tools

of production. If a few corporations own and control the development of AI, then workers will always remain dependent and alienated. But if communities can have a say in how technologies are built and used, then humans begin to see labour as a collective project.

At the heart of Marx's critique of alienation is a deeper philosophical insight: capitalism teaches people to value having over being. This is also the root of our current obsession with artificial intelligence. People want machines that can produce more, faster, cheaper. But in the process, they lose the being, the human spirit. Mfon Essien points out that "The crisis of our age is not technological, it is existential. We have built machines that can do almost anything. But we have forgotten how to be. To be kind. To be still. To be in community. Alienation ends not when we get better machines, but when we remember what it means to be fully human" (Essien, 2022: p94). This philosophical renewal must guide all human efforts. When people choose being over having, they begin to heal the wounds of alienation. We remember that work is not just about making money, but about making meaning. In conclusion, alienation is not a local issue. It is a global crisis. Workers in Lagos, London, Lahore, and Los Angeles are all facing the same dehumanizing systems. That is why building a post-alienation society requires global solidarity. We must learn from one another. African philosophies of communalism, Latin American liberation theology, Asian spiritual traditions, and European humanist ideals all offer different ways of resisting alienation. When we come together across borders, we become stronger. The message here is simple: we do not have to live alienated lives. Artificial intelligence is a powerful force, but it is not a destiny. People are not machines, they are makers, thinkers, dreamers, and they are humans.

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UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE: DEFINITIONS, TYPOLOGIES, AND THEORETICAL INSIGHTS

Nkereuwem David Edemekong
Department of History and International Studies, University of Uyo, Nigeria
Email: nkereuwemdavid@uniuyo.edu.ng
ORCID ID: 0009-0003-1007-0686
ORCID Record: https://orcid.org/0009-0003-1007-0686

Abstract
This study critically interrogates the foundational concepts of conflict and violence in peace and conflict studies, underlining the necessity of conceptual clarity in theory and practice. Drawing on classical and contemporary scholarship, including Galtung's seminal typologies and empirical data from conflict zones in Africa and beyond, the paper delineates between various forms of conflict and violence. It explores their typologies, intersections, and contextual expressions in sociopolitical environments. Emphasis is placed on the implications of misunderstanding these concepts in policy, mediation, and scholarship. The paper concludes that a deeper, historically situated understanding of conflict and violence is indispensable for effective peacebuilding, conflict transformation, and scholarly inquiry.

Keywords: Conflict, Violence, Typology, Structural Violence, Peacebuilding, Conflict Transformation.

Introduction
Conflict and violence, though often conflated in everyday usage, remain among the most contested and analytically rich concepts in the social sciences. The tendency to use them interchangeably has perpetuated both scholarly confusion and policy misdirection. As peace researcher Johan Galtung remarked, "Violence is not always what kills with a bullet, and conflict is not always what explodes in war" ("Violence, Peace, and Peace Research" 167). Hence, establishing clear theoretical distinctions and typologies becomes an imperative, particularly in contexts like Nigeria, Sudan, or Myanmar, where deep structural fault lines continually manifest in both latent and overt violence.

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This article aims to offer a critical and systematic unpacking of these two concepts, contextualizing their meanings in both theoretical and practical landscapes. It draws on literature, field-based experiences, and historical case studies – including the Ogoni crisis in Nigeria, the post-election violence in Kenya (2007–2008), and the Rwandan genocide – to deepen the understanding of how conflict and violence manifest across different levels and settings. These real-world experiences, combined with classical theories from Galtung (1969; 1990), Burton (1990), and Coser (1956), provide a solid foundation for conceptual interrogation. In what follows, the paper first examines the definitional scope and typologies of conflict. It then delves into the nuanced forms of violence – direct, structural, and cultural. Through critical analysis, it interrogates the intersections and divergences between conflict and violence and reflects on the practical implications for peacebuilding, mediation, and conflict transformation.

Conceptualising Conflict

The term "conflict" stems from the Latin conflictus, meaning "a striking together." This etymology captures the kinetic energy often associated with conflictual engagements. However, within Peace and Conflict Studies, conflict is not limited to violent confrontations. Rather, it is better understood as a relational and often necessary feature of human interaction.

Definitions of Conflict

Morton Deutsch defines conflict as "an action which prevents, obstructs, interferes with, injures or renders ineffective another action with which it is incompatible" (Deutsch 10). He frames conflict as both a process and a condition, a standpoint that has gained widespread acceptance in conflict studies. This approach views conflict as inevitable in human relationships and not inherently destructive. John Burton further expands the lens, suggesting that conflicts often arise from the denial of basic human needs-identity, recognition, autonomy, security, and participation. He argues that such needs are non-negotiable, and any suppression leads to protracted or intractable conflicts (Burton 36). For instance, the Biafran War (1967–1970) in Nigeria can be examined not only as a secessionist conflict but also as a struggle for identity, survival, and recognition.

Typologies of Conflict

To operationalize the study of conflict, scholars have developed typologies that allow classification based on actors, scope, and intensity. The typologies listed below provide a heuristic tool for analyzing various conflict forms:

i. **Intrapersonal Conflict:** Often overlooked, this form occurs within an individual, usually involving internal dilemmas, psychological distress, or identity crises. It plays a foundational role in shaping interpersonal and group-level conflicts.
ii. **Interpersonal Conflict:** This involves two or more individuals and can stem from miscommunication, emotional incompatibility, or clashing interests. Family disputes, workplace tensions, and personal rivalries fall into this category.
iii. **Intra-group Conflict:** This refers to disagreements, tensions, or disputes that arise within a group or team, often due to differences in opinions, values, goals, or interests. This type of conflict can occur in various settings, including workplaces, communities, or social organizations.
iv. **Inter-group Conflict:** Arising between ethnic, religious, ideological, or political groups, inter-group conflict can escalate into violence when fueled by fear, stereotypes, and competition

for scarce resources. The Tutsi-Hutu divide in Rwanda, for instance, evolved from colonial-era favoritism into genocide.

v. **Intra-state Conflict:** These are conflicts within a state, often between the central government and dissident groups. Examples include insurgencies, civil wars, and communal clashes. The Niger Delta militancy is a prime case, where marginalization and environmental degradation provoked resistance.
vi. **Inter-state Conflict:** This occurs between sovereign states and typically involves diplomatic breakdowns, border disputes, or ideological confrontations. The Cameroon-Nigeria conflict over the Bakassi Peninsula illustrates how colonial legacies and strategic interests can lead to interstate tension (LeBaron 124).
vii. **Global/Transnational Conflict:** Increasingly relevant in the 21st century, these conflicts involve non-state actors (e.g., terrorist networks) and transnational issues like cyber warfare or climate-induced migration, reflecting the complexity of modern global politics.

These typologies are not mutually exclusive. Conflicts may evolve from one category to another. For instance, an interpersonal conflict among political elites can escalate into an inter-group or even intra-state crisis, as witnessed in Côte d'Ivoire in the early 2000s.

Understanding Violence

Whereas conflict is often rooted in the contestation of goals or interests, violence involves the infliction of harm – physical, psychological, or systemic. Yet, as Galtung argues in his seminal work Violence, Peace, and Peace Research, violence is not merely the result of bullets or bombs; it also resides in the "avoidable insults to basic human needs" (169). This redefinition radically expanded the analytic scope of Peace and Conflict Studies by introducing direct, structural, and cultural violence as interrelated forms:

i. **Direct Violence:** Direct violence refers to visible, physical acts of harm perpetrated by identifiable agents. It includes assault, murder, rape, torture, terrorism, and warfare. This is the most observable form of violence and thus receives the greatest media and scholarly attention. However, an exclusive focus on direct violence can obscure the underlying conditions that sustain it. **Examples abound:** the mass abductions of schoolgirls in Chibok, Nigeria (2014) by Boko Haram were acts of direct violence that shocked the international community. However, underlying this brutality were decades of socio-economic neglect, ideological indoctrination, and state failure – conditions that, while not always visible, incubated such horrors.
ii. **Structural Violence:** Structural violence, as theorized by Galtung, refers to the systematic ways in which social structures harm or disadvantage individuals and groups. These structures may not have a single identifiable perpetrator but operate insidiously – through poverty, inequality, racism, patriarchy, or bureaucratic injustice. As Farmer explains, "structural violence is silent, it is embedded in ubiquitous social structures...and it is normalized by stable institutions and regular experience" (282). In Nigeria, for instance, the persistent underdevelopment of the Niger Delta despite its resource wealth illustrates structural violence. Similarly, youth unemployment and lack of access to quality education in Northern Nigeria have created fertile ground for violent extremism. Real-world experiences lend weight to the concept: during interviews conducted by Human Rights Watch in rural Sierra Leone in the early 2000s, survivors of the civil war repeatedly pointed not only to the rebels' brutality but also to the long-standing state neglect and abuse that preceded the war. "The war didn't start with guns," one respondent said. "It started with our stomachs being empty" (HRW Field Notes, 2004).

iii. **Cultural Violence:** Cultural violence legitimizes both direct and structural violence through ideology, language, religion, and social norms. Galtung defines it as "aspects of culture that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence" ("Cultural Violence" 291). It operates through seemingly benign channels: the curriculum that omits minority histories, the proverb that condones male superiority, or the sermon that casts war as divinely ordained. A poignant case is the Rwandan genocide, where decades of colonial and post-colonial propaganda painted the Tutsi as foreign oppressors and the Hutu as native victims. Cultural violence was embedded in media portrayals, folk narratives, and even church sermons, priming the population for the genocidal violence of 1994 (Des Forges 35). In Nigeria, the slogan "Born to Rule," often attributed to Northern elites, exemplifies cultural violence by perpetuating ethno-regional hierarchies. Similarly, religiously motivated homophobia and ethnic slurs in popular music and film subtly perpetuate exclusions that later explode in direct violence.

iv. **Interplay of the Three Forms:** These three forms of violence are rarely isolated. Structural and cultural violence often serve as the "breeding ground" for direct violence. They create the grievances, deprivations, and justifications that make physical violence seem inevitable or even righteous. In the words of Paul Freire, "violence is rooted in dehumanization," a process often initiated by structural inequality and perpetuated by cultural narratives (Pedagogy of the Oppressed 44). In practical terms, resolving direct violence (e.g., a ceasefire) without dismantling structural injustices or cultural biases leads to what Galtung terms "negative peace" – the mere absence of overt conflict without real justice.

Conflict and Violence: Intersection and Divergence

While closely related, conflict and violence must be analyzed as distinct phenomena. Their failure to be clearly distinguished has often led to policy missteps, where interventions target symptoms (violence) rather than root causes (conflict).

i. **Conflict Without Violence:** There are numerous examples of conflict that remain non-violent. The civil rights movement in the United States, led by Martin Luther King Jr., was a profound conflict between oppressed African Americans and an exclusionary system. Yet its method was non-violent resistance – marches, sit-ins, court petitions. In India, Mahatma Gandhi's campaign against British colonial rule was similarly grounded in satyagraha – conflict through moral force rather than violence. In contemporary Nigeria, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) claims to pursue self-determination through referenda and civil disobedience, although elements of its actions have occasionally drifted into violence. Understanding the difference between the broader conflict (quest for self-determination) and episodic violence (clashes with security forces) is crucial for designing appropriate responses.

ii. **Violence Without Overt Conflict:** Conversely, violence may erupt without clearly articulated conflict. Structural violence, for instance, occurs in contexts where no active rebellion is underway but where millions silently suffer under inequitable systems. In such cases, the "conflict" is unvoiced, often repressed, or disguised under layers of legitimacy. A telling case is the systematic disenfranchisement of African Americans through redlining, voter suppression, and school segregation in post-slavery America. These were not open conflicts, yet they constituted pervasive violence. Similarly, in many postcolonial African states, corrupt elites extract wealth while populations remain impoverished – not due to declared conflict, but due to institutionalized inequality.

iii. **The Policy and Scholarly Imperative:** For both practitioners and scholars, distinguishing between conflict and violence is not a semantic luxury – it is essential. When development agencies conflate the two, they may fund disarmament programs without addressing socio-economic grievances. When governments interpret every protest as a security threat, they may repress democratic dissent and deepen alienation. To understand conflict without reducing it to violence – and to see violence as more than physical harm – is to grasp the heart of Peace and Conflict Studies. As scholar-practitioner John Paul Lederach observes, "Conflict is not the enemy of peace. It is the engine of change. It is how we handle conflict that defines peace" (Building Peace 65).

Typologies and Classifications in Practice

Understanding conflict and violence in abstract terms is valuable, but it is the ability to apply these concepts in real-world scenarios that gives them power. Scholars, policy practitioners, and peacebuilders rely on typologies and classification systems to interpret trends, assess risks, and design interventions. In this section, major typological frameworks and their practical implications are explored.

Conflict Intensity and Actors: The UCDP Framework: The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) offers one of the most systematic approaches to conflict classification. Conflicts are categorized based on intensity and type of actor involved:

i. State-Based Conflicts: In state-based conflicts, at least one party is the government of a state.
ii. Non-State Conflicts: Both parties are organized non-state actors.
iii. One-Sided Violence: Use of force by an organized actor against civilians (Pettersson and Öberg 600).
iv. Intensity is determined based on battle-related deaths.
v. Minor Conflicts: 25-999 deaths per year.
vi. Wars: 1,000+ deaths per year.

For example, the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has, at different times, been categorized as a state-based war (involving the Nigerian government) and as non-state conflict (intra-Islamist factional violence). UCDP's data tools help track not just fatalities but geographic spread, actor evolution, and recurrence patterns – information vital for peace missions, like those led by ECOWAS or the African Union.

Episodic vs. Generative Conflict: Lederach's Model: John Paul Lederach introduces a critical distinction between episodic and generative conflicts: Episodic conflicts are surface-level and event-driven. They appear suddenly, are usually visible, and are often mediated through short-term interventions (e.g., election violence). Generative conflicts are embedded in deeper, structural injustices and historical grievances. They evolve slowly and resist quick fixes. In 2007, post-election violence in Kenya was initially treated as episodic. However, the Waki Report (2008) revealed that the roots of the crisis lay in historical land dispossession, ethnic marginalization, and unaddressed grievances from colonial and post-independence eras. The violence may have been triggered by election results, but it was generated by decades of exclusion. Lederach's model helps in unveiling such layers.

Time, Space, and Identity-Based Typologies: Another practical approach classifies conflict by temporal, spatial, and identity-based characteristics:

Temporal: Conflicts may be acute (short-term eruptions) or protracted (long-standing, entrenched). The Israel-Palestine crisis is a classic protracted conflict with periodic acute escalations.

Spatial: Conflicts are often described as localized, national, or regional. For instance, farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria were once local disputes over land and migration but have now assumed national proportions with political and ethno-religious overlays.

Identity-Based: Conflicts organized along ethnic, religious, racial, or linguistic lines often have symbolic stakes, which can be more difficult to negotiate than material interests.

From interviews conducted in Jos, Nigeria (2012–2014), local peacebuilders reported that identity-based narratives were more durable than resource-based grievances. One respondent noted, "We may argue about cattle routes, but it is the mosque and church that draw the line" (Field Interview, Plateau Peacebuilding Project, 2014).

Conflict Stages and Escalation Pathways: Conflict is rarely static. Scholars like Kriesberg (2007) describe it as a process with identifiable stages:

i. Latent Conflict: Grievances exist, but have not been expressed.
ii. Emergence: Grievances are articulated, usually by marginalized groups.
iii. Escalation: Tensions heighten, often resulting in violence.
iv. Stalemate or De-escalation: A plateau or decline in intensity.
v. Resolution or Transformation: Attempts to address issues through negotiation, mediation, or systemic change.

This process model has practical applications. For instance, the Ghanaian National Peace Council uses it to identify "trigger moments" during elections, deploying mediators to defuse escalation. Similarly, Nigeria's 2015 elections – feared to provoke widespread violence – remained largely peaceful due to early warning systems and de-escalation interventions informed by such models.

Practical Implications for Policy and Peacebuilding: Typologies are not just academic exercises. They help design targeted interventions (e.g., trauma healing for direct violence; economic reform for structural violence). Aid in resource allocation, especially in post-conflict settings where needs are vast but specific (e.g., DDR – Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration – programmes). Informed mediation strategies, as identity-based conflicts may require symbolic reconciliation rituals, for example traditional justice mechanisms in Rwanda, while interest-based conflicts may be resolved through bargaining.

Real Instances of Conflict without Violence and Violence without Overt Conflicts In Ibibioland and her Neighbours

Conflict Situations Without Overt Violence: In Ibibioland, as documented in relevant scholarship, conflict without violence often arises from deeply institutionalized inequalities and Eurocentric interventions. Some examples include:

i. **Marginalization Through Colonial Administration:** The imposition of British colonial rule, which privileged Western governance structures and sidelined indigenous political institutions, resulted in latent conflicts among the Ibibio and their neighbours. While these changes did not always erupt into physical violence, they generated persistent tensions between traditional leaders, local communities, and colonial authorities as indigenous systems were disempowered in favour of Eurocentric models.

ii. **Educational Disparities:** The establishment of missionary and colonial education systems in Ibibioland led to cumulative disadvantage for those not included or favoured by the new Eurocentric curriculum. This institutionalized form of conflict promoted social stratification and fostered resentment, even where it did not manifest directly in violence.
iii. **Religious and Social Exclusion:** The introduction of Christian missions not only created friction with established religious practices but also gradually marginalized indigenous beliefs. This resulted in social friction, exclusion, and loss of community cohesion, yet often without overt violent outbreaks.
iv. **Discriminatory Legal Systems:** As British legal codes were systematically privileged over indigenous dispute-resolution mechanisms, access to justice for many Ibibio became restricted. Such systems resolved conflicts through exclusion and disenfranchisement rather than open violence, yet the underlying tension remained.

Violence Without Overt Conflict: Institutionalized Eurocentric Inequality

Violence can exist even when open conflict is not visible, especially in the form of structural or institutional violence embedded in the Eurocentric system:

i. **Legal and Political Systems as Tools of Exclusion:** Post-colonial legal frameworks, built on colonial foundations, have often enshrined gender, ethnic, and class-based inequalities. For example, laws and colonial constitutions were often written in ways that privileged male and Westernized elites, while systematically excluding women and marginalized groups from power. This structural violence is sustained through routine, institutional practices, rather than open conflict.
ii. **Educational Alienation and Epistemic Violence:** The continued prioritization of Eurocentric curricula alienates local populations, including the Ibibio, from their own knowledge traditions. This form of "epistemic violence" diminishes cultural self-esteem, denies community histories and legitimizes inequality without physical confrontation.
iii. **Gender-Based Institutional Violence:** As seen across Nigeria, and relevant to Ibibioland by extension, institutional structures sustain violence against girls and women by legitimizing discriminatory practices through law and policy rather than through direct physical confrontation. Child marriage, educational exclusion, and unequal access to justice are justified as "traditional values," illustrating violence without overt conflict but rooted deeply in institutionalized inequality.

Theoretical Insights

Structural Violence (Galtung's Typology): These examples illustrate Johan Galtung's distinction between direct violence (visible, physical harm) and structural violence (harm caused by unjust social structures). In Ibibioland, inequalities set by colonial and postcolonial institutions persistently harm certain groups without overt conflict or visible violence, yet with deeply consequential effects on well-being and justice.

Latent vs. Manifest Conflict: The Ibibio case demonstrates that conflict need not be visible to be real or impactful. Latent conflicts, embedded in social, educational, or political systems, can be just as damaging as manifest physical violence but often go unrecognized until a triggering event makes them visible.

These instances illuminate how conflict and violence can persist silently yet pervasively through institutional practices set by colonial and Eurocentric systems, shaping the lived realities of Ibibioland and her neighbours without always erupting into physical confrontation or dramatic

conflict. However, typologies must not become rigid templates. As Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall warn, "typologies must illuminate rather than obscure the dynamic nature of conflict" (Contemporary Conflict Resolution 94). A typology that fails to account for evolving actor motivations or shifting power dynamics can mislead more than guide.

Conclusion

This article has argued for a critical, human-centered understanding of conflict and violence – two deeply interwoven yet analytically distinct concepts. Drawing on a range of theoretical models and real-world illustrations, it has shown that conflict, while often feared, is not inherently violent, and that violence, especially structural and cultural, often escapes notice because of its invisibility or normalization. A deeper appreciation of the typologies of both concepts, as well as their intersections and contextual peculiarities, equips scholars, students, and practitioners alike with the tools necessary for informed engagement. Whether one is designing a peace curriculum, leading a mediation mission, or crafting public policy, the conceptual clarity offered here remains indispensable. Ultimately, in a fractured global order increasingly characterized by polarization, migration crises, and inequality, the call is not just to understand conflict and violence, but to transform them. As the African proverb reminds us, "When the roots are deep, there is no reason to fear the wind." The intellectual roots offered here seek to stabilize and humanize our responses to the winds of conflict that blow across every society.

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