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Printed By: **Omega Books**
Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria
07032878735

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TABLE Of CONTENTS

Article   **Open Access**

APPRAISAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS' PRINCIPLE OF 'RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT' IN THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

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Abstract

This study analyzed the United Nations application of the principles of 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) in the Syrian Civil War. The Syrian conflict which started in 2011 has raged on for over twelve years, with thousands of people killed, maimed, millions displaced, and large-scale properties destroyed. Despite Syria being a member of the United Nations (UN), the UN has not been able to intervene to bring the conflict to an end. A qualitative research design was adopted for the study. Findings show that several factors are aiding the continuation of the Syrian civil war, and the inability of the UN to apply its principles of R2P effectively in the Syrian war. The study found that the two leading countries of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Russia and the United States of America, have vested interests in the Syrian conflict by supporting and arming opposing sides of the war. Also, the UNSC, which is the arm of the UN responsible for peace and security in the world, is currently weakened by internal politics and indiscriminate use of veto powers. However, the study recommends that the United Nations General Assembly should take unilateral decisions to end the Syrian conflict. Also, Russia and the United States of America should desist from arming and supporting the opposing sides.

Keywords: Appraisal, Conflict, Failure, Protect, Responsibility, United Nations.

Introduction

Two devastating world wars, World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1938-1945) almost led to the extinction of the human race. The carnage of the First World War resulted in the formation of the League of Nations in 1919 to prevent future wars. However, the league was faced with issues and was dissolved in 1928, and the league therefore was unable to prevent the outbreak of World War II in 1938. The unprecedented level of destruction, maiming, and killings of the Second World

War led to the emergence of the United Nations Organization (UNO) in 1945. The UNO was formed by countries of the world to avoid the pitfalls of the former League of Nations. Article 1(1) of the UNO Charter reads that the purpose of the UN is to maintain international peace and security and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace.

According to Weiss (2014), the UN has an established principle of 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P), which was unanimously adopted by all members of the United Nations General Assembly at the 2005 UN World Summit. The UN R2P stipulates that each State of the UN has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. This responsibility entails the prevention of such crimes, including their incitement, through appropriate and necessary means (Weiss, 2014).Syria, which is a ratified member State of the United Nations, has been engulfed in civil war which started in 2011. The country headed by a dictator, Bashir Al Assad, is vehemently fighting its opposition who have voiced their dissatisfaction and disenchantment with Assad's regime, hitherto accused of corruption, tyranny, and human rights abuse. According to Murray and McKay (2014), the Syrian war has the recorded killing and maiming of thousands of people, and displacement of millions within and beyond the borders of Syria. The crisis became more intractable with the emergence of different foreign interests; the biggest is America and Russia who have contributed immensely to the continuation of the conflict (Murray and McKay, 2014). In this vein, scholars such as Weiss (2014) pointed out that the UN, with its mandate of world peace, and vested principle of R2P, has been inadequate in its intervention in the Syrian civil war. According to Weiss (2014), the R2P model of the UN was not activated in the conflict, as it became a tool for the actualization of national interests of UN member States, especially Russia and the United States of America; who are key members of the UN Security Council (UNSC). It is based on this notion that this study aims to analyze the United Nation's application of the principles of 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) in the Syrian Civil War. Findings will be of utmost importance in finding a lasting solution to the conflict.

Conceptual framework

Conflict: According to Afzalur (2010), there is no universally accepted definition of conflict, but many of the widely accepted definitions have a common connection, which is the incompatible goals between parties to conflict. Fischer & Ferlie (2013) see conflict as an activity that occurs when individuals or groups carry out acts that are incompatible with their wants, needs, or obligations. While scholars like MacDonald (2009) described conflict as a struggle and clash of interests. Disputes between people happen every day, but as different as the causes of disputes are, so are the solutions (MacDonald, 2009). From the perception of scholars identified above, conflict is seen not to be static, however, it is universal, transcending beyond boundaries and cultures. Conflict is seen not generally as a negative phenomenon, but it offers parties the opportunity to discover the main interests of counterparts and thus, to respond in ways that can directly address the issues. Conflict only becomes contentious and violent when the parties try to close opportunities for dialogue and further communication.

The Syrian Conflict: The causes of the Syrian Civil War were as a result of the high rate of human rights violations by the Assad Regime that made the opposition decide to revolt against the regime. This led to large school destruction of lives and properties. This was further noted when the world's

attention was drawn to what happened on March 15, 2011, after a group of children were tortured for writing anti-governmental graffiti on a wall in the city of Dar'a along with the slogan, 'the people want to overthrow the regime' (The UN Refugee Agency, 2024). The protests were the outgrowth of long issues of deprivation, poverty, inequality, restrictions on human rights, the desire for democracy, and demand for better conditions of living. The protests quickly reached Homs and Hama and continued despite the hasty reforms which made Al-Bashir deploy an army backed by armored personnel carriers to quell them, leading to the death of more than 100 people and turning the demonstration into a full blown civil war.

Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

According to Hehir & Cunliffe (2011), the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a global political commitment that was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly at the 2005 World Summit to address its four key concerns to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Hehir & Cunliffe (2011) noted that the R2P is based upon the underlying premise that sovereignty entails a responsibility to protect all populations from mass atrocity crimes and human rights violations. It is based on a respect for the norms and principles of international law, especially the underlying principles of law relating to sovereignty, peace and security, human rights, and armed conflict. According to Welsh (2019), the R2P has three pillars:

i. Pillar I (The Protection Responsibilities of the State): This states that each State has the responsibility to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity (Welsh, 2019).

ii. Pillar II (International Assistance and Capacity-Building): Accordingly, States should pledge to assist each other in their responsibility to protect (Welsh, 2019).

iii. Pillar III (Timely and Decisive Collective Response): This states that if any State is manifestly failing in its protection responsibilities, then other States should take collective action to protect the population (Welsh, 2019). Welsh (2019), however, noted that while there is agreement among States about the R2P, there is also persistent contestation about the applicability of the third pillar in practice. The R2P provides a framework for employing measures that already exist (i.e., mediation, early warning mechanisms, economic sanctions, and Chapter VII powers) to prevent atrocity crimes and to protect civilians from their occurrence. The authority to employ the use of force under the framework of the R2P rests solely with the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and is considered a measure of last resort (Global R2P, 2016).

Conflict Resolution

According to (Forsyth, 2009), conflict resolution is seen as the methods and processes involved in reaching a peaceful ending of a conflict situation. It involves committed parties attempting to resolve their misunderstanding by actively engaging in communication with each other (Forsyth, 2009). Conflict resolution is a social process where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement to end hostilities with each other. They decide to live peacefully and cease to use arms against each other (Wallensteen, 2015). The "conflicting parties" in this definition are formally or informally organized groups engaged in national or international conflict. The incompatibility here refers to protracted disagreement between the conflicting parties, where their demands cannot be met by the same resources at the same (Wallensteen, 2015).

Mayer (2012) describes conflict resolution as a process by which people who are in disagreement, dispute, or war reach an agreement to resolve their differences. It involves approaches that depend on the kind of social and cultural context it occurs. Lundgren (2016) noted that many major international non-governmental organizations have seen a growing need to engage practitioners trained in conflict analysis and resolution, just as different scholars are equipped with different approaches to handling conflicts. This is further analyzed below:

The collaboration approach according to Bayazit and Mannix (2003) involves attempts to work with the other party involved in a conflict to find a win-win solution to such conflict, or at least to find a solution that most satisfies the concerns of both parties. The win-win approach of conflict resolution creates opportunities for parties to reach mutually beneficial outcomes, and it includes identifying the underlying concerns of the opponents and finding alternatives which mean each party's concerns (Bayazit and Mannix, 2003). For instance, the parties have historical and cultural links, which enable them to address their shared interests like ancient trade, Islamic heritage, and modern cultural exchange. (Irwin, 2010 (ed)). The strategic relationship between the parties strengthened the sense of cooperation and mutual understanding hitherto. This approach is best suitable for the Syrian conflict, which ensures that all parties to the conflict meet, identify issues, and proffer solutions that best address their needs.

From the foregoing, conflict resolution is seen to be an expanding field of professional practice around the world. The escalating costs of conflict have increased the use of third parties who may serve as conflict specialists to resolve conflicts. In fact, relief and development organizations have added peace-building specialists to their teams.

Complexity Theory

This study adopts the complexity theory as its theoretical basis. The major proponent of the theory is Kauffman (1992) who attempted to explain the rationalized behavior of large and complex systems that operate at the edge of chaos. Other scholars like Burnes (2005) state that the complexity theory proposes the idea that systems are in unpredictable mode, as they are also constrained by order generating rules. It uses complex systems to emphasize interactions and the accompanying feedback loops that constantly change systems (Eisenhardt & McKelvey, 2011).Complexity theory has been used in the fields of strategic management and organizational studies. Its application areas also include understanding how groups adapt to their environments, and how they cope with conditions of uncertainty. According to Grobman (2005), groups have complex structures in that they consist of dynamic individuals with networks of interactions, and their relationships are not aggregations of individual static entities. They are adaptive because the individual and collective behavior mutate and self-organize corresponding to a change-initiating collection of events.

In light of these postulations, the complexity theory helps to better explain the nature of international security which the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has been entrusted to maintain since after the cold war. The actions and inactions of the UNSC as regards global security continue to be controversial in line with complex systems. This is also as it is identified that States need power, that is why Syria, led by Assad, has been asserting such power in its territory of influence. It helps to explain the uncertainty faced in the Syrian conflict situation, thereby presenting the situational dilemma for conflict resolution practitioners on which steps to take in other not to escalate a conflict situation. Also, the part of the disputants, presents an environment

where miscalculated steps by the parties could trigger escalatory actions and continue the progression in the stages of conflict escalation.

Hence, complexity theory is used to better understand new ways of carrying out conflict management, as it has been difficult for traditional models to observe and explain the collective behavior that promotes the Syrian conflict, as a result of the complex dynamic networks of interactions.

Syrian Civil War and the United Nations Principle of Responsibility to Protect

According to Granville (2014), the international community has failed in its responsibility to Syria. As a security provider, the Security Council has long been expected to act decisively and promptly in the Syrian crisis to protect the helpless Syrian population who are daily killed by unrepentant Assad and his supporters, including Russia and its allies (Granville, 2014). The norm Responsibility to Protect (R2P) was greeted with cheers from well-meaning scholars and advocates of peace when it was successfully applied in Libya to stop Gaddafi from entirely getting the Libyan population interred as cockroaches as he called them. With the same amount of high expectations raised that the Security Council would replicate the same feat in Syria, such expectations have been dashed as the Security Council continues to demonstrate high levels of indifference as genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity are daily committed by Assad regime, its supporters and terrorist groups. As seen in the works of Evans (2014), The Consequences of Non-Intervention in Syria, a major opportunity to break the cycle of violence breeding violence was completely lost with the failure of the UN Security Council to even condemn the behavior of the Assad regime, let alone take more robust measures, when it first became obvious that unarmed protesters were being savagely attacked, and for many months thereafter. That gave the regime a sense of untouchability and impunity, leading to further repressive behavior which energized a fight back by opposition forces, helped by military defections and some external support, which spiraled quickly into the full-scale civil war we have been watching, with horror, unfold ever since (Evans, 2014).

Responsibility to Protect is a State creation amidst myriads of conflicting national interests. The Security Council is polarized into two groups with mutual antagonistic moves and interests with Russia spearheading one group and the United States heading the other. No time has the Security Council shown enough commitment to protect the Syrian population let alone halting the Syrian war. Though, there are moves made by the Security Council at the incipience of the civil war, lack of concerted efforts and willingness rendered such earlier moves impotent. Notable among the moves was the Annan Plan 2012 which contained a six-point plan proposed by the joint UN-Arab League Special Envoy, Kofi Annan. The Plan included the implementation of a ceasefire, withdrawal of government troops and tanks from cities, release of political detainees, freedom of movement for journalists, freedom of association and the right to demonstrate, provision of humanitarian assistance to besieged civilians, and initiation of a political negotiation process led by Syrians (Adams, 2015). Further, the United Nations Mission (UNMIS) was also created to monitor the ceasefire and implement Annan's Plan. But, as Robert Mood, the Norwegian Head of (UNMIS) later argued that "my deployment was unarmed, had a weak mandate, followed passive rules of engagement, and operated within a political six-point plan that was challenging to translate to field realities without full commitment from all parties, including the UN Security Council (Adams, 2015). The consequence of their inactions in Syria is the death tolls that continue to rise.

Major External Influencing Factors in the Syrian Conflict

According to Venturi (2013), the United States interest in Syria is largely oil. Syria, a part of the Middle East falls entirely within the US geostrategic interest of dominating the region. To effectively achieve this motive, the States within the region need to be structured in such a way as to align with the actualization of such interest. This is the more reason it wants Bashar Al-Assad down as Al-Assad is pro-Russian. It is claimed for instance, that the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq was to achieve and satisfy its thirst for oil. However, the real nightmare of US in the region in achieving this objective is Russia. The US wants to end European Union's dependence on Russia's oil and gas and possibly diversify its energy supply. Already, three major Russian pipelines are supplying energy to Europe and Russia has further planned two new pipelines (Venturi, 2013). The proposed 1,200km Arab gas pipeline which will fall within the interest of the US and to the detriment of Russia and its allies touched Syria. Syria was meant to become an integral part of pipeline construction from Kilis or Kalas in Turkey to Lebanon and Israel and finally to Aqaba on the Persian Gulf, and from there to Taba and Arish (Venturi, 2013).

Taylor (2014) contends that Syria's refusal of the proposal for the running of the pipeline is one of the major reasons it was attacked by the US and its allies in the region because Al-Assad is seen as an unreliable partner. Furthermore, the agreement signed by Syria, Iraq, and Iran in 2011 to run a pipeline eastward which will allow these Shia-dominated States access the European natural gas market while denying access to Sunni Saudi Arabia and Qatar does not fare well with the US, Saudi Arabia and Qatar (Taylor, 2014). Part of the US interest in Syria is to protect its allies in the region and one of such allies is Qatar. The US believes that ousting Al-Assad will allow Qatar to have direct access to the Western European markets through a new gas pipeline to be constructed, thus undermining the interest of Russia's energy conglomerates. On the part of Russia, Calcuttawala (2017) noted that Russia desires to increase European gas dependence on its resources and the best way it believes will actualize this is to limit the presence of America and its allies in the region by backing Assad's regime and Iran. With Iran, Iraq, and Syria on its side, Russia would succeed in maintaining its hegemony in the region, and European Union member states rely on Russia's oil. The Nabucco pipeline agreement signed in Turkey with other European states, supported by the US tended to limit the European Union's dependence on Russia's oil and gas, undermining its influence. The project has been successfully brought to a halt as Iraq and Iran under the interest of Russia pulled out (Venturini, 2013). Also, part of Russia's interests in Syria is to protect a deal it struck with Syria in 2016 on Syria's fossil fuel which Russian companies have been contracted for a possible workable deal (Calcuttawala, 2017). From the view-point of Rafizadeh (2014), Iran's encroaching influence on actors in the Syrian civil war presents an opportunity to assert and consolidate its stance in the region and deepen its alliance with the Syrian government. There have been ideological and geo-strategic rivalries between Iran and other Sunni Arab countries. To this effect, allowing the Alawite-dominated State of Syria and President Al-Assad Bashir to be overthrown will tip the regional balance against Iran and in favor of Sunni majority states such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar. Therefore, since the birth of the Syrian civil war, Iran's foreign policy towards Syria has been to concretely stand by the Syrian government and fight armed rebels and government opposition. Thus, Iran thinks of accomplishing this through robust financial, military, intelligence, and advisory assistance to the Syrian government. As echoed by the UN reports, "Iran has continued to defy the international community through illegal arms shipments. Two of these cases involved shipment to Syria, as were the majority of cases inspected by the panel during its

previous mandate, underscoring that Syria continues to be the central party to illicit Iranian arms transfers (Rafizadeh, 2014).

The United States and its allies, the United Kingdom and France have pushed for regime change in Syria. Though they failed to act militarily in Syria when compared with their actions in Libya, the reasons for their push for regime change in Syria are not far-fetched. First, the change of the Syrian Government which will result in the fall of Al-Assad and possibly the end of Alawite rule would likely tip the balance of power in the region in their favor (Friedman, 2012). Second, if the government is overthrown, the Republic of Iran would lose a strategic ally in the region and weaken the Islamic Republic of Iran and its connections with non-State actors like Hezbollah to the favor of the United States and its Western allies. Third, the fall of the regime would most likely mean that the Sunni majority is installed as Syrian government which will be closer to the United States and its Western allies. Fourth, bringing down Assad and installing a pro-United States government would allow for a holistic fight against extremist groups in the region, further guaranteeing their national security, and reduction in the influx of refugees in their States.

Conclusion

This study analyzed the United Nations' principle of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and its application to the Syrian civil war. It is found that the international community has failed in its responsibility to Syria. As a security provider, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has long been expected to act decisively and promptly in the Syrian crisis, to protect the helpless Syrian population who are daily killed by the War. International influences including the two heavy-weights of the UNSC - Russia and America, have long been intervening in the conflict by providing weapons and logistical support, thereby prolonging the crisis. A major opportunity to break the cycle of violence breeding violence was completely lost with the failure of the UN Security Council to even condemn the behavior of the Assad regime, let alone take more robust measures when it first became obvious that unarmed protesters were being savagely attacked, and for many months thereafter. This gave the regime a sense of untouchability and impunity, leading to further repressive behavior which energized a fight back by opposition forces, helped by military defections and some external support, which spiraled quickly into a full-scale civil war which the international community and the UN have been watching with horror unfolding ever since.

Recommendations

Based on the findings made in this study, the following recommendations appear necessary:

i. The international community and especially, the United Nations, should ensure quick intervention to implement the R2P principle to stop the high rate of human rights violations going on in Syria.

ii. Russia and America, the two great powers should use their leverage and influence on all sides of the conflict to adhere to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

iii. The intervention States, regional organizations, and most especially, the United Nations should garner efforts to rejuvenate their humanitarian responses to the Syrian people who are daily increasing in number needing humanitarian assistance.

iv. It should be mandated that the United Nations Security Council intervene in the Syrian crisis and protect civilians in dire need of safety.

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Article   **Open Access**

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA'S FEDERAL SYSTEM: MATTERS ARISING

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Abstract
Judicial administration in Nigeria's federal system is controversial and meandering, and the issue of intergovernmental relations which is central to the practice of federal system of government has remained problematic in Nigeria due to federal government supremacy over the state governments. The way and manner federalism is practiced in Nigeria does not allow for a proper intergovernmental relations, this in turn affects judicial administration. The study examines the centrality of the judicial system in Nigeria which affects justice dispensation at the State level. The classical or the legal institutional theory used with models of intergovernmental relations in this study explains the relationships between levels of government in a federal system of government. Using Contextual analysis which entails analyzing scholarly text, journals, bulletins, and the constitution, Court cases and statutes within the context of the issue under examination, the paper however indicates that the establishment of the National Judicial Council (NJC) by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has made judicial administration in Nigeria centralized in nature. This has made the state governments' judicial administration an appendage to the federal government. The superior courts at the State level are under the NJC which is one of the federal bodies whose members are appointed by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Based on the results of the study, it was recommended inter alia that: The NJC if accorded full independent can take charge of disbursement of its separate funds and disciplinary measures against defaulting members. The federal government should maintain the Supreme Court and members should be elected by member States in the federation based on stipulated statutory requirements from the NJC. The Supreme Court should only entertain appeals from the Appeal Courts of the State governments.

Keywords: Judicial Administration, Federalism, Federation, Federal System, Intergovernmental Relations, National Judicial Council, Constitution.

Introduction

The essence of public administration is to ensure egalitarian society, harmony, development and justice to avert the notion of the state of nature where life was based on "survival of the fittest". The people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria having firmly and solemnly resolved to live in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN), 1999 as amended)… has adopted a federal system of government. Federalism is an arrangement whereby powers of government within a country are shared between a national (federal government) and the federating units (State governments) in such a way that each exists as a government separately and independently from the other operating directly on persons and property of its own and its own apparatus for the conduct of its affairs, and with an authority in some matters exclusive of all the others (Nwabueze, 2008). The Nigerian federal structural arrangement emerged from her colonization by the former British Colonial Master, an imposition that eventually came up with a somewhat artificial geopolitical synthesis. Nigeria was put together as a country in 1914 being necessitated by some factors such as the size, cultural and traditional diversity, language, historical particularism as well as economic and political considerations that prevailed.

Federalism is more of a political system than an ideological system. The idea originated with the concept of intergovernmental relations… (Amadi, Echem, and Nwoko, 2017). Intergovernmental relations are central to the practice of federal system of government. In this regard, Reagan (1972) cited in Abidoye (2015: p54) stated that "federalism old style is dead, yet federalism new style is alive and its name is intergovernmental relations". This is not to conclude that intergovernmental relation is limited to federal arrangement. In other forms of administrative systems like unitary system, relationship exists between different levels or arms of government within the same political system. For Ojo (2014), in the world over, federalism necessitates the combination of self-rule and shared rule. It accommodates multi-level governance. Federalism is all about sharing, that is, the sharing of powers, functions or responsibilities and resources among levels of Government. In Nigeria, like in most federal systems, the relationship between levels and arms of government is problematic. The general tendency of federating states becoming heavily centralized and the overbearing nature of the central government most especially the executive have over the year heightened intergovernmental relations' conflict in the country.

The Intergovernmental Relations practice in the democratic dispensation since 1999 till date has been characterized by continued federal dominance and state dependency. There have also been ramblings among the various components of government over power limitations and policy implementation. The provisions of the 1999 Constitution have in all emphasized vertical interaction between the federal and state governments rather than horizontal relationships. This imposes limitations to the extent of cooperation among the levels of government and promotes a dependency structure thus typifying the inclusive authority model of intergovernmental relations. Intergovernmental relations and judicial administration in Nigeria's federal system is problematic. Judicial system and administration in Nigeria is highly centralized as manifested in the overbearing nature of the federal level of government in Nigeria's federal system. In Nigeria's federal administration, the judiciary is the statutory custodian of fundamental human rights and the Constitution is the supreme law of the land. Unfortunately, Nigeria's judicial administration is unitary in nature, giving excessive control of the judiciary to the federal level at the expense of the federating units.

For effective administration of justice in a democracy, the Judiciary has a definite and decisive role to play. It has constitutional right to settle legal disputes and administer justice impartially. All courts irrespective of type and jurisdiction are presided over by Judges. In many cases, the Judge decides the truth or falsity of claim(s) presented by disputants. The Judiciary also has the power to review the actions of both Executive and the Legislature. Indeed, the Judiciary is the impartial arbiter and the last hope of the common man, the fulcrum and bastion of sustainable democracy. The Judiciary requires the ambit of the theory and practice of separation of powers to optimally discharge its onerous constitutionally stipulated duties (Maduekwe, Ojukwu, and Agbata, 2016).

If the doctrine of judex est lex loquens is something to go by; it therefore means that the centrality of the judicial administration does not only stifle justice and egalitarian society at the State level, but thwarts intergovernmental relations being the principles through which federalism thrives. The doctrine of judex est lex lequens means that "the judge is the law speaking, that is, he is the mouthpiece of the law. It is obvious that the judge at the State level being an appointee recommended by the National Judicial Council is likely to be influenced by the central government and by implication; the State government of his domicile has no or little checks and balances on him. The central and focal point of this study is to assess judicial administration in Nigeria's federal system.

Statement of the Problem

The practice of federalism in Nigeria put the federating units, the State governments in a dependency position and relationship with the federal government. This dependency equally affects the judiciary at the State level, a hindrance to justice adjudication and appropriate practice of federalism. Being a country with diverse cultures, religions, Languages and ethnic nationalities make federalism a suitable form of government for Nigeria. The Nigerian federalism is a creation of the British. Before the arrival of British colonialists, the area now known as Nigeria was inhabited by peoples who belonged to different empires, kingdoms and societies, which were traditionally administered. (Adigwe, 1974) cited in Majekodunmi (2017, p107). The relationship between those various entities was characterized by much conflict and little co-operation, hence the adoption of federalism by the British colonialists. In a federal structure, adequate autonomy is required for each level of government to enable it performs its responsibility. These entails that Nigeria as a heterogeneous society is not suitable for a unitary system of government or a centralized administration.

Intergovernmental relation is central to the practice of federal system of government, but in relation to judicial administration at the State government level, intergovernmental relations is inappropriate due to the establishment of NJC as enshrined the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is said that federalism old style is dead, yet federalism new style is alive and its name is intergovernmental relations. Apparently, the provisions of the 1999 Nigeria Constitution (as amended) accords with the settled principles of federalism in which States or other federating units share sovereignty with the central government and the States comprising the federation have constitutional existence and power/functions that cannot be unilaterally changed by the central government. Section 2 (2) of the Constitution provides that 'Nigeria shall be a Federation consisting of States and Federal Capital Territory that is to say, there are two constitutionally recognized levels of government in Nigeria comprising the Federal Government and the States as the federating units.

Nigeria with over four hundred lingo-cultural groups, a population of over 130 million, thirty-six States and Federal Capital Territory and 774 Local Governments make intergovernmental relations inevitable for the administration of justice.

The provisions of the 1999 Constitution have in all emphasized vertical interaction between the federal and state governments rather than horizontal relationships. This imposes limitations to the extent of cooperation among the levels of government and promotes a dependency structure thus typifying the inclusive authority model of intergovernmental relations. Judicial administration in Nigeria's federal system is problematic. Judicial system and administration in Nigeria is heavily centralized as manifested by the overbearing nature of the federal level of government. In Nigeria's federal administration, the judiciary is the statutory custodian of fundamental human rights and the Constitution which is the supreme law of the land. Unfortunately, Nigeria's judicial administration is unitary in nature, giving excessive control of the judiciary to the federal level at the expense of the federating units. This scenarios are made possible by the establishment of the National Judicial Council, responsible for the recommendations and discipline of judicial officers (Majekodunmi, 2017).

The appointments of justices and heads of superior courts of record are constitutionally done by the President through the recommendation of the NJC. Appointment of heads of superior courts is subjected to the recommendation of the same NJC. The NJC is one of the Federal Executive Bodies created by virtue of Section 153 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The composition of the NJC comprises of the appointees of the President who has the right to reject recommendation of NJC of any judicial officer recommended for appointment. This scenario hinders the administration of justice in Nigeria's federal system, where the Constitution is the guiding principles binding on all citizens and its interpretation saddled on the judiciary, requires an independent judiciary for each federating unit devoid of the federal government meddling. The problem with the NJC is that the State courts such as the State High Court, Customary courts of Appeal and Sharia court of Appeal are superior courts under the control of the NJC, a federal body capable of being controlled by the federal government.

Theoretical Framework

Classical theory of federalism is used as a theoretical framework for this paper with the theoretical models of Intergovernmental relations. The classical theory of federalism is based on the study of the constitution and system of government obtaining in the four classical federations, namely, the United States of America, Switzerland, Canada and the Common Wealth of Australia. The classical or the legal institutional theory explains what federalism is. The outstanding exponents of the classical theory are A. V. Dicey (1939), Harrison Moore (1902), K. C. Wheare (1963), Jethrow Brown (1912), James Bryce (1921), M. J. C. Vile (1961), Robert Garren (1929), John W. Burgess (1891) among others (Wheare,1964). K.C. Wheare's analysis of the classical theory also regarded as legal institutional theory of federalism is directly applicable to this study.

Federalism in America by the founding fathers meant a political system in which two levels of government existed side by side and neither of which was able to dominate the other. Each level was to have sufficient autonomy to be able to make political decisions over a range of governmental affairs without having to obtain the express approval of the other level, but neither level would be sufficiently independent of the other that its decisions could be taken in a vacuum without regards to the political attitudes of the other. Thus was established a system of

government which was dependent upon the maintenance of a balance between mutual independence of the two levels of government, moderated and tempered by their political and constitutional interdependence (Wheare, 1964). Thus, if the balance of power shifted towards states, the integrity of the federal government would be threatened, and the breakup of the federal system into a loose confederation, or into a system of quite distinct and separate entities would be the likely outcome; on the other hand, if the federal government becomes so powerful that the states were simply subordinate, whether in law or in political reality, the system would have moved from a federal system to a decentralized unitary state. Federation, therefore, represents the middle ground between these two alternatives. Its exact borders cannot be determined precisely, but once the real interdependence of the two levels ceases to exist so then does federalism cease to exist (Wheare, 1964).

In relation to Intergovernmental relations, Wright provides three models of intergovernmental relations that may exist between political entities namely: coordinate – Authority model; inclusive authority model and overlapping – Authority model (Wright 1985). Wright used his three theoretical models of intergovernmental relations to explain the processes and institutions through which governments within a political system interact. According to Wright (1985), in the coordinate-authority model of Intergovernmental Relations, sharp and distinct boundaries separate the national government and state governments. Local units, however, are included within and are dependent on state governments. The Coordinate-Authority Model is that model of intergovernmental relations in which the various levels of government within a nation-state have functional competence in certain critical services as measured by their technical competence. Within this model, functional autonomy is usually emphasized. An example of this is where the various levels of government have concurrent responsibility in the discharge or provision of health, educational and agricultural services. This model is an opposite pole to the Inclusive-Authority Model. It posits federal-state authority relationship as autonomous. Their jurisdictions have distinct domains of power and control. The model aims at the element of coordination of the activities of all the units in the overall interest of the polity and the society. All the units, as per this model, are to work in accordance with the basic spirit of the constitution and established conventions of the land (Wright, 1972, p2; Egomwan, 1984). This model is represented in fig. 3.1 below:
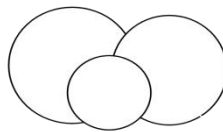
Figure 1.1: The Coordinate-Authority Model

In a sense, therefore, the functional dualism model attempts to integrate both the elements of the partnership and the principal/agent models of intergovernmental relations. The significant distinguishing element is the emphasis on functional competence within the concurrent responsibility arrangement (Bello, 2014). In the Inclusive – Authority Model, a hierarchical view of the relationship between the Federal, State and Local Governments is presented. This model is represented in fig. 3.2 by concentric circles diminishing in size from national to state to local government (Wright, 1985, p59):
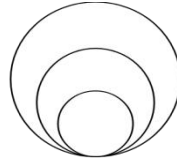
Figure 1.2: The Inclusive –Authority Model

Within this model, Local Government is grossly limited operationally by central rules and regulations. This level of Government has some degree of local discretion but does not have any real independence of action. Within the model, the Central Government sees the Local Authority as spending its own money as the expenditure of the lowest tier of government is subsumed in the annual budget of the Central Government. Consequently, it exercises checks and controls on Local Government activities (Bello, 2014). A further consequence of the imprecise laws that govern relationships in this model is that, between the various tiers of government, the Central Government arrogates to itself the power to issue guidance and advice to the Local Governments on the way and manner they should execute their functions. The Central Government subsequently follows up the guidelines with inspection to ensure compliance. The inclusive model sees the state and local governments as mere appendages of federal government. Here the national government maintains dominance over the state and local government. In this manner, there is no area of state or local autonomy.

In the Overlapping-Authority Model, the three or two levels of government are regarded as equals before the law. The Constitution and Parliament usually delineate and regulate the activities of all the levels of government. Consequently, both the powers and responsibilities of the various tiers of government could be added and subtracted from, over time. As a result of the co-equal assumption of the model, Local Governments usually command considerable financial autonomy as they are given powers to tax their citizens and discretion on the nature, form and level of services they wish to provide. In the partnership model too, there is an inbuilt cooperation and understanding among the various levels of government, such that the functions of one tier of government can be performed by another tier on its behalf. The authority relationship under the overlapping model is that of interdependence. In comparative terms, the area of governmental relation and cooperation are more substantial than area of single tier jurisdiction. In this model, there is emphasis in bargaining and cooperation in formulation and implementation of policy (Ailojie, 2002; Igbinosa, 2000) cited in (Bello, 2014). The overlapping model unlike the inclusive and coordinate models reflects a typical governmental relationship in practice Figure 3.3 depict the authority relationship under this model:
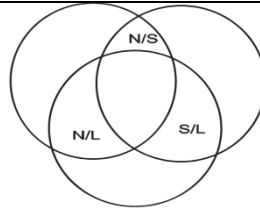
Figure 1.3: The Overlapping –Authority Model

The Centrality of the Nigerian Judicial System and Judiciary in other Climes

If federal system is a practice to go by, the state government ought to have its distinct judicial administration devoid of federal executive meddling into its affairs. The Nigeria's federal system ties the judicial administration to the apron strings of the federal government through the composition and appointment of Justices of superior courts of record. Section 6 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria vested the judicial power in the courts. Section 6, subsection (1) states: "The judicial powers of the Federation shall be vested in the courts to which this section relates, being courts established for the Federation". Subsection (3) states: "The courts to which this section relates established by this Constitution for the Federation and for the States specified in subsection (5) (*a*) to (*i*) of this section shall be the only superior courts of record in Nigeria; and save as otherwise prescribed by the National Assembly or by the House of Assembly of a State, each court shall have all the powers of a superior court of record". Subsection (5) outlined all the superior courts in which appointments are expressly made by the President and the Governor in the case of the State government. It states: (5) this section relates to:

a.   the Supreme Court of Nigeria;
b.   the Court of Appeal;
c.   the Federal High Court;
d.   the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja;
e.   a High Court of a State;
f.   the Sharia Court of Appeal of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja;
g.   a Sharia Court of Appeal of a State;
h.   a Customary Court of Appeal of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja;
i.   a Customary Court of Appeal of a State (1999,CFRN as amended).

The appointments of heads or presiding officers of these courts are made through the recommendations of the National Judicial Council (NJC). The National Judicial Council (NJC) is established by virtue of section 153 of the 1999 constitution as one of the *federal executive bodies*. Subsection (2) of 153 states: "the composition and powers of each body established by subsection (1) of this section are as contained in Part I of the Third Schedule to this Constitution. In relation to who the constitution is vested with appointment of members of the body, section 154, subsection (1) states saddled such responsibility on the President subject to confirmation by the Senate". The National Judicial Council composed mainly members of superior courts of record who are all appointees of the President recommended by the same body for appointment. The implication is that the NJC recommend their members with the President's preference. Judicial discipline policy is instituted for the entertainment of complaints and allegations of misconduct against judicial officers. The investigation for such allegations or complaint is not done openly to the knowledge of

the public. The implication is that, the NJC is in a position to do as they wish in respect of disciplinary measures meted on any ailing member of the judiciary. In the process of recommendations by the Federal Judicial Commission and State Service Commission, the NJC have provided a Procedural Rules they should follow in their recommendations for it to be acceptable.

Rule One: states

> The Federal Judicial Service Commission, State Judicial Service Commission and the Judicial Service Committee of the Federal Capital Territory shall comply with these Rules in their advice to National Judicial Council for nominations or recommendations of candidates for appointment of Judicial Officers for the Superior Courts of Record under the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended).

The irony in the above rule is that the federal judicial commission comprise of the same members who are equally members of NJC and appointees of the President. While the state judicial service commission has major members who are also under the discipline and control of the NJC. The 1999 Constitution stated in third schedule, part 11 that:

> A State Judicial Service Commission shall comprise the following members
> (*a*) the Chief Judge of the State, who shall be the Chairman;
> (*b*) the Attorney General of the State;
> (*c*) the Grand Kadi of the Sharia Court of Appeal of the State, if any;
> (*d*) the President of the Customary Court of Appeal of the State, if any;(*e*) two
> members, who are legal practitioners, and who have been qualified to practice
> as legal practitioners in Nigeria for not less than ten years; and
> (*f*) two other persons, not being legal practitioners, who in the opinion of the
> Governor are of unquestionable integrity.

With the foregoing, it is very clear that the independence of the judiciary is a myth in Nigeria's federal system. The judiciary being the third arm of government has the onerous function of interpreting the laws. Its functions may be expressed in the latin words *jus-dicere non jus dare* which is to declare the law and not make one (Abdullahi, 2014). Woodrow Wilson (1887) cited in Adamolekun (2002) defined public administration as "detailed and systematic execution of law. Every particular application of law is an act of administration…" the principal role of an independent judiciary is therefore to uphold the rule of law and to ensure supremacy of the law. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) divides legislative powers between two main tiers of government: the Federal Government and the government of a state. Generally, legislative powers are divided between these tiers of government in the manner prescribed in the Exclusive Legislative List and the Concurrent Legislative List contained in the Second Schedule of the Constitution. Items on the Exclusive Legislative List can only be legislated on by the National Assembly. Items on the Concurrent List can be legislated on by both the federal and state legislatures, with the caveat that federal legislation shall override state legislation where there is a conflict between them.

There are cases where a subject matter is neither contained in the Exclusive Legislative List nor in the Concurrent Legislative List. In such cases, the courts would look first at whether the subject matter can be deemed incidental or supplementary to any of the items contained in the

Exclusive Legislative List. If yes, then the National Assembly would have exclusive legislative power to legislate on that subject matter as if it were contained in the Exclusive Legislative List. If the answer is no, then the subject matter would be deemed residual. It falls within the residue of the legislative powers of the states. On residual matters the National Assembly can only legislate for the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja ("FCT"), whilst each state is entitled to legislate for itself, without Federal interference.

Item 35 of the Exclusive Legislative List empower the National Assembly (exclusively) to legislate on "*legal proceedings between Governments of States or between the Government of the Federation and Government of any State or any other authority or person.*" The law is settled that where the wordings of a statute are clear and unambiguous, they should be given their ordinary meaning. In view of this, the above provision of the Constitution is clear to the effect that only the National Assembly can legislate on legal proceedings between, *inter alia,* the Government of the Federation and any other authority or person. To that extent, it is elementary that any state law that purports to govern such legal proceedings would be null and void (Okanga, 2019). Statute of limitation is another restriction and over concentration of power at the federal level and centrality of judicial administration.

The judiciary is commonly and rightly referred to as the last hope of the common man. This presupposes that it guarantees equal access to justice and equity; and equally ensures that the rights of citizens are adequately accommodated, and judgments handed down in accordance with the dictates of the law and facts presented to the court. The judiciary can only act as the last hope of the common man where it is independent, well-funded, courageous, unbiased and proactive; this is because it plays a fundamental role in sustainable national development. By efficaciously resolving disputes and upholding civil rights and the rule of law, it creates a stable environment that is indispensable to economic development and social cohesion. Justice must be rooted in confidence and that confidence is destroyed when right thinking people doubt the neutrality of the judge. To achieve this, the judiciary must naturally be above board (Maiyaki, 2018).

Judicial independence is a mirage in Nigeria and the much talked about separation of power is in principle without a corresponding practice. In line with this observation, Ibrahim (2018, p1) made a critical observation of the provisions of the constitution in relation to independence of the judiciary thus:

> …ironically, the word "independence" was mentioned only nine times in the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria and the phrase "judicial independence" or "independence of judiciary" has never been mentioned at all. Nevertheless, under section 17(1)(e) of the non-justiciable Chapter II in furtherance of its social order the Nigerian state shall strive to ensure the maintenance of the "independence, impartiality and integrity of courts of law and easy accessibility thereto". It can also be argued strongly that Section 36(1) only guarantees one's rights to have one's cause (sic) heard by an independent and impartial judge and does not guarantee institutional independence of Nigerian judiciary at all. And this could have been the reason why the fortunes of Nigerian judiciary is day by day dwindling as it is compelled by lack of constitutional guarantees to always beg either the executive or the legislature for one financial favour or another.

The above observation has shown that the independence of the judiciary is not guaranteed in the constitution, but it is attached to the apron strings of the executive arm of government. This is a scenario that is not healthy in a democratic setting and in a federal system. Lack of independence of the judiciary is another means in which the federal executive arm of government centralizes judicial administration in Nigeria.

A study of how the judiciary is constituted in other countries shows that there are some degree of checks and balances which promote and guarantee judicial independence. In New Zealand for instance, Justices of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal and judges of High Court, are appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Attorney-General advised by the Chief Justice and the Solicitor-General. For appointments to district courts, the Governor-General is advised by the Attorney-General who receives advice from the Chief District Court Judge and the Secretary for Justice. In Canada, a federation consisting of a central government and 10 provinces and 3 territories appointment of judicial officers to both superior (federal) and provincial or territorial courts are being made by Governor General (appointed by the Prime Minister) to represent Canadian Monarch who currently is Queen Elizabeth II. All federal justices and judges including justices of the Supreme Court of Canada and federal Court of Appeal are being appointed by Governor General on the recommendation of the federal cabinet.

In United States each state has its own state judiciary, including the Supreme Court. There are varied strange patterns of appointment that have evolved over time. Generally, for appointment to the high court, there is a pattern in about eight states i.e Alabama, Illinois, Louisiana, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, and West Virginia in which judges run on a party ticket as republicans or democrats and get appointed on that platform. Thereafter, they run for uncontested non-partisan elections to retain their offices. And in Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Washington, Wisconsin judges are initially appointed on merit and years after they run for an election to retain their offices on the basis of their judicial record. In 1986 three Justices of the Supreme Court of California were recalled because of their vocal opposition to death penalty.

Just like in Japan, where judges of the lower bench are appointed by the Supreme Court, but will be subjected to election by public every ten years. It appears there are good lessons that the Nigerian judiciary could learn from states in the US and from Japan. If our judges of superior courts know very well that upon their initial appointments they have to run for elections, not necessarily under political parties, to retain their offices based on their integrity, honesty and dedication to work, majority of them could have changed their attitude (Ibrahim, 2018). It has been argued that the composition of NJC in Nigeria has grossly violated the principle of federalism and intergovernmental relations, and it's full of federal dominance and hence State governments have not been given any role to play in the appointment of Chief Judges for their respective states. One may argue that the United States of America's system of judiciary which gives states distinct sphere to operate its judiciary is civilized. But at the same time, civility is not automatic, but it evolved with time. The system of appointment of judicial officers in the United States is a clear reason why people coin the word "true federalism". That is federalism in its truest form and if it's not federalism, it can't possibly be federalism. It is in this regard that Wheare (1964) termed such a semblance of federalism (like in the case of Nigeria) as "quasi-federalism".

The principal role of an independent Judiciary is to uphold the rule of law and to ensure the supremacy of the law. The idea of judicial independence can be resolved into the following

elements, namely, appointment of judicial officers and judiciary staff, security of tenure, remuneration of judges and supporting staff, budgetary provisions and processes, individual and institutional freedom from interference by the executive arm of government and politicians in the course of judicial process. The issue of appointment of judicial officers lies with the NJC's recommendations, the NJC being a federal body in which members are appointed by the President. Funding of the judiciary is subjected to the executive and the legislative scrutiny and there is no security of office for judges because the constitution does not make provision for that like other arms of government. In more developed democracies, judges of superior courts, except in cases of corruption, have appointments for life until they choose to retire. This makes it easier for the judges to stay far removed from political pressure. In this case, independence means that once the judges are appointed, they cannot be easily removed. The situation in Nigeria whereby judicial officers can be readily and recklessly removed should they fail to satisfy certain political selfish interests of the ruling class surely detracts from this norm. Life appointments may be a desideratum to most problems bugging the Nigerian democracy and federal systems of government.

According to the 1999 Constitution, section 292(1): (i), (ii) and (b) mandates the President to remove any judicial officer from office or appointment (whether arising from infirmity of mind or of body) or for misconduct or contravention of the Code of Conduct. This section does not in any way provide the necessary security of tenure to Nigerian judicial officers based on the best practices globally. In light of realities of the global trends on security of tenure of judicial officers, the shallowness of section 292 of the 1999 Constitution literally left the mechanism for removing judicial officers on the hands of politicians. All that the section requires for the President or the Governor to do is to garner 2/3 political support in the Senate or House of Assembly for an ordinary letter stating that the judicial officer be removed for misconduct or contravention of Code of Conduct, inability to discharge his functions as a result of infirmity of mind etc. The most surprising constitutional defect of the section 292 is that it does not at all provide any opportunity to the judicial officer to be removed to defend himself or by a legal practitioner of his own choice. It does not contemplate a hearing at all, either before the President or the Governor as the case may be makes his political address before the Senate or the House of Assembly. This is a clear dreadful breach of section 36 of the 1999 Constitution guaranteeing right to fair hearing. It appears that the Constitution is against itself and it is calamitous to find this arrangement in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, especially as it relates to the offices of highly placed judicial officers like the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Chief Judges of States etc (Ibrahim, 2018).

Federal Government supremacy in judicial matters at the expenses of the State Governments
The case below buttress federal government supremacy in judicial matters or centralized judicial administration at the federal level. This is a case of rendering the States appendages to the Federal government through the NJC in judicial administration.

Case of Justice Raliat Elelu-Habeeb V Attorney-General of the Federation & Others
The 1st appellant was appointed Chief Judge of Kwara State on 28th March, 2008. On 30th April, 2009, the Governor of Kwara State forwarded an address to the House of Assembly of Kwara State, wherein allegations were made against the chief judge and her removal was recommended, on the grounds of inability to discharge the functions of her office and acts of misconduct which contravened the code of conduct for the chief judicial officer of a state. The Kwara State House of

Assembly invited the chief judge to appear before it with a view to exercising disciplinary control over her. However, without giving the judge an opportunity to defend herself, the House of Assembly found the allegations made against her as established and took steps to remove her as the head of the judiciary of Kwara State in her absence. The notice of her removal as chief judge was also not communicated to her subsequently (Yusuf, 2018). Summary of the judgment as delivered at the Supreme Court on Friday, the 17th day of February, 2012 with Suit No: SC.281/2010(lawaspire.com.ng/2014):

> By an originating summons filed on 6/5/09 at the Federal High Court Ilorin by Justice Raliat Elelu-Habeeb Chief Judge Kwara State, against the A-G Federation, the A-G Kwara State and the House of Assembly Kwara State. Two questions were submitted for determination and five distinct reliefs sought from the Federal High Court, herein after referred to as trial court. All the defendants, with the exception of the 1st defendant, Hon. A-G of the Federation, raised an objection one way or the other, as to the jurisdiction of the trial court to entertain and to determine the action by the plaintiff. In their preliminary objections they maintained that since the plaintiff's action relates to an action or complaint against the Executive and legislative decisions of the Kwara State Government with no allegation against the Federal Government or any of its agencies, Federal High Court lacks jurisdiction to hear her case. Various affidavits and further counter-affidavits were filed by all parties in support of their respective stand on the issue raised in the preliminary objections and the originating summons. It was decided by the trial court that all the preliminary objections have no merit and same were dismissed by the trial court on 23/7/2009. That court's reasoning was to the effect that the plaintiff's case involved the serious interpretation of the provisions of the 1999 Constitution; the Federal High Court was therefore conferred with the jurisdiction to hear and determine the action. The trial court then held that the plaintiff, the Hon. CJ, Kwara State, was entitled to all her reliefs claimed and granted them. See pp. 676 at 719 - 720 of the record where learned trial Judge has this to say:
>
> 1. By the combined effect of section 6,153(1)(i), paragraph (d) of the 3rd schedule to the Constitution, Section 271(1), and Section 292(1)(a)(ii) of the 1999 Constitution, the 3rd defendant has no power to initiate disciplinary proceedings against the plaintiff as the Chief Judge of the Kwara State. The power to initiate such disciplinary proceedings and make recommendations for the removal of the plaintiff as the Chief Judge of Kwara State is conferred by the above provisions of the Constitution to the 1st defendant, the National Judicial Council.
>
> 2. Consequently, the proceedings of the 3rd defendant triggered by the letter of the Governor of Kwara State written to it, and which led to the purported removal of the plaintiff as the chief Judge without the recommendation of the 1st defendant are declared null and void, and hereby set aside.
>
> 3. Any action or decision taken in pursuant of the proceedings of the 3rd defendant aforesaid against the plaintiff as the Chief Judge of Kwara State,

without the recommendation of the 1st defendant are hereby declared null and void.

4. The 3rd defendant and the Government of Kwara State represented by the 4th defendant in this case are restrained from further acting on the conclusions reached against the plaintiff based on the letter dated 4th May, 2009"

Aggrieved by the above decision, 2nd, 3rd & 4th defendants/Respondents appealed to the Court of Appeal Ilorin Division. The three Notices of Appeal excluded the 1st Defendant/Respondent at the trial court from the list of parties in the appeals. However on a second thought the 1st defendant has applied to be joined on the side of the respondents which application was granted. Full court formed a panel in the Court of Appeal. Split judgments of 4 - 1 were delivered on 2/7/2010.

The majority judgment was delivered on 2nd July, 2010 to show that the trial Federal High Court lacked jurisdiction to adjudicate upon the case of the plaintiff and held that the matter ought to have been taken to the High Court of Kwara State for hearing and determination having regard to the parties and subject matter of the action.

The Court of Appeal proceeded to hear the matter on its own merit and held that the decision they earlier on set aside was after all correctly decided by the trial court and the decision of the trial court was affirmed by the court below.

All the parties in the Court of Appeal, with the exception of the Hon. A-G of the Federation, were aggrieved and decided to lodge an appeal and cross-appeal to the Supreme Court against parts of the judgment that the parties were not satisfied with, appeal was then lodged to the Supreme Court. The supreme court after due consideration of the appeal before it held that the cross appeal lacks merit and dismissed it and it went ahead to uphold the decision of the trial court.

The Supreme Court held per Mohammed JSC that:

It is for the foregoing reasons that I hold the view that in the resolution of the issue at hand, the entire provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 in sections 153(1)(i)(2), 27(1), 292(1)(a)(ii) and paragraph 21 of Part 1 of the Third Schedule to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, dealing with the appointments, removal and exercise of disciplinary control over judicial officers, must be read, interpreted and applied together in resolving the issue of whether or not the Governor of a State and the House of Assembly of a State can remove a Chief Judge of a State in Nigeria without any input of the National Judicial Council.

This is because the combined effect of these provisions of the Constitution has revealed very clear intention of the framers of the Constitution to give the National Judicial Council a vital role to play in the appointment and removal of judicial officers by the Governors and Houses of Assembly of the State.

In the result, I entirely agree with the two courts below that having regard to these relevant provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,

1999, the Governor of Kwara State and the House of Assembly of the State cannot remove the Chief Judge of Kwara State from Office without the participation of the National Judicial Council in the exercise.

The above case buttresses the centrality of judicial administration occasioned by NJC which is a federal agency established by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The establishment and the functions of the NJC conferred by the Constitution makes it possible for the federal government to interfere in the judicial administration at the State level, this depict a vertical and inclusive intergovernmental relations rather than horizontal and coordinate intergovernmental relations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are hereby advanced:

i.   It is obvious that some provisions of the 1999 Constitution does not allow for state governments to take care of their judicial administration; proper practice of the federal system of government based on its principles; and suitable model of intergovernmental relations, hence the need to amend these sections of Constitution for proper and effective practice of federal system of government in the country. The mode of altering provisions of the Constitution appears difficult, but the whole process to the amendment of it begins with the legislature. Therefore, members of the legislature, at the Senate and the House of Representatives should have Senatorial offices at places that are accessible to the people and those of House of Representatives should have their Federal constituency offices in all the local governments representing each federal constituency. The motive should be to not only brief the people about government policies and developmental strides, but also to sensitize them on the need to support the idea of amending relevant sections of the Constitution. The people should be effectively sensitized about the way some provisions of the Constitution hinders growth and proper practice of federalism which is detrimental to development and their wellbeing. Federal law makers should also liaise with law makers in their respective States government with a view to having a synergy towards the actualization of Constitutional amendment. It follows that the whole issue of amendment of any section or provisions of the Constitution lies with the legislature both at the federal and state levels. Proper autonomy should be given to the judiciary through the amendment of the Constitution to correct all tendencies that tie the judiciary to the apron strings of the federal executive arm of government. The NJC should be expunged from section 153 as one of the Federal Commissions and Councils. The NJC should be independent, whose members should be elected by respective states in the federation. This would check any undue influence from the executive arm.

ii.   Judicial officers should have fixed tenure and funding should not be subjected to the executive or legislative approval or appropriation. Membership into Superior Courts should be done through election based on proven track records of integrity, academic, years of experience and moral uprightness. Their membership should be renewable every five years through re-election based on performance. For proper intergovernmental relations, the federating units should have its High Courts and Appeal Courts. The Appeal Courts should comprise of members drawn from among federating member States to avoid biases and undue influence by the State executives in the dispensation of justice. The judicial officers' salaries should come from a

mandatory and statutory fund derivable from member States. The NJC having its full independent can take charge of disbursement of its separate funds and disciplinary measures against defaulting members. The federal government should maintain the Supreme Court and members should be elected by member States in the federation based on stipulated statutory requirements from the NJC. The Supreme Court can only entertain appeals from the Appeal Courts of the State governments. These would go a long way in the decentralization of the judicial administration and also giving the State governments its proper sphere of jurisdiction and effective intergovernmental relations as expected in a federal system of government.

iii. Experience have revealed that the seemingly impossibility to the amendment of the Constitution, irrespective of its cumbersome and stringent procedures is as a result of corrupt elites who do not want the status quo to embezzling public funds to be changed. In this vein, it should be incorporated into the Constitution that political office holders should earn salaries based on their experience and qualification and all other benefits similar to that of civil and public servants. The legislature should be on a part-time basis and allowances paid based on sitting sessions to avoid unnecessary expenses and juicy benefits that will lure people into politics as a source of revenue rather than to serve. This arrangement could curb the insatiable desire to go into politics for personal benefits and give way for real administrators with administrative, educational and technological know-how who are willing to serve the people with slight marginal benefits-since they are used to the system of payment arrangement.

iv. The amendment of the Constitution should take into cognizance the institutionalization of agencies to check financial impropriety and other corrupt practices in the public service. The Constitution should spell capital punishment for corrupt public officers. This can be achieved through a strong, independent, determined and undeterred judiciary in order to tame the tide of corruption in the country. Death sentence enshrined in the Constitution is enough to divert the attention of people whose intention is not to serve but to loot the public treasury through politics. The above recommendations are to promote and encourage proper practice of federal system of government and judicial administrations at both federal and state levels of government. The recommendations stem from the fact that, with the amendment of the constitution, all other things to make the judiciary independent as the custodian of the constitution will follow.

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www. lawaspire.com.ng/2014

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SECURING THE LEGITIMACY OF EXECUTIVE POWERS THROUGH PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract
This paper analyses how public administration ensures the legitimacy of executive authority through the enforcement of legality, transparency, accountability, and ethical governance. Public administrators are tasked with converting legal frameworks into operational procedures, overseeing executive actions, and ensuring government operations adhere to constitutional and legal limits. This paper uses a descriptive approach by analysing documents to show that public administration is vital for democracy, helping to maintain the legitimacy of executive authority and reduce wrongdoing. Mechanisms such as audits, compliance checks, citizen engagement, and oversight serve to prevent the abuse of power, corruption, and executive lawlessness. The study highlights public administration as a stabilising force in democratic governance by referencing both historical and contemporary examples, including the functions of oversight bodies and administrative issues in Nigeria. Furthermore, it examines the difficulties and intricacies encountered by public administrators in reconciling conflicting demands and interests while maintaining legal principles and ethical norms. The paper concludes that, despite ongoing obstacles such as corruption and politicisation, enhancing administrative processes and cultivating a culture of legality can bolster the legitimacy of executive authority in contemporary administrations.

Keywords: Public Administration, Policy Formulation, Executive Branch, Policy Environment, Legal Framework

Introduction

In contemporary democratic democracies, the executive branch wields considerable authority in decision-making and policy implementation that impacts citizens' lives. The employment of such power must adhere to the rule of law to maintain values of fairness, justice, and accountability. Public administration is essential for ensuring the legality of executive power operations through efficient management, supervision, and compliance with legal standards. A fundamental responsibility of public administration is to execute and enforce laws, regulations, and policies established by the legislative branch of government. Public administrators are tasked with converting legal mandates into practical plans and procedures that direct the conduct of government agencies and officials. Public administration upholds the rule of law and mitigates executive authority abuse by ensuring operations comply with legal standards (Montjoy, 2018). Public administrators also play a vital role in overseeing the operations of the executive power to guarantee compliance with legal and ethical norms. They assess the effectiveness of government agencies, scrutinise their financial records, and probe charges of impropriety or corruption. Through these oversight measures, public administration aids in preventing corruption, nepotism, and other forms of wrongdoing that undermine the legitimacy of executive authority (Peters, 2014). Furthermore, public administration acts as a conduit between the government and the populace, promoting transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in the execution of executive authority. Public administrators interact with citizens via public consultations, feedback mechanisms, and grievance redressal processes to guarantee that government activities are lawful, legitimate, and serve the public interest. Through the promotion of transparent and inclusive decision-making processes, public administration cultivates trust and confidence in the executive branch.

Public administration is an essential component of governmental operations that includes responsibilities such as planning, organising, directing, coordinating, and controlling resources to achieve public goals and objectives. It encompasses the administration of public policies, programmes, services, and resources to guarantee the effective and efficient provision of services to citizens. A fundamental responsibility of public administration is to provide transparency, accountability, and integrity in governmental activities. Embracing ethical principles and best practices is essential for fostering citizens' trust and confidence in government organisations. As a public administrator, I have consistently endeavoured to maintain high ethical standards in all my contacts and decision-making processes (Yusuf, 2019).

A crucial element of public administration is strategic planning and policy formulation. Establishing explicit goals, objectives, and priorities is crucial for directing governmental actions and efficiently allocating scarce resources. Through strategic planning, public administrators can recognise chances for innovation, adjust to evolving conditions, and tackle new societal concerns. Furthermore, public administration is essential in advancing social equity and justice. It is crucial in ensuring that government policies and programs are inclusive, fair, and responsive to the needs of all citizens, particularly the marginalised groups. Public administration in Nigeria faces various obstacles, but there is also considerable opportunity for growth and progress. As the backbone of governance and service delivery, it plays a critical role in the development and operation of the country. Nonetheless, problems including corruption, inefficiency, and insufficient accountability have afflicted the system for numerous years. A significant difficulty confronting public administration in Nigeria is corruption (Obasanjo, 2020). Corruption is a widespread issue that diminishes the efficacy and credibility of governmental institutions. It undermines public

confidence, reallocates resources from vital services, and obstructs economic progress. To address corruption, the government must emphasise openness, accountability, and institutional reforms. Robust anti-corruption initiatives, including the formation of anti-corruption agencies and the prosecution of corrupt officials, are vital for fostering integrity and ethical behaviour in public administration. The importance of public administration in a nation's government is paramount. This paper examines the critical role of public administration as a mechanism that ensures the executive branch operates within legal parameters, promoting transparency, equity, and efficiency in government functions. It also analyses how the legitimacy of executive powers can be ensured through the implementation of public administration, especially in response to executive misconduct or lawlessness in Nigeria.

Clarifications of Concepts

Public Administration

The notion of public administration, as a mechanism to ensure the legality of executive power acts, possesses a profound historical legacy that extends over millennia. Public administration pertains to the structuring and execution of governmental policies and programmes, emphasising efficiency, effectiveness, and compliance with legal standards. Public administration is essential in guaranteeing the legality of executive power activities, ensuring that government acts comply with the constitution and applicable laws. Historically, we can trace public administration, as a mechanism to ensure the legality of executive power actions, back to ancient civilisations like Greece and Rome, where they established administrative processes to handle public affairs (Follett, 1918). The contemporary notion of public administration originated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when governments confronted the problems posed by industrialisation, urbanisation, and democratisation. During this period, prominent individuals like Woodrow Wilson, regarded as the progenitor of public administration, and Max Weber, a German sociologist, made substantial contributions to the discipline by underscoring the necessity of professionalising and rationalising government bureaucracy (Weber, 1921). The influence of public administration in ensuring the legality of executive power acts is significant and extensive. Public administration mitigates corruption, power abuse, and arbitrary decision-making by government officials through the establishment of explicit rules, procedures, and accountability systems. It guarantees that governmental acts are transparent, equitable, and responsive to citizens' needs. Public administration fundamentally acts as a protection against the abuse of executive authority and reinforces the tenets of democracy and the rule of law (Waldo, 1948). Notable figures who have impacted public administration by ensuring the legality of executive actions include Mary Parker Follett, a trailblazer in organisational theory and management, and Dwight Waldo, a distinguished scholar in public administration ethics. These individuals have enhanced our comprehension of how public administration may foster good governance, accountability, and citizen engagement in decision-making processes. Notwithstanding its numerous advantages, public administration faces some challenges. Critics contend that bureaucratic red tape, inefficiency, and slowness may impede the efficacy of government agencies in fulfilling their objectives.

The politicisation of public administration, wherein government officials prioritise political factors over effective administrative methods, can compromise the rule of law and diminish public trust in governmental institutions. The future of public administration, as a mechanism to ensure

the legality of executive power actions, will certainly be influenced by continuous technology improvements, globalisation, and evolving societal expectations. Governments face intricate challenges like climate change, social inequality, and pandemics, necessitating innovative and adaptive public administration strategies that effectively address these issues while maintaining legality, transparency, and accountability. Public administration upholds democracy, safeguards human rights, and advances the common good by ensuring that government activities align with the rule of law and the principles of good governance. In navigating the complexity of the 21st century, it is imperative to enhance and refine our public administration systems to address the increasing requirements of society and maintain the rule of law.

Executive Authority

Executive power denotes the authority and obligation of the executive branch of government to execute and uphold laws, administer programmes, handle foreign relations, and oversee the daily operations of the government. It is one of the three branches of government, alongside the legislative and judicial branches, and is essential to the operation of a democratic society (Magill, 2020). The executive authority is generally conferred onto the head of state or government, such as the president or prime minister, together with their designated officers. This position encompasses the authority to nominate and dismiss cabinet ministers, issue executive orders, veto legislation, and negotiate treaties with other governments. The executive branch supervises the execution of policies and programmes sanctioned by the legislature, together with the enforcement of rules and regulations established by the government. A fundamental characteristic of executive power is the capacity to render swift and resolute decisions during crises or emergencies. This skill is especially crucial in circumstances necessitating prompt action to safeguard national security, respond to natural disasters, or tackle public health problems. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Nigerian government exercised its executive authority to enforce lockdowns, impose travel restrictions, and implement other steps to mitigate the virus's transmission. Nevertheless, executive power is not absolute and is constrained by checks and balances to avert abuses of authority. In numerous democratic nations, the executive branch is answerable to the legislature, courts, and the populace via procedures including legislative supervision, judicial review, and elections. This system ensures that the executive branch operates within legal parameters and upholds the rights and freedoms of citizens. Although it confers the requisite authority to make decisions and execute policies, it must be applied judiciously and transparently to uphold the trust and legitimacy of the government. By adhering to the rule of law and maintaining the separation of powers, the executive branch may execute its responsibilities while protecting the rights and interests of the populace.

Legitimacy

Legality denotes compliance with the law or established norms and regulations. This fundamental notion regulates the conduct of individuals and organisations within a community, ensuring acts are executed in a fair, just, and ethical manner. The notion of legality spans various domains, including criminal law, civil law, and administrative law (Stephen, 2006). In criminal law, legality is essential for establishing the guilt or innocence of those charged with offences. The principle of legality asserts that individuals may only be penalised for conduct explicitly forbidden by law, and any penalty must correspond proportionately to the gravity of the offence. This safeguards persons

from capricious or inequitable treatment by the legal system, guaranteeing that justice is administered consistently and fairly. In civil law, legality regulates interactions between persons and organisations, delineating the rights and obligations of each participant. Legal doctrines, including contract law, property law, and tort law, delineate legal parameters and furnish a structure for the equitable and transparent resolution of conflicts. By adhering to legal principles, persons can safeguard their interests and assure the protection of their rights in legal processes (Black, 2004). In administrative law, legality delineates the regulations and protocols that oversee the conduct of governmental agencies and personnel. This ensures that public power is exercised lawfully and accountably, preventing authority abuse and safeguarding citizens' rights. Administrative law enhances openness, justice, and efficiency in public service delivery by enforcing legal requirements. Legality is a fundamental idea that undergirds societal functioning and the rule of law. By adhering to the principles of legality, individuals and organisations can confidently navigate intricate legal systems, assured that their rights will be safeguarded and justice administered. Moreover, legality contributes to the establishment of order, stability, and trust within society, cultivating a culture of reverence for the law and the institutions that enforce it.

The Legality of Executive Authority
The legality of executive power is a multifaceted and continually contested issue within the domain of governance and political discourse. Executive power denotes the authority conferred upon the executive arm of government, usually led by a president or prime minister, to enforce laws, render decisions, and execute policies. This power can be extensive and influential, raising enquiries over its boundaries and legitimacy (John, 2005). A fundamental question regarding the validity of executive power is the principle of checks and balances. In numerous democratic systems, like the United States, the executive branch is designed to be counterbalanced by the legislative and judicial branches to avert power abuse. In practice, however, the distinctions between these branches may become indistinct, resulting in allegations of presidential overreach. A further crucial factor is the origin of the executive's authority. In a democracy, the executive derives its legitimacy from the permission of the populace, usually via elections. This prompts enquiries about the validity of executive acts that may contravene the populace's desires or encroach upon their rights. The rule of law is crucial in assessing the legality of executive authority. The executive must function within the legal framework and cannot act arbitrarily or whimsically. This principle acts as a protection against the misuse of authority and guarantees that the executive is answerable for its actions (Bruce, 2018). The legality of presidential power, particularly regarding the use of executive orders, has emerged as a highly contested issue recently. The president's directives circumvent the conventional legislative procedure and may yield significant repercussions. Critics assert that executive orders may bypass Congress and erode the separation of powers, but proponents believe that they are an essential mechanism for the president to implement policy amid parliamentary impasse. The legality of executive power is a complex and dynamic matter essential to the operation of a democratic society. The executive must adhere to legal constraints, honour the separation of powers, and reflect the will of the populace. By meticulously evaluating these principles, we may guarantee that executive authority stays legitimate and accountable to the populace it serves.

The Legitimacy of Executive Authority

The executive branch is essential to government operations, tasked with the implementation and enforcement of laws and policies. This authority must be wielded within legal parameters to avert misuse and safeguard individual rights. The assessment of the legality of executive authority entails multiple checks and balances to prevent overreach and guarantee accountability. The principal method for assessing the validity of executive authority is judicial review. The judiciary functions as an autonomous entity that interprets the law and assesses the constitutionality of the executive branch's acts. Judicial review enables individuals to contest executive decisions and ensure governmental accountability for legal infractions or power abuses. This system of checks and balances mitigates authoritarianism and upholds the rule of law (Gregory, Smith, and Strauss, 2018). Besides judicial review, the legislative branch is essential in overseeing executive authority. Legislative oversight enables parliamentarians to hold the executive branch accountable for its activities and ensure compliance with the law. Congress has the authority to scrutinise executive acts, enact legislation to limit executive power, and impeach officials involved in misbehaviour. This system of checks and balances guarantees the executive branch's accountability to the populace and constrains its authority within the legal framework delineated by the constitution (Jerry, 2014). Additionally, public scrutiny and media supervision function as crucial means for assessing the constitutionality of presidential authority. The press is essential in ensuring government accountability through the reporting of governmental actions and possible abuses of power. Investigative journalism and public conversation enable citizens to become aware of the executive branch's actions and to fight for enhanced transparency and accountability. This public oversight mitigates corruption and guarantees that the government functions in the public's best interests (Strauss, Rakoff, and Kim, 2019). The assessment of the legitimacy of executive authority entails a synthesis of judicial review, parliamentary supervision, and public examination. Governments can avert power abuse and maintain the rule of law by instituting a system of checks and balances. To ensure the legal exercise of executive power, citizens must remain vigilant and hold their government accountable. A comprehensive system of checks and balances is essential for government accountability and the protection of individual rights. The public administration is a crucial mechanism for ensuring the legitimacy of executive power actions.

Public administration exerts significant impact, from broad policy formation to detailed service delivery. Public administration is a complex component of governance, efficiently converting policy into action and bearing substantial responsibility for the practical implementation of political decisions to achieve outcomes that benefit the public (Pollitt, 2015). The executive branch plays a significant role in influencing public administration. Nonetheless, the principles and norms of public administration establish the legality of activities undertaken by the executive branch. This interaction is grounded in the principles of democratic government and the rule of law, wherein executive authority is mandated to function within legal confines (Peters and Pierre, 2017). For example, when a policy is issued by the executive, it is the responsibility of public administration to verify that the implementation of the directive conforms to legislative mandates, constitutional stipulations, and existing judicial precedents (Rhodes and Tiernan, 2014). This is significant in the United Kingdom, where the executive's prerogative powers, including the issuance and revocation of passports, are constrained by public administrative regulations to ensure adherence to existing laws (Lynch, 2019). Furthermore, the legal framework of public administration encompasses more than mere adherence to regulations. Public administrators act as

a safeguard against presidential orders that may violate individuals' rights or contradict established laws, thereby maintaining the government's constitutional obligation to the rule of law. Challenges to the Trump administration's immigration policy by public administrators exemplify this dynamic; although the policy was based on an executive order, its implementation encountered obstacles in fulfilling due process standards (Sager and Fowler, 2019). Similarly, offering legal counsel, guidance, and training on procedural and ethical norms to executive personnel is a crucial responsibility in public administration, which helps prevent legal issues that could endanger executive actions. Consequently, public administration reinforces a culture of legality within the operations of the executive department. In a constantly changing policy landscape, public administration's capacity to maintain legality is perpetually enhanced through reforms, public examination, and judicial oversight. This cultivates a culture of respect for the rule of law, accountability, and transparency in executive activities.

The Complexity of Public Administration and Executive Authority
Public administration and executive power are intrinsically linked in a successful democracy. Public administration guarantees that executive activities comply with constitutional mandates and consider public benefit, therefore upholding a legal framework (Henry, 2017). Simultaneously, executive power encompasses the tasks of policy formulation, execution, and maintaining law and order, all of which are realised through an effective public administration. Public administration functions as a regulatory apparatus, supervising the executive's decisions and actions to ensure compliance with legal requirements (Peters, 2010). By establishing a framework of rules and policies, it facilitates lawful behaviour, thereby reducing the potential for overreaching or abuse of power. Furthermore, executive powers denote the authority granted to the president, governors, ministers, and commissioners to enforce laws and oversee state activities. Public administration pertains to the civil service and other entities tasked with implementing these authorities in a lawful and effective manner. Legitimacy refers to public acknowledgement that the executive operates within its legal entitlements and ethical jurisdiction, (Montjoy, 2018). This distinction is significant as Nigeria's democracy relies on public confidence in governmental operations, whereas executive overreach or misconduct can incite civil unrest or legal disputes, and public administration functions as a regulatory mechanism to ensure the executive remains within legal confines, (Adebayo, 2004).

Moreover, compliance with due process serves as an additional method for ensuring executive legitimacy within public administration. The Federal Civil Service Commission guarantees that recruitment for public jobs adheres to merit and federal character principles, hence mitigating nepotism, as evidenced by the 2021 public outcry that resulted in the annulment of unlawful employment practices at some federal ministries, (Premium Times, 2021). Transparency in budget implementation serves as a mechanism for ensuring legitimacy; for instance, the Office of the Accountant General publishes monthly revenue allocations to states, as evidenced by the publicly accessible FAAC allocations, thereby constraining executives' ability to divert funds without oversight. The mechanism of checks and balances through audits serves as an additional method for ensuring the effectiveness of public administration in regulating the executive branch. For instance, the Auditor-General for the Federation conducts audits of ministries and parastatals, as demonstrated in 2023, when the Auditor-General's report revealed unremitted funds in the NNPC and other MDAs, leading to investigations, (The Cable, 2023). Moreover, public personnel must

serve the current administration without political affiliation. Civil officials persist in their roles despite shifts in political leadership (e.g., the transfer from Buhari to Tinubu), so they guarantee continuity. The EFCC and ICPC, while not integral to the core civil service, contribute to administrative enforcement by monitoring the abuse of executive authority. This type of behaviour is seen in various state governors (e.g., Orji Uzor Kalu, Jolly Nyame) who were convicted post-tenure due to corruption revealed through administrative investigations, (EFCC Press Release, 2023). Despite in-built safety mechanisms, instances of executive transgressions exist. The transparency of public administration and rigorous oversight can expose such transgressions, leading to enquiries and sanctions (Public Administration and the Rule of Law, 2020). Oversight agencies and institutions further bolster these measures, ensuring a resilient system of checks and balances.

Challenges to Public Administration Inefficiency in Nigeria
Another challenge facing public administration in Nigeria is inefficiency. Bureaucratic red tape, poor management, and outdated systems contribute to inefficiencies in service delivery. This leads to delays, backlogs, and a lack of responsiveness to citizen needs. To address these challenges, the government must invest in improving infrastructure, training civil servants, and modernising administrative processes. By streamlining operations, enhancing productivity, and embracing technology, public administration can become more efficient and effective in delivering public services. Furthermore, the lack of accountability in public administration is a significant issue in Nigeria. The absence of mechanisms to hold public officials accountable for their actions allows for impunity and undermines the rule of law. To promote accountability, the government must strengthen oversight mechanisms, such as auditing, monitoring, and evaluation. By ensuring that public officials are held responsible for their decisions and actions, transparency and integrity can be enhanced in public administration.

Despite these challenges, there is great potential for improvement in public administration in Nigeria. The country is rich in human capital and natural resources, which can be leveraged to build a more efficient and responsive public administration system. By investing in capacity building, training and development, and empowering civil servants to perform their duties effectively, public administration can become a key driver of development and progress in Nigeria.

Conclusion
In conclusion, public administration is an essential instrument assuring the legality of executive power activities. By performing this role, it significantly contributes to maintaining the core values of democracy, equal rights, justice, and, most importantly, the rule of law. It indicates that sound public administration is less about hierarchical command and control than it is about legality, ethicality, and public value. Public administration plays a momentous role in upholding the legality and legitimacy of the executive power's actions. Through checks and balances, it assures a democratic functioning where all executive decisions and actions are accountable, in accordance with law, and transparent. The significance of public administration becomes even more pronounced in our increasingly complex democratic societies, where preserving the rule of law and public trust is crucial. The role of public administration in securing the legality of executive power activities is essential for the functioning of a democratic society governed by the rule of law. Through effective management, oversight, and engagement with the public, public administrators

uphold legal principles, prevent abuses of power, and promote accountability in the exercise of executive authority. By recognising the importance of public administration in safeguarding the legality of government actions, we can ensure that the executive branch operates in a manner that respects the rights and interests of all citizens. Public administration is a vital function in government that plays a significant role in improving the lives of citizens and advancing the public good. By upholding ethical standards, engaging in strategic planning, and promoting social justice, public administrators can contribute to the betterment of society and ensure the effective delivery of public services. On the other hand, public administration in Nigeria faces numerous challenges, including corruption, inefficiency, and lack of accountability. However, with the right reforms, investments, and political will, these challenges can be overcome. By promoting transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public administration, Nigeria can build a more responsive, effective, and citizen-centric governance system. It is crucial for the government, civil society, and citizens to work together to address these challenges and build a better future for Nigeria.

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Article   **Open Access**

POLITICS OF REVENGE AND PERSECUTION IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC RULE

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Abstract
This paper aims at exposing the technique of counter-revolution of political persecution and its implications for Nigeria's democratic system. To achieve this, the paper briefly makes a conceptual clarification of politics, political persecution, and democracy with its principles. It evaluates the spate of persecution and revenge in Nigeria's political space and detects that Nigeria's politics is no longer in tune with the preferred democratic system of governance as political bullying that manifests in different forms is meted against the perceived enemies of the political actors on the saddle of leadership. Through some glaring pointers to political persecutions and revenge in Nigeria, the paper observes that this cancerous menace has not only questioned Nigeria's democratic dispensation but, also, affected the nation in economic, social, political and developmental growths. The paper without equivocation argues that if this cankerworm is sustained and left unchecked, it will not only weaken and undermine democratic institutions, but also render the process of nation-building in Nigeria difficult, if not impossible. To reverse this ugly situation, the paper recommends that Nigeria needs to strengthen its democratic institutions by ensuring their independence, accountability and impartiality; implement and promote electoral reforms to prevent violence, promote fairness and ensure transparency; respect as well as protect human rights to include freedom of expression, assembly and association. The paper employs the analytic, critical, expository and speculative methods of philosophical research.

Keywords: Politics, Democracy, Democratic Principles, Political Persecution, Nigerian State

Introduction

It is no longer news that politics in today's Nigeria's democratic setting has taken an unfriendly and undemocratic direction. Political vituperation is no longer directed at the candidates of the opposition. Today, Politics and propaganda seek to make more intense use of deep lying forces of greed and envy, fear and hate, to achieve or to prevent social changes of a revolutionary character. Persecution is a veritable tool with which these destructive forces operate. Both its ricocheted self-

destructive powers and its general devastation are too great to be ignored. In Nigeria today, political persecution has indeed become the successful technique of counter-revolution. A closer examination of politicking reveals a pattern of rationalization which is utilized in every sort of divisive political and social debate. Thus, a political party or individuals with a different ideology are attacked by parties or groups in opposition even when the attacked individuals or political circles are working within the framework of national common good. This menace has been used as a weapon by political actors to unleash their venom on the perceived political enemies. This often manifests through harsh policies that are anti-people leading to questioning the government of the day.

Democracy, which is the preferred system of government adopted by Nigeria, is far from being true to its practice. This preferred governance, ideally, gives room for the participation of all Nigerians within the framework of the law. And as such, an attempt to go against its principles is tantamount to betrayal of the system. But the glaring political bullying that manifests in different forms in Nigeria recently, has really propelled one to make a juxtaposition of Nigeria's democracy and democracy adopted and practiced in other climes where citizens with different party inclinations and affiliations freely exercise their fundamental human rights especially the principles of freedom of association and freedom of speech and expression. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to unpack the cankerworm that is eating deep into the fabric of the nation's democratic space especially as it questions the democratic principles of freedom of speech and association. This is done with the hope that when the impending destructive forces endangering the system are nipped in the bud, the risks associated with it will be exposed for caution while the desired democratic environmental decorum would be maximally achieved in the nation.

Clarification of Concepts

The paper, for ease understanding, makes conceptual clarifications of the following: Politics, Democracy, Democratic Principles and Political Persecution.

Politics

According to Collins dictionary, "politics are the actions or activities concerned with achieving and using power in a country or society" ("Politics", n.d.). Unfortunately, the above definition lacks clarity being that politics is only concerned with the use of power, but, it does not clarify whether the power can be used at one's will and for selfish end or for the common good of the people. The Greek philosophers on the other hand considered politics as dealing with all the activities and affairs of the city state (polis). Politics, for them, is an all-inclusive term that makes no distinction between the state and the government. For them, it is the total study of man, society, morality, state, and so on. In this sense, politics is not restricted to mere institution of governance, but, also, a mechanism for achieving societal goals. Hence, politics is a societal platform which advances the promotion of good living and orderliness for the purpose of achieving a healthy and sustainable society.

Democracy

Etymologically, the term 'democracy' comes from the ancient Greek which combines 'demo' which means 'the people' with 'kratos' meaning 'rule', 'power' or 'strength'. When put together literally means 'rule by the people'. Marx and Engels on the other hand describe democracy as the 'dictatorship of the proletariats' (Kautsky, 1918). By this description, democracy is seen as a system

the ruling class uses in exploiting the masses. This as a matter of fact led to their refusal that democracy is a system of government run by the people. But Abraham Lincoln, a one-time American President, in 1863, following the Greek origin of the concept, faulted the uncensored description of democracy by Marx and Engels, and makes bold to define democracy as "the government of the people, by the people, and for the people" ("What is Democracy", 2017). A critical examination of the later, according to Asira E. Asira (2010), "government of the people would mean government run on behalf of the people; government by the people would mean government run by the bona fide citizens of the country in question; while government for the people would imply government in the best interest of the people" (p. 19). From the above expression one can deduce that democracy favours an equal participatory involvement of people in decision-making process (whether directly or indirectly) through representation in the best interest of the people.

Democracy, therefore, exists in an environment where efficient and effective electoral body, registration of eligible voters, conduct of free, fair, credible and periodic elections, provisions of social services and maintenance of existing infrastructure and amenities, employment and sound education are wholly piloted by the people. It is an environment where the general or public good overrides personal interest. Therefore, democracy as a form of government has its principles that distinguished it from other forms of government.

Highlights of Democratic Principles

Democracy as pointed out earlier is a form of government characterized by some principles that distinguish it from other systems of government. These unique principles that are people-centred make for its preference over other systems by many countries including Nigeria.

The Principle of Equality: This is a fundamental ingredient of democracy. It denotes identical condition of people in society; and implies that equal treatment should be given to everyone in the same or similar condition. In practical terms, what is given to Mr. A should not be at variance with what Mr. B should receive as far as they are in the same and similar condition. Therefore, in identical conditions, equals should be treated equally regardless of age, gender, ethnic cleavage and the like. Equality, here, does not mean that all should be treated equally with no recourse to their needs rather equality in this parlance, implies equality of opportunity.

The Principle of Majority or Popular Consultation: This connotes the idea that popular desires should be pursued at all times. This implies that any policy that will be made should have the approval of the people. In other words, the will of the people should prevail over the will of the government. Hence, no policy should be made by the governing body without due consultation and approval of, if not the whole people, but the majority. Democracy is therefore, synonymous with "majority rule".

Majority Rule and Minority Rights: Democracy otherwise known as majority rule acknowledges opinions of the majority in any decision-making. The opinion of the majority is taken as the will of the masses on the grounds that in the decision-making process the majority carries the vote. Be that as it may, that does not mean that the minority group should be looked down upon or denied their legitimate rights. It also implies that irrespective of the majority rule, minority rights should be considered for proportional representation.

The Principle of the Rule of Law: This principle simply implies equality before the law. In other words, no one is above the law. This principle promotes fair hearing, trial and defense by an

accused citizen before he/she is declared guilty or not guilty. It bridges the gap between the leaders and the masses on legal matters. Further, it is the idea that the law is not made for a particular set of people, but rather for all within a particular geographical area irrespective of one's political, social or economic standing. Conversely, it prevents victimization, deprivation of citizens' rights and tyranny of the leaders. The Principle of Freedom: This is one of the fundamental human rights. It simply means absence of restraint. Not freedom to do as one likes even when one's action is an infringement into another's freedom or an infringement into government's constitutional laws. It categorically implies freedom with responsibility. Some of its kinds include:

a. Freedom of Speech/Expression: Citizens are guaranteed freedom to express their opinions. They are made to enjoy the freedom of expressing what affects them as citizens and stakeholders of their country. The advantage of this freedom is that not only that it helps the government to know the plights of the citizenry, but also, it helps the government to know where they are erring in their governance. This gives citizens the sense of involvement and belonging that the government is for them and under their control.

b. Freedom of Association: Citizens are by this principle, at liberty to join associations and political parties of their choice, and also have the freedom to form associations within the framework of the law. This freedom goes with undue influence or force from anybody.

c. Freedom of Movement: Citizens in a democratic government could move from one part of a given country to another without any form of molestation, restriction or intimidation. They can equally transit from their places of origin to another part of the same country for settlement without any discrimination.

From the foregoing, one can deduce that democracy has rules and principles that regulate and guide its operations. Hence, for the system of democracy to have its true test and uniqueness, and serve the purpose for which it is made, the principles inherent in it must be observed, respected and adhered to by all within the democratic environment irrespective of one's status in all spheres of human and national existences.

Political Persecution

This is a systematic oppression and suppression of individuals or groups with dissenting views or criticisms against the ruling political regime or administration, often resulting in censorship restrictions on cultural production, and punishment for those who oppose the established ideology ("Political Persecution", 2019). From the above, one will easily deduce that this political wave excludes any possibility of open criticism against the ideologies or policies of the leading party as well as engender discrimination that leads to the denial or infringement of fundamental rights, violent actions to include police brutality, surveillance abuse, extrajudicial approaches, and so on.

Pointers to Political Persecution in Nigeria's Democracy

As earlier said, political persecution has been an endemic feature of some developing countries inclusive of Nigeria. Remarkably, Nigeria embraced democracy as her preferred system of government and gained independence when this ugly wave with its concomitance has not reached a dangerous dimension. What appears unbelievable today in Nigeria is the level at which this menace has taken the stage in Nigeria's political arena. Following this scenario, some questions begging for answers include: who are the main target of this undemocratic move? What do the employers of this mechanism wish to achieve? This obviously involves a systematic mistreatment of

individuals or groups based on their political beliefs or activities. It is without a legitimate legal basis or through the misuse of laws to target political opponents, which frequently involves violations of fundamental human rights such as freedom of expression or assembly (Yarovyi, 2024). This political mechanism as it were, serves as a tool for political repression and control. It also envelops a wide range of human rights violations in different faces aimed at silencing opposition and instilling fear. This played out between Col. Sambo Dasuki (rtd.), the former National Security Adviser (NSA) and Buhari. Using Lawal Daura, who was the Director General of the Department of State Services (DSS), Buhari was shooting randomly at those he perceived as his enemies (Handel, 2015). As dumbfounding as the above claim appears, one is left with utter wonder as to the reason Buhari was after incriminating Dasuki. But Handel further clarified that it was Col. Dasuki who arrested Buhari when he was overthrown in 1985 as the Military Head of State. He played a key role in the coup that ousted Buhari. The conclusion then was that Buhari, 30 years after, was still nursing ill feelings against Dasuki (Handel, 2015).

In the same vein of suspicion to political persecution which turned out to be so devastating not only to the perceived enemy but also to innocent citizens of Niger State was the scenario of neglect to the cries of Niger State. Vasta, who was a former Commissioner for Information, Culture and Tourism in Niger State, made bold to say, that because of Buhari's grudge against General Ibrahim Babangida of Niger State, for eight years, Buhari did not pay any serious official visit to Niger state and no single federal project was executed in the state. The 'Baro Port Project', which recently generated some political heat in the state, was abandoned by Buhari including all the federal projects across the state. The people of state were made to pay for sin they knew nothing about. It was the case of when two Elephants fight, the grass suffers. He sidelined the state just because of the sin of one person (Hassan, 2025). Digging further into the above perceived persecution, Buhari's absence in Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida's book launch, Vasta as recorded, was unreserved to what he considered as the undeniable fact that the memory of the 'mother of all betrayal' and his subsequent detention by General Babangida, denying him the lifetime opportunity to bid his late mother farewell after death was yet to leave him (Hassan, 2025). Away from Buhari whose broad daylight persecuting approach was not hidden during his administration, allegations of persecution is equally noticed among political parties in Nigeria in a bid to annihilate the opposition. This is made evident when Nasir El-Rufai, the former governor of Kaduna State and one of the founding members of the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) reveals in his statement as recorded, that the PDP which is the oldest political party in this Republic is targeted for destruction, it is a matter of time. There are internal machineries in the PDP that have been hired, paid, or otherwise motivated to destroy the party. So the party is on its way to the grave (Iniobong, 2025). If the above claim is true, this is political immaturity to say the least as politics in Nigeria appears to take a destructive direction where characters are assassinated, parties endangered while opposition party adherents are emotionally, psychologically and even physically tortured.

Going further, the case between Dele Farotimi and Afe Babalola (SAN) is evidently another publicly perceived act of political persecution. Farotimi, a lawyer and human right activist who drew attention to the complexities and perceived flaws within the Nigerian legal system was directly accused and charged to court by Afe Babalola. This unfortunate scenario led to trying him in two different courts, and bails of 50 million and 30 million naira were granted by the High Court and Magistrate Court respectively with additional stipulations of surrendering his travel passport on the charges of cyber crime and criminal defamation. The height of it says it all when even as the bail

was granted Farotimi, he remained in detention for weeks until the court sluggishly finalized his bail formalities. But the doubts of the public was laid to rest when it was exposed that the legal battle between Farotimi and Afe Babalola underscores the potential for political influence in the legal system. Farotimi, a vocal critic of the Nigerian government and its institutions, has long been involved in human rights advocacy, and his arrest is seen by many as an attempt to silence dissent (Reuben, 2024). The above leaves one to wonder what the motive behind the prolonged adjudication of Farotimi's case was as it was between him and his colleague, Babalola. The case equally confronts the role of Nigeria's legal system in protecting the rights of citizens that challenge the status quo. The legal system that should be an impartial institution is now seen in a different picture as machinery used by politicians to witch-hunt their perceived enemies or those who is openly against their policies and government in general. It is disheartening that persecution in politics as it is going on today in Nigeria is a red flag to the preferred democratic system of government. It has not only really punctured the core principles of association and expression among other principles of democracy, exposed some possible consequences that pose some challenges to Nigeria's democratic institutions but also raised some questions whether the current political actors are the right crops of politicians to uphold as well as navigate the preferred democratic system.

Implications of Political Persecution for Nigeria's Democracy
A reflection on the spate of persecution in politics reveals that if this cankerworm is sustained and systematic mistreatment of individual left unchecked, there are obviously some negative effects of it as it will not only weaken the system of government, engender political instability, but also rob the citizens of their fundamental human rights. Arbitrary arrest and detention: this stands out as one of the risks of political persecution. This is the violation of the right to liberty, a deprivation of a person outside of the confines of nationally recognized laws or international standards (Yarovyi, 2024). This as a matter of fact exposes the victims to more human rights violations since they are deprived of the means to defend themselves from extrajudicial actions and degrading treatment. This will be the case where people in authority detain their perceived enemies without cause or due process, even to a point of holding them for a long period without charges.

Unfair Trial: this is another danger of persecution in politics that questions the democracy as practiced in Nigeria. This is a case where in essence, a legal proceeding where the defendant's right to a fair and impartial hearing is compromised, leading to a potentially unjust outcome. Here, the key elements of an unfair trail include violation of due process, lack of impartiality and denial of fundamental rights to counsel, to confront witnesses, to a public trial and to a fair and impartial jury. This as a result, will undermine justice, lead to erosion of trust, violations of human rights, and as well motivate political prosecutions which lack due process with predetermined outcomes and harsh sentences.

Restrictions on Movement: this is also a risk of political persecution that will endanger Nigeria's democracy. This is the case where the intimidated individuals or groups are robbed of their right to movement where in most cases their travelling documents or passports are seized or confiscated, or the victims placed on travel bans. More so, constant threats, monitoring and intimidation are common tactics used to silence dissidents, and in some cases, the perceived enemies may be compelled to flee their homes.

Economic Sabotage: this is no less another risk of political persecution which is a red flag to Nigeria's democracy. Here, opposition politicians or the perceived political enemies and their supporters are targeted with economic sanctions to include, seizure of assets and freezing of bank accounts.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper exposes the weapon of political persecution and its implications for Nigeria's democratic system. It briefly makes analyses of the concepts of politics, democracy and its principles, and political persecution. It evaluates the spate of persecution in Nigeria's political space and detects that Nigeria's politics is no longer in tune with the preferred democratic system of governance as political bullying that manifests in different forms is meted against the perceived enemies of the political actors and their policies. Through some pointers to political persecutions in Nigeria, the paper observes that this cancerous menace has not only questioned Nigeria's system of government but, also, affected the nation in economic, social, political and developmental growths. As such, a reflection on the spate of persecution in politics has informed one that if this cankerworm is sustained and systematic mistreatment of individual left unchecked, there are obviously some negative effects that will not only weaken the system of government, cause political instability, engender arbitrary arrest and detention, promote unfair trail, restrict citizens' rights to freedom of associations, freedom of expression/speech but, also, rob the citizens of their fundamental human rights. Besides, globally, the ugly head of this political abnormality will be more shameful than imagined in the comity of democratic nations. Consequent upon the above challenges, the following recommendations would help to checkmate the risks of political persecution in Nigeria and as well accelerate political, economic, social and developmental growths of the country:

i.   Nigeria needs to strengthen its democratic institutions by ensuring their independence, accountability and impartiality.
ii. Electoral reforms should be implemented and promoted to prevent violence, promote fairness and ensure transparency.
iii. Government should respect as well as protect human rights to include freedom of expression, assembly and association.
iv. Nigeria should promote inclusive politics and encourage participation from diverse groups, including youth, women and the marginalized.

By addressing the above challenges and adhering to the recommendations, Nigeria can strengthen its preferred democratic system of government, promote political stability and ensure that the rights of every citizen are respected and protected.

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Article   **Open Access**

AFRICAN CULTURES AND THOUGHT SYSTEMS IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

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Abstract
In the age of enlightenment, there was the erroneous claim by certain Western philosophers that there is only one philosophy which implies only one civilization and valid cultural values coming from the Euro-West. This claim denigrates and relegates the place of Africans, Asians and other colonized people to the cadre of nonhumans or animals who act from the place of irascible concupiscence as against a proper rational standpoint. It is against this background that this paper aims to demonstrate that Africans are not only humans but have rich philosophies and culture. Hence, there is need for an investigation of African worldviews and thought systems with the aim of finding the implications and relevance therein to apply them to the globalized modern world. Employing the philosophical method of analysis, the paper argues that Africans are not only humans but have rich philosophy and cultural values that are relevant to this globalized world. In fact, their worldviews and thought systems are replete with the values of unity, solidarity, interconnectedness and holistic harmony that are founded on rich philosophical systems.

Keywords: Interculturality, Philosophy, African Thought Systems, Globalization.

Introduction

We live in a multicultural and pluralized society made possible by globalization. Globalization is a growth in social, cultural, economic and political spheres of the society that is facilitated by technology. It has made trade, movement of people, and communication possible and easy around the world. Ruud Lubbets in his article "Globalization and Sustainable Development" describes globalization as "the phenomenon that the degree of global human interaction increases to such an extent that both its primary effects and the reactions it provokes, give rise to numerous new developments"(1999:1). Globalization is the interaction between economies, technologies and politics. It creates an environment that reduces state regulation of the market thus promoting a

more dominant role for large multinational corporations. Globalization has already changed our world drastically: CNN is with us 24 hours a day, the internet and E-mail are globally instantaneous methods of information collection and communication(Sacks, 2002: 28). On the contrary, globalization has negative consequences. For instance, the recent Asian currency crisis affected not only Asia, but all financial markets worldwide. Instability in one area quickly speeds to others. Another consequence of globalization is that more countries are adopting the political model of democracy in combination with the free market approach of economics(Alli, *et al,* 2007:89). In the midst of all these exchanges there have been calls and efforts made for formal intercultural study of cultures and philosophies of different race and people in order to enhance better communication and human living. This is what informs the whole idea of intercultural philosophy.

Whenever the subject of intercultural philosophy is mentioned it is with the consciousness that there has been contact or, at least, a mutual awareness among cultures – particularly those of Europe, Asia, and Africa – for millennia. This contact has increased significantly since the early modern period. With this contact have come encounters with a wide range of practices, cultures, religions, and, particularly, of wisdom or philosophical traditions. The extents of the differences among them have often, but not always, been obvious, and there have been varying responses to these encounters: sometimes incomprehension, sometimes rejection and denigration, but sometimes active engagement (Sweet, 2014:1). In intercultural philosophy, there has not only been an effort by philosophers from varied cultural and traditional backgrounds engaged in a vigorous dialogue with one another in mutual respect, but also the recognition that one's own philosophical views are not complete, that there are other, legitimate philosophical views, and that one's own views may need a rearticulation or even revision(Sweet, 2014:1). It is on the basis of this significance of intercultural philosophy that informs the rationale for a study of some aspects of African life styles and thought systems to demonstrate that Africans are not only humans but also have rich philosophy and cultural values that have been and still are relevant to this globalized world. In fact, their worldviews and thought systems are replete with the values of unity, solidarity, interconnectedness and holistic harmony that are founded on rich philosophical systems. In view of this, this paper is made of four parts: the first part focuses on the context for the analysis of African cultures and thought systems. The second part explores the African lifestyle and thought systems, the third part deals with the relevance of the values found therein in African thought systems and lifestyles to our contemporary world. The last part is the conclusion.

The Context for the Analysis of African Cultures and Thought Systems

Before the issues of African cultures and thought systems will be discussed, there is an urgent need for the interrogation of the question, does Africa exist? The question seems like waking a dead horse from death because this question has long been debated about but this is in order to attend to the challenges of the huge impacts of imperialism and globalisation on Africa. Also, there is need to discuss in brief if Africa and Africans exist because of the Eurocentric narratives put forward by some European scholars such as Hegel, Levy-Bruh, Kant, Hume and others. The Eurocentric arguments are a ploy to push forward the European superiority narrative over the Africans. According to Mohanty Chandra, Eurocentrism comes alive when "third world legal, economic, religious and familial structures are treated as phenomena to be judged by Western standards [...] When these structures are defined as 'underdeveloped' or 'developing" (1984: 71). According to Hegel, "in Negro life the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness had not yet attained to

the realisation of any substantial existence [...] Thus distinction between himself as an individual and the universality of his essential being, the African in the uniform, undeveloped oneness of his existence has not yet attained" (1956: 93). This was not enough for him, he further stressed that Africa, "is no historical part of the World; it has no movement or development to exhibit" (Hegel, 1956, p. 99). For him, their understanding of Africa "is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature" (Hegel, 1956: 99). In line with this, Africans were labeled as "primitive" by Levy–Bruhl. Following this; Europeans held that primitives are irrational, pre–logical, among other things (1923: 36). David Hume in his work *The Treatise of Human Nature* and predominantly his essay 'Of National Characters' first published in 1748, for instance, writes:

> I am apt to suspect the Negroes, and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilised nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilised nation of that complexion, or even any individual eminent either in action or speculation (1978:77).

The German scholar, Immanuel Kant who did not travel more than a day's ride away from his home town, Prussia, claims that:

> The Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the trifling. Mr. Hume challenges anyone to cite a single example in which a Negro has shown talents, and asserts that among the hundreds of thousands of blacks who are transported elsewhere from their countries, although many of them have even been set free, still not a single one was even found who presented anything great in art or science or any other praiseworthy quality, even though among the whites some continually rise aloft from the lowest rabble, and through superior gifts earn respect in the world. So fundamental is the difference between these two races of man, and it appears to be as great in regard to mental capacities as in colour. The religion of fetishes so widespread among them is perhaps a sort of idolatry that sinks as deeply into the trifling as appears to be possible to human nature. A bird's feather, a cow's horn, a conch shell, or any other common object, as soon as it becomes consecrated by a few words, is an object of veneration and of invocation in swearing oaths. The blacks are very vain but in the Negro's way, and so talkative that they must be driven apart from each other with thrashings(1950: 21).

The aim of these false claims and act of denigration of Africans was to enthrone the Eurocentric ideals in terms of culture, politics, religion and economy. Hence, Africa exists and Africans do exist. To put this in proper perspective, African continent has the second largest population in the world after the Asian continent. It has around one billion populace. As regards its land mass, it occupyies 11,724,000 square meter of land mass(*Encyclopedia Britannica on Africa,* 2023). It is considered the cradle of life, that is, the continent from which the first family, hominidae was birthed according to archeological findings. Africa has given rise to several civilizations such as the Kingdom of Kush, the Land of Punt, Carthage, the Kingdom of Aksum, and the Mali Empire with its Timbuktu. It has been

recorded that civilization began in Africa, precisely Egypt (Clayton, 2020: 4). There is high level of variations among Africans ranging from their languages, morphology, cultures and knowledge systems. However, Africans have areas of commonalities in terms of values and world view. Let us turn attention to African culture and thought systems by first exploring the concept of culture.

Culture

Edward B. Taylor defines culture as that which involves knowledge, conviction, art, ethics, regulation, customs or any other capabilities and habits attained by man as a member of society. As for Bello (1991, p. 189) culture is "the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenge of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms thus distinguishing a people from their neighbours". On the other hand, Aziza conceives culture as the totality of the pattern of behaviour of a particular group of people. It includes everything that makes them distinct from any other group of people for instance, their greeting habits, dressing, social norms and taboos, food, songs and dance patterns, rites of passages from birth, through marriage to death, traditional occupations, religious as well as philosophical beliefs (2001: 31).

Culture as a way of life of a people is trangenerational in nature through a means of socialization by a people. Fafunwa supports this view when he asserts that:

> The child just grows into and within the cultural heritage of his people. He imbibes it. Culture, in traditional society, is not taught; it is caught. The child observes, imbibes and mimics the action of his elders and siblings. He watches the naming ceremonies, religious services, marriage rituals, funeral obsequies. He witnesses the coronation of a king or chief, the annual yam festival, the annual dance and acrobatic displays of guilds and age groups or his relations in the activities. The child in a traditional society cannot escape his cultural and physical environments (1974, 48).

For Njoku, culture is a means of learning and exchange among members of a group from one generation to another. He stresses that the human person learns a culture via membership in the group that is, in a community of ideas. Furthermore, culture has three usages: (1) elitarian means the acquisition of great amount of knowledge, either in general or in some particular fields of study. A well cultured person then is one who has great knowledge in science, philosophy, etc. (2) Pedagogical means the education, formation and cultivation of man for the realization of his personality. (3) Anthropological means the characteristics of behaviour of a group of people (Njoku, 2015: 2). Accordingly, culture in philosophical anthropology holds it that one cannot realize one's social fulfillment without expressing one's proper life. One expresses oneself through language, arts and other avenues which one embodies and communicates by means of one's ideas in the socio-cultural world. Against this background then, the person is regarded as *homo culturalis*: a culture-making being"(Njoku, 2015: 2).

Culture can also be said to be material and non-material. The material aspect of culture involves the visible tactile objects such as artefacts and crafts, which man is able to create in order to survive while the non-material aspect of culture has to do with the norms and mores of the people. In view of this, we have beliefs about what is morally right and morally wrong. Culture is not only material and non-material it is dynamic (Idang, 2015: 100). This implies that culture

constantly changes. Antia asserts that "culture is not fixed and permanent. It is always changed and modified by man through contacts with and absorption of other peoples' cultures, a process known as assimilation" (2005: 17). According to Etuk "cultures are not static, they change. Indeed culture needs to change; which wants to remain static and resistant to change would not be a living culture" (2002: 25). One thing stands out clearly about the issue of culture and that is the fact that there is no society that exists without a culture. It is wise to assert that culture is a human activity that is common among every social group. It suffices to hold that culture as people's way of life means that all social groupings have their way of life which also implies their world views, thought systems, political, and economic systems. This is why it is ridiculous when Western scholars claim that Africans are "primitive", lack history, religion and even philosophy. What then approximates to African culture since African cultures are numerous?

African Cultures and Thought Systems

In order to understand African culture and thought system there is need for the understanding of African metaphysics. This is because it is that aspect of African philosophy that specifically studies the African distinctive notion of reality and existence. In African metaphysics, reality is conceived as one and universal but conceived differently by individuals based on their conceptions of life which makes everything around them meaningful. Within African understanding of reality, the African mind thinks in hierarchical categories and modes as against thinking in single, isolated and individualistic manner. It understands reality as a relationship of things and therefore analyzes phenomena in terms of cause and effect, balance and conflict. Any metaphysical study worthy of its salt brings under its focus of study both transcendental and particulars of individual existence. It is in view of this that Jonathan Chimakonam asserts that "in African philosophy we study reality of which being is at the center" (2013: 73). Earlier before him, Godfrey O. Ozumba holds that the basis of African metaphysics is 'Being' with all its ontological appurtenances. These include personality, substance, causality, soul, etc (Ozumba, 2004: 2). What then is African metaphysics which aids in the study of African reality? According to Ozumba, African metaphysics is the African way of perceiving, interpreting and making meaning out of interactions, among beings, and reality in general. It is the totality of the African's perception of reality. African metaphysics therefore include systematization of African perspective as it relates to being and existence (Ozumba, 2004: 2).

African metaphysics is holistic. Its logic underlies the basis for the standards and expectations of the African in the sense that the metaphysical worldview of the African defines his/her attitude to situations and issues in everyday living. With the multiplex of cultures in Africa, we cannot argue that all African communities uphold the same standards nor share the same expectations but the basis and underlying principles of their cultural values are basically the same. Thus, Lovemore Mbigi asserts that, "Although African cultures display awesome diversity, they also show remarkable similarities" (Mbigi, 2005: 75). For instance, the conception of a person in both Yoruba and Akan cultures are similar fundamentally but slightly different. A person is constituted by the body and some other entities. A person, then, is held in Akan and Yoruba philosophies to consist broadly of physical (bodily) and extra-bodily entities. In Akan thought, the physical is called *honam* (body) while the extra-bodily in turn consists of two logically distinguishable entities – the *sunsum* (spirit) and ɔkra (soul). In Yoruba philosophy, the *ara* (body) is held together with a purely nonphysical entity (*emi* – the soul) and both *okan* (the heart) and *ori* (the head, „inner head") which

he describes as partly physical and partly non-physical. However, it was also suggested that the translation of *emi* as soul was a confusion. There, he defined *emi* only as the active principle of life, the lifegiving element put in place by the deity (Majeed, 2014: 44). For the African, the personhood of the individual does not come with birth. The person is one who has attained the status of a responsible member of the community(Onah, 2002: 78). David Lutz rightly observes that, "one of the most striking features of the cultures of sub-Sahara Africa is their non-individualistic character" (2009, pp. 313 – 328). Personhood evolves from how the individual relates with other human and living beings, (Sogolo, 1993: 190 -191). The community is the cornerstone in African thought and life (Mbigi, 2005: 75). Therefore, African metaphysics conceives the human person as a communal being. "People are not just individuals, living in a state of independence, but part of a community, living in relationships and interdependence" (Turaki, 2006: 36). This fact is corroborated by John Mbiti, who argues that one becomes conscious of one's being only in relation to other beings, to be aware of one's responsibilities, duties and privileges towards oneself and others. One experiences pain and joy with the corporate group that consists of relatives, neighbours, kinsmen, alive or dead (ancestors), thus, "I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am" (Mbiti, 1992: 124 – 129).

In the context of the narrative approach, an individual becomes a person when he/she is an adult who can fend for him/herself and is able to reason judiciously and support a conjugal relation through which a family is raised. Along with these are a host of other obligations to the kinfolk and the community that obliges an individual and define personhood. Thus, personhood excludes infants and social misfits (Onah, 2002: 78). What this foregoing analysis shows is that the person in African traditional thought system exists, not just as an individual but also as a member of a group and as a member of a community. The person is communitarian by nature because as an individual member of a group and a community, one constantly interacts with and interpenetrates others(Ndubuisi, 2004: 425). Oyeshile agrees with this, for according to him, as well as being communitarian, the person is also "other things by nature". By other things he means the person exercises other attributes like rationality, the capacity for virtue, evaluating and making moral judgments and therefore, capable of making a choice. These are not attributes that the community bestows on the individual, rather the individual develops them and they are nurtured within the community (2006: 114 -115). The biggest challenge with African thought system and philosophy is the issue of lack of documentation in terms of storage of ideas in writing. This poses a danger in the field of African philosophy generally. It hinders critical after-thought reflection that written experiences afford the human intellect. Besides, "a mere mental acquaintance with reality cannot guarantee tenacity and longevity of ideas" (Onah, 2002: 2). We lose mentally stored ideas from time to time and we make efforts to recapitulate them. In the process of reconstructing our undocumented experiences, some aspects of past experiences are never remembered. Nonetheless, as Joseph Omoregbe writes, "the African store their ideas in form of folklores, folk wisdom, mythologies, traditional proverb, religious worldviews, etc" (1996: 6). Although not comparable to documentation in writing, this form of preservation of ideas afford the traditional African the opportunity to reflect further and more critically on past experiences and shared beliefs. What then is the relevance of African culture and thought systems to the globalized world?

Relevance of African culture and Thought Systems to the Globalized World
The process of globalization is facilitated by technology which dislocates humans from both time and space and projects them into a world where the future and past exist simultaneously. This

technology comes from but one place – education. As we experience globalization and its effects we realize that the only way to accept it (or fight it) is through knowledge. A growing inter-independence through technology is bringing people together. People are better able to communicate with, understand, and learn from each other using technology as a standard context. We are looking beyond our sectarian religionism nationalities, genders, and cultures towards the global village. In this village, all people are citizens of planet Earth, where diversity is at least tolerated in the name of peace and profit. A world is being created where people cooperate and collaborate to overcome common challenges. This increased interdependence is seen in such areas as the military intervention in Kosovo, the joint space program of the U.S. and Russia, and the global impact of such bodies as the World Bank and the IMF(Alli, *et al.,* 2007: 1).

In spite of these perceived positive values which globalization and modernization bring to the world it carries other baggies along which can be referred to as discontents of globalization. According to Stiglitz in his work *Globalization and its Discontents* expresses the discontent, with the state of global regulatory institutions like the IMF. He points out that, while globalization is in theory a force for good and has helped countless developing countries grow, it has also been the root cause of economic failures. Stiglitz explains that there is a discrepancy between theory and practice and that poor regulation on the part of the IMF has made globalization a destructive rather than constructive force. He compares the actions of the World Bank with those of the IMF to emphasize the weaknesses of the latter. It principally argues that the Fund centers too much on imposing a precise economic theory on the countries it seeks to help, to the point of paying no attention to domestic indicators that might distort its projected model (Stiglitz, 2002: 23-52). Stiglitz in Chapter 3 of his work explores how dogged pursuit of privatization, liberalization, and stabilization as ends in themselves have caused IMF policies to fail in countries that need structural support (Stiglitz, 2002: 53-88). He finally argues that, should the IMF become more transparent and practical, it can still become a reliable institution that protects global economic stability. Jonathan Sacks asserts that globalization has profoundly destabilizing effects. Its benefits are not spread evenly. There are winners and losers, within and between countries. The digital device has heightened inequalities. There are 1.3 billion people – 22 percent of the world's population – living below the poverty line; 841 million are malnourished; 880 million are without access to medical care. One billion lack adequate shelter; 1.3 billion lack access to safe drinking water; 2.6 billion do not have access to sanitation. Among the children of the world, 113 million – two-thirds of them girls – go without schooling; 150 million are malnourished; 30,000 die each day from preventable diseases (Sacks, 2002: 29).

There are a lot of challenges ranging from global climate change, extreme global poverty, challenges of cultural suppression and exclusion, existential crises like war, conflicts, human identity crises due to historical experiences of colonialism and the rest. There is the challenge of human alienation in the quest of capitalist wealth creation, global health crises and the rise of pandemics which require multifaceted approaches by all and sundry to deal with them appropriately. There is also the issue of moral bankruptcy. It is against these backgrounds that the values inherent in African cultures and thought systems can be useful in contributing to better ways of handling things in the world. African philosophy often emphasizes communal values, social harmony, and interconnectedness. These principles resonate with contemporary discussions on sustainability, global cooperation, and ethical living. African traditions emphasize holistic health, considering physical, mental, and spiritual aspects. In today's world, there's a growing interest in

holistic well-being and alternative medicine. African philosophy often has strong connections to nature and the environment. These perspectives offer insights into sustainable living and ecological balance, which are crucial in addressing today's environmental challenges. These philosophies offer different perspectives on knowledge acquisition, epistemology, and the nature of reality. Embracing diverse ways of understanding truth and wisdom can enrich contemporary discourse and encourage open-mindedness. In an increasingly globalized world, understanding and appreciating diverse cultures is essential. African philosophy contributes significantly to global cultural diversity, promoting mutual respect and understanding among different societies. African philosophy advocates for social justice, equality, and human rights. Their principles can guide contemporary discussions on social justice movements, inclusivity, and equity.

Conclusion

This paper has set out to interrogate some aspects of African lifestyles and thought systems with the aim of showing that it has rich cultures and philosophies that have been of great relevance to the world and are still relevant to this globalized world. The paper demonstrates that African philosophy often emphasizes communal values, social harmony, and interconnectedness. These principles resonate with contemporary discussions on sustainability, global cooperation, and ethical living. African traditions emphasize holistic health, considering physical, mental, and spiritual aspects. In today's world, there is a growing interest in holistic well-being and alternative medicine. African philosophy often has strong connections to nature and the environment. These perspectives offer insights into sustainable living and ecological balance, which are crucial in addressing today's environmental challenges. These philosophies offer different perspectives on knowledge acquisition, epistemology, and the nature of reality. Embracing diverse ways of understanding truth and wisdom can enrich contemporary discourse and encourage open-mindedness. In an increasingly globalized world, understanding and appreciating diverse cultures is essential. African philosophy contributes significantly to global cultural diversity, promoting mutual respect and understanding among different societies. African philosophy advocates for social justice, equality, and human rights. Their principles can guide contemporary discussions on social justice movements, inclusivity, and equity.

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Article   **Open Access**

PROMOTING HUMAN DIGNITY IN NIGERIA THROUGH INDIGENOUS CULTURAL PRACTICES/BELIEFS

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Abstract

Human dignity is an essential concept in contemporary society. This does not mean that it was not important in previous societies. It is to assert that the idea and understanding of human dignity have evolved to what it is today. Human dignity entails recognizing the worth and value in every human person, irrespective of their ethnicity, religious affiliation, socio-cultural background, or economic status. Every human being has intrinsic worth. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights and various other human rights instruments have spelt out clearly the significance of human dignity. Many of these declarations have indicated how human dignity and human rights have been threatened and even degraded by wars, violence, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other forms of atrocities. This paper is concerned with examining how human dignity in Nigeria is threatened and endangered by different indigenous and other cultural beliefs and practices. The paper adopts the methods of critical analysis, hermeneutics, and evaluation. It concludes that there is an imperative to safeguard only cultural aspects that promote human dignity in Nigeria.

Keywords: Indigenous, culture, beliefs, practices, human dignity, human rights, Nigeria.

Introduction

This paper is informed by article 21 of the Nigerian Constitution which clearly states that: "The State shall-(a) protect, preserve and promote the Nigerian cultures which enhance human dignity and are consistent with the fundamental objectives as provided in this Chapter…." (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2023, p. 37). The chapter referred to in this article, 21, is Chapter II, "Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy." This chapter mentioned above deals with functions of government in promoting the welfare and well-being of the Nigerian people, promoting national integration, economic progress and development, food security, the social and educational objectives, the functions of the mass media, national ethics, duties of the citizens, and so forth. As important as human culture is, human culture is not infallible and sacrosanct. Culture is not stagnant, but dynamic and can be transformed. There are indeed aspects of indigenous cultures

in Nigeria and elsewhere that faithfully promote human welfare and flourishing. Cultural values such as hospitality, communalism, care, love, compassion, humility, friendship, solidarity, environmental protection, *Ubuntu* (human interconnectedness), *Ujamaa* (brotherhood), honesty, diligence, handwork, etc, which are found in   African cultures (Nigeria inclusive) are to be celebrated, cherished, and promoted regardless of the age and season. But it is equally true that there are cultural aspects that are troubling. For instance, in the same African cultures that are found many positive values, there have equally been practices such as female genital mutilation, maltreatment of widows, abuse of childless women, especially those without male children, discrimination against the girl-child, wars and violence, xenophobic attacks against strangers, etc. Recognize that: "While religion and culture may provide moral frameworks that uphold human dignity, they can also perpetuate discrimination, gender inequality, and other forms of social injustice" (Chimaobi & Ameh, 2024, p. 90). These challenging aspects of indigenous cultures in Africa, and in Nigeria in particular, could be termed social ills that plague the society.

Human dignity is so important that it deserves to be reflected upon. All human rights depend on human dignity (United Nations, 1984). In light of the social ills that still pervade culture and Nigerian society, the objective of the Nigerian state to "promote the Nigerian cultures which enhance human dignity…" (Federal Republic of Nigeria, art 21) is to be taken seriously. No aspect of culture that is illiberal and hostile to authentic human dignity should be promoted. This paper will use the methods of critical analysis, hermeneutics, and evaluative methods to examine indigenous cultural beliefs and practices in Nigeria while arguing that they should enhance human dignity, and those aspects that do not enhance human dignity should be transformed or totally eliminated.

Conceptual Clarifications

The key terms that pervade this paper are indigenous, culture, cultural beliefs, cultural practices, promoting, and human dignity. Human dignity refers to "The value or worth that human persons intrinsically possess," arising from the fact that they are created in the Divine Image and they must sustain all life on planet Earth (Hobgood, 2007, p. 349). Human dignity is the heritage of all, irrespective of human behaviour (Udo, 2024). While originally the word, dignity has to do with a person's worth and value based on what he may have earned such as royalty, wealth, distinction; the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights turned that meaning around and asserted that all human beings have inherent dignity not based on their status or entitlements but because they are human beings (Soken-Huberty, n.d). Human dignity means the human being has worth and value. Human dignity is grounded in the fact of being human. In many religions of humanity from ancient times, human beings were seen as equally created by the Almighty God, and this can be found in the teachings of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism (Soken-Huberty, n.d). In the Holy Writ of the Judeo-Christian tradition, God created human beings (both male and female) in God's image and likeness. No human being is inferior or superior to another. It is a fact that some adherents of the various world religions mentioned above have not always lived out these values in having positive equal regard to all human beings for their dignity. If not, practices such as slavery, racism, Apartheid, ethnicism, gender discrimination, etc, would not have been practiced by these adherents.

The next words that require clarification are culture, cultural beliefs, and cultural practices. Culture could be defined as: "… behaviour peculiar to Homo sapiens, together with material objects

used as an integral part of this behaviour. Thus, culture includes language, ideas, beliefs, customs, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, and ceremonies, among other elements" (White, 2022, para 1). Culture also refers to:

> … shared beliefs, values, traditions, social norms, and behaviours of a group of people who share the same living environment in a specific region of the world. Culture encompasses key aspects of a society, including language, education, religion, government, and the identity and personality of the people who are part of that culture" (Naik et al., 2023, para 2-3).

The most generally understood meaning of culture is that it refers to the totality of the way of life of a people in all dimensions and domains. Human beings are creators of culture, and they are also products of culture. Culture is essential to human existence and life. Without culture, there is no human society. One definition of culture is that it is: "…the historically shared means and ways through which a people unveil themselves (to themselves, and only secondarily to others as human" (Espin, 2007, p. 302). Cultural beliefs refer to the worldviews, opinions, positions, notions, and cherished ideas that a group of people uphold and also put into cultural practice (action). Cultural beliefs often imply that people practice these beliefs. People rarely hold beliefs without practising them or acting on them. In the history of human society, some people, especially from a religious angle, can be dogmatic and even fanatical about their beliefs. And so, in the name of cultural or religious beliefs, some persons have gone to war, perpetuated violence, or even engaged in terrorism. People's beliefs generally inform their behaviours. Note that: "Cultural beliefs are beliefs that are learned and shared across groups of people. Because the amount of information in a culture is too large for any one individual to master, individuals know different subsets of the cultural knowledge and thus can vary in their cultural competence" (Weller, 2006, p. 579). And "Cultural practices are the shared behaviours, rituals, and traditions that define a group's way of life, reflecting their beliefs, values, and social norms. These practices shape the identity of communities and influence how they interact with their environment, contributing to diverse cultural landscapes around the world" (Fiveable Inc., 2025, para 1). The word indigenous here is used to mean what is endogenous and internal, originating from the native place. A thing, practice, or reality that is indigenous to Nigeria means that it is not imported into Nigeria from abroad or a foreign land. The indigenous cultural beliefs and practices of Nigeria are from the soil of Nigeria and have been practiced in the land of Nigeria from time immemorial. Since this paper speaks of human dignity, the argument of this paper is that indigenous cultural beliefs and practices in Nigeria should foster human dignity. Cultural beliefs and practices should not violate authentic human values and, by implication, human rights.

Ethical Foundations, Features, and Implications of Human Dignity
In this section, it is imperative to further discuss human dignity. Human dignity is not an accident to human beings. It is an essential aspect of what it means to be human. Human dignity means the human being is dignified, noble, and honourable. It is difficult to discuss the issue of human dignity without relating it to human life. They are closely linked and related. Human life is the basis for human dignity, and this is why the human rights declaration asserts that human dignity inheres in the human person, and it is from this that human rights emanate (Oyeghe, 2023). The following human rights declarations: the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the 1966 International

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights the 1993 Vienna Declaration, the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, etc all affirm this linkage.

From a Christian religious and theological perspective, the human being is created in God's image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). In the biblical account of creation, God created the entire universe- plants, animals, birds, the land, seas, oceans, and every other thing in existence. After creating them, God created humans as the crown of creation. After God created humans, God saw everything as excellent or very good. Humans are unique and distinctive. It does not in any way mean that human beings are to dominate and conquer creation. Rather, human beings are stewards of creation and they have been mandated to till and cultivate the garden (Genesis 2: 15). Psalmist beautifully sings of the nobility and goodness of humans when it asserts that humans are fearfully and beautifully made and God has given them a high place in creation (Psalms 8). Human dignity impels protecting human life on which dignity is built. In the same biblical tradition, the fifth commandment commands, "Thou shall not kill." Respect for human dignity flowing from human life implies human beings should be protected from murder, fratricide, infanticide, and whatever harms human health and wellbeing (Holy See, 1993, no 2269). In Islam, human life is considered to be sacred (Quran 17:33; 6:51). Human beings are not mere things, not mere physical materials, and they are not properties to be possessed. They have moral worth. Human dignity is a strong theme in Catholic Social Teaching as it is affirmed that a human being is *Imago Dei* (God's image and likeness).

Outside the biblical tradition, human rights documents are clear on human dignity and ground human dignity on "human beingness." Animals, plants, birds, and other non-human life do not have the same level of dignity as humans. They have their dignity of a different type. In the history of Western Philosophy, the idea of human dignity has evolved. The following philosophers conceive human dignity in the following ways: Socrates (humans possess dignity as a result of their rationality, which makes them different from non-humans) ; Cicero (ontologically humans have dignity coming from their rationality); Christian medieval philosophers like Aquinas (saw human dignity flowing from rational nature and also the biblical creation of humans in God's image); Renaissance thinkers saw humans as having dignity and because of the value placed on humans, the Renaissance is often called Renaissance humanism); and Kant (lays credence to human dignity in affirming that humans should be treated as ends, not means (Uduigwomen and Udofia, 2018).

It can be said that the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948 is an encapsulation of Renaissance thought and also religious ideas that give credence to the nobility of the human person. And also in the light of the atrocities of the two world wars, the United Nations proclaimed:

> Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world, whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people (United Nations, 1948, para 1-2).

The declaration is clear that dignity inheres in human beings, and this entitles them to inalienable rights and equality. Human dignity is not given by society, and there are natural rights that accrue to all human beings for being humans. The United Nations asserts that human dignity is the foundation for justice, peace, and freedom. When it is disregarded, all kinds of atrocities and violation of human rights and respect for dignity occurs. Barbarous acts, wars, violence, terrorism, armed banditry, etc, are partly as a result of people failing to accord human dignity its due place.

Ethics, as understood here, deals with how human beings ought to behave. The dignity of human compels and instigates reverence and honour for human beings. It has implications. There is a way that human beings are supposed to behave towards other human beings. Human dignity is not for its own sake. It has functionality. Since ethics speaks of human behaviour in terms of right and wrong behaviour, to behave negatively to human dignity or harm human dignity is an ethical concern because it degrades human dignity. Human dignity inheres in human beings irrespective of their conditions and situations in life, irrespective of their races, ethnicities, social background, etc. Even if a human being suffers from physical or mental disabilities or loses any part of her/his bodily parts, the person is still a human being with human dignity. It can be argued that even in death, the human body still carries human dignity. It will be wrong to think that human dignity has only been espoused in the Western tradition. There is a strong basis for human dignity in indigenous traditions. In African traditional thought, priority was given to the human person because the human person has value (dignity) and human life was seen as sacred; and values like family life, dignity of labour, justice, hospitality, responsibility, honesty, etc were all aimed at enhancing the human person and its dignity (Udo, 2024). African personalism, as championed by Martin Luther King, Jr. and other African thinkers, deeply placed emphasis on the dignity of the human person. and other human rights documents are clear on this.

Every human being in Nigeria, both citizens and non-citizens are carrier of human dignity. All indigenous people of Nigeria, no matter their ethnic groups, religious affiliations, political preferences, economic status, or educational background, social positions are possessors of human dignity and have inherent worth. The Nigerian Constitution guarantees a right to human dignity. The Constitution clearly states that: Every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person, and accordingly- (a) no person shall be subject to torture or inhumane or degrading treatment; (b) no person shall be held in slavery or servitude; and (c) no person shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour" (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2023, p. 43). Dignity is a fundamental human right, and the constitution requires that the human person is protected from torture, inhumane treatment, degrading treatment, servitude and slavery, and forced or compulsory labour. The Constitution is also clear on what does not constitute a violation of this right or an exception to this right, and these include things like court-mandated labour resulting from a sentence for the crime, labour required of the armed forces and the Nigerian Police in their duties, labour necessary for people to do in times of emergencies, labour in the form of national service, communal labour, etc. The labour that violates human dignity is precisely the one that is forced without any just or justifiable cause. Before this section closes, it is essential to note that the ideal is not often the manifest. In human history, even when people affirm human dignity, they have not always accorded this dignity to all human beings. In Aristotle's Greek society, women and slaves did not have the dignity to be called citizens. Within the Greco-Roman world, there was a big contradiction for women, slaves, and non-citizens were treated with indignity (Uduigwomen and Udofia, 2018). The popular Immanuel Kant did not see Africans or Blacks as equal to whites. Racism

and Apartheid were practiced and are still practiced in some places to say that some human beings are not equal to others. Religious discrimination and other forms of discrimination are often practiced based on the notion that others who are different from the one discriminating are either less human or inferior, or not deserving of equal consideration. In Africa, despite all its noble humanistic values, there were practices like slavery, human sacrifice, etc. Some of these dehumanizing practices that impede human dignity are examined below, with a focus on Nigeria.

Indigenous Cultural Beliefs/Practices Inimical to Human Dignity in Nigeria
It is a fact that there is a depreciation of respect for human dignity in Nigeria (Uduigwomen and Udofia, 2018). The depreciation of respect for human dignity can be seen by many things happening in the Nigerian society, such as kidnapping, armed robbery, terrorist attacks, ritual killings, and ethno-religious violence resulting in deaths, police brutality, corruption that deprives the citizens of money meant for their development, etc. Outside of these are cultural beliefs and practices that are ingrained as cultural practices. Nigerians have been denied their dignity as a result of various cultural or social practices. Many Nigerians have suffered from various social ills and social discrimination, which shows that they are either unequal or seen as different. Regarding the situation in the country:

> Nigeria has witnessed instances where religious and cultural factors have been manipulated to justify discrimination, marginalization, and even Violence against certain groups. Women, ethnic minorities, and individuals belonging to nondominant religious or cultural communities often find themselves disproportionately affected by these dynamics, facing systemic barriers that hinder their full participation and realization of their rights (Chimaobi and Ameh, 2024, p. 91).

In a place like Igboland, as in other parts of the country, there are many obnoxious practices such as banishment, ostracism, caricature of people in public, valuable property seizure, and fines, often extrajudicially (Iguh, 2020). Other cultural practices that are inimical to human welfare are women's disinheritance, harmful widowhood practices, cannibalism, forced marriage, human sacrifice, the Osu Caste system, and female genital mutilation (Iguh, 2020). Another author corroborates the fact that the Osu Caste system is found in Igboland (Udo, 2024).

Child marriage is a common practice in some parts of Nigeria. Children suffer from all sort of abuses in Nigeria that degrades their dignity and responsibilities. It should be realized that "Child abuse is a violation of the fundamental human rights of a child, either by those to whom the child is entrusted or other adults who may have something to do with the child" (Akhogba, 2016, p. 12). There are female children in Nigeria, especially Northern Nigeria, who are pushed into early marriages, and it is the case that at such ages, they are not psychologically, physically, and morally mature to take the responsibilities of marriage (Olomojobi, 2022). A serious form of child abuse in the country is tagging children as witches and subjecting them to beating, flogging, and denying them food. In Nigeria, where religion suffers from many forms of abuses and some religious people are ignorant of fundamental human rights, people subject their children to abuses. They claim that a child who has not even come to the use of reason can be a participant in witchcraft. Even if it is true that the child has been infested with the spirit of witchcraft, this does not warrant the child being denied his/her rights.

In some cultures, children have also been subjected to child labour. There is nothing wrong with children assisting in work, especially domestic work that is non-exploitative and appropriate to their age and protects their mental health. It is wrong when they engage in exploitative labour that demeans them, diminishes their health, and deprives them of formal education. Exploitative child labour that is harmful to children health is common in Nigeria and takes various forms such as those that make them work as houseboys and house girls without pay, without going to school, no holiday or recreation, with verbal and emotional abuse; force labour, commercial sexual exploitation, street work and life, (Akhogba, 2016). Exploitative forms of child labour, especially domestic service, are ingrained into many cultures. Even when children complain because of poverty, their parents will insist that the children should continue so that they can support the family. By subjecting children to child labour, they are denied their dignity and worth, their voices are suppressed, and deprived of access to formal education. Child labour affects the employment of skilled labour, affects the psychological and physical development of children as they are affected by various abuses, as they suffer health challenges and even physical injuries (Akhogba, 2016). It is understood that: "…not all work a child is engaged in is a form of child labour, however, child labour refers to all work or employment that may deprive him or her of health, personal development, and education (Olomojobi, 2022).

Another cultural practice that negatively affects women's dignity is that of married women being deprived of inheritance in their husbands' houses. At the death of the husband, only the children are given inheritance, and in some cases, if the woman has not given birth to any children, the man's brother comes in to claim all the properties, depriving the woman of all entitlements. As should be understood from above, whatever makes a person feel inferior, not equal to others, or unworthy to be treated like others, amounts to a degradation of dignity or its violation. Customs and traditions in Nigeria make it difficult for married women to inherit properties, and even females are denied any share in their father's properties as they are told they can struggle for properties when they get married (Olomojobi, 2021). Nigerian culture is patriarchal and promotes many forms of gender inequalities, and this has caused much maltreatment, injustices, and untold suffering to women (Nnamani, 2005). Female children are demeaned and made to feel as if they are nobodies. A common cultural practice that infringes on the dignity of women is the widowhood practices. At the death of a man, there is nothing wrong with a woman mourning her dead husband. But very often during this period, many widows experience abuses and insults. They are even accused of killing their husbands. Among the Yoruba, the man is seen as the glory of the woman, and so when a man dies, the woman is seen as losing her glory and thus deprived of her dignity (Oluwakem. 2017). It is as if the woman has no life outside her husband. And in some places in Nigeria, like in Urhobo culture, the woman is forced to marry the man's brother or a family member.

Women have also suffered from a lot of socio-cultural discrimination in Nigeria. In many cultures in Nigeria, the girl-child has in the past been denied formal education. In some cultures, the girl-child is seen as another man's wife as she will marry one day, and any money spent on educating her is seen as a waste. While the boy-child was sent to school, the girl was to be at home and do domestic chores such as cooking and washing clothes. By denying the girl-child formal education, her dignity was offended. She is not important to be trained. In Nasawa State, many traditional practices discriminate against women, impeding their psycho-social/educational development, and instilling in them low self-esteem; and in particular among the Basa people, girl-child education was not promoted (Mejida, 2008). Though it may be waning down female genital

mutilation still happens in Nigeria. There is a deep, ingrained notion in African culture that women are morally inferior, and this informs the need for men to think that they have to dominate women, and one of the ways is to insist on female genital mutilation (Ukhun, 2002).

It is crucial here, though it is not part of indigenous traditional beliefs or practices, to state something on one of the serious abuses in Nigeria that erodes human dignity and personhood. It is a serious threat to human dignity. It is the issue of various police abuses and brutalities. Police brutality is so common in Nigeria. The End SARS protests that took place in Nigeria some years back were over police brutality. Many members of the Nigerian Police take the law into their own hands. There is hardly any road you travel in Nigeria where you will not see the police extorting money from road transporters and travellers. Those who refuse to give are beaten and threatened. It is a fact that: "Section 34(1) (a) protects the individual from torture and inhumane or degrading treatment. This is probably the most abused section of the Constitution. The act of torturing suspects in Police stations across Nigeria has remained endemic despite the high level of enlightenment given to the Policemen in the form of 'human rights lectures'" (Odikpo, 2020, p. 20). In precolonial African societies, practices such as the killing of twins, human sacrifices were common in some societies. It is well known that "…the culture of killing of twins was a cultural practice among some ethnic groups in Nigeria, predominantly among the Efik people and some part of the Igbos"(Udo, 2024, p.55). Indeed, these cultural practices of killing twins and human sacrifices have died down. But once in a while, in some communities in Nigeria, one often hears that during some traditional festivals or at the burial of a king, there are Ogbu (warriors) who go in search of people to kill. Whether this information is false or not, it is important to keep educating people on the need to protect the sanctity of human life.

The Way Forward
There is a moral foundation for human dignity. This is the foundation from which discourses on how to safeguard human dignity must emanate. There is a need for a recognition of this moral foundation for human dignity. It is important that this knowledge of human dignity should be spread. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights places duties on various groups to safeguard human dignity. Though these various bodies know their duties, very often it is not carried out. This is why there needs to be more education on human dignity and human rights. At all levels of education and even in non-formal settings, there should be human rights and human dignity education. African values such as *Ubuntu* (I am because we are), *Ukamaa* (I am inter-related to all other life), communalism (one for all, all for one), Ujamaa (brotherhood), African humanism, Ibuanyidanda (living in complementarity), *Okugbeakpeje* (togetherness of all life), Afroecosolidarity, and many others, all lay credence to the value of the human person and dignity. They are values that should be promoted in all curricula. Afroecosolidarity is an idea that this writer has proposed that affirms the need for humans to recognise the value of humanity while living in solidarity with all other lives on planet earth and the ecosystems (Ikeke, 2022). The concept of *Okugbeakpeje* is still being developed by the present author.

Significantly, Nigerian law and social policy have advanced so far in criminalising some of the above and making various laws to stop their practices. But unfortunately, many of the social ills mentioned above still happen in Nigeria. FGM is still practiced. There are places where the child is still deprived of formal education. Because of the high premium placed on having a male child, infertile women and women who have no male children are seen as "witches" and abused. There

are still communities in which women are discouraged from entering the public domain. It is a fact that there are very few women in politics in Nigeria. It is hard to find a female governor in Nigeria, and the days when Nigerians can have a female president seem to be far away. These imply that Nigerian law and social policy have to be strengthened. Enforcement has to be more robust. Many of the obnoxious practices happen in rural places and in the hinterland of the country, where often government presence is very poor. The Federal Government of Nigeria and state governments, and various law enforcement agencies have a grave role to play to ensure that human rights abuses and offences against human dignity are brought to an end in the country. Law is one of the most powerful instruments to protect human dignity. The courts of the land have ruled in the past on various cultural practices that either discriminate or degrade human dignity to be eradicated, and have ruled in favour of victims of human rights abuses. Law is crucially important in curbing the factors that mitigate against human dignity. Criminal law in Nigeria has played a role and continues still play a role in curbing obnoxious practices in the land (Iguh, 2020).

Recognize that: "By engaging in dialogue, promoting education, and enacting policies that uphold universal principles of human rights, Nigeria can harness the transformative potential of religion and culture to build a society where every individual is valued and respected, regardless of their background or beliefs" (Chimaobi and Ameh, 2024, p. 91). There is a need to engage in a serious campaign and raise awareness on the issues of human dignity. This is where the role of various ministries of culture and information, or government orientation agencies, comes into play. There is a need for them to do more to campaign against these practices that erode human dignity. There are still many people in the Nigerian society who don't know the meaning of human dignity and the human rights that flow from human dignity.

All who engage children in exploitative child labour need to know and be conscientized on the rights of children. It is wrong to deprive children of their dignity and their human rights. Educational empowerment is important for all members of society. When people are educated to know of their dignity and rights, they are able to stand for those rights and their dignity. A popular saying avers that "knowledge is power." It is practically difficult, if not impossible, to intentionally stand for what you do not know. With good educational opportunities and knowledge, people will be able to discard the traditional beliefs that women are inferior, the weaker sex, and are only good to be cooks and stay at home (Mejida, 2008). Educational campaigns against human rights violations and the degradation of human dignity are important. There should be a reconscientization to reclaim human dignity through all academic programmes, civil society organizations, and the government should also engage in human dignity/rights advocacy (Uduigwomen and Udofia, 2018). In speaking of education and the creation of awareness, the role of ministers of religion should not be dispensed. Religions in Nigeria have a large following. Their ministers should help to campaign against the obnoxious practices.

Related to the above is that indigenous cultural practices and beliefs should be subjected to radical criticisms and evaluation. It should be understood that culture is not sacrosanct. Culture is evolved by people or human beings to enable them to navigate through the challenges of life and to create a cohesive social order. People should not treat culture as if it cannot change. Culture is a human tool, a vehicle, and an environment for human to fulfill their purposes. Culture is important. But human rationality is also important. Humans should use the tool of reason to challenge and confront cultural beliefs and practices that offend human dignity. It was the Greek philosopher Socrates who said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." This should apply not only to

individuals but also to groups. The people in a particular culture should keep subjecting their cultural beliefs and practices to examination and purification, and refinement. This paper proposes a role for the media in the protection and sustenance of human dignity in Nigeria. The media that is referred to here refers to all types of media, such as mass media, social media, the new media, traditional media, modern media, print media, electronic and online media, etc. The media has a social responsibility to society to campaign for the development of society and the elimination of social ills. Anti-human cultural practices that offend against human dignity should not be tolerated. They should be combated and eradicated.

Conclusion

The paper has examined the crucial issue of human dignity and how some indigenous cultural beliefs and practices erode or degrade the dignity. Some of the key concepts that pervade this study, such as human dignity, cultural beliefs, cultural practices, culture, etc, were It was clearly explicated. human dignity speaks of the nobility, value, and goodness in the human person flowing from human life. This dignity inheres in all human beings irrespective of their social background, economic status, political affiliation, economic status, or physical conditions. Human dignity entitles people to various human rights. The ethical foundations for human dignity were also presented, such as the religious basis that sees human beings as created in God's image and likeness, various philosophical positions that build human dignity on human rationality, and the African indigenous beliefs that see a sacred value in human life and dignity. The paper noted that despite the nobility in human persons, there have been many ideologies such as racism, Apartheid, and practices such as various discrimination that offend against dignity. In Nigeria, the paper showed that many cultural beliefs and practices, such as patriarchal practices, child labour, female genital mutilation, barbaric widowhood practices, Osu caste system, abuse of childless women, discrimination against the girl child in education, etc, violate human dignity. Various proposals were made to safeguard human dignity in Nigeria. These proposals include strengthening the law and effective enforcement against these obnoxious cultural practices, education, and creating awareness on human dignity, the media highlighting the evils in these practices, ministers of religion engaging their members on the evils of these practices, etc. It is believed and hoped here that if these proposals are carried out, they will help to curb these evil practices and build a better Nigerian society. It is hereby concluded that only cultural practices that promote human dignity should be promoted in Nigeria.

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Article   **Open Access**

INTEREST RATE DEREGULATION AND NON-PERFORMING LOANS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Interest rate is one key factor that determines the quality and quantity of loans extended by Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) and by extension it affects the performance of these banks. Generally, the value and volume of non-performing loans (NPL) is determined by economic, borrower and lender related factors. Accordingly, this study investigated the effects of these factors like maximum lending rate, foreign exchange rate, real GDP and inflation rate on the ratio of non-performing loan to the total loan value of DMBs in Nigeria between 1992 and 2023. Thus, foreign exchange rate, real GDP and inflation rate were used as control variables to lending (interest) rate. Relying on data from the World bank and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) statistical bulletin, the data collected were subjected to descriptive analysis, unit root test, bounds cointegration test, ARDL short and long run analysis, ECM estimation and a couple of diagnostic tests. Basically, result revealed that there is a long run relationship between the variables while in the short run, maximum lending rate, exchange rate and real GDP have negative but significant effects on NPL. However, in the long run, only lending rate and real GDP have negative and significant effects on NPL. The study as such inferred that interest rate deregulation has a negative but significant effect on non-performing loans in Nigeria. Hence, it was suggested amongst others that there is need to completely deregulate interest rate in the Nigerian banking sector in order to further reduce the volume and value of non-performing loans in the Nigerian banking system. Also, a holistic approach that cuts across economic, borrower and lender-related factors should not be taken for granted.

Keywords: Interest Rate Deregulation, Non-performing Loans, Lending Rate, Deposit Rate.

Introduction

Deposit money banks attract funds and make profitable use of such funds. These funds are attracted by way of accepting deposits from customers who do not have immediate needs for such funds at a cost to the bank. These same funds are given to borrowers that have pressing needs for these funds at a higher cost to these borrowers, thereby intermediating between the deficit and surplus units. Lending performs a lot of functions for banks. For instance, it is the highest earning assets in banks' balance sheet. It contributes materially to the banks' achievement and fulfillment of the objectives of profitability by providing a higher return than other financial assets. It helps bank management to satisfy the legal and other regulatory objectives of the monetary authorities. It is the key element in the creation and maintenance of bank-customer relationship, particularly with business firms. It is also a vehicle through which bank management attempts to satisfy the credit needs of the community or the credit markets the bank serves or intend to serve (Eniafe, 2020).

The importance of lending in banking cannot be over emphasized. The wide spread nature of bank loans and advances today is not unconnected with the fact that lending is the nucleus of banking business. Such loans may be in the form of overdraft, loan and advances, business funding arrangements, local purchasing order financing etc. Thus, lending is one of the fundamental functions of deposit money banks. Loans symbolize investments and typically constitute the major asset of banks. Individuals, business organizations and the government request for loans. The households seek loans from banks when their excess of income over expenditure is negative (Atoi, 2018). Besides, individual business firms especially small scale enterprise request for loans from deposit money banks for working capital drives and re-investment. In granting loans, banks take into consideration factors such as liquidity risk, repayment method, sources of repayment and the purpose of such loans (Atoi, 2018). Bank loans and advances are habitually short-term in nature. Mostly, in deposit money banks in Nigeria, the worth of loan portfolio rests on credit analysis carried out by the loan officer. The credit expert's role is to make sure that loans granted have a decent qualitative composition. The qualitative features of bank loans include high liquidity quotient, minimum risk and appropriate maturity structure. These qualitative elements are necessary to guarantee repayment on demand or maturity (Akpan, 2023). Though, in some instances, there may be default, where the customer may fail to pay the interest and principal as they mature or as they fall due within the specified period as agreed between the bank and the borrower (customer). Once there is default and the debtor defaults as scheduled or retrieval is highly doubtful or it is probable to be protracted, the loan turns out to be a non-performing loan which at last leads to bad debts.

There are so many factors that cause a loan not to perform as expected. One of such factors is high regulated interest rate, which is the rate at which deposit money banks lend to customers (Arikewuyo & Akingunola, 2019). On this front, the Nigerian government introduced the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986, which ushered in the deregulation of the financial system and in particular of the banking system in Nigeria. Deregulation of interest rate was aimed at allowing interest rate to be set by the forces of demand and supply. According to Ene, Agok and Ene (2015), the ultimate objective of the policy under SAP was to bring about improved financial intermediation by enhancing the role of banks in effectively mobilizing domestic savings and optimally allocating investable resources. It provides a platform for greater competitiveness in mobilization and utilization of funds, an efficient financial industry and more productive

organization within the financial industry. They added that interest rate deregulation helps to enhance savings, boost investment and consequently help to enhance economic growth. Thus, in August 1987, all controls on interest rates were removed, while the CBN adopted the policy of fixing only its minimum rediscount rate to indicate the desired direction of interest rate changes. While the country further experienced variations in interest rate regimes, total deregulation of interest rates (deposit and lending rates) was again adopted in October 1996. It has remained so since then.

The deregulation of interest rate in Nigeria has been met with divergent views by financial experts both in academia and in the banking sector. While some commended the policy, others deprecated the decision. For instance, Abiodun (2017) decried the deregulation policy because it has the tendency of slowing down investment as borrowing will be cut down due to high interest rate. Supporting this view, Akpan (2023) described the Nigerian domestic financial markets as being structurally oligopolistic, therefore if interest rate is left uncontrolled, it might lead to sharp increase in lending rate, leading to increase in cost of capital and discouraging investment. On the contrary, Ikhide (2020) argued that interest rate deregulation will not only bring relief to the financially repressed economy, but it will ensure a real return on deposit which had previously yielded negative results. Adeleke (2023) and Aderiga (2015) collaborated by stating that financial repression arises mostly where a country imposes ceiling on deposit and lending nominal interest rates at a low level relative to inflation. The resulting low or negative interest rates discourage savings mobilization and channeling of mobilized savings through the financial system. This has negative impact on the quality and quantity of investment and hence economic growth in view of the empirical link between savings, investment and economic growth. Similarly, Enoh (2019) believe that interest rate deregulation will definitely lead to more efficient allocation of financial resources because interest rate will now reflect scarcity and relative efficiency in different use. That is, only efficient investors will have access to scarce financial resources.

Thus, related studies have been undertaken on interest rate deregulation and non-performing loans and these studies have produced different and contrasting results. However, in a bid to ascertain the true and current effects of interest rate deregulation on the value and volume of non-performing loans in the context of Nigeria, this study was undertaken.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review
Interest Rate: In every transaction that involves borrowing and lending, there is always a borrower and a lender. When a lender lends to a borrower, there is an opportunity cost for such. In order to compensate the lender for parting with his money, a given agreed sum is paid to him. This agreed sum is called interest. When this amount is expressed as a percentage of the borrowed sum (principal), it is termed interest rate. Thus, interest rate is the reward for parting with liquidity or money for a specified period of time. It is the amount of money due per period, as a proportion of the amount lent, deposited or borrowed. Rate of interest is also seen as a measure of the unwillingness of those who possess money to part with their liquid control over it. It is as such referred to as the 'price or cost' of borrowing money (Enoh, 2019). In essence, total interest on an amount borrowed or lent depends on the principal sum, the interest rate, the compounding frequency, and the length of time over which it is lent, deposited or borrowed. There are different

types of interest rates. In Nigeria, the popular ones are monetary policy rate (MPR), treasury bills rate, treasury certificates rates, bank lending and deposits rates. According to Eke, Eke and Inyang (2015), the Nigerian economy has at different times witnessed enormous interest rate swings in different sectors of the economy. They pointed out that prior to the introduction of Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in Nigeria in 1986; the financial sector was characterized by rigid exchange rate and interest rate controls, mandatory sectorial allocation of bank credit to the private sector, which engendered distortion and inefficiencies that results to low direct investment.

Interest Rate Deregulation in Nigeria: Interest rate deregulation implies the removal of rules and regulation that constrains the operation of market forces and controls over interest rate, with the aim to allow interest rate to be determined by the forces of demand and supply. In essence, other things being equal, in a deregulated setting, when the demand for loans is on the increase, lending rates will go up and vice versa when the demand for loans decreases. On the flip side, when deposits from customers shoot up, deposit rates go down and vice versa (Amauche, 2015). In Nigeria, prior to 1986, the Nigerian financial system was highly regulated. The introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986 ushered in the deregulation of the financial system and in particular of the banking system and in August 1987, all controls on interest rates were removed, while the CBN adopted the policy of fixing only its minimum rediscount rate to indicate the desired direction of interest rate changes (Eke, Eke & Inyang (2015). They stated that this was modified in 1989, when the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) issued further directives on the required spreads between deposit and lending rates. In 1991, the government prescribed a maximum margin between each bank's average cost of funds and its maximum lending rates. Later, the CBN prescribed savings deposit rate and a maximum lending rate. Partial deregulation was, however, restored in 1992 when financial institutions were only required to maintain a specified spread between their average cost of funds and their maximum lending rates. The removal of the maximum lending rate ceiling in 1993 saw interest rates rising to unprecedented levels in sympathy with rising inflation rate which rendered banks' high lending rates negative in real terms (Okoronkwo & Eze, 2023). According to Andozi, Warribo and Olatunyi (2019), direct interest rate controls were restored in 1994 but as this and other controls introduced in 1994 and 1995 had negative economic effects, total deregulation of interest rates was again adopted in October 1996, and this has remained the case.

Loans: A loan is a given sum of money a party borrows from another with a promise to repay this given sum at an agreed date. The amount to be repaid may exceed the initial amount borrowed though it all depends on the terms of agreement between both parties. In a loan agreement, the party parting with the money is called the lender while the other party is called the borrower. In essence, a loan is the lending of money by one or more individuals, organizations, or other entities to other individuals, organizations or entities as the case may be. Wilkinson (2017) defined a loan as a sum of money transferred from one person (lender) to another person (borrower) for temporary use, with or without interest according to the terms of the loan agreement written in the accompanying bond, note, mortgage, or other documents of indebtedness. The recipient of a loan incurs a debt and as said earlier, is usually liable to pay interest on that debt until it is repaid. This implies that a loan is an asset for the lender and a liability for the borrower.

Non-Performing Loans (NPL): The concept of non-performing loans differs from one country to another. A loan maybe considered non-performing in one country and might not be considered as such in another country. However, opinions in some cases do match. The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Compilation guide on financial soundness indicators (2015) stated that "a loan is non-performing when payments of interest and/or principal are past due by 90 days or more, or interest payments equal to 90 days or more have been capitalized, refinanced, or delayed by agreement, or payments are less than 90 days overdue, but there are other good reasons, such as a debtor filing for bankruptcy, to doubt that payments will be made in full." According to Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (2001) as cited in Kargi (2021), a loan is considered default when a bank declares that a borrower cannot meet his/her obligation and repay the loan, or similarly to the first definition, the borrower past due more than 90 days on any payment of the bank credit. These definitions offer a sensible framework for identifying non-performing loans. In addition, the Nigerian banking regulation also defines NPL as loans whose credit quality has deteriorated and the full collection of principal and/or interest as per the contractual repayment terms of the loan and advances are in question (CBN, 2015). By and large, NPLs are loans that are outstanding both in its principal and interest for a long period of time, disagreeing to the terms and conditions under the loan contract (Gesu, 2024). Any loan facility that is not current in terms of repayment both on principal and interest conflicting to the terms of the loan agreement is a non-performing loan. Thus, the amount of nonperforming loan measures the quality of bank assets (Tseganesh, 2022). However, 2010 CBN prudential guidelines for money deposit banks in Nigeria, Section 15.1, classifies non-performing loan facilities into three distinct categories as sub-standard, doubtful and lost on the basis of time period and other criteria. It considers unpaid principal and/or interest remaining outstanding for more than 90 days but less than 180 days as a sub-standard loan, while doubtful loans (facilities) are those whose unpaid principal and/or interest remain outstanding for at least 180 days but less than 360 days. Finally, a facility is considered as lost when unpaid principal and/or interest remain outstanding for 360 days or more.

Theoretical Underpinning

Related theories include the Keynes theory of interest rate, loanable funds theory, and classical theory. Hence, this work is anchored on all three theories. Put differently, Keynes theory of interest rate states that "rate of interest is determined by the demand and supply of money, the loanable funds theory has it that interest rate is determined by the forces of demand and supply of loanable funds, while the classical theory of interest rate states that the rate of interest is determined by the supply and demand of capital" (Nwaru, 2014). These postulations underscore theoretical backings against a regulated system and renders full support for a deregulated system. Such a system puts no limit on the interest rate spread (lending rates minus deposit rates) of DMBs. This is because the higher the spread, the more the profit banks make. However, the downside of the whole thing is that more lending exposes banks to the problem of default in payment (higher incidences of non-performing loans) which is triggered by high lending rate, and economic factors like unfavorable exchange rate, downturn in economic activities and high inflation rates. This does not relegate the role of lender and borrower related factor like poor credit worthiness, insufficient collateral, poor credit risk assessment, ineffective debt recovery mechanism and poor risk management techniques (Bredl, 2018; Robert & Koori, 2022). Hence, operating a deregulated system increases the credit risk of banks due to economic, lender and borrower related factors.

Empirical Review

Juma and Jemaiyo (2025) examined the impact of non-performing loans on the financial performance of publicly listed commercial banks in Kenya by focusing on bank lending rate as a mediating variable. Adopting a document review methodology, ROA and ROE were considered measures of bank financial performance and result suggested that lending rate plays a mediating role in the relationship between non-performing loans (NPLs) and the financial performance of commercial banks in Kenya. Sewanyina, Ongesa, Nyambane and Manyange (2024) examined the relationship between non-performing loans (NPLs) and financial disclosure of commercial banks in Uganda by relying on survey data generated from 189 banking professionals. The data were analysed using descriptive and Pearson correlation analysis. Results indicated that there is a weak, positive and significant relationship between financial disclosure and non-performing loans with interest rate playing a major role to this nexus.

Koskei and Samoei (2024) investigated the influence of bank lending rates on nonperforming loans in listed commercial banks in Kenya using secondary monthly data from November 2019 to September 2023. Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression analysis was utilized for data analysis and results showed that bank lending rates have positive and significant effect on non-performing loans of listed commercial banks in Kenya. Robert and Koori (2022) examined the effects of bank lending rates on non-performing loans of commercial banks in Kenya between 2016 and 2020 using secondary data generated from all 39 commercial banks operating in Kenya as at the time of the study. Inferential and descriptive approaches were used for data analysis. The study revealed that bank lending rates has a significant and positive effect on non-performing loans of commercial banks in Kenya. Also, central bank rate has a moderating effect on the link between bank lending rates and non-performing loans in commercial banks in Kenya.

In a related study, Merhbene (2021) sought to ascertain the impact of non-performing loans on the profitability of banks in Tunisia between 2010Q1 and 2019Q4. The study estimated a threshold of non-performing loans (NPLs) using an econometric framework for ten Tunisian commercial banks. Results showed that banks with lower non-performing loan tend to have higher profitability. Eniafe (2020) examined the effects of non-performing loans on Deposit Money Banks' performance in Nigeria by using the Error Correction model approach and the Least Square method of analyses. The study showed that non-performing loans have impacted Deposit Money Banks performance; however, net interest margin and deposit to loan ratio had varied effects. Arikewuyo and Akingunola (2019) investigated the nexus between interest rate deregulation and fund mobilization of Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) in Nigeria between 1986 and 2016 by adopting the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) Bound Test technique; and results demonstrated that interest rate has an insignificant influence on fund mobilization in the short run but the influence in the long run was significant. The study also demonstrated that money supply and inflation rate are the key drivers of fund mobilization of DMBs in both short and long run situations; and that government expenditure was statistically insignificant.

Atoi (2018) examined the effects of non-performing loans (NPLs) on the stability of Nigerian banks with national and international operational licenses from 2014(Q2) to 2017(Q2) by adopting a "restricted" dynamic GMM to estimate the macroeconomic and bank specific drivers of NPL for each licensed category. Z-Score was constructed to proxy banking stability, and its response to shocks as NPLs was examined in a panel vector autoregressive framework. The results reveal that

drivers of NPLs vary across the two categories of banks, but weighted average lending rate was a vital macroeconomic driver of NPLs for both. The results also confirmed the moral hazard hypothesis and risk-return tradeoff of efficient market theory. Furthermore, international banks withstand NPLs shocks in the long run, despite temporary flux in the short horizon, while the stability of national banks is susceptible to NPLs shocks in the long run. Bredl (2018) investigated the role of non-performing loans (NPLs) for lending rates charged for newly granted loans in the euro area. More precisely, it looked for an effect that extends beyond losses caused by that stock which have already been incorporated into the banks' capital positions. The paper focused on the question of which channels are responsible for such a potential effect. Adopting regression, descriptive and charts as analytical tools, results indicated that a higher stock of net NPLs is associated with higher lending rates, whereby there are indications that this relation tends to be offset by loan loss reserves. Although the NPL stock affects banks' idiosyncratic funding costs as well, the latter do not seem to constitute an important link between the stock of NPLs and lending behavior. Furthermore, NPLs do not strongly affect the banks' interest rate pass-through.

EL-Maude, Abdul-Rahman and Ibrahim (2017) examined the relationship between bank specific and macroeconomic determinant of non-performing loans of Deposit Money Banks in Nigeria over a period of 5 years (2010 to 2014). Using a sample of 10 banks, data generated were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation coefficient and multiple regressions and findings revealed a positive significant relationship between non-performing loans and loan to deposit ratio and bank size; whereas the relationship between capital adequacy ratio and inflation revealed a positive insignificant relationship; but return on asset has a negative insignificant relationship with the rate of non-performing loans. Sheefeni (2016) investigated the impact of interest rate spread on non-performing loans in Namibia. The study employed co-integration and error correction model on the quarterly data collected for the period 2001 to 2014. Findings showed that interest rate spread has a positive and statistical significant effect on non-performing loans in Namibia. The study also showed that inflation has a positive but statistically insignificant effect on non-performing loans in Namibia. Therefore, the positive impact of interest rate spread suggests that increase in interest margins has the potential of increasing the probability of defaulting on loans by clients.

Ene, Atong and Ene (2015) empirically examined the effect of interest rates deregulation on the performance of Deposit Money Banks in Nigeria between 1986 and 2014 using OLS regression method. Accordingly, finding revealed that deregulated interest rates have positive and significant impact on the ROA of Deposit Money Banks. The study further revealed that deregulated interest rates have positive and significant relationship with loans and advances of Deposit Money Banks. It further showed that the higher the rates of interests, the higher the performance of deposit money banks. Eke, Eke and Inyang (2015) used the classical least squares method to empirically examine interest rate deregulation effect on the lending operations of Deposit Money Banks in Nigeria for the period 1970 to 2013. The period was divided into two policies regime periods; the regulated interest rate era spanning 1970-1986 and the deregulated period 1987-2013. The Chow test was applied for data analysis and result obtained for interest rate regulation era showed that interest rate spread and statutory liquidity ratio have negative and significant effect on the volume of commercial banks' loans, while fixed exchange rate has a negative and insignificant impact on banks' loans and advances. It was also showed that monetary policy rate (MPR) and inflation rate

exert positive and significant impacts on banks' loans for the period. For the deregulation era, the result showed that MPR and exchange rate have significant impacts on banks' loans and advances.

Methodology

Research Design: Quasi-experimental research design was adopted in this study. This is because of the need to establish the cause-effect relationship between interest rate deregulation and non-performing loans of deposit money banks' in Nigeria. In addition, this design was adopted because of the fact that the study was not based on a full scale experiment.

Sources of Data: This study used secondary data, which were time series in nature. These data were gathered solely from the World Bank and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) statistical bulletin, 2023 edition.

Method of Data Analysis: The ARDL (Autoregressive Distributed Lag) model was chosen for this work. This is because of its numerous benefits over other techniques, which are: efficiency in small samples analysis, a combination of linear variables with diverse orders of integration of I(0) and I(1), and the fact that it is less prone to autocorrelation (Pesaran, Shin and Smith, 2001). The analysis also covered:

Stationarity Test: Stationarity test was performed on the time series data generated using Phillip-Perron (PP) test criterion. Given that times series data tend to have stationarity problem, it was necessary to carry out this test. In addition, this test was conducted in order to avoid having spurious and fictitious estimates, which are misleading.

Co-integration Test: Bounds test approach to co-integration was adopted to examine if long run relationship exists among the underlying variables of the study. In this test, the null hypothesis of no co-integration was tested against the alternative hypothesis of co-integration with the application of F-test.

Model Specification

The model adopted for this study is that suggested by Koskei and Samoei (2024). This model in the context of Nigeria is functionally given as:

$$\text{NPL} = F(\text{LNR, EXR, RGDP, INF}) \quad\quad\quad\quad \text{.................... (1)}$$
$$\text{Log\_NPL} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Log\_LNR} + \beta_2 \text{Log\_EXR} + \beta_3 \text{Log\_RGDP} + \beta_4 \text{Log\_INF} + \mu \text{ .... (2)}$$

Where:

NPL	=	Non-Performing Loans ratio
LNR	=	Maximum Lending Rate
EXR	=	Foreign Exchange Rate
RGDP	=	Real Gross Domestic Product
INF	=	Inflation Rate
Log	=	Natural Logarithm
F	=	Functional relation

The ARDL version of the above functional model is formalized as:

$$NPL_t = P_0 + Q_1 NPL_{t-1} + Q_2 PLR_{t-1} + Q_3 MLR_{t-1} + Q_4 MIR_{t-1} + Q_5 MAR_{t-1} +$$

$$\sum_{i=1}^{m} K_1 \Delta NPL_{t-1} + \sum_{i=1}^{m} K_2 \Delta PLR_{t-1} + \sum_{i=1}^{m} K_3 \Delta MLR_{t-1} + \sum_{i=1}^{m} K_4 \Delta MIR_{t-1} + \sum_{i=1}^{m} K_5 MAR_{t-1} + e_{it}$$

Where:

P_0	=	Constant Parameter
Q_1-Q_5	=	Long run multipliers
$K_1 - K_5$	=	Short run dynamic parameters of the regressors
e_{it}	=	Random disturbance
m	=	Optimal lag length
Δ	=	First difference operator

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results
Descriptive Analysis

Statistics	NPL	LNR	EXR	RGDP	INF
Mean	15.60063	24.74094	170.8359	60878.30	18.78469
Median	13.88000	23.55500	132.8250	36930.55	13.06500
Maximum	43.21000	36.09000	645.1900	229912.9	72.84000
Minimum	2.960000	18.36000	17.30000	897.1200	5.390000
Std. Dev.	10.59953	4.404990	142.1835	64713.42	16.25423
Skewness	0.696251	0.501314	1.425274	1.036396	2.091959
Kurtosis	2.886022	2.548257	5.177734	3.073949	6.421406
Jarque-Bera	2.602740	1.612445	17.15753	5.735918	38.94825
Probability	0.272159	0.446542	0.000188	0.056815	0.000000
Sum	499.2200	791.7100	5466.750	1948106.	601.1100
Sum Sq. Dev.	3482.849	601.5221	626700.4	1.30E+11	8190.200
Observations	32	32	32	32	32

Source: E-Views 10 Output

Interpretation: The above result shows the descriptive statistics of variables used in the estimation. Non-performing loan (NPL) for the period 1992-2023, averages 15.60% and varies from 2.96% to 43.21% with a standard deviation of 10.60%. Average maximum lending rate for the period is 24.74% while foreign exchange rate is ₦170.84 per United States dollar. The mean of real GDP and inflation rate are ₦60878.30 and 18.78% respectively. However, while the variables NPL, LNR and RGDP were normally distributed, EXR and INF were not. Finally, all the variables were positively skewed.

Unit Root/Stationarity Test

Variables	ADF Test Statistics	Critical Values			Probability Value	Order of Integration	Remarks
		1%	5%	10%			
NPL	-5.350413	-3.670170	-2.963972	-2.621007	0.0001	I (1)	Stationary

LNR	-7.473199	-3.670170	-2.963972	-2.621007	0.0000	I (1)	Stationary
EXR	-5.328322	-3.670170	-2.963972	-2.621007	0.0001	I (1)	Stationary
RGDP	-4.527204	-3.661661	-2.960411	-2.619160	0.0011	I (0)	Stationary
INF	-4.216581	-3.679322	-2.967767	-2.622989	0.0027	I (1)	Stationary

Source: E-Views 10 Output

Interpretation: Stationarity test results revealed that at 5% critical value, the variables NPL (non-performing loans), LNR (maximum lending rate), EXR (foreign exchange rate) and INF inflation rate) were stationary at first difference, while the variable RGDP (real gross domestic product) was stationary at level. This informed the need to adopt auto-regressive distributed lag (ARDL) technique.

ARDL Bounds Test

F-Bounds Test		Null Hypothesis: No levels relationship		
Test Statistic	Value	Signif.	I(0)	I(1)
			Asymptotic: n=1000	
F-statistic	4.347225	10%	2.2	3.09
K	4	5%	2.56	3.49
		2.5%	2.88	3.87
		1%	3.29	4.37
			Finite Sample: n=35	
Actual Sample Size	28			
		10%	2.46	3.46
		5%	2.947	4.088
		1%	4.093	5.532
			Finite Sample: n=30	
		10%	2.525	3.56
		5%	3.058	4.223
		1%	4.28	5.84

Source: E-Views 10 Output

Interpretation: ARDL Bounds test showed that there is a long run relationship between interest rate deregulation related variables (LNR, EXR, RGDP and INF) and the value of non-performing loans in Nigeria.

ARDL Short Run Estimation

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.*
LOG_NPL(-1)	0.738175	0.278350	2.651968	0.0453
LOG_NPL(-2)	-1.560446	0.497422	-3.137068	0.0258
LOG_NPL(-3)	0.513108	0.263526	1.947089	0.1091
LOG_NPL(-4)	-0.437248	0.231604	-1.887912	0.1177
LOG_LNR	-9.626404	3.292965	-2.923324	0.0329

LOG_LNR(-1)	-6.691420	2.312368	-2.893752	0.0340
LOG_LNR(-2)	5.497085	2.135888	2.573676	0.0498
LOG_LNR(-3)	-2.666709	1.400687	-1.903858	0.1153
LOG_EXR	-2.203684	0.858660	-2.566420	0.0503
LOG_EXR(-1)	4.071903	1.285191	3.168325	0.0249
LOG_EXR(-2)	-2.616756	0.853097	-3.067359	0.0279
LOG_EXR(-3)	7.458280	2.123482	3.512288	0.0171
LOG_EXR(-4)	-2.986824	1.383040	-2.159607	0.0832
LOG_RGDP	-29.84756	7.496131	-3.981728	0.0105
LOG_RGDP(-1)	16.98033	5.132978	3.308085	0.0213
LOG_RGDP(-2)	-11.05565	4.167609	-2.652757	0.0453
LOG_RGDP(-3)	10.72261	3.037213	3.530412	0.0167
LOG_RGDP(-4)	8.914365	4.108814	2.169571	0.0822
LOG_INF	0.443648	0.293267	1.512778	0.1907
LOG_INF(-1)	3.008144	0.752553	3.997251	0.0104
LOG_INF(-2)	0.742064	0.612897	1.210747	0.2801
LOG_INF(-3)	0.684487	0.553239	1.237235	0.2709
C	72.84313	19.02800	3.828208	0.0123

R-squared	0.972324	Mean dependent var		2.350603
Adjusted R-squared	0.850550	S.D. dependent var		0.753374
S.E. of regression	0.291245	Akaike info criterion		0.290785
Sum squared resid	0.424118	Schwarz criterion		1.385096
Log likelihood	18.92901	Hannan-Quinn criter.		0.625327
F-statistic	7.984668	Durbin-Watson stat		1.761416
Prob(F-statistic)	0.014827			

***Note**: p-values and any subsequent tests do not account for model
   selection.
Source: E-Views 10 Output

Interpretation: ARDL short run analysis revealed basically that lending rate, exchange rate and real GDP have negative but significant effects on non-performing loans (NPL), while inflation rate has a positive insignificant effect on NPL in Nigeria. However, one year lagged values of NPL (non-performing loans), LNR (maximum lending rate), EXR (foreign exchange rate), RGDP (real gross domestic product) and INF (inflation rate) have significant effects on current value of non-performing loans.

ARDL Long Run Estimation

Levels Equation
Case 2: Restricted Constant and No Trend

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
LOG_LNR	-7.722951	2.156689	-3.580929	0.0159
LOG_EXR	2.131754	0.471564	4.520603	0.0063
LOG_RGDP	-2.454121	0.502067	-4.888033	0.0045
LOG_INF	2.793353	0.741091	3.769247	0.0130
C	41.71018	9.461957	4.408198	0.0070

EC = LOG_NPL - (-7.7230*LOG_LNR + 2.1318*LOG_EXR -2.4541
    *LOG_RGDP + 2.7934*LOG_INF + 41.7102)

Source: E-Views 10 Output

Interpretation: From our long run estimation, it was discovered that in the long run, only inflation rate has an insignificant effect on non-performing loans in Nigeria as maximum lending rate, foreign exchange rate and real GDP have significant effects on non-performing loans. However, in the long run, the effects of maximum lending rate and real GDP are negative while the effects of foreign exchange rate and inflation rate are positive.

ECM Estimation

ECM Regression
Case 2: Restricted Constant and No Trend

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
D(LOG_NPL(-1))	1.484586	0.227813	6.516683	0.0013
D(LOG_NPL(-2))	-0.075860	0.097259	-0.779981	0.4707
D(LOG_NPL(-3))	0.437248	0.121424	3.600988	0.0155
D(LOG_LNR)	-9.626404	1.289010	-7.468057	0.0007
D(LOG_LNR(-1))	-2.830377	0.678600	-4.170904	0.0087
D(LOG_LNR(-2))	2.666709	0.637114	4.185609	0.0086
D(LOG_EXR)	-2.203684	0.442386	-4.981363	0.0042
D(LOG_EXR(-1))	-1.854700	0.498067	-3.723794	0.0137
D(LOG_EXR(-2))	-4.471456	0.603520	-7.408961	0.0007
D(LOG_EXR(-3))	2.986824	0.414227	7.210605	0.0008
D(LOG_RGDP)	-29.84756	3.281227	-9.096463	0.0003
D(LOG_RGDP(-1))	-8.581327	1.666282	-5.149983	0.0036
D(LOG_RGDP(-2))	-19.63698	2.961681	-6.630350	0.0012
D(LOG_RGDP(-3))	-8.914365	1.896907	-4.699421	0.0053
D(LOG_INF)	0.443648	0.137586	3.224528	0.0233
D(LOG_INF(-1))	-1.426551	0.388584	-3.671155	0.0144
D(LOG_INF(-2))	-0.684487	0.225303	-3.038075	0.0288
CointEq(-1)*	-0.746411	0.241796	-7.222652	0.0008

R-squared	0.950482	Mean dependent var		-0.059001
Adjusted R-squared	0.866302	S.D. dependent var		0.563223
S.E. of regression	0.205941	Akaike info criterion		-0.066358
Sum squared resid	0.424118	Schwarz criterion		0.790059
Log likelihood	18.92901	Hannan-Quinn criter.		0.195458
Durbin-Watson stat	2.761416			

* p-value incompatible with t-Bounds distribution.
Source: E-Views 10 Output

Interpretation: From the Error Correction Model, the co-integrating equation has the required negative and significant signs, which implies that the speed at which equilibrium can be restored in an event of any distortion in the long run relationship between interest rate deregulation and value of non-performing loan is about 74.6% annually.

Diagnostic/Econometric Tests

Test	Criterion	Test statistic Value	Probability Value
Autocorrelation	Q-Statistic	$1.7201 \leq Q \geq 12.187$	> 0.05
Normality	Jarque-Bera	0.616755	0.734638
Heteroscedasticity	Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey	2.065891	0.2156

Source: Extract from E-Views 10 Output

Interpretation: From the above table of summarized diagnostic tests results, it was observed that there is no presence of autocorrelation and heteroscedasticity in the errors of the model as the errors of the model were normally distributed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion: From the foregoing, it was revealed that in the short run, maximum lending rate, foreign exchange rate and real GDP have negative and significant effects on non-performing loans while inflation rate has a positive insignificant effect on non-performing loans. However, in the long run, all variables were statistically significant while only foreign exchange and inflation rates have positive effects on non-performing loans. Nevertheless, these interest rate deregulation related variables, at different periods, have a combined significant influence of about 97.23% on non-performing loan-total loan ratio. Hence, it was inferred that interest rate deregulation has a negative but significant effect on the volume of non-performing loans in Nigeria. This aligns with the position expressed by the likes of Koskei and Samoei (2024), Robert and Koori (2022), and Sheefeni (2016) who agreed that lending rate has a significant effect on the value and volume of non-performing loans in different countries.

Recommendations

There is need to completely deregulate interest rate in the Nigerian banking sector in order to further reduce the volume and value of non-performing loans in the Nigerian banking system.

i. In addition to completely deregulate interest rate, there is the need to also focus on economic related factors like foreign exchange rate, economic condition and inflation rate in the country. This is because these factors have direct and indirect effects on the ability of borrowers to repay the loans they collected from banks.

ii. It is imperative to tight all possible ends as the need to consider borrower-related factors like poor credit worthiness and insufficient collateral cannot be over emphasized. Thus, to effectively curtail the incidences of non-performing loans in Nigeria, a holistic approach that cuts across economic, borrower and lender-related factors should not be taken for granted.

Contribution to Knowledge

This work will to a large extent contribute to bridging existing knowledge gap in the literature by way of introducing a model that captures maximum lending rate and other economic related variables like foreign exchange rate, real GDP and inflation rate as surrogates of interest rate deregulation. Also, the currency of this work is not in doubt.

Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of this study was availability of data on the variable non-performing loans. This is because the World Bank and other online sources only captured the ratio of non-performing loans to gross loans from 2009, while the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) on its own, lumped non-

performing assets with reserves for depreciation, thereby making it difficult to get the actual value of non-performing assets (loans).

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Article   **Open Access**

JAPAISM AMONG NIGERIAN EXPERTS: A DOOM IN THE FUTURE OF THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

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Abstract

The migration of skilled Nigerian experts, also known as brain drain, has become a significant challenge facing the Nigerian public service. The future of any nation depends largely on the educated and skilled individuals, they are responsible for the development of the nation and are the greatest resources the nation can ever boast about, not oil, agriculture, gross domestic profit etc. This phenomenon has led to a depletion of the country's human capital, undermining the delivery of public services and hindering economic development. It is the people that develop the nation and not just the availability of natural resources, Nigeria is a typical example because in spite of the available human and natural resources the nation still remains in a quagmire due to corruption and looting of public funds. This problem is further complicated by the scourge of the migration of Nigerians to developed nations, which has led to brain drain in many aspects of our life as a nation. The magnitude of the migration of experts and talented citizens threaten to constitute a clog in the overall development of Nigeria. National growth and development cannot be realized when there is a high level of migration of experts from Nigeria. The paper shall further expose the causes of this endemic movement of Nigerians on the basis of corruption which has led to an increase in unemployment and cruel economic state. The paper further examined the consequences, and solutions to brain drain among Nigeria experts. The national development cannot be achieved if this growing trend of migration of competent Nigerians overseas is not curtailed the Nigerian public service shall be a doom in the future.

Keywords: Indigenous, culture, beliefs, practices, human dignity, human rights, Nigeria.

Introduction

Nigeria has been faced with the problems of migration and brain drain for several years, with the attendant economic and development consequences.[1] A good number of her citizens continue to migrate out of the country unabated. The migration of skilled Nigerian experts, also known as brain

drain, has become a significant challenge facing the Nigerian public service. What makes it worrisome is the quantum of highly educated and skilled professionals that have found haven in advanced economies; the situation normally referred to as brain drain. Brain drain is the migration of people who possess some technical skills and expertise as well as professionals in various fields of endeavour (doctors, nurses, engineers, technologists, university lecturers, engineers, computer scientists, business managers, etc) to countries rather than their own for better conditions of services and where they feel their utilities can be improved. This phenomenon has led to a depletion of the country's human capital, undermining the delivery of public services and hindering economic development. [2] Available evidence has shown that apart from South Africa, the destination countries of most migrants from Nigeria are in the North America and Europe while few are found in some Asian countries.[3] Evidence suggests that the number of Nigerian emigrants outweighs her immigrants going by the negative net migration data (-300000) of the country as at 2017.[4] Literature has also shown that Nigerian doctors that are practising outside her shore outnumber those in the country, with many of them trained in Nigeria why the country currently experiences acute shortage of medical practitioners. Reports have it that about 17 million Nigerians live overseas. This is capable of impacting negatively on sustainable development of the country. Brain drain is a global problem, but its impact is more severe in developing countries like Nigeria, where the loss of skilled experts can have devastating consequences for the public service and economic.[5]

Conceptual Framework: Definition of Brain Drain

The conceptual model of brain drain suggests that brain drain is driven by a complex interplay of factors, including economic, social, political, and environmental factors. The model also suggests that brain drain has significant consequences for the country of origin, including the loss of human capital and expertise, reduced economic growth, and decreased competitiveness. The Cambridge Dictionary,[6] defined Brain Drain as "the situation in which large numbers of educated and very skilled people leave their own country to live and work in another country where pay and conditions are better." Furthermore, Nadja,[7] explains that "Brain Drain is the preponderance of the migration of highly skilled and educated persons from poor, developing and less industrialized countries to richer, more developed ones". Brain drain can also be said to be the situation whereby a country loses those who are highly educated and talented workers in specific fields to other nations. Brain drain is largely seen as a problem, for the reason that competent persons leave their country and exercise their expertise to boost the economy of other nations. Their home country is left to suffer, because most of those who remain don't have the ability to make a difference or because their contributions are insignificant. Meanwhile, migration is the movement of people from one place to another. Migration can be international or local. The former means the movement from one country to another while the latter implies the movement within a country from one city to another. The following reasons are considered as the causes of migration, economic, social, political or environmental.

The term, brain drain, is also known as human capital flight. It means large scale movement or migration of top flight manpower from various developing countries (predominantly African countries including Nigeria) to more developed countries notably United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Holland, Newzeland and Australia. As earlier stated, the chief reason for this movement is the quest for better opportunities. With particular reference to

the University system, Utile,[8] conceptualizes brain drain as "the mass exodus of highly trained and well experienced academics from countries with poor conditions of service to those with better work conditions in search of greener pasture". Brain drain is common amongst such skilled personnel as medical doctors, pharmacists, nurses, medical laboratory scientists, industrial chemists and pilots. Others are computer scientists, engineers, university lecturers, researchers' technologists and lawyers. The term "brain drain" originally referred to technological workers leaving a nation. But nowadays its application or meaning has widened to include the migration of educated and professional people from one country, economic sector or field for another usually for better remuneration and/or living conditions (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2010). Brain drain is usually considered an economic cost on the part of the releasing countries. This is because migrants usually take with them the fraction of value of their training sponsored by governments or other organizations. It could be likened to capital flight which refers to the same movement of financial capital. The converse of brain drain is brain gain. Thus, whilst developing countries from which trained personnel are migrating are suffering from brain drain, developed nations are experiencing brain gain. Basically, brain drain entails the transfer of knowledge, experience, skill and expertise from one region, country or geographic location to another.

Brain drain has grown in scale due to recent developments in modern electronic information technology, the widening of gap between the South and the North and spread of corporate globalization, an increasing political instability, civil wars and social and religious strife in many Southern and African countries, of which Nigeria is one. Another term closely related to brain drain is brain waste. This is a situation whereby foreign nationals or workers are often hired to do jobs for which they are over qualified. For instance, there are many Nigerian doctors and European scientists working as taxi drivers in some large United States of American cities like New York, Chicago, Texas, Michigan, Washington, etc. The obvious implication of this scenario is that Nigeria is being deprived of valuable contributions of this highly skilled manpower who are grossly underutilized in the USA. Brain drain refers to the emigration of highly educated and skilled individuals from one country to another.[9] It can be categorized into internal brain drain, international brain drain, temporary brain drain, and permanent brain drain.[10] Brain drain is driven by push factors, such as low salaries and poor working conditions, and pull factors, such as better economic opportunities and improved working conditions.[11]

Causes of Brain Drain among Nigerian Experts

The pertinent and worrisome question is: why have Nigerian intellectuals and professionals left or contemplating seriously leaving the country? A variety of reasons account for the migration of a large chunk of Nigeria's best brains from the country to other parts of the globe (especially the West). Previous and recent studies have revealed that a key driver of intellectual and professional exodus from Nigeria is the harsh economic condition under which most intellectuals and professionals work. Next is the desire to go to countries that could pay for and utilize their competitive skills.[12] Since the start of the new millennium, there has been a significant increase in the migration of highly educated and talented Nigerians to Europe, the Americas and Asia. It is significant and detrimental because while Nigeria lags in development the receiving end which is a developed nation enjoys more of the fruits of our labours. Nigeria has had her citizens in many parts of the world and they are doing so many amazing things in different fields of human endeavour's. The consequences of migration are brain drain whereby those who are endowed

academically and gifted to bring about development in the nation are away. Migration has become a bane to the development of Nigeria, a lot of her young citizens are excelling in various fields overseas.

The proportion at which Nigerians who are professional in their fields leave their fatherland to practice their expertise in foreign lands in the last two decades has worsened the brain drain issue. The migration of specialists out of the Nigeria to other countries of the world where economic certainty and good standard of living is guaranteed is a pest to the development of Nigeria while host nations enjoy the fruits of the nations that have trained the individual without paying the cost of educating them, Nigeria languish in development. Adeyemi et al.,[13] states that "this development is being seen as a problem, due to the fact that the most competent and highly skilled labour travelled out of their countries to contribute their quota to the development of other nations while leaving their countries underdeveloped". At this point, it is pertinent to look into some causes of brain drain and migration in Nigeria.

High Level of Unemployment: Unemployment is one of the main reasons why Nigerians depart overseas for greener pastures, getting most jobs is Nigeria is not based on merit but they depend on how connected the person seeking the job is to those in top positions. To get a job one has to know someone who knows someone, and those who have no connection find it difficult to be employed regardless of their quality of education and grades. Also, most employers believe that Nigerian graduates are unemployable because of the state of the educational institutions, particularly public schools. Education is constantly promoted and encouraged, but then there is limited opportunity for employment. Also, Akusoba,[14] states the obvious truth is that "many Nigerian graduates are unemployable because of the deplorable state of Nigeria universities. Most employers prefer to employ graduates with foreign certificates in place of those with local certificates because they think that Nigeria education lacks quality". Many of our graduates are uneducated flaunting certificates which they cannot defend. Another factor responsible for lack of jobs in Nigeria is the rapid growth in population and an inadequate supply of jobs, there is massive shortage of employment opportunities, funds meant for building industries are syphoned into private pockets, this also creates unemployment. Furthermore, the advent of oil has been a bane and led to low level of diversification of the economy, the absence of white-collar jobs and less level of creativity, many Nigerians are only concerned about graduating from the University and getting a white-collar job. Hence, many university graduates are without work, some have spent months and years in search of jobs, and failure to secure one force them to migrate to foreign nations in search of work, meanwhile, so many are forced to school outside and return home for work having earned a foreign certificate or some go having earned the certificate get a better job package.

Poor Educational Sector: So many of our public educational institutions lack the basic infrastructure and facilities which has led to the migration of some our undergraduates to foreign universities for studies and who do not come back to help in the rebuilding of the nation, they become accustomed to their newfound society and this spells doom for Nigeria. Also, the constant strikes organised by the Academic Staff Union of Universities has affected the duration students are supposed to spend in tertiary institutions, it is common to find some undergraduates spending up to six or more years for a course duration that is supposed to last for four years. These strikes are not in any way

beneficial to the students or for the infrastructural development of the institution, rather, they are sometimes driven towards a selfish motif of the lecturers. Also, our educational sector has been affected by corruption, to the level that most examinations conduction are not free of malpractices, malpractice to some extent has even become a regular practice. Therefore, these irregularities in our universities often prompt some of our young ones to migrate to other countries to study.

Economic Reason: The fluctuating nature of the Nigerian economy has led to many migrating overseas in search for greener pasture. Poverty is no doubt on the increase in Nigeria, many Nigerians live below a dollar daily, and making Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development Vol. 2 No 1, 2019. ISSN: 2630-7073(Online) 2640-7065(Print) 7 A Publication of Association for the Promotion of African Studies 7 ends meet becomes difficult for an average Nigerian and leads to the migration of many youths across the Mediterranean borders in search of greener pastures where some have met their untimely death. Also, the poor economic condition in Nigeria has resulted to Brain Drain, whereby a skilled worker leaves Nigeria for another country in search for better economic conditions in order to secure a better job, increase standard of living, get a better salary package etc.

Corruption: Chinua Achebe stated that "Nigerians are corrupt because the system they live under today makes corruption easy and profitable".[15] Little wonder the former British Prime Minister stated that Nigerians are fantastically corrupt. The dominance of corruption in Nigeria has persistently call for serious worry and attention. "A corrupt free environment gives room for investment and efforts to increase the pie other than merely fighting over its distribution and thus promote growth. To this end, good governance and low level of corruption accelerate the process of development." [16]

Insecurity: Taft and Haken,[17] states that Nigeria's Fourth Republic, which began in 1999 with the election of Olusegun Obasanjo has been fraught with security challenges, including spikes in communal and sectarian violence in the Middle Belt, militancy and criminality in the Niger Delta, and insurgency in the Northeast. Coupled with the threats and widespread of the Fulani Herdsmen in various nook and cranny of the country as well as the poor level of our security forces has also contributed to the growth of these violence and insecurity. Most importantly, unresponsive attitude of the government to bring to an end the recurrent issues of violence have forced many Nigerians to flee the nation in search of security in other countries.

Consequences of Brain Drain among Nigerian Experts
The brain drain of Nigerian experts in public service has severe consequences for the country's development. This phenomenon has led to a depletion of skilled professionals in the public sector, undermining the delivery of essential services and hindering economic growth. The phenomenon has caused and continues to cause incalculable damage to the country. Its effects on Nigeria are legion and multifarious. Some of the consequences are discussed below:-

Economic Consequences: The economic consequences of brain drain among Nigerian experts in public service are far-reaching.

Reduced Productivity

The emigration of skilled professionals leads to reduced productivity in various sectors of the economy.[18] This reduction in productivity can have a ripple effect leading to decreased economic output and growth.

Decreased Economic Growth

Brain drain can lead to decreased economic growth, as the country is deprived of the skills and expertise needed to drive economic development.[19] This can result in reduced economic opportunities, increased poverty, and decreased living standards.

Increased Dependence on Foreign Aid

The brain drain of Nigerian experts in public service can lead to increased dependence on foreign aid.[20] This can undermine the country's sovereignty and autonomy as well as perpetuate a culture of dependency.

Social Consequences: This social consequence of brain drain among Nigerian experts in public service are significant.

Reduced Access to Public Service

The emigration of skilled professionals can lead to reduced access to public services, including healthcare, education and infrastructure.[21] This can exacerbate social inequalities and undermine human development.

Decreased Quality of Public Services

The brain drain of Nigerian experts in public service can lead to decreased quality of public services.[22] This can result in inadequate service delivery, decreased public trust, and increased social unrest.

Increased Brain Drain of Remaining Professionals

The emigration of skilled professionals can lead to increased brain drain of remaining professionals.[23] This can create a vicious cycle, where the remaining professionals are overworked, demotivated, and more likely to emigrate.

Political Consequences: The political consequences of brain drain among Nigerian Experts in public service are far-reaching.

Decreased Government Capacity

The emigration skilled professionals can lead to decreased government capacity, undermining the ability of the government to deliver essential services and implement policies. [24]

Increased Corruption

The brain drain of Nigerian experts in public service can lead to increased corruption, as unqualified and inexperienced individuals are appointed to key positions.[25]

Decreased Public Trust

The emigration of skilled professionals can lead to decreased public trust in government, undermining the legitimacy and accountability of public institutions.[26]

Solutions to Brain Drain among Nigerian Experts

In view of the deleterious effects of brain drain on Nigeria's economy, it is hereby suggested that urgent steps should be taken towards curbing the menace. Below are some of the ways out.

i. **Proper Funding of Tertiary Education in Nigeria:** Funds are very critical to tertiary education in Nigeria. Without adequate finance, tertiary education can hardly function properly. In this study, we shall use the university system for our analysis. This is because of its pivotal role in the whole gamut of Nigerian tertiary education. University education has over the years witnessed inadequate funding. As Odekunle,[27] succinctly notes, Nigerian universities have been grossly underfunded which resulted in the loss of great deal of valuable manpower to overseas countries. Also, according to Saint et al,[28] the university system in Nigeria has not had the financial wherewithal necessary to maintain educational quality even in the midst of significant population explosion. Worse still, Olukoya,[29]   has painted a grimmer picture with the assertion that Nigerian universities have become "glorified secondary schools", due to overcrowded classrooms, with students sitting on the floor during lectures, lack of books in libraries, ill-equipped laboratories that cannot conduct experiments, and the menace of brain drain. It therefore entails that for the universities to execute their mandate satisfactorily they should be properly funded. In this regard, Mgbekem,[30] aptly opines that "there is the dire need for efficient funding of the university system through increased budgetary provision". This is necessary for the maintenance of dilapidated or decaying infrastructure, procurement of new equipment, relevant books and journals, chemicals and other vital learning inputs.

ii. **Provision of Conducive Working Environment**: Based on the premise that unsatisfactory working environment, owing largely to dilapidated and obsolete facilities, was and is still partly responsible for human capital flight in Nigeria, it is suggested that urgent and massive overhaul of facilities especially in the universities, hospitals and research centres be undertaken. In the view of Ekundayo et al,[31] apart from the physical working environment, there is also the compelling need to make the psycho-social environment conducive. In this regard, there should be proper appreciation and recognition for intellectual and professional worth. Also, the Nigerian government should address and review all the various policies that have triggered the migration stream of intellectuals from universities, and other professionals like doctors, pharmacists, nurses, engineers, etc, from the country. For instance, the hitherto frequent harassment, arrest and dismissal from service of leaders of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) which was common during the military era should not be allowed to re-occur.

iii. **Upward Review of the Pay Package for Academics and Professionals based on their Qualifications** Incontrovertibly, there exists a strong correlation between motivation via enhanced remuneration and employee performance.[32] However, the research has revealed that there has been a general lack of motivation amongst Nigerian lecturers and professionals like medical doctors, pharmacists, nurses, lawyers, medical laboratory scientists, etc, due chiefly to poor wages. For instance, available statistics from ASUU Secretariat Abuja indicates that until recently, Nigerian lecturers constituted one of the least paid workers in the country. For example, whilst the annual salaries of some public sector (Oil and iron and steel) workers as

at 1997 were N600,000 and N400,000 respectively, that of university academic staff was N54,000.[33]

Case Study of Brain Drain among Nigerian Experts

In 2016, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that there was an international shortfall of 4.3 million medical workers. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), which has 24% of the world's disease population but only 3% of its health workers, suffers the most from this shortage.[34] Although, the brain drain affects all African nations in varying degrees,[35] countries in SSA are worst hit, for instance, as of 2017, the doctor-to-patient ratio was about two doctors per 10,000 people.[36] In contrast, the analysis of the World Bank open-source data shows that higher-income countries have 3.3 physicians per 1000 people. Tus, the statistics indicate that low-income countries in SSA have shortfalls of health professional, and the prevailing brain drain will worsen the doctor patient ratio. Nigeria serves as a notable example of the challenges faced by many SSA nations. The growing population of Nigeria and its implications for healthcare have already been explored from different vantage points. For example, Omoleke & Taleat,[37] examine how recent challenges in the Nigerian health industry have increased the death rate or made the health sector inefficient and unaffordable for many Nigerians.[38] Omoleke and Taleat,[39] identified five problems in the Nigerian healthcare system: underpayment, obsolete infrastructure, inadequate medical facilities, and low fund allocation. As a matter of fact, the medical sector receives too little funding to make a difference, Nigeria's healthcare allocation is merely 4% of the annual budget.[40] All these studies highlight the lack of medical professionals: In a country with a population of more than 200 million and 35,000 doctors, Nigeria's doctor-to-population ratio stands at 1:5000, lower than doctor-to-patient ratio of 1:600 recommended by the WHO .[41] In 2023, when Nigeria's population hit 218 million, there were only 24,000 licensed doctors.[42] A significant contributing factor to this low ratio in the most populous African nation is the widespread migration of healthcare professionals.

The pull factors for migration of Nigerian medical professionals include higher salaries, more supportive work environments, opportunities for professional development, advanced healthcare infrastructure, access to research, and well established professional networks, which not only promote career growth but also enhance social recognition.[43] As a result of these pull and push factors, as of November 2021, over 8,000 licensed Nigerian doctors had relocated to the United Kingdom, and by mid-2022, an additional 700 had left to practice internationally.[44] From 2016 to 2018 alone, nearly 9,000 Nigerian medical professionals moved to the UK, US, and Canada, with the demand for healthcare staff in these industrialized nations further amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic.[45] Licensing in these countries is a relatively straight forward processes: In the UK, a preferred destination due to its established Nigerian communities, competitive salaries, and robust healthcare system, Nigerian doctors must meet English language proficiency standards, pass UK Nursing and Midwifery Council qualification verifications, succeed in a computer-based examination, and cover registration costs. The US and Canada have similar requirements involving transcript reviews and licensing exams.[46]

The drain of expertise in Nigeria's healthcare sector leads to further challenges, such as shortages in rural healthcare, burnout, and lower presenteeism.[47] Anetoh & Onwudinjo,[48] and Okafor & Chimereze,[49] observed that migration results in more people needing health care, healthcare disparities, a lack of expertise and resources, negative effects on the economy, and public health concerns. Although, doctor migration may affect home and destination economies,[50]

losing qualified physicians in the home country may limit healthcare services, increase the workload for remaining healthcare professionals, and raise healthcare costs as governments may need to hire more costly temporary employees or recruits.[51] However, in the destination countries, talented physicians may address holes in the healthcare system and enhance treatment at the expense of their home nations.[52] Thus, the migration of Nigerian doctors to industrialized nations deprives the country of crucial healthcare expertise that could mentor future medical professionals and influence healthcare policies. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a severe public health crisis that endangered human lives and heightened the inability of the government to invest in healthcare. During the pandemic, the national health systems could not handle effectively the increased demand of vulnerable people and patients who require admission into critical care unit to treat COVID-19.[53]

The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the dire situation of the healthcare system, ultimately leading to the 2023 Anti-Brain Drain Bill. The Anti Brain Drain Bill In 2023, House of Representatives Member Ganiyu Abiodun Johnson, belonging to the ruling All Progressives Congress party, introduced a law called the "Medical and Dental Practitioners Act Amendment Bill" in response to the worrisome trend of brain drain in the health sector. Tis bill mandates graduates in the medical and dental fields to serve in Nigeria for five years post-graduation before obtaining a license. The bill in its essence compels health workers to contribute to their home country's healthcare system before considering emigration.[54] The bill successfully passed the second reading in the House of Representatives, marking it as an interim measure to address the escalating migration trend. Sule,[55] asserted that the House of Representatives proposed the Medical Brain Drain Bill as a quick fixed for this trend. The bill has generated varying comments from government officials, health experts, and the public. While fielding questions from journalists, former Minister of Labour Chris Ngige argued that the bill is unworkable due to the human rights infringement on the doctors, despite its good intentions. [56] Members of the Opposition in Parliament criticized that the bill infringes on medical doctors' rights, but the former Speaker of the House, Femi Gbajabiamila pointed to Sect. 45 of the 1999 constitution which allows the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) to suspend certain rights due under specific conditions.[57] The bill sparked significant controversy and backlash among healthcare professionals and the public. Innocent Orji, the president of the Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors, expressed disapproval of the bill. Orji,[58] highlighted the government's failure to address critical issues such as poor compensation, job insecurity, stagnant wages, and currency exchange rates, which, he argued, justified medical workers' reluctance to remain and practice in Nigeria. Healthcare professionals abroad strongly opposed the bill, viewing it as a violation of their rights, particularly considering the government's track record of not fulfilling promises regarding the welfare of Nigerians.[59]

Conclusion

In conclusion, unless concerted efforts by all well-meaning Nigerians especially those in government in a tackling the problems of Brain Drain and migration. The brain drain of Nigerian experts in public service has severe consequences for country's development. we shall remain the giant or Lion of Africa that cannot roar and blossom into rapid development that will propel us into belonging to the comity of developed nations. This study has been able to prove that multiplicity of factors account for the large-scale migration of skilled and intellectual manpower from Nigeria to overseas countries. Also, it has been able to x-ray the effects of brain drain on Nigeria. Based on the

evidence provided above it is clear that the negative consequences of brain drain in Nigeria public service far outweigh the gains. To address this challenge, the Nigerian government must implement policies and strategies that promote working conditions, increasing salaries, and providing opportunities for career advancement.

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Article   **Open Access**

QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGIES AS DETERMINANTS OF TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL TASK PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OGUN STATE

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Abstract

Globally, the quality of education is imperative for the development of any society. Though Nigeria is not an exception but the quest for acceptable standard of education has been a challenge to all stakeholders of education which has become the gap that needs to be filled by all concerned. The study examined quality assurance strategies as determinant of teachers' instructional task performance in Ogun State, Nigeria. Three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Descriptive survey research design was employed. Study population consisted of all the 3,450 senior secondary teachers in the 169 public senior secondary schools in Ogun State. Data were collected using researcher-constructed questionnaire titled: Quality Assurance Strategies Questionnaire (QASQ) and Teachers' Instructional Task Performance Questionnaire (TITPQ) with reliability coefficients, $r = 0.79$ and 0.75 respectively. The hypotheses were tested at $P < 0.05$ probability level of significance using the multiple regression analysis. Findings revealed that quality assurance strategies do jointly significantly influence teachers instructional task performance of monitoring ($F_{(4, 3445)} = 1362.539$; $P < 0.05$), and finally, results also showed significant relative influence ($\beta = 0.074$, $t = 2.471$), inspection ($\beta = 0.071$, $t = 2.453$) and supervision ($\beta = 0.064$, $t = 1.101$) at $p<0.05$ significant The study concluded that the use of quality assurance strategies will improve the instructional task performance of teachers. It was therefore recommended that these quality assurance strategies should be incorporated into the process of teaching and learning for overall school effectiveness.

Keywords: Secondary School, Quality Assurance Strategies, Teacher Instructional Task Performance, Ogun State.

Introduction

Teachers instructional task performance is enhanced by good mastery of the subject to be taught and good lesson delivery. It is the ability to do well in teaching and instructional tasks.Teachers' tasks are the technical, formal and core job responsibilities of teachers in a school which is often written in their job description (Mbon, 2017) Tasks and responsibilities of teachers include

planning lessons, delivering lessons (face-to-face), assessing, guiding students' activities, doing additional works, and developing the profession in education (Iroegbu&Etudor-Eyo, 2016; Ayeni, 2020). According to Punongbayan &Bauyon (2015), teachers' task performance is therefore regarded as the act of teachers doing well at their core or formal responsibilities. In a school, teacher's task performance include providing essential inputs like adequate planning of lesson notes, effective delivery of lessons, proper monitoring and evaluation of students' performance, providing regular feed-back on students' performance, improvisation of instructional materials, adequate keeping of records and appropriate discipline of students to produce and enhance expected learning achievement in secondary schools (Ololube & Major, 2014)

Quality assurance is seen as a set of procedures that every organization should undertake in order to guarantee that standards are defined and attained consistently for a particular product or service (Orunbon & Isaac-Philips, 2020). In other words, quality assurance s the process of ensuring that organizations such as schools possess the ability to enable the students perform well in standard examinations and give education that is relevant to the needs of the students, community, and the society as a whole (Ayeni, 2017; Abdulkareem, 2020). Quality assurance could stand as preventive measure of quality problems through planned and systematic activities and this could include the establishment of a good quality management system and the assessment of its adequacy, the audit of the operation of the system, and the review of the system itself (Kadir, Tijani & Mafara , 2020). Furthermore, Okolo (2015) posted that quality assurance has also been described as a concept covering a host of academic activities, such as school's instructional supervision, discipline, availability and utilization of instructional materials, infrastructure, and finance which are meant to improve the quality of resource input, process and output of the school system. Quality assurance is therefore, the efficient management, monitoring, evaluation and reviews of the resource inputs and transformation process (teaching and learning) to produce quality outputs (students) that meet set standards and expectations of the society (Fasasi & Oyeniran, 2014; Ugwoke, Ofoegbu & Ugwuanyi, 2019). According to Usman, (2015), supervision is a way of stimulating, guiding, improving, refreshing, encouraging and overseeing certain groups with the hope of seeking their cooperation in order for the supervisors to be successful in their task of supervision. Furthermore, it is essentially the practice of monitoring the performance of school staff (teachers), observing the challenges of teaching and learning activities with the aim of using befitting and good techniques to ameliorate the shortcomings while still improving on the advantages thereby increasing the school standards to achieve educational goals (Usman, 2015). Educational supervision is a process of assisting and over-seeing the educational system for the improvement of teaching-learning processes. It is also a way of advising, guiding, encouraging and improving people with the aim of getting their cooperation towards successful learning outcomes. For anything to be regarded as qualitative in schools so that standard of education in secondary schools is improved, school or instructional supervision must be given high priority (Chepkuto, Sang & Chumba, 2018). However, teachers' task performance has adversely affected the standard of education thereby posing a challenge to all stakeholders of education. This has become the gap that needs to be filled by all concerned. It is against this backdrop that the researchers investigated the quality assurance strategies as determinants of teacher's instructional task performance in public secondary schools in Ogun state.

Statement of the Problem

The expectations of all stakeholders of education most importantly at the senior secondary level is the attainment of good higher education potential which is the ultimate goal of secondary education. Quality assurance strategies are fundamental instruments put in place to ensure that the policy and standard of education are met (Ikuelogbon, Anaenyeonu & Eze, 2016). This instruments are to be inculcated in the supervisory roles of principals to ensure effective instructional task performance of teachers. However, there have been steady decline in teachers instructional task performance, learners achievement and standards as well as school's overall effectiveness which depicts non- relegation of quality assurance in secondary schools. There has been a gap in the use of quality assurance strategies by principals which has resulted to inadequacies in teacher's instructional task performance. Thus, it is important that the principals of secondary schools as well as teachers are familiar with these quality assurance strategies so as to inculcate them into their daily activities so that the conduct of this exercise will be effective.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the quality assurance strategies as determinants of teacher's instructional task performance in public secondary schools in Ogun state. The specific objectives are to:

i.   Investigate the joint influence of quality assurance strategies (monitoring, inspection and supervision) on teachers' instructional task performance in public secondary schools in Ogun state;

ii. Investigate the relative influence of quality assurance strategies (monitoring, inspection and supervision) on teachers' instructional task performance in public secondary schools in Ogun state

Hypotheses

The hypotheses below are formulated for this study and would be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

i. H_01: There will be no joint significant influence of Quality Assurance Strategies (monitoring, inspection and supervision) on teachers' instructional task performance in public secondary schools in Ogun State.

ii. H_02: There will be no relative significant influence of Quality Assurance Strategies (monitoring, inspection and supervision) on teachers' instructional task performance in public secondary schools in Ogun State.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised of all the teachers (13449) and principals (8,215) in Ogun State, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling techniques consisting of cluster and systematic random sampling techniques were used to arrive at a sample of 3449 teachers and 1,000 principals in secondary schools n Ogun State. A questionnaire titled "Quality Assurance Strategies Questionnaire (QASQ) and Teachers' Instructional Task Performance Questionnaire (TITPQ) were used to collect data for the study. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics of multiple regression at 0.05 level of significance. The questionnaire consists of several sections (A, B, C, and D) which all contain structured statements.

Section A is constructed to consist of the personal information of the teachers. Examples of the personal information included in this section are: the age, gender, current level of education and years of teaching experience.

Section B is constructed to elicit responses from the teachers on the extent of quality assurance strategies in Ogun state public senior secondary schools. These strategies were responded to in four areas or strategies: monitoring, inspection, supervision and evaluation. A total number of eighteen (18) items were administered for quality assurance strategies. The rating technique is based on the following scale:
High Extent (HE) = 4; Medium Extent (ME) = 3;Low Extent (LL) = Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1

Results
Demographic Analysis
Demographic analysis of teachers revealed that majority of them, 1775 (51.0%) are males while females are 1675 (49%); 1525 (44.2%) teachers are within 40- 49 years of age, 261 (39.7%); have 10-19 years of teaching experience, 2050 (59.4%).

H01: There will be no joint significant influence of quality assurance strategies (monitoring, inspection and supervision) on teachers' instructional task performance in public secondary schools in Ogun state.

Table 1: Model Summary and Coefficients of Multiple Regression Analysis

ANOVAª						Model Summary			
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1 Regression	6.423	4	1.066	1362.53	.011ᵇ	.286ª	.197	.057	.62637
Residual	384.684	3445	.358						
Total	391.107	3445							
		3449							

a. Dependent Variable: Teachers' instructional task performances
b. Predictors: (Constant),monitoring, inspection and supervision

Coefficients is significant at 0.05*.

Table 1 shows a joint significant influence of Quality AssuranceStrategies (monitoring, inspection and supervision) on teachers' instructional task performance in public secondary schools in Ogun state.($F_{(4, 3.445)} = 1362.53$, $P < 0.05$). The model summary shows that 5.7% (Adjusted $R^2= 0.57$) variation in teachers' instructional task performance in public secondary schools could be explained by Quality AssuranceStrategies. The remaining 94.3% could be explained by other factors not included in the model.

H02: There will be no relative significant influence of Quality AssuranceStrategies (monitoring, inspection and supervision) on teachers' instructional task performance in public secondary schools in Ogun state.

Table 2: Coefficients of Multiple Regression Analysis

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.377	.639		2.614	.009
	Monitoring	.044	.015	.074	2.471	.003
	Inspection	.054	.016	.071	2.453	.005
	Supervision	.001	.026	.064	1.101	.919
a. Dependent Variable: Teachers' instructional task performances						

Beta Coefficients is significant at 0.05*.

Table 2 shows that the beta coefficient for monitoring (β = 0.074, t = 2.471), inspection (β = 0.071, t = 2.453) and supervision (β = 0.064, t = 1.101) were all found to be significant at $P < 0.05$. This implies that all the independent variables significantly influence teachers' instructional task performances.

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one revealed a joint significant influence of Quality AssuranceStrategies (monitoring, inspection and supervision) on teachers' instructional task performance in public secondary schools in Ogun state.($F_{(4, 3.445)}$ = 1362.53, P < 0.05). The model summary shows that 5.7% (Adjusted R^2= 0.57) variation in teachers' instructional task performance in public secondary schools could be explained by Quality AssuranceStrategies. The remaining 94.3% could be explained by other factors not included in the model. This result is supported by Agi (2020) who found that quality assurance (supervision, inspection and monitoring) jointly predict teachers' instructional task performance in public secondary schools in Ogun state. Findings from hypothesis two revealed that beta coefficient for (β = 0.074, t = 2.471), inspection (β = 0.071, t = 2.453) and supervision (β = 0.064, t = 1.101) were all found to be significant at $P < 0.05$. The findings aligned with the submission of Oguntimehin, Kuewumi & Adeyemi (2018) who found that supervision, inspection and monitoring jointly predict teachers' instructional task performance in public secondary schools in Ogun state.

Conclusion

This study concluded that quality assurance strategies are the administrative instruments expected to be incorporated into any leadership style adopted by school principals.

In the same vein, quality assurance evaluation instruments are also important to be included in school curricular activities especially the instructional tasks of teachers for effective outcome of educational standards.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researcher proffers the following recommendations:

i.   Federal and state inspectorates' services should ensure regular supervision and monitoring of public senior secondary schools in Ogun state to ensure their total compliance with the quality standards.

ii.   Regular appraisal programme should be organised for teachers for their professional growth and overall improvement of instructional delivery in public senior secondary schools.

iii.   Government should organize workshops and seminars for teachers to enable them develop professionally, and more funds should be allocated to schools to enable them provide the needed facilities.

iv.   School supervision and inspection should be prioritized. After every quality assurance evaluation exercise in school, a follow up visit should be conducted to ensure strict compliance by principals and teachers.

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Appendices
Lead City University, Ibadan, Department of Arts and Social Science Education, Faculty of Arts and Education

Teachers' Research Questionnaire
Title: "Quality Assurance Strategies and Management Administrative Styles as determinants of Teachers' Instructional Task Performance Questionnaire (QASMASTITPQ)"

Dear Sir/Ma,
This questionnaire is constructed to collect data for a research. Please kindly respond to the questions below as any information provided here would be treated with high degree of confidentially and used for only academic purpose. Thank you.

Section A: Personal Information (Bio-Data)
i.   Age: 20-29 years {   } 30-39 years {   } 40-49 years {   }   50 years and above {   }
ii.   Gender: Male {   }   Female {   }
iii. Current Educational qualification: NCE {   } B.SC/PGDE { }   B.ED {   }M.ED {   }   MPhil/PHD {   }
iv.   Years of Teaching Experience: 0-9 years {   } 10-19 years {   }   20-29 years {   }   30 years and above {   }

Section B: Quality Assurance Strategies
Key: High Level (HL) = 4; Medium Level (ML) = 3;LowLevel (LL) = Very Low Level (VLL) = 1
Pls. tick (✓) in the box appropriate to your response (perception)

S/N	Statements At what level does;	H (4)	ML (3)	LL (2)	VLL (1)
A	**Monitoring**				
1	The school principal monitors teacher's attendance				
2	Quality assurance officers from the Ministry of Education occasionally check on teachers' attendance in school				
3	The school principal regularly checks and certified teacher's lesson plan and lesson notes				

4	Quality assurance officers do call out teachers to report their lesson notes				
5	The school principal monitors teaching-learning process in my school				
6	Quality assurance officers monitors teaching-learning process				
7	The school principal monitors my students as they progress in learning				
8	Quality assurance officers are friendly during monitoring exercise				
B	**Inspection**				
1	The principal periodically checks to see whether classroom activities are in line with meeting the educational goals				
2	Quality assurance officers inspect the surrounding during classroom activities				
3	The principal often inspects the neatness of the school environment				
4	Quality assurance officers inspect the neatness of the school environment				
5	The principal inspects classroom orderliness				
6	Quality assurance officers inspect classroom orderliness				
7	The school principal always inspect classroom instructional materials				
8	During their visit, education quality assurance team do inspect classroom instructional materials				
C	**Supervision**				
1	My school principal supervises all teachers				
2	Quality assurance officers do come for school supervision				
3	During classroom visitation, my principal provides great assistance in aiding me to improve my teaching				
4	Quality assurance officers provides instructional assistance to teachers				
5	My principal holds regular meetings with teachers to discuss school challenges				
6	Quality assurance officers proffered solutions to challenges facing the school.				
7	My principal gives teachers suggestions on how they can improve their teaching				
8	Quality assurance officers give teachers suggestions on how they can				

		improve their teaching			
D		**Evaluation**			
1		The school principal evaluates classroom performance			
2		Quality assurance officers evaluate classroom performance			
3		The school principal takes part in quality assurance evaluation exercise			
4		Quality assurance evaluation visit is regular in my school and is always effective, efficient and all inclusive			
5		The feedback from my school principal is always positive			
6		The feedback from evaluators after school visit by inspectors provide help to improve academic activities in my school			
7		Principal chairs meeting for general school improvement			
8		Workshop and seminars are regularly organized for teachers and students to improve their performance			

Lead City University, Ibadan, Department of Arts and Social Science Education, Faculty of Arts and Education

Teachers' Research Questionnaire
Title: "Quality Assurance Strategies and Management Administrative Styles as determinants of Teachers' Instructional Task Performance Questionnaire (QASMASTITPQ)"
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ii. Gender: Male {   }   Female {   }
iii. Current Educational qualification: NCE {   } B.SC/PGDE { }   B.ED {   }M.ED {   }   MPhil/PHD {   }
iv. Years of Teaching Experience: 0-9 years {   } 10-19 years {   } 20-29 years {   } 30 years and above {   }

Section C: Management Administrative Styles
Key: High Level (HL) = 4; Medium Level (ML) = 3;Low Level (LL) = Very Low Level (VLL) = 1
Pls. tick (✓) in the box appropriate to your response

S/N	Statements	HE (4)	ME (3)	LE (2)	VLE (1)
A	**Autocratic Management Style** **At what level does;**				

1	my school principal takes decision without consulting other school staff				
2	the school principal always act as the spokesperson for the school				
3	the school principal is always concern on matters that push school activities forward with a view to getting results				
4	teachers and students are always organised by the principal before work is done				
5	my Principal set himself or herself on high standards and expect all teachers to follow suit				
B	**Democratic Management Style**				
1	the principal uses teamwork approach to achieve school objectives				
2	the school committees are functional				
3	the school management considers every angle before decisions are made from discussion among teachers				
4	all teachers abide by formal decisions by following proper procedures				
5	the principal listen to ideas suggested by teachers				
C	**Lassez-Faire Management Style**				
1	the principal is good at bringing out the best in other people				
2	the principal regard mistakes made by teachers as opportunity to learn				
3	the wellbeing of all staff is important to the school management				
4	the principal loves helping other staff of the school to develop				
5	the principal motivates teachers to perform better				

Lead City University, Ibadan, Department of Arts and Social Science Education, Faculty of Arts and Education

Teachers' Research Questionnaire

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ii.   Gender: Male { }   Female { }

iii.   Current Educational qualification: NCE { } B.SC/PGDE { } B.ED { }M.ED { }   MPhil/PHD { }
iv.   Years of Teaching Experience: 0-9 years {   } 10-19 years { } 20-29 years { } 30 years and above { }

Section D: Teachers Instructional Task performance

Key: High level (HL) = 4; Medium level (ML) = 3;Low level (LL) = Very Low Level =1
Pls. tick (√) in the box appropriate to your response

S/N	Items; Teacher At what level do i;	HL	ML	LL	VLL
1	prepares my lesson notes adequately in line with the curriculum and scheme of work				
2	regularly conduct continuous assessment for my learners to measure their level of achievement				
3	supervise every learner work during lessons, and learners notes are constructively marked and corrected				
4	Finish the scheme of the work/syllabus with my students for each term as the case may be				
5	use instructional materials to teach every lesson in order to facilitate learning				
6	mark every test and assignments given to students and their scores are recorded in the marks book				
7	use several teaching methods in delivering subject matter so as to meet the needs of the range of learners				
8	Make all students understand what they learn during my lessons				
9	dictate or write on the board without the help of students				
10	Motivate Learners to learn during teaching and learning				

Table 3.1: Population of the Study (LGAs (N) = 20; Schools (N) = 172 and Teachers (N) = 5,059)

S/N	Senatorial Districts	S/N	Local Government Areas	Number of senior public secondary schools	Number of Teachers		
					Male	Female	Total
		1	Ijebu East	4	60	80	140
		2	Ijebu North	16	153	215	368
1.	Ogun East	3	Ijebu North East	4	62	84	146
		4	Ijebu Ode	11	132	185	317
		5	Ikenne	7	92	101	193

S/N	Senatorial Districts	S/N	Local Government Areas	Number of senior public secondary schools	Male	Female	Total
		6	Odogbolu	8	107	115	222
		7	Ogun Waterside	6	81	98	179
		8	Remo North	1	13	14	27
		9	Sagamu	9	133	132	265
			Sub-total	**66**	**833**	**1,024**	**1,857**
		10	Abeokuta North	9	144	157	301
2.	**Ogun Central**	11	Abeokuta South	19	289	292	581
		12	Ewekoro	3	53	66	119
		13	Ifo	9	131	132	263
		14	Obafemi-Owode	7	100	124	224
		15	Odeda	6	92	91	183
			Sub-total	**53**	**809**	**862**	**1,671**
		16	Ado-Odo/Ota	18	254	250	504
3.	**Ogun West**	17	Yewa North	10	142	143	285
		18	Yewa South	11	158	155	313
		19	Imeko-Afon	5	80	81	161
		20	Ipokia	9	132	136	268
			Sub-total	**53**	**766**	**765**	**1531**
	Overall Total			**172**	**2,408**	**2,651**	**5,059**

Source: Ogun State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Abeokuta (2020)[3]

Table 3.2: Sample Size for the Study (Schools (n) = 169 and Teachers (n) = 3,683)

S/N	Senatorial Districts	S/N	Local Government Areas	Number of senior public secondary schools	Number of Teachers		
					Male	Female	Total
		1	Ijebu East	4	57	67	124
		2	Ijebu North	15	110	140	250
1.	**Ogun East**	3	Ijebu North East	4	54	69	123
		4	Ijebu Ode	11	99	126	225
		5	Ikenne	7	75	81	156

|							
		6	Odogbolu	8	84	89	173
		7	Ogun Waterside	6	67	79	146
		8	Remo North	1	13	14	27
		9	Sagamu	9	100	99	199
			Sub-total	**65**	**659**	**764**	**1,423**
		10	Abeokuta North	9	106	113	219
2.	**Ogun Central**	11	Abeokuta South	18	168	169	337
		12	Ewekoro	3	47	57	104
		13	Ifo	9	99	99	198
		14	Obafemi-Owode	7	80	95	175
		15	Odeda	6	75	74	149
			Sub-total	**52**	**575**	**607**	**1,182**
		16	Ado-Odo/Ota	17	155	154	309
3.	**Ogun West**	17	Yewa North	10	105	105	210
		18	Yewa South	11	113	112	225
		19	Imeko-Afon	5	67	67	134
		20	Ipokia	9	99	101	200
			Sub-total	**52**	**539**	**539**	**1,078**
	Overall Total			**169**	**1,773**	**1,910**	**3,683**

Source: Ogun State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Abeokuta (2020)[3]

Figure 4.1: Age distribution of teachers in public senior secondary schools in Ogun state
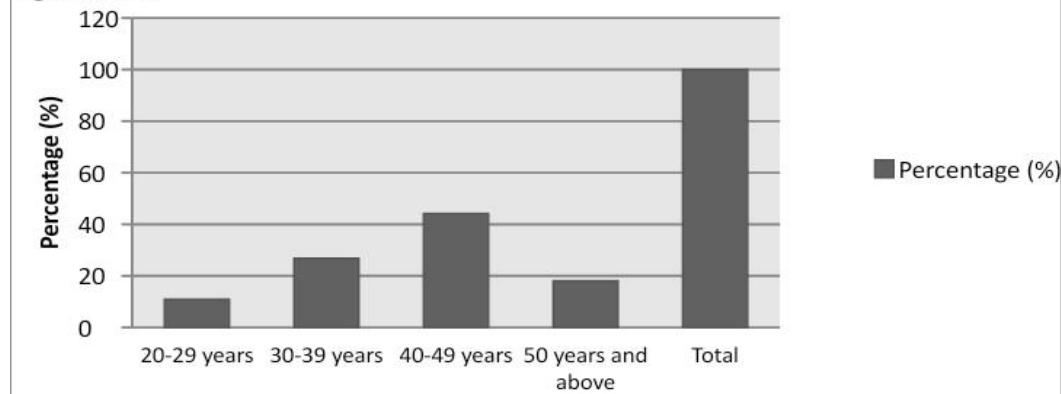
Source: Field study 2020

Figure 4.2: Sex distribution of teachers in public senior secondary schools in Ogun state
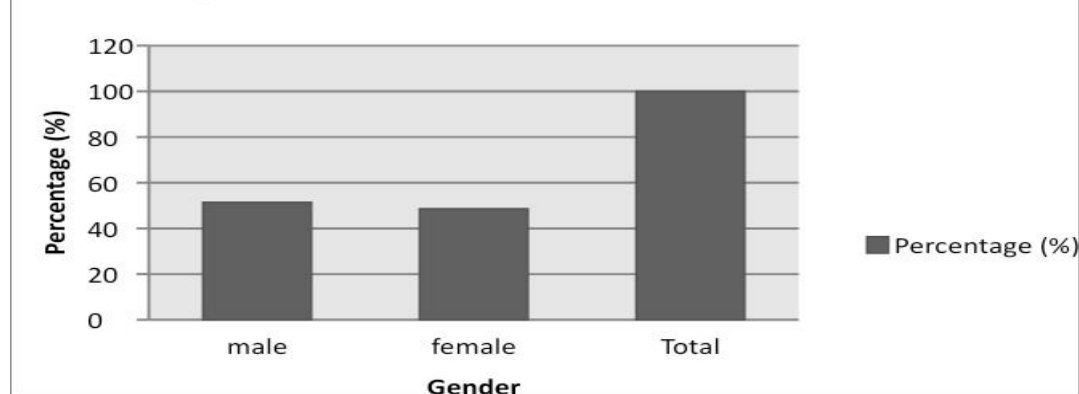
Source: Field study 2020

Figure 4.3: Distribution of teachers educational qualification in public senior secondary schools in Ogun state
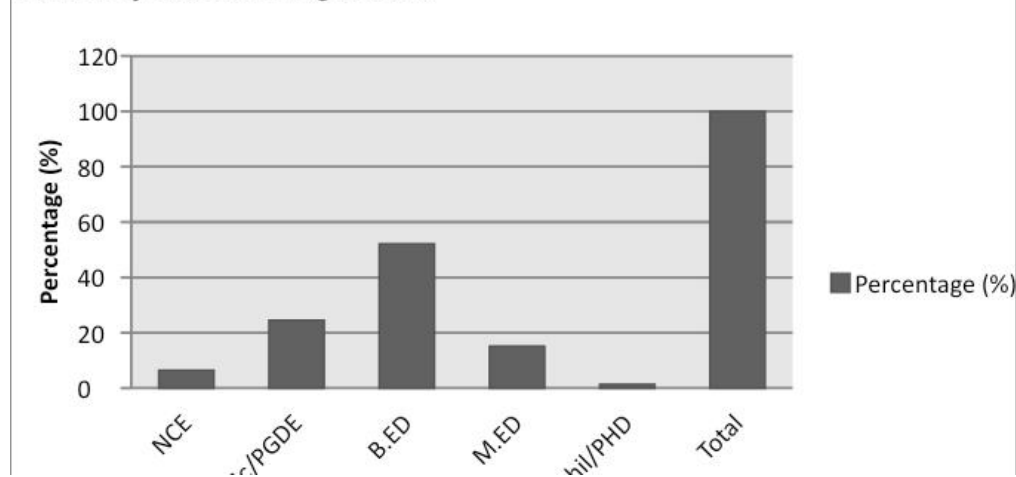
Figure 4.4: Distribution of teaching experience of teachers in public senior secondary schools in Ogun state
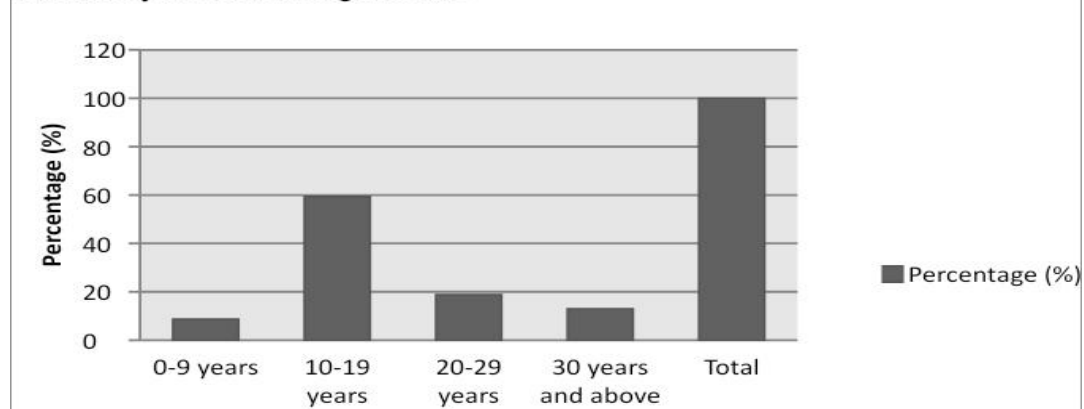
Source: Field study 2020
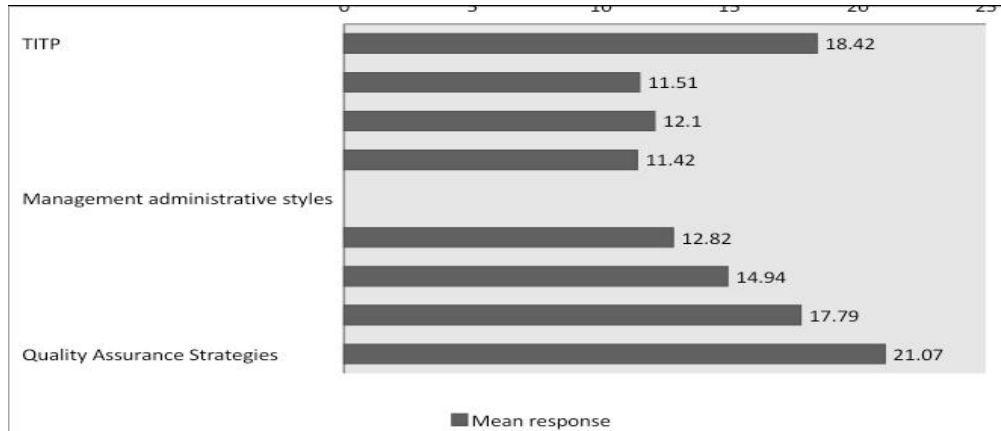
Source: Field study 2020

Figure 4.5: Descriptive mean scores of quality assurance strategies, management administrative styles, and teachers' instructional task performance of respondents in public
senior secondary schools in Ogun state.

Source: Field study 2020

Source: Field study 2020

Figure 4.8: Percentage of teachers with high and low levels of instructional task performance
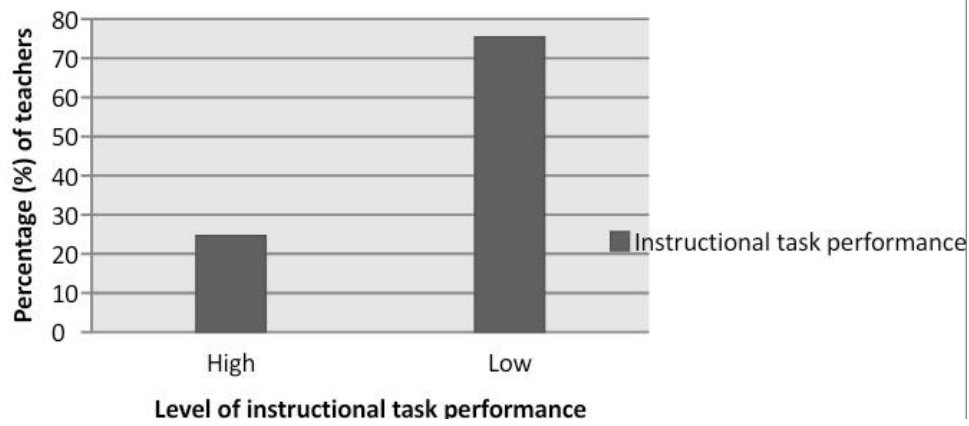
Source: Field study 2020

Article   **Open Access**

DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE FRAMEWORK FOR PLASTIC WASTE-TO-VALUE INITIATIVES IN KADUNA METROPOLIS, NIGERIA

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Abstract
Plastic waste continues to pose a significant threat to the urban environment in Kaduna Metropolis, Nigeria, with current efforts toward its management being fragmented and unsustainable. Informal collectors and recyclers operate in isolation, with little support from structured policy or institutional frameworks. This study aimed to develop a sustainable framework for implementing plastic waste-to-value initiatives by examining current practices, economic viability, and stakeholder-driven strategies in Kaduna. A qualitative research design was adopted, involving five key informant interviews with actors from private recycling firms, government agencies, and regulatory bodies. Thematic content analysis was used to identify recurring themes and practical insights. Findings revealed that while the plastic waste sector has high economic and environmental potential, it is constrained by infrastructural deficiencies, lack of financing, high operational costs, and weak government support. Informal waste pickers are central to the collection system, and private companies demonstrate profitability, yet face sustainability challenges. One key recommendation is the institutionalization of public-private-community partnerships supported by consistent policy, access to finance, and technology adoption. The study concludes that a circular economy approach that integrates informal sectors, enforces regulations, and promotes community participation is essential to transform plastic waste into a valuable economic asset in Kaduna Metropolis.

Keywords: Plastic Waste, Sustainability, Waste-to-value, Circular Economy, Recycling, Kaduna Metropolis

Introduction

Plastic waste is a global environmental challenge, posing significant threats to ecosystems and public health. Developing a sustainable framework for plastic waste-to-value initiatives aims to address this issue. Plastic waste has emerged as one of the most persistent environmental challenges in developing countries, particularly in rapidly urbanizing areas such as Kaduna Metropolis, Nigeria. The widespread use of plastic products—due to their affordability, versatility, and durability—has led to massive environmental degradation, clogging drainage systems, polluting natural ecosystems, and contributing significantly to urban flooding and public health issues (Jambeck et al., 2015; Alabi et al., 2019). Despite increased global awareness of plastic pollution and the potential for recycling as a mitigation strategy, Nigeria continues to struggle with the effective management of plastic waste due to poor infrastructure, low public awareness, limited government involvement, and weak enforcement of environmental regulations (Nwafor & Nwogu, 2021). In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the economic potential embedded in plastic waste recycling, a concept often termed "waste-to-value." This model sees waste not merely as a disposal problem but as a resource with economic and social value. In urban centers like Kaduna, where informal and semi-formal recycling efforts exist, plastic waste-to-value initiatives could offer a sustainable solution by reducing environmental harm while simultaneously creating jobs, enhancing livelihoods, and contributing to the circular economy (Adelekan & Asiyanbi, 2021). However, the success of such initiatives depends heavily on the existence of an enabling framework that integrates institutional support, community participation, financial investment, regulatory mechanisms, and technological innovation (Wilson et al., 2012).

Kaduna Metropolis, like many Nigerian urban centers, faces a mounting plastic waste crisis. Informal waste collectors and recyclers play a substantial role in diverting plastics from landfills, yet their efforts remain fragmented, under-resourced, and largely unsupported by formal policies or institutional frameworks. According to recent field interviews with key stakeholders in the plastic waste recycling sector, challenges such as lack of funding, inadequate sorting infrastructure, high transportation costs, and the absence of regulatory enforcement hinder the scalability and efficiency of recycling operations. Moreover, while companies like CEETEE Recyclers Limited demonstrate the profitability and export potential of plastic recycling, their impact is constrained by inconsistent government support and limited access to advanced technologies. Despite Kaduna State's commitment to promoting sustainable development, there is no cohesive, sustainable framework guiding plastic waste-to-value initiatives. Current efforts are largely reactive, uncoordinated, and fail to leverage community engagement, private sector participation, or national environmental policies effectively. As a result, significant opportunities for economic empowerment, environmental protection, and social development are being lost. Developing a sustainable framework that harmonizes stakeholder efforts, facilitates access to resources, and promotes policy-driven solutions is therefore critical to addressing the growing plastic waste problem in Kaduna Metropolis. This study aims to develop a sustainable framework for implementing plastic waste-to-value initiatives in Kaduna Metropolis, Nigeria. Specifically, it seeks to examine the existing practices, challenges, and opportunities in plastic waste management and conversion in in Kaduna Metropolis, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Clarification: A sustainable framework refers to a structured and long-term strategy that integrates environmental, economic, and social goals to ensure the responsible use of resources without compromising future needs. In the context of waste management, sustainability involves creating systems that minimize environmental harm, promote resource efficiency, and generate economic opportunities (Bringezu et al., 2016). A sustainable framework, therefore, includes supportive policies, stakeholder engagement, funding mechanisms, and technological innovation that work together to maintain continuous and scalable impact over time. Plastic waste comprises discarded plastic materials that are no longer useful in their original form. These materials include single-use plastics such as bottles, bags, packaging, and containers. Due to their non-biodegradable nature, plastic waste poses serious environmental threats, particularly in urban centers where collection and disposal systems are often weak (Jambeck et al., 2015). In Nigeria, and Kaduna specifically, plastic waste has become a visible urban pollutant, contributing to flooding, poor sanitation, and environmental degradation (Nwafor & Nwogu, 2021). Waste-to-value initiatives involve transforming waste materials into economically valuable products, thereby extending their lifecycle and reducing environmental burdens. These initiatives can include mechanical recycling, chemical recycling, or upcycling processes that turn plastic waste into items such as construction materials, textiles, or reusable packaging (Hopewell et al., 2009). Waste-to-value also promotes the circular economy by enabling resource recovery and supporting livelihoods through waste collection, sorting, and processing activities (Wilson et al., 2012).

Theoretical Review

Circular Economy Theory: This study is underpinned by Circular Economy (CE) Theory, which promotes a regenerative system where resource input, waste, emissions, and energy leakage are minimized through closed-loop production cycles. Unlike the traditional linear economy (take–make–dispose), the circular economy emphasizes designing out waste, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013). In the context of plastic waste, CE theory supports the transformation of waste materials into valuable resources through reuse, recycling, and recovery processes. This framework aligns directly with the objectives of the study by advocating for sustainable waste management practices that provide economic value while protecting the environment. Applying CE theory to the Kaduna context enables stakeholders to shift from informal, fragmented waste disposal systems toward integrated, value-generating recycling initiatives. It also highlights the importance of stakeholder collaboration, product lifecycle thinking, and supportive policy frameworks as essential components of a sustainable waste-to-value ecosystem (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017).

Empirical Review: The empirical literature on sustainable framework for implementing plastic waste-to-value initiatives reveals various perspectives and findings. Adelekan and Asiyanbi (2021) conducted a qualitative investigation to examine waste-to-wealth initiatives in Nigerian urban centers, focusing on identifying policy gaps that hinder sustainable waste management. Using semi-structured interviews with key waste actors in Lagos and Ibadan, they applied thematic content analysis to draw insights. Their findings revealed that although informal recycling activities were widespread and contributed to livelihood support, the absence of coherent institutional

coordination and poor implementation of policies significantly restricted the growth of plastic waste-to-value initiatives. Nwafor and Nwogu (2021) aimed to assess the key drivers and barriers to solid waste management in Nigeria. The study collected data through surveys and interviews involving municipal workers and local residents across various urban areas. The researchers analyzed the data using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Their results indicated that inadequate infrastructure, limited public awareness, and poor enforcement of existing waste regulations remained major challenges. They concluded that these structural barriers stifled the potential for effective plastic recycling and waste recovery programs.

Babayemi et al. (2019) evaluated the nature and volume of plastic waste generation in Lagos and assessed its implications for sustainable waste management. The study employed a combination of field sampling and stakeholder interviews, analyzing the data through both quantitative and qualitative methods. Findings indicated that polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and high-density polyethylene (HDPE) plastics were the most commonly generated and recyclable types. However, despite their recyclability, these materials were largely unmanaged due to a weak recycling system and minimal government intervention. Ogunjuyigbe et al. (2017) investigated the socioeconomic impact of recycling activities in Lagos. The study used structured questionnaires administered to individuals working in recycling companies and informal sectors. Statistical tools including regression and chi-square analysis were employed to interpret the data. The findings revealed that recycling provided a significant income stream for low-income households and created job opportunities. Nonetheless, the sector remained underdeveloped due to insufficient institutional support and lack of formal recognition. Oloruntade, Oluwadare, and Adegbite (2021) conducted a household survey across three Nigerian states to assess practices and attitudes related to plastic waste management. Using structured questionnaires, the authors collected and analyzed data using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that while public awareness of plastic waste issues was increasing, behavioral change remained limited. The lack of incentives and infrastructure, such as sorting and recycling centers, discouraged consistent engagement in sustainable practices. Ikebude (2017) examined the effectiveness and sustainability of waste management systems in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The researcher conducted field observations and interviews with waste managers and government officials, analyzing the results using SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. The study found that while there was high potential for recycling, political interference, poor funding, and operational inefficiencies undermined progress toward sustainable waste management.

Oguntona and Arowolo (2020) conducted a study to assess the economic viability of plastic waste recycling in Southwestern Nigeria. Data were gathered through interviews with recycling entrepreneurs and review of financial records. Using cost-benefit analysis, the study demonstrated that plastic waste recycling was economically profitable, particularly for firms engaged in export. However, the researchers noted that lack of access to capital and inadequate government support hindered expansion and innovation in the sector. Agunwamba (2003) focused on waste scavenging as a key component of urban waste management in Nigeria. Data were collected through direct observation and interviews conducted in major urban dumpsites. The study used descriptive analysis to interpret the findings. It concluded that scavengers recovered over 60% of recyclable waste, making them critical to the waste recovery system. However, the study noted that these individuals often worked under hazardous conditions without social protection or policy inclusion. In a similar direction Wilson, Velis, and Cheeseman (2012) undertook a cross-national comparative

study to explore the role of the informal sector in recycling across countries such as Nigeria, India, and Brazil. The researchers relied on case studies and secondary data, applying comparative analysis techniques. Their study found that informal waste pickers played a central role in waste recovery, often recycling more efficiently than formal systems. However, they were largely excluded from official waste management policies, limiting their ability to scale operations and improve working conditions.

Hopewell, Dvorak, and Kosior (2009) provided a global review of the challenges and opportunities in plastic recycling. Drawing on secondary data and published reports, the authors used a narrative review method. Their findings emphasized that the major barriers to plastics recycling included technological limitations, contamination of waste streams, and inconsistent government regulations. They highlighted the need for investment in innovation and policy reform to improve recycling systems globally. Based on the reviewed empirical literature, a key gap was the lack of a context-specific, integrated framework that bring into line policy, private sector, and community-level actions for plastic waste-to-value conversion in Kaduna Metropolis. While many studies emphasize the economic potential of recycling, few provide practical, localized models for implementation in Northern Nigerian cities.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore sustainable framework for implementing plastic waste-to-value initiatives in Kaduna Metropolis, Nigeria. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for gaining in-depth insights into the operational realities, challenges, and enabling factors related to plastic waste-to-value initiatives. The research was conducted in Kaduna Metropolis, the capital of Kaduna State, Nigeria. The area was selected due to its high population density, increasing plastic waste generation, and the presence of active formal and informal recycling actors (Creswell & Poth, 2018).Data were collected through key informant interviews (KIIs) with stakeholders directly involved in plastic waste management and recycling. Participants included representatives from private recycling companies (SPC Integrated Recycling Company; CEETEE Recyclers Ltd), government agencies (Kaduna State Environmental Protection Authority and Kaduna State Ministry of Environment), and regulatory bodies (NESREA). A total of five in-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide. Questions focused on collection practices, conversion processes, economic viability, regulatory challenges, and suggestions for sustainable framework development.

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants with relevant expertise and institutional authority in plastic waste management. This ensured the data collected were rich, context-specific, and aligned with the study objectives. Interview responses were analyzed using thematic content analysis. Transcripts were reviewed, coded, and grouped into thematic categories aligned with the study's objectives: current practices, economic viability, and framework development. This approach allowed for identifying patterns, shared experiences, and divergences among stakeholders (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Anonymity was maintained where requested, and data were used strictly for academic purposes, with full approval from the relevant ethical oversight body at Kaduna State University.

Results and Discussion

This section presents key insights from selected stakeholders in Kaduna Metropolis engaged in plastic waste management and conversion initiatives. These interviews offer practical, institutional, and regulatory perspectives that align with the objective of this study, develop a framework for implementing sustainable plastic waste-to-value initiatives in Kaduna metropolis. On developing a framework for implementing sustainable plastic waste-to-value initiatives this what Mr. Muhammed Zaharadeen Yunus, personal communication Officer of SPC Integrated Recycling Company, explained:

> That company serves as an intermediary in the plastic recycling chain by purchasing sorted plastic waste from local collectors and reselling it to recyclers, without engaging in actual processing. He noted that clear plastics like PET bottles are more valuable, while the business is economically viable - yielding an average monthly profit of ₦150,000 - it faces challenges such as limited storage space, high transportation costs, and inconsistent funding. Yunus emphasized the sector's potential for job creation and environmental benefits. In proposing a framework for sustainable plastic waste-to-value initiatives, Mr. Yunus called for increased government support, better infrastructure, public awareness, and policy reforms to make plastic waste-to-value initiatives more sustainable (KII, 2024).

Regard to the developing of framework for implementing sustainable plastic waste-to-value initiatives this what Mr. Ibrahim Ismail, the CEO of CEETEE Recyclers Limited, described the company:

> The company's operations in processing polyethylene terephthalate (PET), high-density polyethylene (HDPE), and polypropylene (PP) plastics. Their procedures include collecting plastic waste, sorting by color, removing non-compatible materials (e.g., caps and labels), shredding, compressing, and transporting for either local manufacturing or export to European and Asian markets. The company pays its staff using a mixed wage system based on daily trips or kilograms sorted, which has reportedly improved efficiency. Ismail emphasized that exporting materials is more profitable due to exchange rate gains and that demand for recycled products such as packaging, household items, and building materials is consistently rising. He also acknowledged several challenges including high transport costs, insufficient infrastructure, and a lack of direct government support. Although they receive support from NGOs, such as Coca-Cola, Ismail stressed the importance of stronger public-private collaboration and policy frameworks to sustain the industry (KII, 2024).

Developing a framework for implementing sustainable plastic waste-to-value initiatives this what Mr. Bala Thomas Gure, Chief Town Planning Officer at KEPA, described:

> Kaduna's current waste collection model as largely informal and characterized by a "grab and dump" approach. Plastic waste is converted through sorting, washing, heating, and pelletizing. Gure highlighted the role of private companies as primary actors in this ecosystem. He cited sachet leather, plastic

kettles, construction pipes, and automobile parts as major outputs of recycled plastics. Despite efforts, the sector faces challenges such as limited funding, high technology costs, and lack of structured incentives. Informal waste pickers, he noted, remain essential players in this ecosystem. Gure emphasized that with structured policies and community awareness, plastic waste conversion could significantly contribute to employment and environmental sustainability in Kaduna (KII, 2024).

Concerning the developing a framework for implementing sustainable plastic waste-to-value initiatives this what Mr. Hashim Usman, Head of Pollution and Sanitation Control at NESREA in Kaduna State discussed:

> Regulatory mechanisms such as the Pollutant Pay Principle (PPP) and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), which place accountability on producers and promote the engagement of waste collectors. According to Usman, conversion processes typically include manual sorting, washing, and heating of plastics into pellets. Products from recycling include household plastics and automotive components. Usman noted that while there is job creation and increased internal revenue generation, limitations such as high machinery costs, energy challenges, and poor access to funding hinder scalability. He advocated for broader public awareness campaigns, integration of informal collectors, and supportive government regulations to foster a sustainable circular economy (KII, 2024).

On developing a framework for implementing sustainable plastic waste-to-value initiatives this what Mr. Yusuf Usman Mu'azu, Director at the Kaduna State Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, discussed:

> The dual waste management system comprising formal evacuation to dumpsites and informal collection by scavengers. He identified major outputs such as plastic pellets, belts, and packaging materials. Successful models, including Mubeco and Abdulrahman Gumi, demonstrate the viability of the sector. However, technological, financial, and infrastructural constraints persist. Mu'azu stressed that government policy, regulatory enforcement, and data-driven decision-making are essential to the success of plastic waste-to-value frameworks. He further recommended community clustering, public-private partnerships, and the creation of a conducive business environment to attract investment (KII, 2024).

To ensure a sustainable plastic waste-to-value framework, stakeholders emphasized the need for a collaborative and multi-sectoral approach involving government, private sector, NGOs, and local communities (Mr. Yusuf Usman Mu'azu, Director at the Kaduna State Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, 2024; Mr. Bala Thomas Gure, Chief Town Planning Officer at KEPA, 2024). Key elements include policy and regulatory support, consistent government backing, access to financing, public awareness, and training programs (Mr. Hashim Usman, Head of Pollution and Sanitation Control at NESREA in Kaduna State, 2024). Suggestions for sustainability include launching educational campaigns, integrating informal sector actors through community collection centers,

and supporting associations of waste collectors to address sector-wide issues (Muhammed Zaharadeen Yunus personal communication at SPC Integrated Recycling Company, 2024).

Successful models, such as the Lagos dumpsite system where pickers pay for access and sell materials to on-site buyers, were cited as adaptable to Kaduna's context (Gure, 2024). Government tax incentives and regulatory enforcement were highlighted as critical enablers for attracting private investment (Mu'azu, 2024). Stakeholders also stressed the importance of a metrics-based approach for monitoring social, environmental, and economic impacts, such as reduction in plastic pollution, job creation, and revenue increases (Mr. Ibrahim Ismail, the CEO of CEETEE Recyclers Limited, 2024). Public education via media (in local dialects), social media campaigns, workshops, and traditional leader engagement are considered effective strategies to foster behavioral change (Gure, 2024; Usman, 2024). Ultimately, stakeholders advocate for a structured, well-financed, and inclusive framework that leverages data, technology, and grassroots participation to transition from informal waste disposal practices to a circular and profitable plastic waste economy.

These findings align with Adelekan and Asiyanbi (2021), who found that the absence of institutional coordination and policy implementation hinders the expansion of waste-to-wealth initiatives in Nigeria. Similarly, Ogunjuyigbe et al. (2017) observed that informal recycling generates significant income, but is limited by lack of formal recognition. The central role of informal waste pickers noted in this study echoes Wilson et al. (2012), who emphasized their efficiency in waste recovery despite being excluded from formal systems. From a theoretical perspective, the findings support the Circular Economy (CE) Theory, which advocates for resource regeneration through waste reuse, recycling, and closed-loop systems (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013). The informal sector's role in keeping plastics in circulation and private firms' export of processed materials reflect core CE principles. However, without institutional support and policy integration, the system remains incomplete and unsustainable.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that, while Kaduna Metropolis has a vibrant and growing plastic waste recycling sector, its potential is undermined by financial, infrastructural, and regulatory challenges. Informal waste pickers are the bedrock of the collection process, while private recyclers drive the conversion of plastic into valuable products. Based on the findings of this study, a sustainable waste-to-value framework in Kaduna Metropolis must be built on four critical pillars as recommended: policy enforcement, investment in modern technology, public-private collaboration, and inclusive community engagement. Firstly, policy enforcement is essential to ensure compliance with environmental standards and promote accountability across the plastic waste value chain. Regulatory bodies like NESREA and state environmental agencies must not only develop clear waste management policies but also implement and monitor them consistently. Stakeholders emphasized that without enforceable laws and incentives, informal and private actors will continue to operate in isolation, limiting the system's overall efficiency and sustainability. Secondly, investment in modern technology such as plastic sorting machines, pelletizing units, and clean energy-powered transport will address key infrastructure gaps. Respondents, particularly from the private sector, noted that access to affordable and efficient recycling technology is necessary to improve processing capacity, reduce costs, and enhance product quality for both local and international markets. Thirdly, public-private collaboration must be institutionalized through formal partnerships, financing mechanisms, and shared responsibility models. This collaboration would create a

structured ecosystem where government provides enabling policies and infrastructure, while private actors drive innovation and operations.

Finally, inclusive community engagement, especially of informal waste collectors, is vital. Waste pickers are already central to the plastic recovery process and must be integrated into the formal value chain through training, support programs, and the establishment of community collection centers. With this integrated framework in place, Kaduna can transition from reactive waste disposal to a circular economy model where plastic waste is not just managed but leveraged as a source of economic growth, employment, and environmental protection.

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Appendix

Key In-Depth Interview Guide: Developing a Sustainable Framework for Implementing Plastic Waste-to-Value Initiatives

Introduction
This Key In-Depth Interview is to collect information/data to develop a sustainable framework for implementing plastic waste-to-value initiatives in Kaduna Metropolis, Nigeria. We are in your organization to hear your opinions and views. The information provided will be used by Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and Kaduna State University (KASU) to provide policy framework for better programs.

Consent
Do you provide consent to document, use, store and share the information provided for reporting and communication purposes?
☐ Yes ☐ No (if Yes continue KII)
1. **Introduction and Purpose:** Briefly introduce the purpose of the interview and the key areas of focus (practices, viability, and framework). Explain the confidentiality of responses and encourage open, honest feedback.
2. **Interviewee Background:** Ask the interviewee to provide a brief background of their role and experience in plastic waste management.

Develop a Framework for Implementing Sustainable Plastic Waste-to-Value Initiatives
1. From your perspective, what are the essential elements needed to develop a successful plastic waste-to-value framework in Kaduna?
2. What steps would you suggest to make plastic recycling initiatives more sustainable in the long term?
3. How can local communities and informal sectors be better integrated into the waste-to-value chain?
4. What role should local and state governments play in supporting sustainable plastic recycling initiatives?
5. Are there any examples of frameworks from other states or countries that could be adapted for Kaduna State?
6. How can Kaduna State attract private sector investment into sustainable plastic waste conversion?
7. What strategies would you recommend to raise awareness and educate the public about the benefits of plastic waste recycling and reduction?
8. What are the potential environmental and economic impacts of implementing a comprehensive plastic waste-to-value framework?

Thank you for your time
Dr. Dogara Micah
Lead Researcher
Kaduna State University

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INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACHES TO DATA COLLECTION IN *EGUNGUN* MASQUERADE FESTIVAL CONFLICTS AMONG THE IBADAN PEOPLE OF SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

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Abstract
The study of the *Egungun* masquerade festival among indigenous Ibadan scholars faces significant challenges in method and methodology, primarily due to the application of Eurocentric frameworks that often deviate from African cultural and philosophical contexts. Limited attention has been paid to the reliability and validity of data collection and interpretation within the Yoruba heritage, particularly in the context of *Egungun* festival conflicts. This study addresses this gap by examining indigenous philosophical approaches to data collection and interpretation, focusing on the 1976 conflict between *Egungun* Olóòlù and Islamic worshippers in Ibadan, South-West Nigeria. The study employed empirically focused, community-based participatory methods, including oral traditions and site visits for participatory observations. In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with individuals possessing extensive knowledge of the *Egungun* festival in Ibadan, alongside key informant interviews with *Egungun* cult members. The study proposes a culturally grounded framework rooted in Yoruba philosophies of *ajobi* (family kinship) and *Ajogbe* (communal kinship). This paper aims to offer a novel approach to understanding *Egungun* festival conflicts in Ibadan, South-West Nigeria. The adopted framework will undoubtedly encourage scholars to explore new directions in the study of the *Egungun* masquerade festival among the indigenous people of Ibadan, South-west, Niger and elsewhere. .

Keywords: *Egungun* Masquerade, Festival Conflicts, Yoruba Philosophy, Indigenous Methodology, Ibadan.

Introduction

In July 2018, after scheduling a meeting with the head and spiritual leader of one of the most revered *Egungun* in South-West Nigeria, *Egungun* Olóòlù, I realised why vital information about indigenous culture is often not readily accessible. High Chief Kazeem Abija represents two significant cults in Yorubaland: the Ogboni and *Egungun* Olóòlù cults. From a distance, non-initiates

have used stereotypes to define him and his cults. Despite his busy schedule, High Chief Kazeem Abija was prepared to meet me. I noticed that he was not alone, he had arranged for other important individuals to be present. As the stage was set, some more people arrived to listen to our conversation and verify stories they had previously heard about this cult. My encounter with High Chief Kazeem Abija revealed the essence of African indigenous knowledge. Thus, one of the greatest challenges facing contemporary scholars in African studies is the use of methodologies that align with the cultural and philosophical realities of the communities under study. Scholars and organisations, such as the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), have long advocated African-centred approaches, arguing that Western epistemological frameworks often produce findings inapplicable to African contexts (CODESRIA, 2019; Keane and Seehawer, 2017). Consequently, many recommendations from African studies are often irrelevant to the environments in which they were conducted due to inappropriate methodologies. While interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to the study of African culture are increasing, vital ethnographic and historiographical studies have been compromised (Seehawer, 2018). In some cases, core African values can only be expressed within their cultural origins. For instance, among the Yoruba, how can traditional festivals, dances, and other socio-religious practices be captured through a quantitative approach? How can the history that gave rise to them be conveyed through "Yes" or "No" questions?

Among the Yoruba, the *Egungun* festival is an annually event and attracts large crowds from across the globe. Similarly, Islam, a foreign religion, has been embraced by some people in Ibadan. Records document conflicts between these religions in Ibadan (Imaledo, 2024; Adeboye, 2012). Intriguingly, these conflicts often target individuals who are Ibadan by birth or residence. The *Egungun* festival, a religious event, transcends diverse cultures within Ibadan's social life. Social and religious lives among the Yoruba are inseparable, creating an interface between religious festivals and Ibadan's festival culture. Sociologists have often unconsciously applied quantitative methods to research the *Egungun* festival, resulting in inconsistent conclusions that generalise people with diverse and heterogeneous cultural identities and statuses. This is why Nhemachena et al. (2016) concluded that research, particularly by indigenous African scholars, sometimes exacerbates negative perceptions of their culture. This claim underscores the need to examine how Africans project their indigenous knowledge to preserve their history. Against this background, this paper focuses on the 1976 conflict between *Egungun* Olóòlù and Islamic worshippers in Ibadan, employing indigenous philosophical lenses, specifically the Yoruba concepts of *ajobi* and *ajogbe*, to decolonise research methodologies and provide a deeper understanding of these cultural dynamics.

The Yoruba philosophy of *ajobi*is built on familial kinship and collective responsibility, binding individuals to their lineage and ancestors. The word *ajobi*derives from "won jo bi wa," meaning "we came from the same ancestor." *Ajogbe* ("a jo gbe," we live together) revolves around communal harmony and interconnectedness (Akinwowo, 1980). In the context of Ibadan, this philosophy acknowledges Ibadan as a melting pot for diverse Yoruba people in South-West Nigeria. These principles guide social interactions, conflict resolution, and knowledge transmission, shaping how data are collected and interpreted in culturally sensitive research. Using these philosophies challenges Eurocentric assumptions and reconstructs the narrative of *Egungun* festival conflicts through an indigenous lens, ensuring that the voices of Ibadan's people are authentically represented. This approach aims to provide new insight into the uniqueness of qualitative data gathering among Ibadan indigenes and to decolonise research methodologies in African contexts.

Conceptual Clarification

To articulate the themes of this paper and understand the operational concepts defining this study, two reasons are highlighted: first, they facilitate in-depth analysis and valid conclusions; second, the concepts involved are inherently contested. Thus, religion, conflict, indigenous knowledge, *ajobi*, and *Ajogbe* are discussed.

Religion, Conflict, Indigenous Knowledge, Ajobi, and Ajogbe

How can religion be viewed in the context of culture and origin? Addressing this question provides greater clarity on why conflicts arise during religious festivals. What is religion? There is no universal definition of religion. Scholars perceive religion as a belief system rooted in cultural and environmental realities, particularly in Africa (Idowu, 1973; Mbiti, 1975; Agada, 2022). Africans' perception of religion is intertwined with the culture that shapes it. Thus, religion is embedded in the culture that produces it. Abe's (1990) conception of religion is rooted in Buddhist culture. His work emphasised the reformation of orthodox and esoteric Buddhism into a more modernised form, driven by belief in expressions about God. Beyond cultural context, religion manifests in various accessible forms. Among the Yoruba, traditional religion revolves around everyday experiences, explaining their polytheistic nature. The Yoruba worship multiple gods as they manifest in sensory experiences, appreciating nature's role in daily life. For instance, water, which supports growth, crops, animals, and sustenance, is worshipped through *Yemoja* (the water goddess); iron, used for tilling the ground, is similarly revered. These patterns of religious expression clearly reflect the Yoruba's indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is not a novel concept; however, it requires attention to reflect a people's identity. Warren (1991) views indigenous knowledge as the endowment of local people within their environmental context. Ellen and Harris (1996) consider it a natural and cultural way of life, while Crawhall (2006) describes it as belonging to marginalised groups, whose existence is often perceived as less impactful globally. Scholars agree that indigenous knowledge is unique and should be approached as such for better understanding. Moreover, indigenous knowledge, as expressed by a people, does not render them inferior. Indigenous knowledge manifests through religion and festivals, which may lead to conflict when interacting with unfamiliar or unaccommodating cultures.

Philosophy of Ajobi and Ajogbe and *Egungun* in the Culture of Ibadan

The worship of *Egungun* varies across Yoruba regions. This paper focuses on the *Egungun* in Ibadan. The *Egungun* festival is a continuous tradition of the third Ibadan, founded in the 1830s, redating Ibadan as one of the newest Yoruba towns. Although *Egungun* were used in some wars fought by Ibadan, they have always been integral to its culture. Myths recount that Lagelu, the head of Ibadan, and his men publicly disrobed an *Egungun* at the market square during the *Egungun* festival. In response to this taboo among the Yoruba, the Alaafin Sango, supported by the Olowo of Owo, the Awujale of Ijebu, the Alake of Abeokuta, Owa Ilesha, and Orogun Ile-Ila, launched a three-year campaign that devastated Ibadan (Layiwola, 2015). In Yoruba cosmology, ancestors exist between *Aye* (the visible world of the living) and *Orun* (the spiritual and invisible domain of ancestors, gods, and spirits). Ordinary individuals access the visible world by virtue of being human, but accessing *Orun* requires intermediaries, such as ancestors, who bridge the spiritual and invisible realms. Ancestor status is not universal; only those who live to a ripe old age and die "good deaths" qualify. These individuals may represent families, lineages, villages, towns, or kingdoms in the invisible

worlds. Their descendants and associated people regularly seek their intervention (Bamikole, 2013).

As representations of ancestral spirits, the *Egungun* festival is a collective responsibility, with every household member expected to participate actively in Ibadan. During this period, the spirit of a household's founder physically appears as *Egungun*. Cultural norms require household members to hold a vigil the day before the public appearance of their *Egungun* to invoke ancestral spirits. This vigil holds greater spiritual significance than the physical appearance of the *Egungun*. Immediate *Egungun* members use this time to seek divine intervention for issues beyond physical strength, termed *ipenija* (a call for divine intervention). Issues such as barrenness, misfortune, health, and economic challenges are presented individually and collectively to ancestors believed to have the power to alter circumstances (Babalola, 2019). At the special grove of these *Egungun*, within the ancestors' compound, the *Alagbaa* recounts the life and contributions of the ancestor who founded their compound. Typically Ogun worshippers, the *Alagbaa* appease Ogun, Sango, and Esu on behalf of the household and others seeking assistance from their *Egungun*. In Ibadan, the *Egungun* festival last pans three months; from May to July, with feasts every fifth day. In contemporary Ibadan, not all chiefs have *Egungun*. Thus, *Egungun* perform for Ibadan's chiefs in order of seniority, with each chief selecting a day to commemorate their ancestors with relatives. During these visits, eating and drinking occur, with chiefs, elders, and invited guests watching lineage masquerades dance. Some *Egungun*, accompanied by devotees, visit sections of Ibadan, with men and women wearing uniforms specially purchased for the festival.

The philosophical foundations of *ajobi* and *ajogbe*, Yoruba ethos, are evident in the festival's organisation. In Ibadan, there are two types of *Egungun*: *Egungun Ogun* (war masquerades) and *Egungun ebo* (sacred masquerades). All *Egungun Ogun* are family *Egungun*. Ibadan's family settings comprise multiple families headed by a *bale* and an overall *mogaji*. For instance, the Ode Aje family, where Olóòlù resides, oversees over thirty families. Other *Egungun* in Ode Aje may represent each *agbole* (quarters) within this area. For *Egungun ebo*, the only *Egungun* is *Egungun* Olóòlù, a community *Egungun* representing Ibadan's collective belief in the religious cosmology of ancestors (Imaledo, 2024). Thus, *ajobi* manifests in the collective participation of households, where family members honour ancestors through shared rituals, reinforcing lineage ties. *Ajogbe* ensures the festival fosters community unity, as diverse groups celebrate and resolve disputes through dialogue and mutual respect. These principles guide not only the festival's execution but also the research process, ensuring data collection aligns with community values and priorities.

Research Methodology

This paper draws on personal research experiences gathered while examining the conflict between Islamic and Isese religions in Ibadan. The study employed empirically focused, community-based participatory methods designed to align with the Yoruba philosophical principles of *ajobi* and *ajogbe*, ensuring that data collection respects familial and communal values. By prioritising indigenous voices and practices, the study seeks to decolonise research methodologies, offering a model for culturally sensitive inquiry in African contexts. Oral traditions, for instance, tap into Ibadan's rich history of storytelling, preserving and transmitting knowledge across generations. Site visits enabled immersive observation of *Egungun* rituals, providing firsthand insights into their cultural significance. Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with careful attention to cultural protocols, such as respecting custodians' authority and ensuring truthfulness in sacred spaces. These methods collectively ensure that the data reflect the lived experiences and

philosophical worldview of the Ibadan people.

African Indigenous Knowledge and Interview Patterns

African Indigenous Knowledge of Ajobi and Ajogbe in Data Collection: Various methods and patterns exist for conducting interviews in traditional African societies. This section draws on my experiences collecting data between 2015 and 2024 in Ibadan, Oyo State. Three methods are discussed: Focus Group Discussion, Key Informant Interview, and In-depth Interview.

In-depth Interview and Reliability

One strength of cultural studies scholars examining festival religions is the use of in-depth interviewing. As a qualitative research method, in-depth interviewing targets a small number of respondents to explore their viewpoints on the issues under discussion (Boyce and Neale, 2006). A traditional festival like the *Egungun* festival is staged among a cult that may include non-initiates, who are likely to have less in-depth understanding than initiates. This explains why the group of interviewees is often small in such festivals. For instance, Ibadan hosts various Islamic sects, and engaging specific groups narrows the information documented about them. The *Egungun* festival conflict, particularly the one involving *Egungun* Olóòlù, the most revered and contested *Egungun* in Ibadan, exemplifies this. *Egungun* Olóòlù is a religious masquerade highly respected for special ritual sacrifices in certain areas of Ibadan. During my fieldwork, responses to questions about the conflict between followers of *Egungun* Olóòlù and some Islamic worshippers diverged significantly from popular narratives. Respondents' interests and assumptions about the *Egungun* Olóòlù cult varied widely. These respondents were crucial because I carefully selected key insights from their extensive narratives. I further sought individuals with neutral knowledge of the conflict to confirm narratives influenced by other parties' interests.

In a traditional African society like Ibadan, in-depth interviewing can clarify allegations, truths, or generalisations about significant issues. For example, how can one conclude that ritual killings occur during the *Egungun* festival's public procession in Ibadan? This question requires careful consideration, free from sentiment or hasty generalisations. Such revelations could dispel public conflict. Denzin (2001:28) describes in-depth interviewing as a means by which "the personal is made public." In traditional Ibadan settings, truth is vital to uphold the philosophies of *ajobi* and *Ajogbe* (family and community). These philosophies take precedence over religious affiliations where unity is required. Indigenous Ibadan people respect their religion and the cultural festival that defines them. The *Egungun* festival re-echoes the ancestors' role in founding the city. Every Ibadan indigene has an ancestor who lived in a village or city within Ibadan, represented by a *baale* (village representative) or *mogaji* (city representative). The *ajobi* and *Ajogbe* philosophies guide the narratives of Ibadan indigenes who witnessed the *Egungun* festival conflict. For instance, when I asked, "I heard that human beings are used as sacrifices?" the response was, "Omo ti obo bi, obo kin pa, eran aya di ni" (He who came from a woman is not killed by a woman, rather animal is used). This implies that *elegungun* do not use human sacrifices, only animals as substitutes.

Key Informant Interview

For traditional phenomena, Key Informant Interviews bridge gaps between scarce literature and public perceptions or interests. These interviews seek knowledgeable individuals whose rare understanding of the issue is crucial. African indigenous knowledge patterns naturally position

respondents around daily societal issues, reflected in roles such as the Olubadan, members of the Olubadan-in-Council, *mogaji, bale, baale,* and traditional heads of numerous *Isese* religions in Ibadan and other parts of the Yoruba kingdom. Culturally, gatekeepers in traditional African societies serve as custodians of community history. Key Informant Interviews with these custodians preserve their societies. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) recognise storytelling's significance as a tool for preserving a people and their culture. During interviews with key informants for the 1976 *Egungun* festival conflict, a purposive sampling approach selected respondents who were directly involved or had firsthand information. Creswell and Creswell (2017) note that gatekeepers with diverse insights enrich a study. Participants, including the Chief Imam of Ibadanland, the head of *Egungun* in Ibadanland, the custodian of *Egungun* Olóòlù, and Ajagbemokeferi's children, guided data collection. Their societal affiliations and connections to the conflict were considered. As custodians of their generation's and religions' histories, these individuals were key participants, confirming and ratifying data from in-depth interviews and FGDs. Excluding them would reduce the credibility and reliability of data on the conflict between *Egungun* Olóòlù followers and some Islamic worshippers.

Focus Group Discussion in *Egungun* Festival Conflicts

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) are a vital instrument for qualitative data collection. Their importance lies in the belief that interviewing a group together helps guide memories and life stories, avoiding distortions. Alabi and Ukpokolo (2019) note that FGDs enable knowledgeable participants to discuss and debate issues objectively. They advocate objectivity and identify gender equality in these interviews. However, this cannot be generalised within the scope of the of the *Egungun* festival conflict. In most African societies, males and females are not equal in roles or relations. While Western feminist ideologies attempt to penetrate African culture, many advocates are females seeking male responsibilities. This may succeed in some African cultures, but not in the worship of *Egungun* Olóòlù in Ibadan, a focus of this paper. For a female to don the *Egungun* Olóòlù costume is taboo, punishable by death. *Egungun* Olóòlù must not see a female, nor may a female see him: "Ani mo ko ko, eni ko komo" (he who knows him does not meet him, he who meets him does not know him) (Abija, 2018). The *Egungun* cult is male-dominated among the Yoruba. Although some female *Alagbaa* (custodians), known as *Iya Agan*, exist, male cult members lead them, as reflected in the Yoruba saying, "oso loko aje" (wizard is the husband of the witch). Thus, mixed-gender FGDs discussing issues forbidden to females may be restricted to single-gender groups.

The number of FGD participants varies. Ayantayo (2015) suggests four to twelve, grouping them into mini (at least four members) and full FGDs (minimum six). Alabi and Ukpokolo (2019:49) propose five to ten participants without such distinctions. In African monotheistic or polytheistic religions, respect or honour for positions, not individuals, must be considered. Even in colonial religions, Africans reflect their defining culture in rituals. The philosophy of *ajobi* guided participant selection, ensuring family representatives and *Alagbaa* contributed significantly to data collection. *Ajogbe* fostered communal consensus, with participants debating narratives to reach a shared truth. At the Ogunmola compound, Alagbaa Ogunmola and Alagbaa Ibikunle noted their forefathers' close friendship and collaboration in decision-making. This *Ajogbe* bond preserved memories and strengthened frail recollections during data collection, enhancing data trustworthiness and aligning with Yoruba values of collective responsibility and harmony.

Individualist-FGDs of *Egungun* Festival Conflicts

Some FGDs in African studies overlook their individualistic nature. This study introduces "Individualist-FGDs," a method rooted in Yoruba philosophy's emphasis on hierarchical truth-telling. Individualist-FGDs represent an indigenous, philosophically based technique, distinct from Western FGDs dictated by gender and participant numbers. The 1976 *Egungun* festival conflict between *Egungun* Olóòlù and Alhaji Ajagbemokeferi in Ibadan served as an experiment. *Egungun* Olóòlù is primarily ritualistic, with few authorised to speak about him. How could FGDs be conducted? As noted, position, not age, is paramount in African religion. The custodian of *Egungun* Olóòlù, Alhaji Kazeem (Abija), could not be grouped with others to discuss the cult's affairs. In a special room where truth is upheld due to deities that punish lies, the chief custodian sat with six key cult members behind him and five others in front. Questions prompted deliberations. For some, he initiated objective discussions for two reasons: first, the *Egungun* Olóòlù festival is a legal event in Ibadan, opened by the Olubadan; second, Islam in Ibadan allows observance of both religion and culture (*baale*), benefiting the custodian. To ensure truth, he answered questions based on witnesses' conclusions. Among Muslim leaders in interviews on the 1976 conflict, Individualist-FGDs mirrored those of *Egungun* Olóòlù followers. The principal interviewee was the *bale* or *kalifa*, head of the Alhaji Ajagbemokeferi dynasty. Alhaji Kalifa Ajagbemokeferi, who witnessed the conflict as a child, maintained all facts and records. During the interview, he ensured two family members and six members of the central mosque his father built were present. His name, Ajagbemokeferi ("he who speaks the truth at all costs"), welcomed co-respondents' criticism. He restructured questions for deliberation, relaying answers to me, confident in their truth as the household's chief custodian. These Individualist-FGDs reflect the cultural and philosophical importance of trust among Yoruba religious leaders. Cultural considerations determine their feasibility. This Yoruba indigenous and philosophical framework persists across generations, despite foreign religious influences.

Trustworthiness of Data Collection in the *Egungun* Masquerade Festival Conflict among the Indigenous People of Ibadan in South-West Nigeria

The trustworthiness of data is fundamental to a study's validity. Although validity is often associated with quantitative research to verify whether it meets its aims and objectives (Joppe, 2002), it is equally significant in qualitative research. LeCompte (1990:31–62) suggests that the accuracy and reliability of findings are central to validity. Within the context of the *Egungun* Masquerade Festival Conflict among Ibadan's indigenous people, indigenous knowledge systems ensure accuracy and trustworthiness. My fieldwork findings incorporate gods, reputations, response patterns, and published texts.

The God/gods

The influence of gods is pivotal in ensuring data reliability. My experience indicates that the average indigenous Ibadan individual is acutely aware of divine presence in human affairs. In this study, this presence is conceptualised as God, understood as Allah, Olodumare, or Olorun. For *Egungun* worshippers, Olodumare is the supreme deity, preferred over Olorun. Subordinate deities, including Ogun, Sango, Yemoja, and Egungbe, complement Olodumare. Both *Egungun* adherents and Muslims carry sacred symbols of these deities. For Muslims, these include the Koran and rosary; for *Egungun* followers, symbols include a red cloth around the neck, beads on the neck and hands, and uniquely designed sticks representing specific deities. These symbols safeguard against

falsehood during interviews. A devout Muslim would not lie while holding the Koran, just as an *elegungun* would not speak falsely in Ogun's presence. This reverence enhances data trustworthiness, particularly in the conflict between *Egungun* Olóòlù followers and certain Islamic worshippers.

Reputation and Oral Preservation of History

Reputation, as an individual's cultivated image, shapes data collection for *Egungun* Masquerade Festival Conflicts. Adeboye (1998) explores how communities sustain identity rather than compromise it through conflicts. Many informants allowed mentees and families to engage in discussions critical to cultural survival. Most respondents, regardless of religion, consciously transmitted accurate narratives to future generations, either as eyewitnesses or to safeguard family honour by providing precise accounts. Local historians present during discussions corrected memory lapses, reinforcing collective recollection.

Published Texts on the Subject Matter

Published texts on the conflict between *Egungun* Olóòlù followers and certain Islamic worshippers are limited, primarily in select newspapers. The Tribune Newspaper played a crucial role in preserving the 1976 Ibadan conflict, documenting its causes and resolutions. Newspaper reports corroborated interviews and verified their cultural alignment with Ibadan's traditions. Comparing sources, I reviewed direct interviews with key figures like Alhaji Ajagbemokeferi and *Egungun* Olóòlù, attended by crowds, many still alive. Their insights enriched the study and guided accurate conflict reconstruction.

Conclusion

This paper's primary objective is to explore African indigenous knowledge's role in reconstructing historical narratives. Examining the conflict between Alhaji Ajagbemokeferi and *Egungun* Olóòlù, the focus was on how respondents preserved narratives to ensure data reliability, not the conflict itself..

Recommendations

To advance research on Egungun festival conflicts and similar cultural phenomena, the following recommendations are proposed, grounded in the Yoruba philosophies of *ajobi* and *ajogbe*:

S/N	Recommendation	Description	Expected Outcome
1	Adopt Indigenous Methodologies	Scholars should prioritise qualitative methods like in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and Individualist-FGDs, aligning with *ajobi* and *ajogbe* to capture culturally nuanced data. Training in Yoruba philosophical frameworks should be integrated into research design	Enhanced authenticity and reliability of data, leading to culturally relevant findings that resonate with Ibadan communities.
2	Foster Community Collaboration	| Engage scholars who are Egungun cult members, Islamic leaders, and Ibadan indigenes as co-researchers to co-design studies. Use *ajogbe* principles to build	Increased community trust, richer data from insider perspectives, and reduced risk of misinterpretation.

		trust and ensure community ownership of research outcomes.	
3	Promote Interdisciplinary Research	Encourage collaboration between anthropologists, historians, sociologists, philosophy and religious studies scholars to study festival conflicts holistically, integrating *ajobi* for familial context and *ajogbe* for communal dynamics	Comprehensive insights into cultural conflicts, fostering innovative approaches to conflict resolution

The paper recommends that thoughtfully applied qualitative research methods can significantly aid in reconstructing African histories.

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YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND RISING INFLATION IN NIGERIA: A CALL FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES

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Abstract
Nigeria is facing a dual economic challenge: persistently high youth unemployment and escalating inflation. This paper explores the interconnectedness of these two critical issues and argues that without sustainable economic empowerment strategies targeting youth, the nation risks deepening its socio-economic crisis. Drawing on current data and policy reviews, the paper presents an overview of Nigeria's economic situation, highlighting how inflation reduces the purchasing power of households and hampers job creation, particularly for the youth. It examines the cyclical relationship between youth unemployment and inflation- where rising costs limit opportunities and joblessness which further exacerbates poverty and inflationary pressure. The paper also discusses the socio-economic consequences of these trends, such as increased crime rates, youth migration, social instability, and weakened national productivity. It critiques existing government interventions such as N-Power and the Youth Empowerment Fund, identifying systemic challenges like corruption, poor implementation and inadequate funding. To break this cycle, the paper proposes a set of sustainable strategies: promoting skills acquisition and vocational education aligned with market needs, improving access to youth-friendly credit and grants, supporting entrepreneurship and innovation, fostering public-private partnerships, and ensuring inclusive economic policy reforms. The paper makes a strong case for placing youth at the center of Nigeria's economic recovery agenda by advocating for inclusive, practical, and scalable interventions. It concludes with a call to action for policymakers, private sector stakeholders, and development partners to prioritize sustainable empowerment strategies as a pathway to stability, economic growth, and long-term national development.

Keywords: Youth Unemployment, Inflation, Economic Empowerment, Sustainable Strategies, N-Power.

Introduction
Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, is currently grappling with two significant macroeconomic challenges- youth unemployment and rising inflation- that continue to erode its economic

foundation and threaten national stability. Despite being richly endowed with natural and human resources, Nigeria's economy has persistently struggled with job creation, especially for its youthful population, even as inflation steadily diminishes purchasing power, living standards, and business competitiveness. The convergence of these two economic adversities has compounded socio-economic distress and widened the gap between the privileged and the marginalized, especially among young people. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023), Nigeria's youth unemployment rate stood at 53.4%, representing more than half of its youth workforce aged between 15 and 34 years. This alarming figure is further compounded by the country's inflation rate, which climbed to 28.9% in December 2023, driven by food price hikes, fuel subsidy removal, naira devaluation, and persistent insecurity disrupting agricultural production. Inflation not only reduces the real value of wages but also weakens consumer demand, discourages investment, and further constrains the labor market. However, inflation increased to 32.70% in September, 2024 and further rise to 33.88% in October same year. Contrary to this upward trend in inflation, youth unemployment dropped from 8.40% in the second quarter of 2024 to 6.50% in the first quarter of the same year. Yet projections for 2025 shows that youth unemployment in the country will remain between 6.8% to 8.2% as inflation dropped to 23.71% in April, 2025 and further declined to 22.97% in May same year.

The interplay between youth unemployment and inflation presents a vicious economic cycle: high inflation leads to rising costs of living, which deters employers from expanding their workforce, thereby increasing unemployment. Conversely, a large pool of unemployed youth limits economic productivity and growth, weakening the state's ability to implement effective monetary and fiscal policies to tame inflation. This dual crisis has serious implications (not just for the economy) but also for national security, public health, and the country's long-term development.

While the Nigerian government has introduced various youth empowerment programs such as N-Power, Youth Entrepreneurship Support (YES), and YouWin, their impact has been limited due to poor implementation, inadequate funding, lack of coordination, and the absence of long-term sustainability frameworks (Adebayo, 2022; Eze & Oladipo, 2023). Many of these interventions are reactive and politically driven, lacking strategic alignment with the broader structural challenges facing Nigeria's economy. Meanwhile, the private sector and non-governmental organizations have made commendable efforts in promoting youth skills training and entrepreneurship, yet such initiatives remain insufficient in scale and reach to meaningfully reverse current unemployment trends. Nigeria's economic future is intricately tied to how it responds to the pressing challenges of youth unemployment and inflation. Without decisive action, the nation risks further economic stagnation, increased social unrest, and a deepening cycle of poverty.

Youth Unemployment and Inflation

The economic realities of youth unemployment and inflation are complex, yet they are deeply interconnected in Nigeria's macroeconomic landscape. Understanding the relationship between these two critical issues is essential for designing effective policies and interventions. While each presents its own set of challenges, their convergence creates a compounded crisis that disproportionately affects the youth and undermines national development. Youth unemployment refers to the situation where individuals between the ages of 15 and 34 are willing and able to work but cannot find suitable employment. In Nigeria, this phenomenon has reached alarming levels. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023), more than half of Nigeria's youth

population is either unemployed or underemployed. This figure includes graduates, school leavers, and vocationally trained individuals who, despite their qualifications, are unable to secure decent work. The situation is even direr in rural areas, where opportunities are fewer and access to resources such as training, capital, and information is limited. Contributing factors to youth unemployment in Nigeria are many but notable among them is inflation. Inflation, defined as the persistent increase in the general price level of goods and services over time, has also posed a serious threat to economic stability in Nigeria. Recent data from the NBS (2023) shows that Nigeria's inflation rate rose to 28.9% as of December 2023, driven primarily by food inflation, currency depreciation, energy cost spikes, and disruptions in domestic production. Food inflation alone exceeded 33%, disproportionately impacting low-income and unemployed populations, including the youth, who spend a larger share of their income on basic necessities.

Inflation reduces the purchasing power of consumers, erodes savings, discourages investment, and increases the cost of doing business. For unemployed youths, this creates a triple burden: the inability to earn income, rising living costs, and limited entrepreneurial opportunities due to high input prices. These factors combine to create economic disillusionment and a sense of hopelessness, especially among educated but idle youth. The link between youth unemployment and inflation is both direct and indirect, forming a mutually reinforcing cycle. One of the theoretical foundations explaining this relationship is the Phillips Curve, which suggests an inverse relationship between inflation and unemployment. However, in the Nigerian context, both high inflation and high unemployment coexist- a situation known as stagflation. This anomaly reflects structural weaknesses in the economy, such as dependence on imports, low productivity, poor infrastructure, and policy inconsistencies (Akanbi & Okeke, 2021). High inflation discourages firms from expanding due to uncertain costs and weak consumer demand, thereby limiting job creation. At the same time, high unemployment weakens overall economic demand, which should theoretically lower inflation, but in Nigeria's case, supply-side constraints like fuel scarcity, logistics challenges, and insecurity drive prices upward regardless of consumer demand levels. The result is a stagnant economy in which inflation persists alongside high levels of youth unemployment. Furthermore, inflation undermines the effectiveness of any income earned by young people, particularly in the informal sector where wages are low and unregulated. For those attempting self-employment, inflation raises startup costs, reduces profit margins, and limits scalability. Consequently, many youths find themselves trapped in a cycle of economic inactivity or unsustainable livelihood strategies, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation, crime, and political manipulation.

The dual crisis of inflation and youth unemployment threatens not only economic growth but also social cohesion. A large population of unemployed and economically marginalized youth poses significant risks to national security, as they become susceptible to radicalization, banditry, and involvement in organized crime (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2022). Moreover, the erosion of purchasing power caused by inflation means that even employed youths are not immune from hardship, leading to widespread disaffection and potential civil unrest. Addressing this crisis requires policymakers to view inflation and unemployment not as isolated issues but as interconnected challenges demanding integrated responses. Strategies such as targeted subsidies for youth-led enterprises, investment in agro-industrial value chains, and monetary policies that stabilize the naira without stifling productive sectors are essential. Understanding the linkage between inflation and unemployment helps illuminate the urgent need for coordinated fiscal and macroeconomic planning, especially in a youthful and volatile demographic context like Nigeria.

Socio-Economic Consequences of Youth Unemployment and Rising Inflation

Youth unemployment and rising inflation are dual socio-economic challenges that significantly impede both individual advancement and national development in Nigeria. At the individual level, the lack of stable and gainful employment among young people leads to a decline in living standards, frustration, and loss of self-worth. With inflation eroding the purchasing power of income, even those with jobs struggle to meet basic needs. For the unemployed, the situation is dire—they face increased vulnerability to poverty, food insecurity, homelessness, and social marginalization (NBS, 2023).The combined effect of unemployment and inflation fuels a rise in crime rates. Disillusioned and desperate youths are more likely to engage in illegal activities such as cybercrime, drug trafficking, armed robbery, and kidnapping. This not only threatens societal peace and security but also burdens the criminal justice and law enforcement systems (Adebayo, 2013). Moreover, youth who feel economically excluded may become susceptible to political manipulation and recruitment into violent or extremist groups, leading to increased social unrest and instability in the country (Igbuzor, 2011). Migration, both internal and international, is another direct consequence. A significant number of Nigerian youths migrate to urban centers or overseas in search of better opportunities, often risking their lives in dangerous journeys through the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea. This brain drain results in the loss of skilled and semi-skilled human resources, which could have been harnessed to drive national development (Akinyemi, et al., 2012). At the same time, the over-concentration of youth in urban areas without corresponding job creation and infrastructural support leads to urban congestion, housing shortages, and strained public services. Low productivity is another profound effect of youth unemployment and inflation. With a large segment of the population idle or underemployed, the country fails to fully utilize its human capital potential. Inflation further discourages investment in business and entrepreneurship, reducing output levels across sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services (World Bank, 2022). This stagnation in productivity undermines economic growth and weakens Nigeria's competitiveness in the global market.

The long-term implications of persistent youth unemployment and inflation in Nigeria are grave and far-reaching. One of the most significant consequences is the diminishing of human capital. When young people are unemployed for extended periods, their skills become obsolete, and their motivation to seek employment diminishes. The lack of access to decent jobs also discourages investment in education and skill acquisition, leading to a generation that is ill-equipped to meet the demands of the labor market (Ogunlela, 2020).A weakened human capital base has direct implications for the country's economic growth. Without a skilled, productive, and motivated workforce, economic development becomes unsustainable. The economy becomes heavily dependent on imports and foreign aid, while sectors that could generate employment and revenue (such as agriculture, manufacturing, and technology) remain underdeveloped (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2021). The rising dependency ratio is another long-term concern. When a significant proportion of the population is not economically productive, the burden of care falls on the employed minority and the government. This situation is unsustainable, particularly in a country like Nigeria with a rapidly growing population. Increased dependency strains public resources and social welfare systems, and limits the capacity for infrastructure development, healthcare delivery, and educational investment (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2022).Furthermore, the erosion of trust in government institutions may result from the perceived failure to address these economic challenges. Youths may become disengaged

from civic participation, further weakening democratic governance and social cohesion. The loss of faith in the system can foster apathy or radical opposition, threatening political stability and national unity (Emeh, 2012).

The socio-economic consequences of youth unemployment and rising inflation in Nigeria are interconnected. They threaten not only the immediate welfare of the youth but also the long-term stability and prosperity of the nation. Addressing these issues requires urgent and comprehensive economic empowerment strategies that focus on education, skills development, entrepreneurship, job creation, and inflation control. Only through inclusive and sustainable economic policies can Nigeria harness the potential of its youth and steer the country toward long-term development and stability.

Existing Government Interventions: Gaps and Challenges

Over the past two decades, the Nigerian government has implemented several policies and programs aimed at tackling youth unemployment and fostering economic empowerment. These initiatives, while laudable in intent, have often struggled to achieve their objectives due to systemic weaknesses. One of the most prominent interventions is the N-Power Programme, launched in 2016 under the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP). Designed to provide temporary employment, skills acquisition, and capacity building for unemployed graduates and non-graduates, N-Power targeted areas such as education, health, agriculture, and technology (National Social Investment Office [NSIO], 2017). While millions of youths benefited from stipends and training, the program's long-term sustainability and ability to secure permanent employment for beneficiaries remain in question. Similarly, the Youth Empowerment Fund (YEF) was created to support youth-owned businesses through grants and training. Although this initiative aimed to encourage entrepreneurship, its impact has been limited due to poor coordination and lack of consistent funding (Iwayemi, 2013). Another key intervention is the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)'s series of youth-targeted schemes, including the Agric-Business/Small and Medium Enterprises Investment Scheme (AGSMEIS)and the Targeted Credit Facility (TCF)introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These programs offer loans and grants to young entrepreneurs and SMEs, especially in agriculture and non-oil sectors (CBN, 2021). While innovative, these efforts have not been evenly accessible across regions and often face bureaucratic bottlenecks.

Despite the proliferation of these programs, unemployment among Nigerian youths continues to rise. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2023), youth unemployment reached over 42% in 2022, signaling disconnect between policy design and actual socioeconomic realities. The persistent inefficacy of youth empowerment interventions in Nigeria can be traced to several interrelated challenges. Corruption remains one of the most significant obstacles. Allegations of embezzlement, favoritism in beneficiary selection, and mismanagement of funds have undermined public trust and diminished the effectiveness of many initiatives (Transparency International, 2022). In some cases, funds earmarked for youth development are diverted for political patronage or remain unaccounted for. Poor implementation mechanisms further limit the success of these programs. Many initiatives lack clear performance indicators, monitoring frameworks, and feedback systems. This absence of accountability results in low impact and failure to address the needs of the most vulnerable youth populations, especially those in rural areas (Akinyemi, et al., 2012).

Another key issue is the lack of policy continuity. Successive governments often abandon or alter youth empowerment programs initiated by their predecessors. For instance, while N-Power initially gained traction, delays in stipend payments, lack of exit strategies, and uncertainty about program continuation have demotivated participants (Emeh, 2012). This inconsistency hampers long-term planning and discourages youth from engaging with such schemes meaningfully. Additionally**,** inadequate funding poses a severe limitation. Many programs are underfunded or experience delayed budgetary releases, making it difficult to reach the intended number of beneficiaries or provide quality support services (World Bank, 2022). Funding constraints are often exacerbated by broader economic instability and the inflationary pressures affecting the nation. The cumulative effect of these challenges is the failure to translate government intentions into tangible outcomes. As a result, the youth population continues to grow disillusioned, with many turning to informal or illicit means of survival. Without a strategic overhaul that emphasizes transparency, inclusiveness, and sustainability, current interventions may only offer temporary relief rather than long-term solutions. While the Nigerian government has initiated several promising programs to address youth unemployment, systemic flaws such as corruption, poor implementation, discontinuity, and underfunding have significantly undermined their success. There is an urgent need for a more coherent, well-funded, and transparent approach to economic empowerment that aligns with the realities of inflation and the expanding youth demographic. Collaborative efforts involving government, private sector, and civil society are essential for building resilient structures that support meaningful youth engagement and sustainable development.

Proposed Sustainable Economic Empowerment Strategies
The persistent challenges of youth unemployment and inflation in Nigeria demand comprehensive, forward-thinking, and sustainable strategies. To move from reactive interventions to long-term solutions, it is essential to empower Nigerian youths with the tools, support systems, and enabling environments they need to thrive in a competitive and evolving global economy.

Promoting Skills Acquisition and Vocational Education: One of the most effective strategies to address youth unemployment is the promotion of skills acquisition and vocational education. Traditional education systems in Nigeria often emphasize theoretical knowledge over practical skills, leading to a mismatch between graduates' competencies and market demands. Therefore, realigning educational and vocational training curricula to match current industry needs and technology trends is essential (Okolie, et al., 2019).Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) should be repositioned as a central pillar of national development. Skills in digital technology, renewable energy, agri-tech, health services, and construction are increasingly valuable in Nigeria's changing labor market. Public and private training centers should adopt competency-based models and integrate digital tools to deliver scalable and relevant training to urban and rural youth alike (UNESCO, 2022).

Enhancing Access to Youth-Friendly Credit and Grants: Access to capital remains a major barrier for aspiring young entrepreneurs. Conventional financial institutions often require collateral and offer high interest rates, which are prohibitive for youths. To overcome this, the government and financial stakeholders should scale up youth-friendly credit and grant schemes, including microfinance programs, low-interest loans, and cooperative models.Community-based financing

through youth savings groups, credit unions, and cooperative societies has shown promise in promoting financial inclusion. These models can be further supported through capacity-building on financial literacy and business planning. The expansion of credit facilities like the CBN's AGSMEIS and the NIRSAL Microfinance Bank's youth entrepreneurship loans must be made more transparent, equitable, and decentralized to reach underserved communities (CBN, 2021).

Strengthening Entrepreneurship and Innovation Ecosystems: To build a resilient economy, Nigeria must invest in entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems that support youth-led businesses from ideation to scale. This includes establishing innovation hubs, business incubators, and accelerators that offer mentorship, seed funding, and workspace. Additionally, digital platforms can be leveraged to connect young entrepreneurs with markets, supply chains, and investors. Rural enterprise development should not be neglected. Supporting agro-based entrepreneurship, processing industries, and small-scale manufacturing in rural areas will not only reduce youth migration but also stimulate inclusive local economic development. Furthermore, digital literacy and e-commerce training are vital to ensure that Nigerian youth can tap into the growing digital economy.

Public-Private Partnerships: Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are critical for bridging the skills gap and creating sustainable employment. Governments must collaborate with private sector actors to co-design and implement training programs aligned with industry needs. This includes apprenticeship schemes, internship placements, and job-matching services that ensure youth are employable upon completion of training. Industries can also support capacity development by investing in skill centers, offering certification programs, and participating in curriculum development. For instance, sectors such as ICT, agriculture, and renewable energy present vast opportunities for PPP-led job creation initiatives that integrate youths into emerging value chains (ILO, 2021).

Policy Reforms for Inclusive Economic Planning: To ensure the long-term effectiveness of economic empowerment strategies, there must be policy reforms that promote inclusive and youth-centered planning. Young people must be involved in decision-making processes that affect their economic future. This includes creating advisory bodies, youth parliaments, and consultative platforms that integrate youth voices in policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation (UNDP, 2022).Governments at all levels should institutionalize youth representation in national economic councils and budgeting processes. Moreover, policies must be aligned with demographic realities, gender equity, and regional inclusion. For example, targeted support for young women, persons with disabilities, and rural youth will ensure that no demographic is left behind in the pursuit of national development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Youth unemployment and rising inflation remain two of the most pressing challenges confronting Nigeria today. This paper has highlighted how the combination of limited job opportunities, a growing youth population, and soaring costs of living continues to erode economic stability and social cohesion. It has also emphasized the inadequacy of short-term palliatives and emphasized the urgent need for long-term, sustainable economic empowerment strategies. Without such targeted interventions, Nigeria risks facing a deepening crisis that not only marginalizes its youth

but also threatens national development and peace. Therefore, there is an urgent call to action for policymakers, stakeholders, and development partners to implement inclusive, practical, and scalable solutions. These must focus on skills development, entrepreneurship, access to credit, and job creation across key sectors while addressing inflation pressure in the economy. Empowering the youth is not just a moral and economic imperative, it is essential for Nigeria's future prosperity and stability. The following recommendations were provided by the paper in order to ensure a robust sustainable economic development in Nigeria:

i.   The government should take measure to tackle the inflationary pressure in the country as a way of boosting consumer demand as well as private sector confidence in the economy.

ii. Sustainable microcredit and grant schemes should be developed to empower youth entrepreneurs. Government agencies, banks, and development partners must ensure that youth-friendly loan policies with low interest rates and minimal collateral requirements are accessible to young innovators and startups.

iii. Given Nigeria's vast agricultural potential, policies should focus on attracting youth to agribusiness by offering modern tools, training, land access, and market linkages. This approach would create employment while enhancing food security and reducing inflation caused by high food prices.

iv. The government must ensure that economic reforms and policies are inclusive of youth concerns. Reducing corruption, simplifying business registration processes, and improving infrastructure will create a more enabling environment for youth employment and investment.

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EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS (SEC) AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS IN SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS: A STUDY OF SABON GARI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study investigates the effect of socioeconomic status (SEC) on academic performance of senior secondary school students. The research aims to explore the relationship between socioeconomic factors, such as parental income, education level, and occupation, and students' academic achievement. A sample of senior secondary school students will be selected, and data will be collected through surveys and academic records. A mixed method of data collection was employed. The findings indicated that students from high socioeconomic status families performed better than those from low socioeconomic status families. The study concluded that there is a strong correlation between socioeconomic statue of students and their corresponding academic performance.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Parental Education, Parental Income, Parental Occupational, Socioeconomic Status

Introduction

Education is widely recognized as a critical factor influencing an individual's social and economic success, as it provides a pathway to improved opportunities and a better quality of life (OECD, 2020). Academic achievement, measured by factors such as test scores, grade point averages, and educational attainment, is often considered a crucial indicator of educational success (Sirin, 2022). However, numerous studies have consistently demonstrated that socio-economic status (SES) plays a significant role in shaping academic achievement outcomes (Reardon, 2011; Sirin, 2022). Socio-economic status refers to the social and economic position of individuals or families within a society, encompassing various dimensions such as income, parental education level, occupation, and access to resources and opportunities (Mistry et. al., 2021). SES is a multifaceted construct that reflects both

material and social advantages or disadvantages (Duncan & Magnuson, 2012). It is well-established in research that individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds tend to have better access to educational resources, including quality schools, tutoring, books, and technology, which can contribute to enhanced academic performance (Reardon, 2011; Sirin, 2022; Duncan & Magnuson, 2012). Research has shown over and over again that there is a strong link between socio-economic standing and academic success. Several studies (Sirin, 2022, Reardon, 2011) have found that students from higher SES backgrounds tend to do better than their friends from lower SES backgrounds in terms of test scores, grades, and education (OECD, 2019). Different countries and educational systems have seen these differences in how well people do in school based on their Socio-economic standing.

Different things can cause a person's socioeconomic position to affect how well they do in school. First, families with a higher SES often have more money to spend on their children's education, giving them access to good schools, private tutoring, and activities that help them learn more. (Reardon, 2011; Pong, 2024) These tools can help make learning easier and provide more learning opportunities that help students do well in school. These things can help students build skills, attitudes, and behaviours that are valued in the education system, which can help them do better in school. (Sirin, 2022). But it is important to keep in mind that the link between Socio-economic standing and academic success is complicated and affected by many things. Even though higher SES is usually linked to better school results, there are exceptions and differences within and between countries. Some studies have found that some kids from poor backgrounds do very well in school even though they face a lot of social and economic problems. Second, parental schooling, which is a part of SES, has been found to be a strong predictor of how well children do in school. Parents with more education usually know more about how the school system works and have the skills and information to help their children learn. They are more likely to do educational things at home, help with schoolwork, and encourage a good attitude toward learning. (Reardon, 2011). Also, a student's social and cultural capital can be affected by their Socio-economic level, which can have an effect on how well they do in school. Students from higher SES backgrounds often have access to a wider range of resources, such as educational role models, cultural experiences, and social ties.

Statement of the Problem

This study seeks to explore the effect of socioeconomic status (SES) on the academic performance of senior secondary school students. Lower socioeconomic individuals are facing a numbers of problems in the daily activities not even in term of academic tussles alone. Socioeconomic status, which encompasses a wide range of factors such as family income, parental education levels, and occupation, poor orientation is often linked to disparities in educational resources, support systems, and opportunities available to students. These factors can significantly influence students' academic achievements, attitudes toward school, and overall performance of students. In many communities such as Kaduna, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may face numerous challenges such inadequate academic utensils, poor educational environment, inadequate school facilities, like, (chairs, seating on the floor and alike), and lack of academic support at home, may contribute to poorer academic outcomes. Now, researches indicate that, students from lower socioeconomic background are overall in the classes in all universities, polytechnic, college of education and colleges. Understanding the extent and nature of these effects is essential to developing effective interventions that support students from disadvantaged backgrounds and promote equity in

educational outcomes. Therefore, this study aims to discuss the relationship between socioeconomic status and academic performance among senior secondary school students. It will explore how different SES levels impact students' academic achievements and identify factors that may mediate this relationship.

Conceptual Explication

Academic Performance: Academic performance represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that are the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college, and university. School systems mostly define cognitive goals that either apply across multiple subject areas (e.g., critical thinking) or include the acquisition of knowledge and understanding in a specific intellectual domain (e.g., numeracy, literacy, science and history). Therefore, academic achievement should be considered to be a multifaceted construct that comprises different domains of learning. Because the field of academic achievement is very wide ranging and covering a broad variety of educational outcomes, the definition of academic achievement depends on the indicators used to measure it (Reardon, 2011).

Socioeconomic Status: Socioeconomic status (SES) encompasses not just income but also educational attainment, financial security, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class. Socioeconomic status can encompass quality of life attributes as well as the opportunities and privileges afforded to people within society. Socioeconomic status is a consistent and reliable predictor of a vast array of outcomes across the life span, including physical and psychological health. Thus, SES is relevant to all realms of behavioral and social science, including research, practice, education, and advocacy (Diemer & Blustein, 2022).

The Influence of Socioeconomic Status on Academic Achievement

Socio Economic status is the most important variable in determining the Academic Achievement of students. Increasingly, researchers examined educational processes, including academic achievement, in relation to socio economic background. (Bornstein, Bradley, 2019; Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, 1997; Coleman1988; McLoyd, 1998). The Socio Economic Status of a child is most commonly determined by combining parents' educational level, occupational status and income level (Jeynes 2002).Studies have repeatedly found that SES affects student's outcomes. McLoyd, 1998).

Researchers found that the Socio economic Status, parental involvement and family size are particularly important family factors, Majoribanks1996. Families with high socio economic status often have more success in preparing their young children for school because they have access to a wide range of resources to promote and support young children's development. They are able to provide their young children with high quality care, amenities and facilities. Crnic, Lamberty (1994), discussed the impact of socio economic status on children's readiness for school. White (1982), carried out first Meta – analytic study to review the literature on this subject published before 1980 to examine the relationship between SES and academic achievement and showed that the relation varies significantly with a number of factors such as the types of SES and academic achievement measures.

Students who have a low SES earn low test scores and drop out of school. The low SES affects academic achievement as it prevents access to important resources and creates stress at home, (White, 1994). Low SES leads to family problems and disrupted home environment and as a result

the academic performance of the child. Even in families with above average income, parents lack time and energy to invest in their achievement was found to be significant. Trivedi, Vineeta (1988), conducted a study of the relationship between socio economic background and academic achievement among the intermediate students. The sample consisted of 523 girls students from 11 institutions. The finding of the study revealed a significant relationship between socioeconomic status and academic achievement. The students of upper SES showed better achievement than the students of lower SES group. Rupa Das Barbora (2001), conducted a study on the academic achievements of children belonging to the background classes focusing on Kamrup District Assam to find out the causes of their low academic achievements. It was found that the children of literate parents show better academic achievement than the children of illiterate parents.

Academic Records of Students from High Income and Low Income Families

In many Primary school, Secondary, Universities, Polytechnic, College of education, children from lower economic background faced several dilemma which includes, extortion, certificate racketeering, sexual harassment, upgrading Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), these are few challenges faced students from lower socioeconomic background among others. Nowadays, education turn to trade by barter between lecturers and students you can either go for your incandescent (beauty) or settlement of debt (money), your money or beauty would determine the class of degree you will graduate only few among the lecturers are free from this dilemma. This issue is wide across all universities both public universities and privates, that is why we are graduating poor students. If care is not take in the nearest future Nigeria would be count among country who have higher number of illiterate peoples. A dozen of researches indicates that children from higher socioeconomic background tend to have quality education, and things are happened children from high socioeconomic background are rudeness because the means they parents paid for their daily activities are not yours. A survey research found that wherever you go in the universities or colleges you may found childrens from lower socioeconomic background are leading figure in term of Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). In many high-poverty developing countries, education is seen as a crucial pathway for socioeconomic advancement. Although education does not guarantee employment, it significantly enhances future earning potential and job opportunities, thereby contributing to higher lifetime income and improved life choices. However, academic failure remains a serious issue with long-lasting impacts on individuals, families, and communities, potentially reducing civic involvement and productivity (Nsiah, 2017).

Challenges Facing Students from Poor Families

Despite the numerous challenges faced by students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, the role of teachers is pivotal in shaping their academic success. Teachers must address various factors, including language learning needs and motivational elements, to enhance teaching effectiveness for these students. Teachers who provide tailored resources and activities can significantly impact the development and achievement of underprivileged students. In the U.S., students qualifying for free or reduced education are deemed economically at-risk based on federal poverty thresholds (Furcsa, 2020). Teacher effects are notably higher in low-SES schools, meaning that a child's academic outcomes can vary significantly based on their teacher (Nye et al., 2004). Teachers play a crucial role in addressing the challenges faced by low-income students, yet often these students do not receive the necessary support. Educators can make a positive difference by recognizing and overcoming their

biases, ensuring fair special education referrals, and adapting their teaching styles to meet the needs of these students (Tâm et al., 2016). Studies have shown that teachers often have preconceived notions about students from different SES backgrounds. Teachers may rate high-SES students higher than low-SES students with similar academic achievements, and negative initial perceptions of low-SES students can become self-fulfilling prophecies. However, teachers who hold high expectations for their students can significantly elevate the self-perceptions and academic outcomes of low-SES. (Tâm et al., 2016).

Strategies to Improve Academic Performance for Low Income Students

Addressing disparities in higher education attainment is vital for social mobility and economic competitiveness. Higher education not only benefits individuals through better job prospects and incomes but also enhances societal outcomes by increasing economic output, reducing demand for social assistance, and promoting civic engagement. Federal programs like the Pell Grant are crucial for helping low-income students afford college, though other costs such as test and application fees remain barriers. (Perna, 2015). Programs like the College Ambition Program (CAP) offer support through college visits, financial aid planning, counselling, and tutoring. These initiatives help low-income students overcome social and economic barriers to higher education (Schneider et al., 2024). A comprehensive approach is necessary to close the performance gap and improve educational outcomes for low-income and minority students. Successful strategies include small class sizes, high expectations, rigorous academic standards, enrichment activities, quality professional development, and parent empowerment programs. Effective implementation and evaluation of these strategies are crucial for systemic school reform and improved academic performance among disadvantaged students (Ward, 2006).

Theoretical Framework

The research adopted theoretical triangulation to obtained information at hand. The theoretical framework are expanded achievement attributional model and the individualised individual theory of Beck (1992) is used to show, understand and explain academic performance as a variable in this research topic. The theory explained that individual from high economic background tend to have a quality education. A lot of dilemma has indicates schools of lower socioeconomic background has a lot of problem which could not allowed students to have a quality education. Things like unqualified teachers, dilapidated class room, broken chairs, and absence of teachers for entering class to deliver a lectures etcetera. The expanded achievement attribution model (Freize et al., 1983) was proposed to consider the individual definitions people have for achievement, success and failure. Achievement and performance are used interchangeably by researchers in the field of education and social science. The model is an expansion of the original achievement attribution model (Weiner et al., 1974), the criticism of which was based on neglect of prior judgement of success on which the attribution process depends, insensitivity to the impact of causal attributions on affective, cognitive or emotional factors, reaction to success and failure, and lack of in-depth integration of internal and controllable determinants of performance and attribution in relation to external and uncontrollable factors such as culture.

The expanded achievement attribution model (Freize et al., 1983) explicitly allows for the determination of the subjective level of academic success before an attribution is made; which is what I propose to do in this study. The Frieze et al. (1983) expanded achievement attributional

model pinpoints the fact that the academic performance of adult students involves a process and is interconnected. This process forms a link between the different stages of the entire performance evaluation cycle. In addition, the expanded achievement attributional model is concerned with the values people have with regard to appropriate areas where achievement is strived for, and it relates these values to the cognitive and affective responses to success or failure. Furthermore, as it is typical of performance or achievement-driven research (Weiner et al., 1974), the expanded model of attribution requires an understanding of the "attribution process" (Frieze et al., 1983; Doolittle, 2007).

Frieze et al. (1983) & Doolittle (2007) reveal that the attribution process focuses on what happens to a person in achievement behaviour. They argue by means of the expanded achievement attributional model that, once achievement behaviour occurs, information about the performance is used immediately to infer why the outcome occurred. In terms of the model, before the determination of the level of success or failure is made, a more complex sequence of initial information processing is required. The initial information includes task, self and social standards which are categorised into controllable and uncontrollable. In a different but similar tone, Maehr & Nicholls (1974) show that the association between internal attributions and perceptions of success and failure may depend on the specific value system of the culture (e.g. our cultural practice or cultural value efforts). Weiner et al. (1974) work shows that pride and shame are not the only, or even necessarily the dominant, emotions associated with academic achievement outcomes; a wide variety of emotions such as surprise, frustration, anger and gratitude occur as a result of achievement-oriented behaviour. Individualised individual theory is used in understanding and explaining the behaviour and attitude of individual towards their academic tussles. This theory states that individuals from lower socioeconomic background their education and skill is not in favour of themselves and is not only rewarding to people as individuals but also to societies, and depends largely on the empowerment of people. The theory still digs the students of poor families are the backbone of searching knowledge and put zero phobia in search of knowledge and are the people who have the skill of imparting knowledge.

Methodology

Research Design: The study adopted descriptive and explanatory research designs for this study that will the entire study.

Study Area

Sabon Gari Local Government Area (LGA) is one of the 23 LGAs in Kaduna State, Nigeria. It is located in the northern part of the state, bordering Zaria and is part of the Zazzau Emirate. The local government is named "Sabon Gari," which means "new town" in Hausa, a term that historically refers to settlements established by non-natives, often around older towns. Sabon Gari covers a relatively small land area but has a significant population due to its urban nature. The local government is home to people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Hausa, Fulani, Yoruba, Igbo, and other ethnicities from around Nigeria, attracted by the area's economic and educational opportunities. Sabon Gari LGA is known for its vibrant commercial activities, with bustling markets, retail businesses, and industries. Agriculture also plays an important role, with residents engaging in small-scale farming and livestock rearing. The LGA's markets, such as the Samaru Market, draw people from neighbouring regions for trade, which boosts the local economy.

Sample Size

The sample size of One Hundred and Seventy Five (175) respondents was selected for the sake of this study because of the inability to examine the entire population of Sabon Gari Local Government. The sample size for the qualitative date was six (6).

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage%
Sex		
Male	97	55.4
Female	78	44.6
Total	175	100
Age		
10-15	57	32.6
16 -20	89	50.9
21-25	27	15.4
26-30	2	1.1
Total	175	100
Educational qualification		
Primary	112	64
Secondary	63	36
Total	175	100
Job description		
Welder		
Mechanic	67	38.2
Hawker	87	49.8
Total	21	12
Working experience	175	100
1-10 years	78	44.6
11-20 years	67	38.3
21-30 years and above	30	17.1
Total	175	100

Sources: Field Work (2025)

The Table 4.1 shows the distribution of the respondents' demographic characteristics. It reveals that 55.4% were males and 44.6% females. This shows that males constitute the highest respondents in the study sampled. The age distribution reveals that 32.6% are between 10-15 years, 50.9% 16 -20 years, 15.4% 21-25 years, and 1.1% 26-30 years. This indicates that the 16-20 years were the majority among the respondents. Their educational qualification reveals that 112% have primary education certificate, 63% secondary. The study shows that most of the respondents attended primary.. The job description data reveal that 38.2% are welders, 49.8% mechanics, 12% hawkers. This indicating that majority of the respondents are mechanics. On years in service, the result shows that 44.6% have between 1-10years, 38.3% in the range of 11-20years, 17.1% 21-30 years and above. This shows that those who constitute 44.6% stay longer in the service than the rest of the respondents.

Table: 4. 2: Does State Ministry of Education Kaduna Sponsor Students Who Excel in WAEC and NECO?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	98	56%
No	77	44%
Total	175	100

Source: Field Work (2025)

The above responses indicate that 98 (56%) respondents said yes, while 77 (44%) said no. This means that Kaduna State Government sponsors students who do very well in the WAEC and NECO. A participant in an in-depth interview in Sabon Gari market revealed that:

> Frankly speaking, Kaduna State Government is doing well in giving students scholarship to study within and outside the state. Again, the state government given them enough token to meet their needs. I salute the government of Kaduna State for its tireless effort to see the indigenous peoples of Kaduna have better education (IDI, with Businessman, 2025).

Table: 4. 3 Do Quiz and Debate Impact on Students' Academic Performance?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	114	65.1%
No	61	34.9%
Total	175	100

Source: Field Work (2025)

The responses above with frequency of 114 said Yes, while a frequency of 61 said No. This indicates that Quiz and Debate have meaningful impact on students' academic performance. A participant revealed during an as follows

> Quiz and Debate are strategies that our children can imitative and learn something when teacher imparting knowledge. I imagined why the government neglect these academic activities that enable students to be fluent in speaking English in expressing themselves well (IDI, with Mai Unguwan Tsugugi, 2025).

Table: 4.4: Does Kaduna State Ministry of Education Allow Schools to Demote Students Due to Poor Academic Performance?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	118	67.4%
No	57	32.6%
Total	175	100

Source: Field Work (2025)

The responses above indicate yes with the frequency of 118, while those who expressed no have a frequency of 57. This significantly implied that those who said are more. A Key informant asserted that:

The issue of demotion has become an issue of the past. Students move to the next level irrespective of their academic performance. This trend motivates students in the contemporary era not to work diligently to actualize their academic goal (IDI, with classroom teacher, 2025).

Discussion of Major Findings

The study's findings on the effect of socioeconomic status (SES) on academic performance of senior secondary school students are consistent with existing literature. A significant relationship exists between SES and academic performance, with students from higher SES backgrounds tend to perform better academically (Sirin, 2005; White, 1982). Parental income, education, and occupation are crucial factors in determining SES, which in turn affects academic performance (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). The achievement gap between students from low and high SES backgrounds is a persistent issue, with limited access to resources and opportunities contributing to this disparity (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Targeted interventions, such as financial assistance, educational resources, and mentorship programs, can help mitigate the effects of low SES on academic performance (Jensen, 2013).

Conclusion

The paper concluded that the low SES affects academic achievement as it prevents access to important resources and creates stress at home. A student's social and cultural capital can be affected by their Socio-economic level, which can have an effect on how well they do in school. Students from higher SES backgrounds often have access to a wider range of resources, such as educational role models, cultural experiences, and social ties. The study further concluded that teachers may rate high-SES students higher than low-SES students with similar academic achievements, and negative initial perceptions of low-SES students can become self-fulfilling prophecies. However, teachers who hold high expectations for their students can significantly elevate the self-perceptions and academic outcomes of low-SES.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings on the effect of socioeconomic status (SES) on academic performance of senior secondary school students 0f Sabon Gari Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria, the following recommendations are proposed:

i.   The policymakers should develop and implement targeted interventions to support students from low SES backgrounds, such as providing financial assistance, educational resources, and mentorship programs.

ii. The government should ensure equal access to quality education for all students, regardless of their SES, by providing resources and support to disadvantaged schools.

iii. The government should develop policy initiatives that address the specific needs of students from low SES backgrounds, such as providing free or subsidized educational materials and resources.

iv. Teachers should use differentiated instruction to cater to the diverse needs of students from different SES backgrounds.

v.   Support systems need to be established such as counselling and academic guidance, to help students from low SES backgrounds overcome challenges.

vi. Parent-Teacher Collaboration: Foster collaboration with parents from low SES backgrounds to ensure they are involved in their child's education and can provide support.

vii.   Parents from low SES backgrounds should be encouraged to be involved in their child's education, providing support and guidance where possible.

viii.   Community Resources need to be provided such as libraries and educational centres, to support students from low SES backgrounds.

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Article   **Open Access**

TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE AMONG THE IGBO OF NIGERIA: A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract
The Igbo people of South-Eastern Nigeria are endowed with a lot of cultural heritage-their language, religion, arts and crafts, architecture, music, clothing, food, literature, and the totality of their way of life. People's culture is their identity. Thus, the traditional Igbo architecture which is basically in vogue in precolonial Igbo society is part of the culture of the Igbo people and it is embedded in their values and belief system. Unfortunately, this traditional Igbo architecture is waning and moribund in the face of modernization.Thus, this research comes handy as it calls for urgent revitalization of traditional Igbo architectural designs and the creation of awareness of its importance through a detailed examination of the different architectural designs that existed in Igbo society, the material for their construction and the convenience, comfort and satisfaction one gets from them. The research is qualitative in that the researchers employ library research and direct observations in carrying out the research. The theoretical framework is based on New Historicism which emphasizes the cultural and social context in which a work is interpreted. The paper concludes on the note that craft and creativity also reside in non-literate societies whose architectural designs are the focus of this research.

Keywords: Traditional, Architecture, Culture, Igbo, Identity, Nigeria.

Introduction
Igbo people constitute one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. They are found in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria. Because of their enterprising, independent and adventurous nature, they are found in different parts of the world. They are quick in emulating other people's culture as they travel from one part of the country to another or from different parts of the world. This gives way to the decline in some aspects of Igbo cultural identity, especially Igbo architectural designs coupled with the twentieth and twenty first century's globalization and homogenization

phenomena. In the past, it was the local materials found in Igbo environment that were used to construct houses, but now Igbo people have abandoned the old patterns and adopted the modern architectural designs found in European and other advanced countries of the world.

Architecture is the art and science of building; the art or practice of designing and building structures, especially habitable ones (Merriam-Webster). Durand (2019) states that architecture is the art of composing and realizing all public and private buildings; arguing that for a building to be appropriate, it must be solid, healthy, and comfortable. Therefore, architecture is the science of designing and erecting buildings, be it residential, commercial, business centres, recreation centres, town halls, worship centres, among others. Architectural design, therefore, is a discipline that focuses on covering and meeting the needs and demands to create living spaces using certain tools and, especially, creativity (Munari, 2020). In pre colonial Igbo society, architectural designs are seen in the people's ideas as they construct their huts with mud walls and thatch roofs. They are able to design their houses which, in most cases, distinguish the different types of houses owned by different people according to their cultural values, social class and so on. Therefore, to the Igbo speaking areas of South-Eastern Nigeria, architecture is neither a purely artistic nor an exclusively technical activity, and its aim is to provide material frame for the major part of human life: work and rest, religious, social and artistic activities (Alozie, 2020).

The purpose of architecture is to improve human life, create timeless, free, joyous spaces for all activities in life. The infinite variety of these spaces can be as varied as life itself and they must be as sensible as nature in deriving from a main idea and flowering into a beautiful entity (Lautner, 2011). Architecture is the starting point for anyone who wants to take humanity towards a better future (Charles-Edouard 2019). It is based on the above that architecture can be seen as more than a mere record or reflection of who we are. It is a means of creating our culture and ourselves. Determining who we want to be, or what it means to be fully human, can be properly understood as a design problem (Buchanan, 2012). Architecture expresses people's values, belief system, and philosophy; and identifies them. It exists to create the physical environment in which people live. Igbo Architecture is more than just the built environment; it is also part of our culture. It stands as a representation of how we see ourselves, as well as how we see the world. Throughout history, societies have developed unique types of architecture, reflecting their local, cultural, geographical and economic forces. Igbo people of South-Eastern Nigeria are no exception.

Types of Igbo Architecture

In traditional Igbo society, a man and his wife or wives and children do not live in the same house. The man lives in *òbí* (homestead) while the wife or wives and children live in *m̀kpúkè* (huts). The man's house is rectangular in shape while the wife's or wives' house(es) is/are square in shape. The *òbí* is at the centre; near the entrance gate. Aniako (2002) acknowledges thus that " Obi is the seat of ritual, economic, political and social authority of the Igbo family compound." The huts of his wives housing their individual families are spread out around it in a large compound. There are shrine houses for religious purposes. Communality is an important aspect of Igbo cultural life and it is ingrained in the layout of the settlement pattern. Settlements have community spaces at the centre, and these spaces are the sites for public gatherings, discussions and meetings, as well as other community interactions (Njoku, 2019). The shrine houses are separately structured, and in the form of dwelling houses. There is also, among other forms of architectural types, the yam barns structured for yam storage; livestock pens for keeping of the different domestic animals like cattle,

goat, sheep, pig, horse and donkey; and structures where domestic birds such as chicken, duck and turkey roost and lay/hatch their eggs. Also, most of the traditional housing units are circular in shape. This reflects the Igbo idea of social success and achievement. The circular and oval house types are predominant in the areas south of Enugu; from Okunano to Ihe-Ogwu and extends eastwards to Okposi (Okoye and Ukanwa, 2019).

An in-depth study of the traditional Igbo architectural designs exposes a litany of styles of buildings which Igbo people could make. There are the *ùkpùrù* designs which are tower-like, often used for security purposes; the *m̀bàrì are* religious architectural designs that has strong walls from the entrance and the major gate drawn within from a long runway. There are also huts built with thatch roofs soaring high in the sky like the pyramid and many others.

As stated earlier, there is a particular type of this traditional structure called the *m̀kpúkè* and *òbí* (women homestead and men homestead respectively). A man builds *m̀kpúkè* based on the number of his wives. One can easily decipher whether a man married a wife or many wives by counting the *m̀kpúkè* in his compound. These mud houses (mkpuke) have a lot of architectural designs in carvings, paintings and intricate structures according to the owner's purpose and taste. The *m̀kpúkè* is a mud house that has a common entrance. The house is merely supported by a heavy tall rectangular pillar in the centre of the entrance of the building. This also supports the roof. Within the *m̀kpúkè* and on the outside, mud walls are more of artistic designs to the taste of the owner. These mud houses have some beds, a long rectangular mud base at the entrance and other necessary facilities, according to the financial capacity of the owner.

Additionally, some well to do families among the Igbo also have something much more than huts for their women. Such houses are called *sọ̀máńgà*. *Sọ̀máńgà* is a special type of *m̀kpúkè*. What makes it special is that though it is a mud house, it has a touch of the Western style in the early 1930s. The *sọ̀máńgà*, like the *m̀kpúkè,* has only one common entrance. There are four long mud steps running from one end of that entrance to the other which finally leads the climber to a long rectangular mud base (the *ọ̀jọ́*), which also has the same length with the log steps. One would descend to the floor of the house which serves as the house's sitting room. The sitting room has a square shape of twelve feet by twelve feet.

Within the *m̀kpúkè* are some in-built aesthetic designs that make the *m̀kpúkè* a complete house to accommodate even the visitors. There is the *ọ̀kwụ̀ìtọ̀*. It is the biggest mud bed of a rectangular shape (6ft x6ft) at one end of the house that joined the *ọ̀jọ́* immediately after the long rectangular pillar on that *ọ̀jọ́* which supported the house's ceiling. This rectangular mud bed, the *ọ̀kwụ̀ìtọ̀* can contain like four adults who will spread the *úté nwáàlì* (mat) comfortably for a night's sleep. The head of the *ọ̀kwụ̀ìtọ̀* terminates at a cylindrical mud design that is raised above to join the wall at that end just like it is seen at the other end where the *ọ̀jọ́* terminates.

The second mud bed from the right side of the house is the *ìkpò. Ìkpò* is a rectangular mud bed for two adults. *Ìkpò* separates from the *ọ̀kwụ̀ìtọ̀* with a raised mud wall of a heavy rectangular shape. By the side of this *ìkpò* is the small dwarf door to a small room called the *ḿgbábú*. This small room serves as a store house and a strong room for the woman of the house. That is where she secures all her valuables. It is through that store or strong room that one gains access to the ceiling of the house by using a ladder. The ceiling is the strongest and safest place in the house because of its security potentials. This is because the ceiling is made of very strong rafters. These rafters are referred to as *ùbúlù*. They are made from the stem of palm trees, and are naturally immune from termites attacks or from other insects.

The *ḿgbábú* has a small door facing one of the *ìkpò* or mud beds. One crosses the *ìkpò* before getting into the *ḿgbábú* where the woman keeps all her valuables, including wooden boxes of clothes, necklaces and bangles. Sometimes, a clay pot of drinking stream water covered with the shell of coconut, or a calabash dish with a calabash cup placed on the pot's cover is kept in the *ḿgbábú*. This stream water has a desirable 'taste' and cooling effect especially during the dry or hot weather. Generally, both the mud walls and thatch mats of *ḿgbábú* provide the needed air conditioner in the time of heat. Ukaegbu (2005) asserts that "Since the walls are thick, they retained some heat, thereby creating a stable condition of no extreme cold or heat." This *ḿgbábú* forms a link to the rafted ceiling which has a good opening for also preserving valuables. A ladder is also handy for climbing the ceiling. The ladder is usually removed immediately after use for security reasons. When children are big enough and could no more be hidden in the *ùkó* to safeguard them from the assailants, they are taken to the ceiling through the ladder and are as well locked from the outside and would be warned to maintain silence.

After this *ìkpò* that leads to the *ḿgbábú*, is another *ìkpò* that can comfortably contain two more adults for night's rest. It is directly joined by the *ágōdō,* a specially structured bed. The *ágōdō* had a mud pillow for resting the head. It has a hollow at the centre and a platform is raised above its hollow with some long tiny strong sticks joined at the two ends in close succession to form the bed for two persons. In place of the sticks to form the floor, *ḿgbō,* which is a flat wooden board, is used. In front of the *ágōdō*, from the floor of the house, is a hole that leads to the space under the long sticks/flat wooden board raised above to form the floor of the bed that usually has a mat on it. Through this hole, the nursing mother and the new baby are kept warm by some live charcoals in a clay oval plate called *ọ̀kụ̀,* which is inserted to the hollow of the *ágōdō* through the hole. *Ágōdō* is unique. It is purposely meant to help the woman who newly gave birth to a child to be placed on a serious warm temperature so that, according to belief, all blood clots after childbirth would dissolve freely. It is also believed that, the pains of childbirth and the cramps were taken care of with the heat of this *ágōdō*, together with some hot beverages, as there are no hospitals for childbirth but the backyard of the local/traditional midwives, with the thick rectangular wooden board, *ḿgbō*, serving as the birth bed.

At the foot of the *ágōdō* is the rectangular wall soaring high towards the ceiling. The rectangular wall has a rectangular tall structure that completely shields the foot of the *ágōdō.* The tail end of the *ágōdō* is about three feet, making it possible for someone to hide at the foot of the *ágōdō* unnoticed. Some mischievous children usually hide there to avoid being beaten. Some of the children also hide in order to frighten unsuspecting family members. That rectangular wall that joins directly to the foot of the *ágōdō* is the *ùkó* (shelf).

The front view of the *ùkó* x-rays three apartments. The eight feet-tall structure has the *ùsọ́ékwū/ọ̀kpụ̀kpọ̀lọ̀ńtụ́* (hearth) as the first apartment. This is arranged in such a way that it has enough space to contain the fire-place and a moderate size of an *òsîtè* or the tripod stand. The *ùsọ́ékwū* (hearth) is about four feet high and has a roof of rafters made from the stem of the palm tree which is joined to the two sides of the mud walls to form a base. This base is the *ányá ọ́kụ̄* where the woman keeps the fish, meat, *ògìrì* (oil bean wraps), and other perishable ingredients she would want to preserve. Because of the constant heat from the fire-place, flies finds it difficult to infest the ingredients. In some *ùsọ́ékwū* (hearth) that are very high, the woman hangs some seed crops like cobs of maize tied with their leaves in bunches and hung beneath the rafters and allowed to suspend over the fire-place, dangling at the instance of any slightest disturbance. The

heat from the fire-place scared pests, such that the seedlings would ever remain safe till the next planting season. The dry ọ́kwụ̀rụ̀ (okro) seeds, dry àkị̀dị̀ (local beans) pods, and seeds of ìnìnè *(*light green amarantus) are tied and are hung above the cooking pot to dry. Also, ńgị̄gā, a pot-like basket with cover, used to preserve meat and fish, helps to keep away the enticing content from rats and mischievous children. This also dangles over the fire-place. The fire place also plays very significant role in the *m̀kpúkè*. Apart from those mentioned earlier, fire glows constantly at that fire place in the heart of the raining season and at the peak of the harmattan/dry season to keep the house warm mostly for the little children and the aged, and serve as the source of fire for the following day for household use; or else,one will have go to the neighbours to fetch fire.

Directly above this segment, ụ̀sọ́ékwū (hearth) is a decking which houses the ùkó (main shelf)*. Ùkó* has a small door and is usually under lock. *Ùkó,* just like the *m̀gbábú* is another place of utmost privacy for the woman. This is where she preserves her most valuable items ranging from money, jewelries and other valuables that are kept out of the public glare. The woman would also arrange her hot pot of *ófé ōnūgbù* (bitter leaf soup) and calabash of *ńrí ákpụ̄* (pounded cassava) rolled in big balls, covered tightly and carefully placed in the *ùkó* to maintain their warmness for the next morning, especially, in readiness for the workers in the farmland during the planting season who usually left at the first crow of the cock (around 4am).

One particular thing is unique about this 'treasury' called the *ùkó*. It is a strong refuge where a mother keeps her little children while she is away. This is commonly seen in precolonial Igbo society when the slave trade is still in vogue. Then, slave traders hunt for people, especially children they will kidnap and sell into slavery. To protect their children, mothers hide them in the *ùkó,* provides them with food and drinks and locked them up, while sounding a note of serious warning that they must not make a noise. In those days these evil men that hunt for children will come and search the whole compound and go away empty handed, without seeing the children.

It is worthy to note that the *ùkó* itself is decked above the 'rafted' *ányá ọ̀kụ̄* and decked again, giving it a small space between it and the house's ceiling. It is also made of *ùbúlù* or the palm tree rafters which are very strong and can last for so many years and still withstand the test of time. For the rafters to make the *ányá ọ̀kụ̄* which the two ends are buried at the two sides of the walls of the *ùkó* building, some people use the bamboo stems cut to size. Sometimes, it is used as a whole or opened diagonally making the inside face the *ụ̀sọ́ékwū*. The length of time it is in use can be detected from the extent of smoke that smears it. In some cases, the whole of the rafters are *ùbúlù* for the ceiling and the *ányá ọ̀kụ̄*. Igbo architectural designs are unique. Some designs are only seen in the well-to-do families. Most houses has the thatch roof while some, built by people who had the taste of the fast spreading modernity, has the zinc roof.

Generally, the interior of the mud houses is cleaned at intervals with a chunk of *ǹtíté* (decayed banana stem) which is used to soak water from the working calabash of water to rub the walls, mud beds and the floor. A sizeable pebble is used to rub the watered area until it shone. This constant cleaning gives all the mud houses some cooling effects for comfort. In some cases, especially during popular festivals like New Yam Festival, women paint the interiors of the mud houses. They usually use some black and milky colorants like the *ánùnùù* leaves and *ńzū* (chalk-like substance) respectively to give their houses some lovely dark and light colour paintings believed to have coolness effects.

It is worthwhile to note that in pre colonial Igbo society, the forebears do not have seats in the *m̀kpúkè*. All the mud beds and the *ọ̀jọ́* at the entrance serve as seats. Those who cannot not

find spaces at the *òjó* and *ìkpò* will quickly settle down at the neat floor. It is normal for people to have their rest by sleeping on the bare, clean, cool floor of the *m̀kpúkè*. Actually, people really lived very close to nature. The ingenuity of these buildings remains a marvel. There is a careful thought in the Igbo style of building.The *m̀kpúkè,* which is for women and *òbí* that is for men in the Igbo traditional society form an epitome of Igbo intricate cultural designs. It may not be easy to find *m̀kpúkè* and *òbí* in these modern times because of dilapidation and lack of maintenance of the original traditional *m̀kpúkè* and *obi*. They suffer neglect, as people have shifted their architectural focus on modern structures.

On the other hand, the *òbí,* has a thatch roof, and some intricate designs within and outside the mud walls. These make it so beautiful and comfortable. Also, just like the women's homestead, the men's *obi* appears in different shapes and forms according to the owner's social class. The *obi* of the traditional ruler usually stands out as a unique structure which stands out as an epitome of architectural design. It is often larger in size than the average obi and the paintings and designs are even more intricate, more elaborate and more beautiful, often depicting wild animals, totems and the occupations which the community is known for. Only professional painters and designers are engaged for the work on the traditional ruler's *obi.*

Apart from the *m̀kpúkè* and *òbí,* there are other architectural designs that are seen in different parts of the Igbo community. For instance, in Agbaja, there are ancestral homes in various shapes and sizes. There are also the ten Nsude pyramids on the Udi highlands of Enugu State.The Nsude pyramids originally stand as a testimony of Black Africa's cultural enlightenment. Built with hardened red mud and clay, the structures lasted for centuries until the 1930s when degradation, followed by years of negligence that only their faint outlines can be traced (Ozoene, 2016). The first base section of the pyramid is sixty (60) feet in circumference and three (3) feet in height. The stacks are forty-five (45) feet in circumference. Circular stacks continued till it reaches the top. The structures are temples for the god *Àlà/Uto* who is believed to reside at the top. A stick is placed at the top to represent the god's residence. The structures are laid in groups of five parallel to each other (Omotolani, 2021). A source also states that, Nsude pyramids are ten (10) pyramid structures built by the Igbo people in Nsude and Agbaja Owa. The structures are made of mud and clay with five circular stacks, laid on each other, with decreasing circumference. The base is sixty (60) feet in circumference with a height of two-six (2-6) feet. The second layer is forty-five (45) feet in circumference. The structure is sacred in Igbo culture and is considered the residence of the god, Ala (Afropedia, 2010).

The Materials Used for the Construction of Houses among the Igbo
It is interesting to note that all the materials used in constructing traditional structures in traditional Igbo society are sourced locally. As Ebenezer, (2020) points out, the buildings are usually made of mud and thatched roofs and this choice of materials is very significant, as the materials are readily available and fit our tropical climate. The major material mostly used is *ájá úpà,* (the red mud). This is collected from the environment. The local hoe and digger are used to evacuate the soil. Then the mud is collected from the earth with local containers like the baskets or earthen wares. Women and children are usually seen making several trips from the excavated points to the family compound where the red earth will be used. They heap trips of the desired quantity of the red earth. The quantity of the red mud to be desired for the house depends on the type of house it is used for. Also, several clay pots are filled with water.

Having gotten the desired quantity, the man of the house will invite some able bodied men, usually his friends, to help him trample the red earth (an exercise referred to as *ízọ̀ ọ̀tọ̀)*. They will scoop a manageable quantity from the big heap and create a permanent enabling environment within the family compound where the red earth would be mashed. The men so employed will normally start the work very early in the morning, at the first crow of the cock (around 4am).   They usually make the work an early morning affair so that the hot sun of the day will neither disrupt their work nor sap their energy. As they trample the red earth, they will add water gradually until they produce a soft, smooth, silky pulp. They will roll the pulp in very big balls and pack somewhere within the family compound. When they are done each day, they will use the fresh banana leaves to cover the heaps they have prepared. They will continue like this until they whole red mud heap are appropriately prepared. It is worthy of note that these men are not paid for their services. They feed from the food prepared by the women. The women of the house usually cook the delicious *ófé ōnūgbù áká ágá n'ọ̀kụ̀* (bitter leaf soup with lots of meat and fish) and *ńrí ákpụ̄*-cassava fufu. The man of the house usually provides some kegs of *ńgwọ̀* or *ńkwụ́ élū (*palm wine) to make his friends glad. Whereas *ńgwọ̀* is tapped from raffia palm, *ńkwụ́ élū* (literally 'upwine') is gotten from the oil palm. Both are delicious alcoholic beverages; the latter being more alcoholic than the former. The job of house construction is rotated among the group of friends who need to build or mend their houses. It was called *òfú ọ́rụ̄* or *ígbā ōnwè ọ́rụ̄*, which means exchange of labour.

When the desired quantity of mud is ready, the workers join their friend/their host, to the farm land to collect *ájụ̀/ákịŕịká* or the reeds that is used in roofing the *ụ́nọ̀ ájụ̀* or *ụ́nọ̀ ákịŕịká* (grass house). Sometimes, women and children join them in bringing the roofing reeds home, carrying the smaller bundles cut and tied by the men. On the completion of the day's work, the host and the hostess, as was the custom, will provide food and drinks (palm wine) for their guests/workers. That is communal living in action. These reeds are collected and heaped in the same family compound where they had the big mound or heap of mud. They are spread to dry, as wet or fresh reeds are not suitable for roofing because they are not be durable.

When the desired quantities of reeds are ready, the men bring in the rafters. The man of the house may have some tall strong palm trees he felled for the building project, or his friends may give him if he does not have. They will fell the palm trees, cut off all the palm fronds and saw the stems into *ùbúlù.* These are long strong cylindrical 'planks' that are used as the rafters and for ceiling the house. The *ùbúlù* is dried and are packed in the same family house. Note that the person who intends to erect a house has to start some nine months earlier to fell trees for the building. The required trees are very heavy ones. He has to cut down the trees in time so that the heat of the sun can help in making them lighter before use. Apart from palm tree, other trees that are used are oil bean tree and *ùrù* tree.

The trunks of oil bean tree are used as pillars. The trunks of palm tree (split into two) are used as wall-plates. The wood from *ùrù* tree is lighter than those from other trees and is split length-wise and measured about five metres long, and are used as rafters. Tough vegetable cables known as *àpàlị̀* are collected from the forest, split into convenient sizes and used for tying together the pillars, wall-plates and the rafters. According to Orji (1999), "Another thing is the provision of sufficient amount of special type of wild tall grass (*ájụ̀/átā/ọma*), for roofing the house."

Generally speaking, Igbo people live in the rain forest area where there is abundant and high quality hardwood that are easily harnessed for the construction of buildings. Mahogany is used for making planks. *Ọ́jị̀* (iroko) and *Úkpì*, both hardwoods, serve in making beams and posts in

building construction. The mangrove is another hardwood which is termite resistant. The areas outside the forest are often heavily farmed and it is mostly there that many kinds of palm trees grow. Of the various species of palm tree, practically every part is used for building purposes: timber, fronds and fibres. Bamboo, which grows in clusters, is available in almost all parts of Igbo countryside (Alozie, 2020).

After the three major raw materials comprising mud, reeds and planks are ready to be put in use in the building project, the man of the house will invite his friends to help him. He and his wife or wives will provide the food and drinks throughout the period the building project lasts. As we already stated, the workmen are not paid in monetary terms for their services, because it is a communal labour which makes the members of the community help each other in turn. During the erection of this project, these friends ensure that they help their friend to achieve his desired goal of building a durable, beautiful family house; either his *obi* or the *m̀kpúkè* for his wife. In some parts of Igbo land, the minstrels entertain these men while they work. With the music, the tough task of trampling the red earth and erecting the structure become pleasurable events.

With the architectural design of erecting the mud walls fully completed, the structure is allowed to dry before the rafters are put in place. After the rafters, which form the skeletal part of the house, is the roofing. The ceiling of the house is done according to the owner's taste and ability. The rolls of the parked mud are supplied by the labourers to the builders as they construct the desired design of the structure. The *ùbúlù* or planks made from the stem of palm tree are used for the rafters and the ceiling while the dry reeds are used for the roof. *Ékwérē/ékwélē,* which is twine from the palm fronds, or the string from the raffia palm is used to tie the reeds tightly onto the rafters and filling the reeds so closely together to avoid leakages during the rains. It is, therefore, necessary to note, as rightly pointed out by Okoye and Ukanwa (2019), that the indigenous builders never used nails to join two or more parts of the building, instead they make use of various kinds of cord and strings like *ákwálà* from raffia palm and *ékwélē* from palm fronds.

The reeds are the earliest form of roofing materials for the traditional Igbo houses. With a touch of modernization, people begin to use the raffia palm mats called *àtáṇ́/àkányá.*. These are the raffia palm leaves collected from the trees when they are fresh and sewn together. The fresh raffia palm fronds are cut in long tiny sticks (5feet each), which are placed in the centre of the mat. Before the sewing, one long stick is introduced to form the first base where the leaves are bent and are sewn with a long tiny flexible dry stick made from the dry raffia palm fronds. When few leaves are tied to put the base in place, the second stick is introduced to strengthen the first base. The leaves are sewn closely together without giving any gap. This is to avoid the case of leaking roofs when they are used. These mats are sown in large quantities depending on the size of the building. Other methods to build such is that the skeletal framework of the roof is first weaved using bamboo poles or sliced bamboo poles. The bamboo is placed in slopes and then crossed with palm fronds. To give a formidable roofing structure that can avert incidence such as wind, at various points, rafters are knotted or tied. The last process is thatching.The skeletal structure is covered with grasses and *àtáṇ́/àkányá*. Most of these houses have no concrete beams due to the materials available at that time. In most of them, wood and bamboos are used as support system or beams (Ebenezer, 2020). Buildings that have *àtáṇ́/àkányá* for their roof are called *ụ́nọ́ ātānī̄/ụ́nọ̄ ākānyā* (literally meaning *àtáṇ́/àkányá house*). After this stage of using mats for roofing, the Igbo people who travelled far and wide, copied the western culture and then introduced the corrugated iron sheets for roofing their mud houses. With time, they plastered their mud houses with cement and

subsequently, there was a total change over to modern architectural design as found in Western countries. Some scholars classified materials for Igbo architecture based on construction materials used in precolonial, colonial and postcolonial eras.

	Precolonial Era	Colonial Era	Postcolonial Era
Wall types	Walls are constructed with aja ọtọ - mud or red earth	Walls are constructed with mud and cement plastering	Sandcrete blocks with cement plastering and paintings
Roofing technique	Thatch roof using ajụ, akịrịka, atanị	Thatch roof and few zincs	Zincs, asbestos and aluminium sheets
Floor/slab type	Wood (deck) earthwork (ground floor)	Wood (deck) and earthwork (ground floor)	Concrete slab
Columns	None	None	Reinforced concrete and steel
Beams	Hardwood	Hardwood	Reinforced concrete
Gates	Bamboo + palm fronds	Wooden gates	Steel materials
Windows	none (except in security houses)	Wooden windows	Wooden windows, louvers, sliding glasses

Bert-okonkwo, Nzewi and Okolie (2017)

Modernization has, therefore, made its impact on Igbo architecture through the importation of new house forms, attesting to the dynamism's of culture. Aniako, (2002:298) attests that "The notion of modern architecture which places far greater stress on architecture as building technology differs from the largely humanistic content of Igbo architecture."

The Aesthetics in Traditional Igbo Architecture
Igbo people have evolved a very strong and durable architectural system which helps them to combat the unfavorable elements like the wind, rain, animals, invaders and so on. This architectural system which is part of the Igbo cultural heritage has aesthetic value in that it depicts the beauty of traditional Igbo society. One can see that some Nigerian writers, especially those who depict Igbo society like Chinua Achebe, John Munonye, Flora Nwapa, Chukwuemeka Ike and so on integrate aspects of Igbo architecture in their writings in order to enrich their work as well as depict the art of innovation inherent among the Igbo in pre colonial and colonial Igbo society. In fact, Chinua Achebe was very detailed in his description of the Igbo architectural design which depict the precolonial Igbo society in his classical work, *Things Fall Apart:*

> Okonkwo's prosperity was visible in his household. He had a large compound
> enclosed by a thick wall of red earth. His own hut,or *obi* stood immediately
> behind the only gate in the red walls. Each of his three wives had her own hut,
> which together formed a half moon behind the *obi*.The barn was built against

one end of the red walls and long stacks of yam stood out prosperously in it. At the opposite end of the compound was a shed for the goats and each wife built a small attachment to her hut for the hens. Near the barn was a small house, the "medicine house" or shrine where Okonkwo kept the wooden symbols of his personal god and of his ancestral spirits. He worshipped them with sacrifices of kola nut, food and palm wine and offered prayers to them on behalf of himself, his three wives and eight children. (Achebe, 1958)

The above description of Okonkwo's house paints the picture of what it takes to be a wealthy man in precolonial Igbo society. In order words, Igbo architecture goes beyond the art of mere construction of houses but makes a statement on how affluent the owner of the house/ compound is. Again, it shows how the precolonial Igbo society manages space(s) basically for utilitarian purposes. The position of the *obi* in Okonkwo's compound shows that it is to give the head of the house hold the ample view of the compound as well as protect the house hold from attackers. Even the wall of the compound is described as "thick" showing that the safety of the occupants of the compound is paramount in selection of the materials for the building.

Generally, the mud houses are usually very cool during the hot weather of the tropical dry season. It, therefore, creates a very conducive atmosphere for the inhabitants. The thatched roof also serves as a coolant, especially during the hot season, when temperature is high. The thatch does not generate heat. It absorbs moisture which can easily dry off with a little heat. The drinking water in a clay pot that is kept in the mud house is usually cool. It is usually desirable because it is very refreshing. Also, the materials used in Igbo traditional architecture is simple and of natural substance like wood, thatch, clay. They are readily available, easy to produce, cheap and easy to replace. Above all, the Igbo traditional houses has aesthetic value: they are convenient and offer comfort and satisfaction to their inhabitants.

Traditional Architecture as part of Igbo Cultural Identity

Architecture is an aspect of material culture and so an element of cultural identity. Traditional Igbo architecture portrays and reminds one of the Igbo cultural values which it (Igbo architecture) reflects :the Igbo belief system , social hierarchy and so on. The nature of the circular shape of most of the Igbo architectural designs depicts Igbo communal living, their victories and accomplishments. Igbo communities, whether village groups or the smaller settlements comprising them, are organized around an open, public space known as ilo or ama. The circles points to a worldview which believed in a round world or cyclical understandings of the universe (Okoye and Ukanwa, 2019). Moreover the obi which is at the centre of the compound is the first building to be seen in a compound. The positioning is strategic that the man of the house can see anyone that enters the compound, and serves as a protection to the members of the family. Obi is also a place for family meetings and a place where the man of the house receives his visitors. The various architectural designs offer to a great extent, a considerable scope to the understanding of the Igbo world view and the Igbo environment. Again, the building materials used for Igbo architecture are cheap and readily available in the local environment and so reflect the Igbo cultural environment and vegetation.The decorative arts are very attractive and they serve as a means of thought communication.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, most of these traditional Igbo architecture are mostly neglected in some places where they still exist and are not given sustainable maintenance. These have made them to fade away: most of them are gradually fading away naturally. It is equally regrettable that a lot of these traditional Igbo architectural designs are demolished on purpose in a bid to erect modern structures without concrete means of preserving them physically. The painful thing about this is that generations to come will only see a few of their forebears' traditional architectural designs in pictures and relics in the museums and archives, where some of these are available. Again, few traditional Igbo architectural designs that have survived modernization are now used either as relics or as special places of relaxation in some hotels and restaurants. This is not unconnected with the rise of modernity which has swept off most of the Igbo traditional architectural designs, replacing them with more modern ones. It behooves us as Igbo people to preserve this cultural heritage, not by going back to this form of architectural design but by recreating them in tourist village/s where we can showcase and sell them (hire out these traditional Igbo architecture/buildings to tourists) to the outside world and at the same time, instill the pride in our people that our culture is one that has come a long way which we should be proud of.

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Article **Open Access**

ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NIGERIA'S JUDICIARY IN PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMBATING CRIME

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Abstract
This study examines the role of the Nigerian judiciary in protecting human rights, with an emphasis on the effectiveness and challenges of the Nigerian judiciary system. Despite its constitutional provision, the Nigerian judiciary is faced with a lot of issues such as judicial corruption, political interference, and delays in the legal process. These ultimately undermine its role in protecting human rights. This research applies the theories of criminology, including natural law theory, legal positivism, labeling theory, and conflict theory, to understanding the judiciary's approach to human rights protection in criminal cases. The major findings in the study include but not limited to judicial challenges that explains the challenges the Nigerian judiciary faces among which are lobbying in the appointment of judicial officers. Equally, there is another important finding which highlights the contrasting theoretical perspectives of Natural Law Theory and Legal Positivism in the context of human rights protection. The Natural Law Theory posits the importance of upholding moral principles and respecting inherent human rights, this suggests that certain rights are absolute and global. Conversely, Legal Positivism emphasizes the role of legislation and state power in defining and protecting human rights. This highlights the authority of laws and institutions in shaping rights protection. These perspectives offer different ways through which to understand and approach human rights, with Natural Law Theory focusing on ethical and moral foundations while Legal Positivism focusing on legal frameworks and state authority. On the other hand, labeling theory and conflict theory reveal how the judiciary's decisions can perpetuate human rights violations and reinforce existing power dynamics. The study equally evaluates the effectiveness of judicial interventions in addressing human rights violations and identifies areas for improvement. The study found out some challenges in the Nigerian judiciary system including inadequate judicial remedies, corruption, and political influence which are believed to hinder human rights protection. From the discussion, the paper recommended, among other things, that Federal Government should strengthen judicial independence, improve access to justice and combat corruption by implementing anti-corruption measures within the Nigerian judiciary system.

Keywords: Judicial Protection, Human Rights, Natural Law Theory, Legal Positivism,

Introduction

The judiciary in Nigeria is the third arm of government which is responsible for interpretation of laws, arbitrating cases, advising the executive and legislature, and defending citizens' rights and freedoms. Chwkwuma, (2023). Nigerian judiciary has both legal and administrative structures, with its primary function being adjudication and encompassing jurisdiction over various legal domains. Kekere, et, al, (2024). Egemonu, (2022), sees the Nigeria Judiciary, as the most important arm of government. According to him, this is because the judiciary plays a leadership role in promoting access to justice and ensuring justice is served effectively. Lib, (2017), opined that the judiciary has over time, struggled to assert its rights and perform its duties to protect human rights, particularly during periods of military rule and fusion of executive and legislative powers. According to Vynokurov, (2021), human rights protection involves understanding the content and scope of possible actions covered by them, and distinguishing between "protection" and "enforcement" at both scientific and legislative levels.

Chandrashekhar, (2024), defines human rights protection as the safeguarding of human dignity and equality worldwide for all in a globalized world, facing challenges and opportunities. Human rights protection is a fundamental pillar of any democratic society, ensuring that individuals enjoy freedoms and protections against abuses by both state and non-state actors. In Nigeria, the judiciary plays a crucial role in upholding these rights through its interpretation and enforcement of constitutional provisions, statutory laws, and international treaties. Notably, Nigerian courts, especially the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal, have issued significant rulings that have reshaped the nation's human rights environment, Maduekwe, (2021). Regardless of their crucial role, the apex court, appellate courts, and other judicial bodies have faced challenges in maintaining the integrity of the judicial system. Some factors such as judicial corruption, political interference, and procedural delays have impeded their optimal performance, thereby undermining the judiciary's ability to protect citizens' rights (Lugard, 2017).

Statement of the Research

The judiciary plays a vital role in keeping the rule of law and safeguarding human rights. Nevertheless, there are concerns regarding the effectiveness of the judiciary in fulfilling this mandate, which necessitate probing and debate. According to Aliyu, et, al, (2020), lobbying, has been entrenched in the process of appointing Judicial Officers in Nigeria, and the powers of the Chief Justice of Nigeria threaten the independence of the Judiciary. Notably, there is constant face-off between the National Judicial Council (NJC) and State Governors in Nigeria over the appointment of substantive Chief Judges, leading to tensions within and outside the legal profession. Udemezue, & Hameed, (2021). Frequent consequences of this interference in the Nigerian judiciary have been attributed to biased rulings, inconsistent enforcement of human rights laws, and a failure to hold government officials answerable for human rights abuses.

Equally, studies have confirmed that bribery, favouritism, and judicial misconduct undermine public confidence in the judiciary. Zubairu, (2020), Udombana, (2020). It is quite disturbing to see how financial and political pressure on courts prevents victims of human rights abuses from getting justice. Delays in the judicial process have been highlighted as a significant obstacle to the timely enforcement of human rights protections (Melcarne et al., 2021). Such delays, often resulting from court overburden, staff shortages, and inefficient procedures (Oi et al., 2016), can lead to extended illegal detentions, denied fair trial rights, and prolonged violations of

fundamental freedoms, underscoring the principle that "justice delayed is justice denied." Another disturbing phenomenon by Shukla, (2023), is limited access to justice, which results from significant barriers faced by low-income individuals, minorities, and persons with disabilities when navigating the justice system. Furthermore, Nigerians in the rural areas often face significant challenges in accessing legal justice due to financial constraints and lack of awareness of their rights. The enormous prices associated with civil lawsuit can be exorbitant, thereby deterring individuals from pursuing or defending legal actions. This in turn can restrict access to justice for marginalized populations, particularly the poor (Woo et al., 2022). In view of these challenges, this study seeks to examine the Nigerian judiciary's role in protecting human rights, assess its effectiveness in upholding justice, and identify essential reforms to enhance its capacity and ensure equitable access to justice for all.

Research Questions
To this end, the following research questions are proposed to guide the study:
i. How effective is the Nigerian judiciary in protecting human rights, particularly in cases involving criminal justice?
ii. Which legal provisions govern the enforcement of human rights in Nigeria?
iii. What are the challenges faced by the Nigerian judiciary in upholding human rights, and how can these challenges be addressed?
iv. What is the relationship between the Nigerian judiciary's handling of criminal cases and the protection of human rights?
v. How do criminological theories (e.g., labeling theory, conflict theory) explain the Nigerian judiciary's approach to human rights protection in criminal cases.

Research Objectives
The following are the objectives in which the research will be guided:
i. Critically examine the Nigerian judiciary's role in protecting human rights in criminal cases.
ii. Explore the application of criminological theories in understanding the judiciary's approach to human rights protection.
iii. Evaluate the effectiveness of judicial interventions in decisively addressing human rights violations.
iv. Identify the challenges and limitations faced by the judiciary in upholding human rights.
v. Provide actionable recommendations to strengthen the judiciary's role in the protection of human rights.

Theoretical Framework
The theories of criminology offer valuable perception into the Nigerian judiciary's approach to human rights protection in criminal cases. Here is an explanation of how natural law theory, legal positivism theory, labeling theory and conflict theory can be applied:

Natural Law Theory
Studies suggest that natural law theory has been propounded by various thinkers including Thomas Aquinas, John Locke, and Germain Grisez, with significant contributions from others like John Finnis and Petrus Iohannis Olivi. Hochstrasser, (1993), Lee, (2019), Jensen, (2016). Ayobami, (2023), opined that the tripartite doctrines of natural law, human rights, and international law apply to the

Nigerian situation. Hussain, & Akhtar, (2023), submits that Natural rights are inherent, universal, and derived from a higher moral order, according to theories like moral intuition, human nature, and the Social Contract, noting that Judiciary's interpretation of laws must be guided by justice and fundamental ethical considerations. Applying it to this study we see that in certain instances, Nigerian courts have recognized natural law principles, especially when fundamental rights are at stake and courts have, for example, used constitutional provisions to safeguard individuals from government overreach and human rights violations.

Legal Positivism

Legal positivism, according to Weinstock, (2020), represents a group of legal philosophers using conceptual clarification methods to make normative claims about law, and is a fundamental theory of jurisprudence studied in law and related fields, focusing on normativity and values. Mindus, (2021). Legal positivism argues that laws are created by recognized authorities (e.g., governments and legislatures). Ratnapala, (2009), and should be applied as written, regardless of moral considerations. This theory proposes a strict interpretation of human rights laws by Nigerian judges, adhering to the constitution and existing legislation. The theory outlines the judiciary's role, emphasizing adherence to the law as it is written rather than relying on subjective moral judgments, showing that strong, clear laws, not judicial leeway, are key to effective human rights protection. Applying it to the Nigerian Judiciary, we see that Nigerian courts may enforce laws literally, neglecting potential human rights violations, reflecting a strict legal positivist stance. For instance, courts may uphold government policies that restrict freedom of expression if they are in accordance with statutory provisions, despite concerns about their effects on human rights.

Labeling Theory

Labeling theory, developed by Howard Becker (1963), suggests that individuals are labeled as deviant or criminal by society, leading to a self-fulfilling prophecy according to Aquinas, T. (1274). In the context of the Nigerian judiciary, labeling theory can explain how the court's decisions and labeling of individuals as "criminals" can perpetuate human rights violations. For instance, the Nigerian judiciary's tendency to impose harsh sentences, including capital punishment, can be seen as a form of labeling by Nigerian Prisons Service. (2020) Annual Report. This labeling can lead to further stigmatization and marginalization of individuals, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. According to Amnesty International (2019) Nigeria, the authorities must respect human rights in the fight against crime. The judiciary's reliance on confessional statements, often obtained through coercive means, can also be seen as a form of labeling. This approach can result in wrongful convictions and perpetuate human rights abuses.

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory, rooted in the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, posits that social inequality and conflict arise from the competition for resources and power by Amnesty International (2019) Nigeria. In the context of the Nigerian judiciary, conflict theory can explain how the court's decisions reflect and reinforce existing power dynamics and social inequalities. For example, the Nigerian judiciary's handling of cases involving economic and financial crimes has been criticized for being lenient towards wealthy and powerful individuals by Premium Times. (2020). How Nigerian courts are used to shield corrupt officials. This can be seen as a reflection of the court's complicity in maintaining the existing power structure and protecting the interests of the elite. Furthermore,

the judiciary's approach to cases involving human rights violations by security agencies can also been seen through the lens of conflict theory Human Rights Watch. (2019). Nigeria: Security Forces Abuses in North. The court's reluctance to hold security agencies accountable for human rights abuses can be attributed to the power dynamics at play, with the judiciary often deferring to the interests of the state and its security apparatus.

The Nigerian Judiciary and Human Rights protection: A Theoretical Synthesis

The application of theories of criminology provides a framework for understanding the role of the Nigerian judiciary in protecting human rights.

Natural Law Theory posits that inherent, universal rights are derived from a higher moral order (Hochstrasser, 1993; Lee, 2019; Jensen, 2016). This theory has been applied in Nigerian courts, particularly in cases involving fundamental rights (Ayobami, 2023). The judiciary's interpretation of laws should be guided by justice and ethical considerations, ensuring that the rights of individuals are protected (Hussain & Akhtar, 2023). In contrast, Legal Positivism emphasizes the importance of strict interpretation of laws and adherence to constitutional provisions (Weinstock, 2020; Mindus, 2021). However, this approach can lead to the literal enforcement of laws, potentially neglecting human rights violations (Ratnapala, 2009). The effectiveness of human rights protection relies on the existence of strong, clear laws. Labeling Theory provides insight into how court decisions and labeling can perpetuate human rights violations (Becker, 1963; Aquinas, 1274). The Nigerian judiciary's reliance on confessional statements and harsh sentencing can result in wrongful convictions and stigmatization (Nigerian Prisons Service, 2020; Amnesty International, 2019). By combining these theoretical frameworks, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Nigerian judiciary's role in protecting human rights and identify areas for improvement.

Methodology

Research Design: This study adopts a qualitative research design, applying a doctrinal research approach to examine the role of the Nigerian judiciary in protecting human rights. The research will examinee existing literature, academic articles, books, and court judgments. This is in a bid to identify the challenges faced by the Nigerian judiciary and potential reforms to strengthen its capacity.

Data Collection: The study will bank on secondary data sources such as academic articles and books on human rights, judiciary, and criminology theories. It will also make use of court judgments and decisions related to human rights cases in Nigeria in addition to reports from human rights organizations and government agencies.

Data Analysis: The study will employ thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes in the data. The researcher will examine the data through the lens of criminology theories, including natural law theory, legal positivism, labeling theory, and conflict theory.

Conclusion

Criminology theories, such as natural law theory and positivism theory offer valuable insights into the Nigerian judiciary's approach to human rights protection in criminal cases. Natural law theory emphasizes the importance of upholding moral principles and respecting inherent human rights,

while positivism theory highlights the role of legislation and state power in shaping human rights protection. By considering these theoretical perspectives, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex factors influencing human rights protection in Nigeria. labeling theory and conflict theory, offer valuable insights into the Nigerian judiciary's approach to human rights protection in criminal cases. These theories highlight the ways in which the judiciary's decisions can perpetuate human rights violations, reinforce existing power dynamics, and reflect the interests of the powerful.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions above, it is recommended that Federal Government of Nigeria should:

i.   Strengthen judicial independence: Advocate for reforms to ensure the independence of the judiciary and protect judges from external interference.
ii. Improve access to justice: Implement measures to increase access to justice, such as legal aid programs, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and court-annexed mediation.
iii. Combat corruption: Implement anti-corruption measures, such as asset declaration, financial disclosure, and robust disciplinary mechanisms for corrupt judges and judicial staff.
iv. Review and reform the Nigerian Constitution: Advocate for constitutional reforms to strengthen the judiciary's role in protecting human rights and ensuring justice.
v.   Enact legislation to protect human rights: Advocate for legislation that protects human rights, particularly in areas such as freedom of speech, assembly, and association.
vi. Establish a robust judicial accountability mechanism: Establish an independent body to investigate complaints against judges and judicial staff, and ensure accountability for misconduct.
vii. Integrate human rights and judicial ethics into legal education: Ensure that law students receive comprehensive training on human rights, judicial ethics, and the role of the judiciary in protecting human rights.
viii. Provide ongoing training for judges and judicial staff: Offer regular training programs for judges and judicial staff on human rights, judicial ethics, and best practices in judicial decision-making.
ix. Promote public awareness of human rights and the judiciary: Organize public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about their human rights and the role of the judiciary in protecting those rights.

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Article   **Open Access**

RATIONALIZING CHARLES BEITZ'S NOTION OF GLOBAL JUSTICE: LESSONS FOR CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract
The current global order perpetuates systemic injustices, including economic disparities, human rights violations, and environmental degradation, which compromise human dignity and well-being. This paper endeavours to substantiate Charles Beitz's concept of global justice. The study is a qualitative research. Data were obtained from books, scholarly journals, and online sources. This study employed expository and critical methodologies. The expository method conveyed the notion of global justice in Charles Beitz's philosophy, whilst the critical method evaluated same. The paper identified several concerns of global injustices, including pervasive poverty, forced migration and refugee crises, and inequitable access to healthcare, education, and technology. Moreover, challenges such as global pandemics, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation present substantial risks to international security and stability. Charles Beitz contended that the ideals of justice ought to be implemented on a worldwide scale, rather than restricted to geographical boundaries. He advocated for a cosmopolitan framework of global justice, highlighting the moral equality of all individuals globally and asserting that human rights and distributive justice ought to be universally enforced. He also championed reforms to international institutions, like the United Nations, to enhance their efficacy in advancing global justice and safeguarding human rights. Although he is critiqued that his global justice approach is not only impractical but also violates the rights of individuals to their own property and resources. Regardless, the study concluded that his work has significantly influenced the field of global justice and modern society by challenging the conventional division between domestic and international justice.

Keywords: Economic Inequalities, Cosmopolitanism, Distributive Justice, Global Justice

Introduction

The 21st century has undeniably been beset by global issues including poverty, human rights violations, and environmental degradation which are the results of injustices. It becomes essential to contemplate a philosophy that tackles challenges stemming from injustice and Charles Beitz's concept of global justice, which provides valuable insights into tackling global inequalities, is useful here. Beitz's notion of global justice is founded on a cosmopolitan framework that underscores the moral parity of all humans globally. In his *Political Theory and International Relations*, he asserts that global justice necessitates the consideration of the interests and wants of all individuals, irrespective of their nationality, culture, or socio-economic status (127). He contends that the conventional differentiation between domestic and international justice is ethically arbitrary, asserting that concepts of justice ought to be applied internationally rather than only inside national boundaries. His notion of global justice revolves around the principle of distributive justice, which underscores the equitable allocation of resources, advantages, and responsibilities among all individuals.

Beitz's theory of global justice underscores the significance of human rights, international law, and global institutions in advancing justice and safeguarding human dignity. He contends that human rights ought to be regarded as universal entitlements rooted in the moral dignity of every individual, rather than as privileges conferred by states. He underscores the necessity for global organisations, like the United Nations, to enhance their efficacy in advancing global justice and safeguarding human rights. His notion of global justice provides a thorough and sophisticated framework for comprehending the many difficulties related to advancing justice and human dignity in a globalised context.

Understanding the Notion of Global Justice

Global justice is a topic in political philosophy stemming from concerns regarding inequalities. It is occasionally perceived as a manifestation of internationalism. Norwegian philosopher Henrik Syse asserts that global ethics and international justice within the Western tradition are integral to the natural law tradition, having been structured and imparted in Western culture since the Latin era of the Middle Stoa and Cicero, as well as by early Christian philosophers such as Ambrose and Augustine. Syse asserts, "This initial natural-law theorising focused on the concept of *ius naturale*, a system of rights that is inherent and universally applicable to all individuals, serving as a standard for discerning right from wrong" (Syse 229-237). Global justice is a theoretical perspective that examines the "equitable distribution of benefits and burdens globally" and evaluates the feasibility of the institutions necessary to "ensure such equitable distribution" (Kukathas 1). The foundation of cosmopolitan global justice rests on the recognition of individual human beings as the principal focus of attention, wherein jurisdictional boundaries do not impose limitations on the administration of justice. Global justice is founded on essential intuitions and insights derived from the traditional exploration of justice within local and national societies. It is the quest for justice on a global scale, encompassing all of humanity.

Consequently, global justice encompasses a minimum of four interconnected defining characteristics: (a) this designates human beings, irrespective of their identity or location, as the principal bearers of rights; (b) it pertains to topics that, by their nature and breadth, must be substantially addressed at the global level, such as climate change and the global political economy; (c) addressing aspects 'a' and 'b' necessitates a collective global conscience, comprised of shared

values and wise considerations, which include the projection of values by influential nations, negotiations within international agreements, and the imperative for cooperation; (d) addressing aspects a, b, and c necessitates the conceptualisation and establishment of global public goods, ensuring their complementarity with the pursuit of public good at national and regional levels (Sujian 515). These four characteristics predominantly serve as the standards of global justice and given the disparities between domestic justice and international justice, universal values pertaining to human rights, democracy, equality, and freedom function as a shared framework for inter-nation interactions. The notion of global justice, akin to the notion of justice within a national framework, acknowledges various types of rights and their significance in the assessment of justice. Similar to justice in general, fundamental rights at the global level pertain to the equitable treatment of all individuals, as well as physical, economic, and health security, and access to education, among other aspects. The quest for the recognition of these rights occurs primarily within the framework of public goods development, as delineated between national and global spheres. For example, due to the increasing economic interdependence of nations (globalisation), the quest for economic and environmental justice necessitates the establishment of a complementarity of rights, responsibilities, and public goods at both national and global levels.

Background to Charles Beitz's Concept of Global Justice

Charles Beitz's concept of global justice was shaped by several philosophical and academic inspirations. A key influence on his philosophy was the cosmopolitan tradition, which underscores the moral equality of all humans globally. He was notably influenced by Immanuel Kant's philosophy, which posits that moral principles ought to be universally applicable, transcending national or cultural confines. He asserts in his work, *Political Theory and International Relations*, that Kant's concept of the "kingdom of ends," which posits that individuals should be regarded as ends in themselves rather than as means to an end, serves as a significant impetus for cosmopolitan thought (Beitz 67). Beitz also referenced the work of John Rawls, who formulated a theory of justice that underscored the significance of fairness and equality. He criticised Rawls' theory for its excessive emphasis on domestic justice, contending that concepts of justice need to be applied universally. He contends in *Cosmopolitan Ideals and National Sentiment* that Rawls' theory of justice as fairness "fails to furnish a satisfactory account of the moral relations between nations" (123). His concept of global justice was shaped by the realities of global inequalities and injustice. He was profoundly troubled by the significant inequalities in income, power, and resource accessibility among various countries and areas.

Beitz contended that these disparities were morally unjustifiable and that affluent nations bore a moral responsibility to aid impoverished states. In *Cosmopolitan Ideals and National Sentiment*, he asserts, "the existence of extreme poverty and inequality in a world of unprecedented prosperity is a scandal" (145). He was influenced by the rise of new global institutions and international law, which he perceived as establishing a foundation for advancing global justice. He contended that these institutions and regulations need to be structured to advance the common good, rather than only catering to the interests of dominant states. He contends in *Political Theory and International Relations* that "the evolution of international law and institutions establishes a framework for the pursuit of global justice" (151). Alongside these philosophical and theoretical influences, His concept of global justice was also shaped by his own experiences and observations. As an American philosopher with extensive international experience,

he possessed a profound understanding of the intricacies and issues associated with global justice. He was also influenced by the contemporary social and political movements, notably the civil rights and anti-war movements. Beitz observes in *Cosmopolitan Ideals and National Sentiment* that his experiences as a philosopher and activist illuminated the need for adopting a global perspective on matters of justice and morality (12).

Beitz's concept of global justice was also shaped by his critique of realism and the view that nations are the exclusive actors in international affairs. In *Political Theory and International Connections*, he contends that realism "fails to provide a satisfactory account of the moral relations between nations" (67). He maintains that individuals and non-state actors possess moral agency and must be incorporated into our considerations of global justice. Moreover, his concept of global justice was shaped by his interpretation of "cosmopolitanism," which underscores the moral equality of all humans globally. In *Cosmopolitan Ideals and National Sentiment*, he asserts that cosmopolitanism "is a moral and political philosophy that underscores the unity and interdependence of humanity" (123). Beitz's concept of global justice was further influenced by his critique of nationalism and the belief that national borders should only dictate our moral responsibilities. In *Political Theory and International Connections*, he states that nationalism "fails to provide a satisfactory account of the moral relations between nations" (151). He contends that our ethical responsibilities ought to be grounded on a cosmopolitan principle of humanity, rather than in national identity. His concept of global justice was shaped by various philosophical and theoretical traditions, including cosmopolitanism, liberalism, and critical theory. His work remains a significant contribution to the domain of global justice, with his concepts of cosmopolitanism, human rights, and global government retaining substantial influence.

An Exposition of Charles Beitz's Notion of Global Justice

Charles Beitz contends that confining discussions of justice to the national sphere in the contemporary global context is ethically indefensible, as global organisations now possess the capacity to undertake fundamental state functions, including tax collection and lawmaking. Building upon John Rawls' contractarian notion of "justice", he has sought to investigate the moral responsibilities individuals have to aid the vulnerable members of the global community—the disadvantaged in other nations (*Political Theory and International Relations* 79). In this framework, "justice" does not pertain to common law, laws, or, in the realm of international law, to practices recognised as law and broad principles acknowledged by relevant national legal systems. For the sake of this analysis, "justice" refers to the optimal global allocation of rights, including property rights, derived from the endorsement and implementation of specific a priori principles. Beitz posits the existence of five fundamental moral principles that underpin all substantive international law: self-determination, nonintervention, the integrity of treaty obligations, the right to self-defence, and constraints on the use of force in armed conflict. However, these five notions are not inherently "principles" of the international legal order; they exist at significantly various levels of generality and are employed with varying degrees of efficacy as explanations for actions (Rubint 407). Furthermore, extensive segments of international law, particularly the majority of regulations commonly implemented in reality, such as those governing diplomatic immunity, do not originate from these purported principles in any manner. They originate from societal needs, which governments rationalise as "just" through public statements and diplomatic correspondence. Beitz references the General Assembly Declaration on the "Establishment of a New International

Economic Order" yet subsequently asserts that the redistribution measures he advocates cannot be effectively enforced without "coercive global institutions" (174). He and others seem to presume that documents like the "New International Economic Order Declaration" are useless as legislation due to their absence of coercive enforcement measures. However, they were never meant to constitute legislation; such legislation exceeds the legislative jurisdiction of the General Assembly (Brierly 110).

Notably, Charles Beitz's concept of global justice is fundamentally grounded in a cosmopolitan perspective that underscores the moral equality of all humans globally. He asserts that global justice necessitates the consideration of the interests and needs of all individuals, irrespective of their nationality, culture, or socio-economic status. He contends that the conventional differentiation between domestic and international justice is ethically arbitrary, asserting that concepts of justice ought to be applied internationally, rather than exclusively inside national boundaries (Beitz 67). Beitz's cosmopolitan perspective emphasises that all individuals possess equal moral value and need to be treated with dignity and respect. His concept of global justice underscores the significance of human rights and distributive justice. He asserts that human rights are universal entitlements rooted in the moral dignity of all individuals, rather than advantages conferred by nations (123). He underscores the necessity for a more equitable allocation of resources and advantages both among states and within nations. He states that the significant inequalities in income, power, and resource accessibility among various countries and areas are ethically unjustifiable, and that affluent nations bear a moral responsibility to aid less prosperous states (151).

His concept of global justice influences global governance and institutional reform. He contends that global institutions, like the United Nations, ought to be structured to advance the common good, rather than only catering to the interests of dominant nations (145). Beitz underscores the necessity for enhanced transparency, accountability, and engagement in global decision-making processes. He contends that global justice necessitates that all individuals and nations possess a role in the formulation of global policies and institutions that influence their lives (175). Charles Beitz's concept of global justice provides a thorough framework for comprehending the many challenges associated with advancing justice and human dignity in a globalised context. His work has profoundly influenced the domain of global justice and persists in shaping current discussions regarding human rights, distributive justice, and global governance. His concept of global justice is distinguished by its focus on the significance of non-state actors, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and multinational corporations (MNCs), in advancing global justice. He contends that these actors exert considerable influence on global outcomes and must be held accountable for their activities (155). He underscores the necessity for enhanced transparency and accountability in global decision-making, especially with international institutions like the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

A Critique of Charles Beitz's Concept of Global Justice

Numerous philosophers have contested Charles Beitz's concept of global justice. In his book *The Law of Peoples*, Thomas Nagel challenges his concept of global justice, contending that it neglects the significance of national sovereignty and the differentiation between domestic and international justice. Nagel argues that his cosmopolitan perspective, which highlights the moral equality of all individuals globally, is excessively expansive and neglects the importance of national boundaries

and the function of states in safeguarding the interests of their inhabitants (Nagel 118). Nagel contends that Beitz's concept of global justice overlooks the distinct commitment states have towards their own inhabitants, which cannot merely be simplified to a moral duty to aid those in need. Nagel contends that his concept of global justice is excessively dependent on a worldwide distributive principle, necessitating affluent states to allocate resources to impoverished nations to mitigate global injustice. Nagel argues that this method is both unrealistic and dismissive of the significance of national self-determination and the impact of economic progress on enhancing human well-being (132). Nagel contends that a more pragmatic and efficacious strategy for global justice should prioritise the advancement of human rights and the rule of law, rather than endeavouring to redistribute resources globally.

In his book, *Just and Unjust Wars*, Michael Walzer challenges Charles Beitz's concept of global justice, asserting that it is excessively broad and neglects the intricacies of international relations and the significance of national interests. Walzer argues that Beitz's cosmopolitan perspective, which highlights the moral equality of all humans globally, overlooks the reality that nations own distinct cultures, histories, and beliefs that influence their interpretations of justice and morality (213). In *The Law of Peoples*, John Rawls challenges Charles Beitz's concept of global justice, claiming that it is excessively expansive and neglects the significance of national sovereignty and the differentiation between domestic and international justice. Rawls argues that Beitz's cosmopolitan perspective, which prioritises the moral equality of all individuals globally, overlooks the diverse cultures, histories, and beliefs of nations that influence their interpretations of justice and morality (119). In his work, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Robert Nozick challenges Charles Beitz's concept of global justice, contending that it rests on the erroneous premise that individuals possess a moral duty to aid others in need, irrespective of nationality or context. Nozick argues that his cosmopolitan perspective, which prioritises the moral equality of all humans globally, overlooks the significance of individual rights and liberties (233). Nozick contends that Beitz's concept of global justice neglects the diversity of human beliefs, objectives, and interests, asserting that it is not the responsibility of the state or international bodies to enforce a homogeneous interpretation of justice upon all individuals. Nozick argues that his strategy is both impracticable and infringes upon individuals' rights to their property and resources (240).

Charles Beitz's Notion of Global Justice: Lessons for Contemporary Political Discourse

Charles Beitz's concept of global justice, articulated in his influential work *Political Theory and International Relations* (1979), possesses significant implications for contemporary political discourse. He contends that the norms of justice applicable inside nations ought to be extended globally, asserting that the global allocation of resources and benefits should be assessed based on fairness and equality (15). This concept opposes the conventional perspective of international relations, which asserts that states are the principal actors and that their interests should take precedence over global justice. His concept of global justice underscores the acknowledgement of global poverty and inequality as a moral and political concern. He contends that the global allocation of resources and advantages is markedly inequitable, asserting that this disparity is morally arbitrary and wrong (30). This concept has considerable lessons for modern society, when challenges such as global poverty, climate change, and economic disparity are predominant issues. By seeing global poverty and inequality as a moral and political concern, his concept of global

justice compels us to reevaluate our beliefs regarding the global allocation of resources and advantages.

Another important implication of his concept of global justice is the focus on the obligation of wealthy nations to tackle global poverty and injustice. He contends that wealthy nations possess a moral duty to aid impoverished nations and to advance global justice (50). This concept has considerable implications for the contemporary society, when matters like as international assistance, global governance, and economic advancement are vital issues. By underscoring the obligation of wealthy nations to combat global poverty and inequality, his concept of global justice compels us to reevaluate our beliefs regarding the role of states in advancing global justice. Beitz's concept of global justice implies a reevaluation of our presuppositions on the worldwide allocation of resources and advantages. Instead of prioritising state interests, we should emphasise global justice and the welfare of all persons (75). This necessitates a profound transformation in our comprehension of global politics and economics, together with the acknowledgement of the moral and political obligation to advance global justice.

Moreover, his concept of global justice influences our comprehension of human rights and international government. He contends that human rights ought to be acknowledged as universal and inalienable, and that global governance should be structured to advance and safeguard these rights (100). This is important for the modern society, where matters such as human rights, global governance, and international law are key issues. His concept of global justice, by underscoring the significance of human rights and global governance, compels us to reconsider our beliefs regarding the function of global institutions in advancing global justice. Furthermore, his concept of global justice advances the need of international collaboration and joint efforts in tackling global issues. Beitz avers that global justice necessitates collaboration and coordination among states and other international entities to tackle challenges such as poverty, inequality, and climate change (125). This demonstrates that matters such as global governance, international collaboration, and collective action are vital challenges. Most of all, his concept of global justice provides a robust framework for analysing global politics and economics.

Conclusion

Charles Beitz aimed to address the conventional statist perspective in international relations, which favoured state interests over individual welfare, in his idea of global justice. He maintained that this approach was ethically deficient, as it overlooked the global aspects of justice and morality. He was especially apprehensive over the huge disparities in wealth, power, and opportunity that prevailed among states and individuals globally. He aimed to formulate a theory of global justice that would tackle these disparities and establish a fairer and just global framework. His idea of global justice offers a substantial addition to international relations and the discourse on global justice. He postulated that the tenets of justice need to be universally implemented, and that individuals have ethical responsibilities to confront global injustices, irrespective of their nationality or geographical position. His focus on the significance of global distributive justice, human rights, and the safeguarding of vulnerable populations is a notable achievement in international political discourse.

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MORPHOLOGICAL PROCESSES OF THE IBIBIO VERB

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Abstract
This study examined the morphological processes of the Ibibio verb. The specific objectives were to investigate how and where verbal constituents are distributed and realised across morphological constructions and to discuss the morphological processes of Ibibio verb in order to explore the different morphological alternations internal to the verb complex. The theoretical framework adopted was Lexicalist theory. The study was a qualitative research with a descriptive survey design. Information was obtained through the process of elicitation and introspection. The result of the study showed that the Ibibio language is a verb centered language. It was observed that most grammatical properties in Ibibio were indicated by affixes attached to the verb roots; thus, affixes formed the head of constructs to determine the grammatical category of the morphological constructions. The effects of the pervasive nature of the Ibibio language become predominant in the areas of grammatical contrasts, verb alternations, cliticisation, verb compounding, derivational and inflectional processes and reduplication. Thus, circumfixation and interfixation processes were identified as part of Ibibio affixation processes to add to the most commonly known ones- prefixation and suffixation, while infixation becomes unproductive in Ibibio language. Partial reduplication, clipping and plurisation functioned as incidental by-products of phonology while the juxtaposition or incorporation of two verbs resulted in category incorporated preposition.

Keywords: Morphology, Ibibio Verb, Prefix, Suffix.

Introduction
The phenomenon of verb is a widespread area of study in the grammar of the Ibibio language. The traditional grammar identifies a verb as a part of speech (i.e. property of morphology) which forms

the fundamental building block of a language with notional definitions to aid in syntactic analysis. The verb is a word class which denotes or defines an action, condition or an existence. The verb is a prominent category that is central to sentence formation. It modifies its base or stem to create different meanings. The study of the verb in any language is equivalent to the study of the language throughout the world (Dickson, 2012). The verb is found virtually in most languages of the world, but in different word order as a parametric variation from the same universal communication principles. The verb constitutes the principal part of the grammatical well-formedness of Ibibio sentences. The sentence in Ibibio is a pro-drop, where subject of verbs may not be overtly expressed, instead appropriate affixes – vowel and syllabic nasal prefixes are regularly used. Accordingly, Essien (1986, p. 29) avers that every verb in Ibibio is capable of taking some kind of object in ordinary discourse and such objects are generally deleted, thus, giving the impression at the surface level that such verbs are intransitive. The verb occupies the headship position of a verb phrase. It forms a fundamental unit in a construction with a universal intuitive recognition by the native speakers.

The Ibibio language is the major language spoken in Akwa Ibom State amongst the other two dominant languages- $Anna\bar{n}$ and $Q\d{r}\d{q}$. The language is classified under the Lower-Cross language group of the Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Congo language family (Urua, 2007). The verb in Ibibio language is complex and agglutinative (Benjamin, 2019). Hence, verbal elements are built by stringing morphemes together across morphological constructs in the language. However, due to the pervasive nature of the verb, there exists some complexities in identifying the head relations in terms of its distributional criteria in Ibibio sentences. Also, verb roots in Ibibio hardly appear alone or perform its grammatical function without interfacing with other linguistic paradigms in a manner that will cause morphological alternations or contrasts internal to it. Consequently, the study of the morphological processes of the Ibibio verb is inspired by this gap. The study aims at investigating how and where verbal constituents are distributed and realized across morphological constructions. It seeks to discuss the morphological processes of Ibibio verb in order to explore the different morphological alternations internal to the verb complex. The study is basically set out to account for the morphological processes of the Ibibio verb. It uses the process of elicitation and introspection to obtain data. The Lexicalist theory is the theoretical framework.

Theoretical Framework

Lexicalist theory is an approach to word formation. It was propounded by Chomsky in his work "Chomsky's Remarks on Nominalization" (1970). Lexicalist theory can be called Lexicalism. Lexicalism is a theoretical standpoint in modern generative linguistics according to which the processes that form complex words (derivation and compounding) are accounted for by a set of lexical rules, independent of and different from the syntactic rules of the grammar (Scalise & Guevara, 2014). The theory stepped down transformation in the analysis of word and the lexicon. It spells out the autonomy of morphological component in parsing words based on the grammaticality of the language (Halle, 1973). It breaks words in accordance with its internal structure in a specific order of concatenation of morphemes. The lexicalist theory is relevant to the study of morphological processes of Ibibio verb in the sense that it has a parameterised method of parsing complex words in the Ibibio language,

Methodology

The study is a qualitative research with a descriptive survey design. The qualitative research is a humanistic research, which uses interviews as its primary sources in linguistics field work to collect corpus (data) for analysis (Oluikpe, Ndimele & Oluikpe, 2018). The data for this research was obtained from Ibibio speakers in Uyo Metropolis. The sample size of the study consisted twenty (20) adults-males and females of equal number, who speak the Ibibio language using a simple random sampling technique. The unstructured interview was used as instrument for data collection from the informants, in order to confirm the researcher's data generated intuitively, which serve as the primary source of data. The data was juxtaposed with the secondary sources like textbooks, journals and online materials that were relevant to the topic of the research. The data is analysed using Lexicalist theory.

Presentation and Data Analysis

The verb in Ibibio language agglutinates with affixes and other words to perform grammatical functions. The agglutinative structures are composed of morphemes strung together based on morphological rules according to its peculiar features within the bound of grammaticality. The Ibibio verb manifests in two major types of morphological processes- concatenative and non-concatenative morphological processes.

Concatenative morphological process

This is a derivational process, which involves the segmentation or addition of morphemes to the verb root to create new words from an existing word. It has different ways which are productive in Ibibio:

Affixation

This is a morphological process in which morphemes are added to the root verb to either extend or change the function. The affixes are discussed based on the position and the functions of affixes prevalent in the Ibibio language as:

Prefixation

This is a grammatical device or a word component which is attached as abound morpheme before the root word. Morphologically, prefixation in the Ibibio verbs produces the following derivatives:

Agentive

The agentive is a grammatical instigator (agent) of the action of the verb. It is derived through the attachment of a prefix to the verb. The prefix bears a high tone, which changes the
original grammatical category of the verb to the noun. It can be exemplified below as:

Prefix			Verb root		Derivation	Gloss
1)	(a)	ọ́	+	kwọ̀rọ́ preach	ọ́kwọ̀rọ́	'preacher'
	(b)	á	+	kpìí 'tap'	á-kpìí	'tapper'

It could be deduced from the examples that the prefixes 'á' and 'ọ́' are the noun class elements, which are attached to the verb roots 'kwọ̀rọ́' and 'kpìí', as the basic forms of the verb root to become agentives. The choice of the prefix is determined by the noun class. The agglutination of

the prefixes to the verb roots results in nouns. It could be realised that in example 1 (a-b), the nominalised verbs are usually followed by a cognate noun as in

(a) ọ́kwọ̀rọ́ ikọ 'one who preaches the gospel'.

(b) á-kpìí úkọ̀d 'one who taps palm-wine'.

This can be illustrated on a diagram using the principle of lexicalist theory as:

Fig.1 ọ́kwọ̀rọ́ 'preacher'
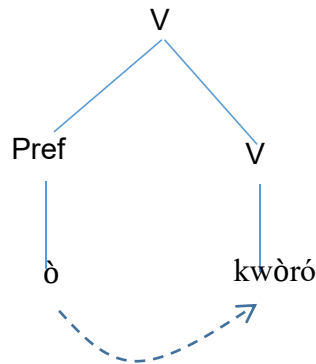
Fig. 1 shows the structure of an agentive noun 'Ọ-kwọ̀rọ́'. The prefix 'Ọ' is the head node which percolates to the features of the complement (verb) to derive an agentive 'Ọ-kwọ̀rọ́'.
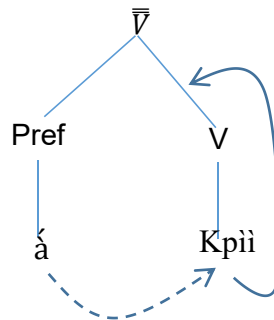
Fig. 2 á-kpìí 'tapper'

In Fig.2, the prefix 'á' percolates to the verb root 'kpìí' to derive an agentive noun á-kpìí – 'tapper'. The prefix acts as the head that determines the grammatical category of the agentive.

Gerundive

Gerundive in Ibibio describes the grammatical function of the verb. It changes the form class from verb to nominal (ending with …'ing' as in English language). The nominal is derived by prefixing a high tone harmonizing vowel 'ú' to the verb root as can be seen in the following examples:

(2)	**Prefix**	**+**	**Verb root**	**Derivation (Verbal Noun)**
(a)	ù	+	míá 'clap'	ùmíá 'clapping'
(b)	ù	+	tíghá 'kick'	ùtíghá 'kicking'

It is observed that the prefix 'ù' is a class changing. It changes the category of the basic form (verb) to gerund-verbal noun. The nominalised verbs portray different kinds of activities or actions; they often follow cognate nouns as:

a)   ùmíá úbọ́k   'clapping of hands'

b)   ùtíghá bọ́ọ́d   'kicking of football'

The gerundive can be represented using the lexicalist framework as follows:

Fig.3   ùmíá 'clapping'
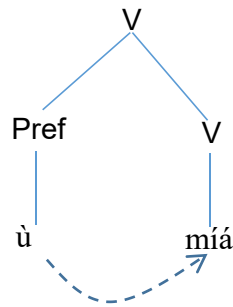
The prefix' ú' percolates to the feature of the verb root 'míá' to derive' ùmíá' as a gerundive noun. The prefix 'ù' acts as the head that determines the grammatical category of the gerundive noun 'ùmíá'.

Fig.4   ùtíghá 'kicking'
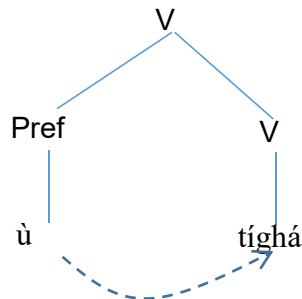
The prefix 'ù' characterizes the head of the morphological construct, which percolates to the root word 'tíghá' to derive 'ùtíghá' as the grammatical category of the gerundive.

Deverbal noun

This is the outcome of the morphological process whereby a noun is directly derived from the verbs through the attachment of a bound morpheme to a verb root. It can be termed deverbative. The deverbatives occur as single lexical items. They are explicated in the following examples as:

	Prefix	Verb	Deverbal	Grammatical class
(a)	ú-	sém 'speak'	ú-sém 'language'	Noun
(b)	ḿ-	kpà 'die'	´*m*-kpà 'death'	Noun

In the above examples, the principle of harmonization determines the choice of a particular prefix by the verb. The prefixes have high tones. The tones of the verbs do not change after union with the prefixes; rather the form classes are changed from verbs to nominals. The examples can be demonstrated thus:

Fig.5   ú-sém 'language'
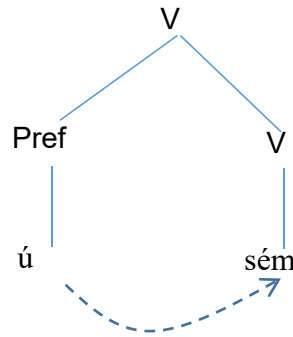
The prefix and the verb root exhibit shared structures. The 'ú'-prefix percolates to the features of the verb root 'sém' to create a verbal noun ' ú-sém' as a grammatical category.

Fig.6   ḿ-kpà 'death'
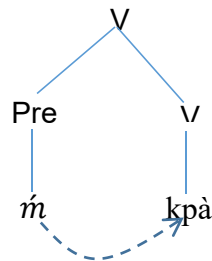
Here, the prefix determines the grammatical category of the deverbal noun as the head of the morphological construct. The prefix 'ḿ' percolates to the complement 'kpà' to emerge a verbal noun ḿ-kpà 'death'.

Infinitive

The infinitive verb is a deverbal derivative, which is formed through the prefixation of ádí/édí- to the verb root. It can be illustrated with the following examples:

(4)	Prefix	Verb root	infinitive	
(a)	ádí-	wéd	ádí-wéd	'to write'
(b)	édí-	yàm	édí-yàm	'to sell'

In example 4, the prefix as the head of the morphological construct is ádí-/édí-. The prefixes determine the grammatical category of the infinitive. The verbal derivands are 'wéd' and 'yàm' respectively, which merge with the prefix to emerge as the derivatives. These derivatives are infinitive. The infinitive most times cannot function as predicates but rather as a deverbal noun; it occurs as a subject in a construction. It can be demonstrated as:

Fig.7   ádí-wéd 'to write'
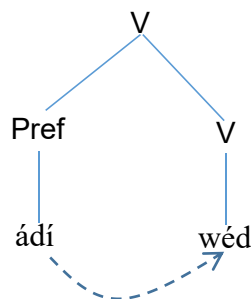
From the diagram, it could be observed that the prefix 'ádí-' percolates to the features of the complement (verb root) to intersect and derive infinitive 'ádí-wéd' which is a class-changing category.

Fig.8 édí-yàm 'to sell'
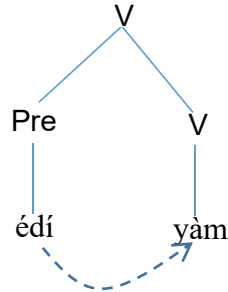
It is observed that the prefix 'édí-' percolates to 'yàm' to intersect with it and derive an infinitive 'édí-yàm'.

Suffixation
Suffixation is a morphological process, which attaches an affix or affixes as bound morphemes after the root or stem word. It acts as an additional morpheme to the host (root) to create new words. It functions in the Ibibio language as a morphological process that may derive agentless, reversive and reflexive verb derivatives. These derivatives are accompanied by harmonization of the verb stem with the suffixes in diverse ways as:

Agentless verb derivation
It is a morphologically unmarked verb, where the role of an agent is not represented. In Ibibio, an agentless verb is marked through a –CV suffixation as the examples below show:

5.	**Verb root**		**Suffix**	**Agentless Derivation**
(a)	wák	'tear'	ká	wákká 'torn'
(b)	bʌñ	'break'	ñǫ́	bʌññǫ́ 'broken'

From example 5, it could be observed that the suffix attached to the verb roots derive agentless verbs through doubling of the coda consonant. The –CV-suffixes attach to the verb roots occur to form geminate consonant, which occur intervocalically. It is realised that the suffix does not perform the function of an agent; rather, it merely indicates the absence of an explicit agent and occurs with verbs that can take an ergative nominal, e.g.

	Sentence	**Gloss**	
(a)	Ṅwèd òdò áwákká.	The book is torn	Book the torn.
(b)	Ètòńwèd ǫ́bʌññǫ́	The pencil is broken	
	Pencil broken.		

From the above examples in 6 (a-b), it could be deduced that the syntactic structures are ergative nominals, which indicate the absence of an explicit agent. The verbals obligatorily attach the –CV suffix 'ká' in 'wákká' and 'ñǫ́' in 'bʌññǫ́' to perform an ergative nominal. Also, the AGR features of

person and number are indicated affixally on Ibibio verbs, more specifically, as prefixes. Thus, (-á, and -ọ́) as shown in examples 6 precede the verb roots. The examples are shown on tree diagrams using the lexicalist theory as:

Fig.9 wákká 'torn'

```
                    V
                   / \
                  /   \
                 /     \
                V       Suf
                |        |
               wák      ká
                ⌐ _ _ _ _ ↗
```
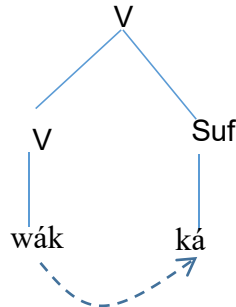
The verb root 'wák' percolates to the features of the complement node (the suffix) 'ká' to emerge an agentless verb 'wákká'.

Fig.10 bʌññọ́ 'broken'

```
                     V
                    / \
                   /   \
                  /     \
                 V       Suff
                 |        |
                bʌñ      ñọ́
                 ⌐ _ _ _ _ ↗
```
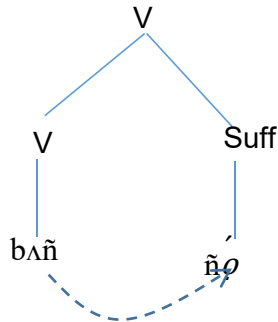
From the theory, the verb root 'bʌñ' percolates to the feature of the complement 'ñọ́' to derive an agentless word bʌññọ́ 'be broken'.

Reversive verb derivation

Reversive verb derivation is a process, which relates a root verb to a suffixation process to indicate contradiction or reversivisation in meaning. It could be considered in the examples as:

	Verb		Suffix	→	Reversive Verb	
a.	fíọk 'wedge'	+	kọ	→	fiọkọ́	'unwedged'
b.	wán 'wrap'	+	ná	→	wánná	'unwrap'

From the examples, it could be observed that the verb roots occur in the affirmative of what one should do as: fíọk - 'wedge' and wan 'wrap' while, the -CV suffixes occur as reversive markers to induce actions that are contrastive in meanings. Also, the final consonant of the verb forms the initial consonant of the -CV to create geminate consonant, while, the vowel of the stem harmonises with the vowels of the suffix to agree.

It could be demonstrated on the tree diagram below:

Fig. 11 fíọ̝kkọ̝ 'unwedged'
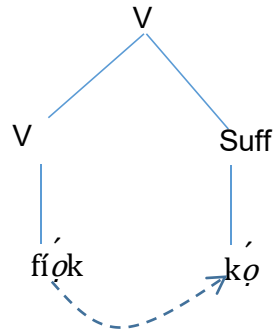
It could be observed that the verb root 'fíọ̝k' percolates to the complement 'kọ̝' to emerge fíọ̝kọ̝ 'unwedged'

Fig.12 wánná 'unwrap'
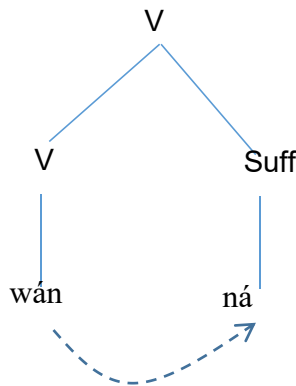
In Fig.12, the verb root 'wánná' percolates to the complement 'ná' to emerge as wánná 'unwrap'.

Reflexive verb derivation

Reflexivisation is the act of referring back to the subject (performer of an action). Verbal reflexive is where the marker is part of the morphology associated with verbs (an affix, a clitic, or a particle) Okeke, p.2008. Thus, the Ibibio language marks reflexivisation through the process of suffixation associated with the verb roots as a reflexive pronoun, which are co-referential with the subject. It can be considered in the following examples:

	Verb	Suffix	Reflexive Verb
a.	díb 'hide'	bé	díbbé 'hide oneself'
b.	tán 'pick'	ná	tánñá 'pick by yourself'

As observed from the examples above, the reflexive suffix morphemes are attached to the verb roots to indicate reflexivisation. However, it is realised that example 8 (a-b) takes geminate according to the grammaticality of the language. The reflexive verb derivation allows harmonisation between the root and the suffix vowels. This could be illustrated using the lexicalist theory as:

Fig. 13   díbbé 'hide oneself'
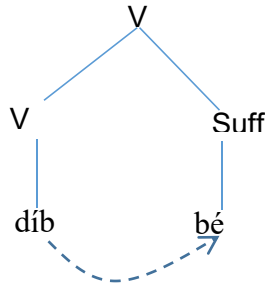
The verb root 'díb' copies the feature of the complement node 'bé' to emerged as díbbé 'hide oneself'.

Fig.14   tánñá 'pick by yourself'
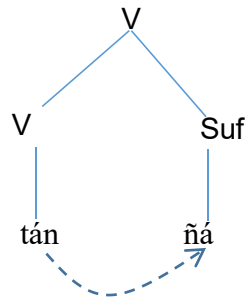
Here tánñá results from the percolation of the verb root 'tán' and the complement (suffix) 'ñá' to emerged as tánñá 'pick by yourself'

Circumfixation

This is a morphological process in which a discontinuous affix comprising two dissimilar parts surrounds an otherwise free morpheme (Mbah, 2012). It adds an affix to both sides of a host morpheme (verb root). This can be considered below:

I - negative circumfix marker combination

This is a circumfixation process, whereby an initial vowel prefix and an obligatory negation suffix markers í/hé, há conjoin to create circumfixation. It can be exemplified as:

(9)	Prefixes	Verb root	suffix	Derivation
(a).	í-	dí 'come'	-hé	í-dí-hé ' not coming'
(b).	í-	tá	-há	í-tá-há 'not chewing'

From the examples above, the discontinuous affixes harmonise with the vowels of the verb roots. The first marker of the circumfix is marked with the prefix (í-), while the suffix takes variable negative markers, depending on the vowel of the verb root. The tones of the verb roots with the affixes are high tones. It can be demonstrated thus:

Fig.15   í-dí-hé   'not coming'
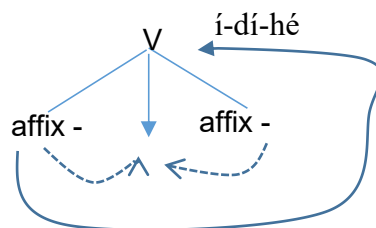
From the diagram, the verbal derivand is '-dí-'on which the features of the circumfixes percolate. After the merging, í-dí-hé 'not coming' emerges as a negative derivative.

Fig.16   í-tá-há 'not chewing'
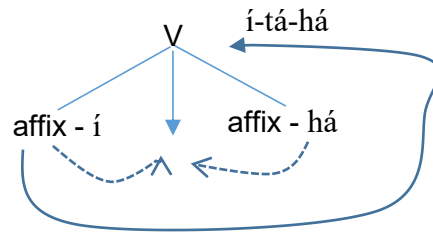
The diagram demonstrates the percolation process between morphological forms. The derivand 'tá-'on which the features of the circumfixes percolate, intersect with the circumfixes í-/há to derive í-tá-há 'not chewing'.

Compounding

According to Mbah (2018:36) "a compound word is a form with a new meaning independent of either the individual meanings of the deriving words or the sum of their meaning thereof". Thus, compounding in Ibibio is a morphological process where two or more free forms are combined to form a new word with a new meaning, which is different from the meanings of the comprising words or their meanings put together. It is demonstrated in the following examples:

	Verb 1	**+**	**Verb 2**	**Derivation**	**Gloss**
(a)	tọ́ 'hit'	+	bék 'pluck'	tọ́bék	'break off'
(b)	dá 'stand'	+	bèm 'take care'	dábèm	'watch over'

In the above examples, two verb roots (V1+ V2) with independent meanings are combined to form a compound verb. The second verb (V2) reanalyses its meaning and expresses a preposition, which have greater prepositional meaning than the verb. The examples can be represented on a tree diagram using the theoretical framework as:

Fig.17 tọ́bék 'break off'
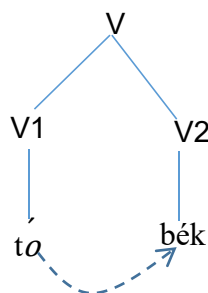
It could be observed that there is compatibility between the feature of the first verb and that of the complement.

Nonconcatenative morphological process

This is a process-based morphology. It involves a systematic modification of the sound structure of the root word. It exhibits a root based modification or alternation, which is epiphenomenal that is

an incidental byproduct of phonology. It can be called inflectional morphology due to its distinctive nature of modifying words to fit into different grammatical contrasts and contexts. It includes clipping or truncation, internal change and partial reduplication.

Clipping or truncation

This is a subtractive morphological process, which involves a systematic shortening or deletion of a defined portion of the base words. It is a non-class changing category derivation with the same semantic and grammatical content. It is shown in the following examples as:

	Verb root	**Clipped verb**	**Grammatical class**
(a)	kpìkké	kpì 'cut'	verb
(b).	wàmmặ	wàm 'pluck'	verb

From example (11), it is observed that the verb roots undergo the process of shortening some syllable to have but a clipped form without any grammatical contrasts. In Ibibio, the clipped form has been accepted in general usage. Using the lexicalist theory, clipping can be represented on a tree diagram as follows:

Fig. 18 'Kpìkké' 'cut'
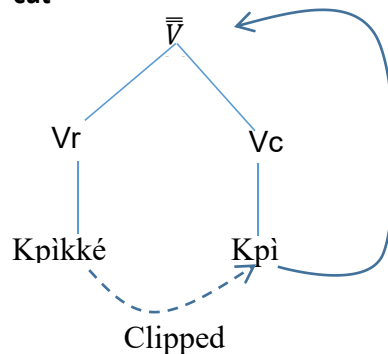
From the above diagram, there is a percolation process, where the root word 'Kpìkké' is clipped to derive 'Kpì' of the same class category and meaning.

Fig. 19 'Wàmmà'
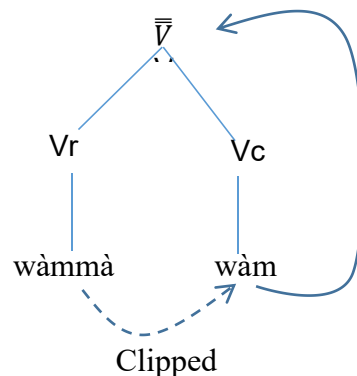
There is percolation process that resulted from the root word (verb) 'wàmmà,' being clipped to derive 'wàm' with the same meaning and function.

Internal change or Process Word

Internal change is also named process morpheme (Essien, 1990) or internal change (O'Grady, Archibald & Katamba, 2011). According to O'Grady, Archibald and Katamba (2011, p.136) "internal change is a process that substitutes one non-morphemic segment for another to mark a grammatical contrast". Essien (1990, p.91) views internal change as, "a process morpheme which involves the system of marking plurality. However, pluralisation is a process of making something more than one. In the Ibibio language, pluralisation is a complex phenomenon that functions in different grammatical classes through different processes like affixation and reduplication. According to Essien (1990, p.91), "plural verbs usually have the meaning of repeated, sustained or continuous action, or action by a large number of objects. The following are the examples of plural in the Ibibio language:

	Singular Verb	**Plural Verb**
(a).	wùkkọ́ 'uproot'	wùùnó 'uproots'
(b).	fàkká 'uncork'	fààñá 'uncork'

From example (12), it could be observed that the singular verb stems undergo internal changes by lengthening the vowel sounds in the medial positions to denote pluralisation in the Ibibio language.

However, in the case of example 12(a-b), the [kk] in wúkkọ́ 'uproot' and fákká 'remove' are formed by doubling the vowel of the first syllable and nasalising the oral stop from [kk] to [ñ]. This is because there is an internal phonetic process occasioned by vowel harmony such that the velar nasal [ŋ] is affected and modified by the voiceless velar plosive [k]to reflect the same place of articulation thus changing [kk] to [ñ]. The vowel of the stem harmonises with the vowels of the suffix. It could be represented on a tree diagram, using the lexicalist theory as:

Fig. 20 wùkkọ́
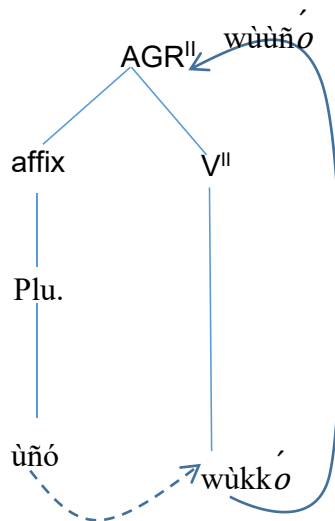
From the diagram, it could be deduced that there is a percolation process, which arise from the verb category (affix) ùñó to the complements (verb root) wùkk ọ́ to emerge and produce a plural verb wùùñọ́

Fig. 21 'fàkká' 'uncork'
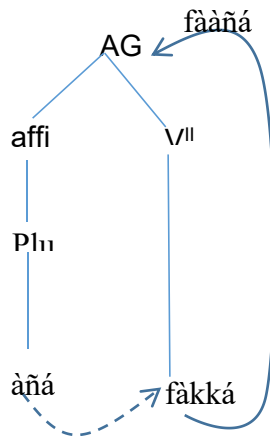
The verb category (plural marker) percolates over the singular verb 'fàkká' with a plural notion 'àñá' to form a plural verb fààñá

Reduplication

This is a process, which is very common in the Ibibio language. It occurs partly as a full reduplication and as a partial reduplication of nonconcatenative morphology. The addition of affixes is determined wholly or partly by the base. It attaches an affix to the base through the copying of the full base or parts of the base. It performs grammatical and semantic contrasts. There are two types of reduplication in Ibibio, which include:

Full Reduplication

Full reduplication is a type of reduplication where there is a total repetition and copying of the reduplicant. It occurs in the CV- verb base by doubling the reduplicant and inserting a vowel in between the CV-reduplicant to mark imperative constructions and intensity. This can be considered in the following examples:

	CV verb stem in full reduplication				
(a)	.tà	'chew'	tata		'chew'
(b)	.má	'love'	mámá		'love'

The CV-reduplicant copies the entire CV verb roots, such that the derived form has two forms of combinations; the half of the base and the half of the reduplicant, which functions to show intensity and command

The examples can be diagrammatically represented using the lexicalist theory, thus:

Fig. 22 Tátà
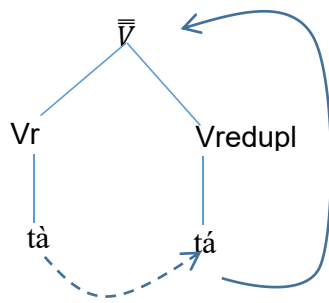
Here, the verb category (reduplicant) 'tà' percolates to the verb root 'tà' to derive a reduplicated from 'tàtà'

Fig. 23 Mámá
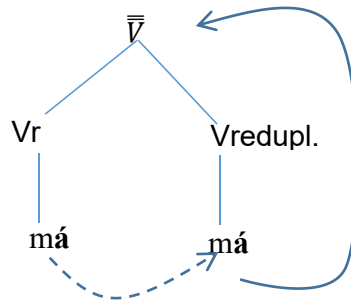
From the illustration, the reduplicant 'má' percolates to extend the verb root 'má' so as to derive a redulplication 'mámá' at the same level of compatibility. Thus, full reduplication occurs either as an interfixation process or copying the whole part of the verb

Partial reduplication
This is a morphological process, which duplicates or copies only a part of the reduplicant. It involves a systematic modification or alternation of the sound structure of the root word either by deleting the final consonant in a CVC structure and the second syllable in a disyllabic verbs. The examples below illustrate thus:

(14)
(a).   tèm   'cook'   téé-tèm   'cook'
(b).   tóbó   'tie'   tóó-tóbó   'tie'

It could be observed that the examples above show instances of partial reduplication. There is modification of the verb root through a lengthening process. In example 14(a) the coda in the CVC root is deleted, while, in example 14(b) the second consonant in a CVCV (disyllabic structure) is deleted thereby extending the vowel of the reduplicated segment (reduplicant) to mark emphasis, intensity, contrast and ensure specification. There is no semantic change to the structure of the word, but there is harmonization between the vowels of the reduplicant and the vowels of the root verb, using the lexicalist theory, the examples could be represented thus,

Fig. 23 téé-tèm
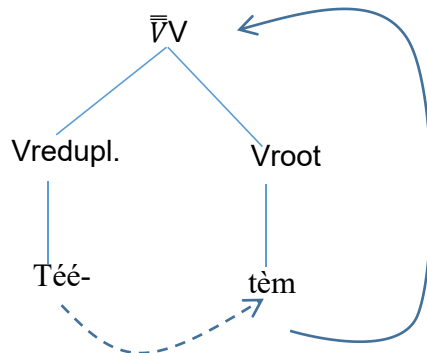
The reduplicant 'téé' percolates to the features of the compliment 'tèm' to emerge a partial reduplicated verb 'téé-tèm'. It indicates grammatical contrast, showing emphasis.

Fig. 24 Tóó-tóbó

‘
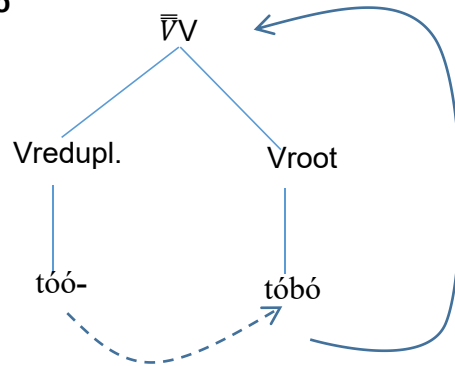
It is observed that 'tóbó' is a disyllabic verb. The first syllable is clipped and the vowel is duplicated in harmony with the verb root. The 'tóó-' reduplicant percolates to the verb root 'tóbó; to derive 'tóó-tóbó' with all the tone copied as well.

Summary of Findings

The study of the morphological processes of Ibibio verbs helps to specify the linguistic forms that Ibibio grammar assumes. The verb constitutes the kernel structure of the Ibibio language. The morphological structure of the Ibibio verb provides grammatical information about its morphemic or cellular architect. The monosyllabic verbs are canonical verbal units. The morphological processes are either derivational or inflectional. The Ibibio concatenative morphology is the affixation of prefix, suffix, circumfix and interfix to free morphemes while infix becomes dormant in Ibibio affixation process. The prefix determines the grammatical class of the eventual derivatives and all prefixes are observed to be mostly vowels sounds, marking personal and modal features prefixally. It produces nouns such as agentive, infinitive and verbal nouns as semantic functors on arguments or morphosyntactic locus, where inflection takes place. The suffix may be used to form verb complexes to derive agentless, reversive and reflexive verbal forms. The agentless verb acts as an ergative verb in the Ibibio morphology. Most suffixes in Ibibio language begin with consonant sounds, marking negation and pluralisation suffxally. Also, circumfixation is used to form negative constructions in the Ibibio language. Interfix is realised in full reduplication of verb forms, while the partial reduplication modifies the sound structure of the root words. On the other hand, concatenative process produces morphological terms used to define the relationship between the affixes and other constituents in the construction. Also, verbs in Ibibio are consonant initials. They do not begin with vowels except when they are prefixed to the verb; but most Ibibio suffixes are consonants. Ibibio verbs also concatenate one another to form compound verbs. Compounding in the Ibibio language results in category incorporated preposition. Here, the last verb in the compound re-analyses its meaning to express a preposition notion. This is similar to what is seen in neighbouring languages such as Igbo, Yoruba (see Madugu 1995, Mbah 1999, 2018). Thus, the concatenative and nonconcatenative morphological processes examined in this research work generate morphosyntactic structures in well-formedness conditions to form the influences of this study.

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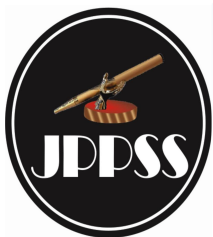
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TONE SYSTEMS OF IGBO, YORUBA AND IBIBIO: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND THE LINGUISTIC IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract
This paper aims at providing a comparative analysis of the tonal systems of Igbo, Ibibio, and Yoruba, highlighting their similarities and differences. By examining tone types, distribution and lexical functional load, the analysis aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of tone as a linguistic phenomenon and its implication in language learning. Using a structured corpus, data was obtained by means of elicitation from six consultants (that is, two native speakers of each of the languages, purposively selected). Also, existing scholarly works served as reliable sources as many works have been done on the phonology of these languages. The paper adopted the Contrastive Analysis (CA) method propounded by Lado (1957). The findings showed that Igbo and Ibibio languages do not have mid-tone, Yoruba and Igbo do not have contour tones. Again, Yoruba does not have a down-step tone. The analyses show that the languages exhibit tonal complexity which means that learners and speakers must rely on tone to avoid ambiguity. This paper therefore concludes that, the differences in tonal structure of the languages can constitute pronunciation problems for native speakers of one of the languages learning another, as they would unconsciously transfer the pronunciation pattern they have internalised for their mother tongue (MT) or first language (L1) into their target language (TL). This paper recommends that learners of second language (L2) should be taught to produce and master appropriate application of the tones in the L2 which are lacking in their first language (L1), to prevent pronunciation errors and ambiguity.

Keywords: Tone Systems, Ibibio, Yoruba, Igbo.

Introduction
Languages have been compared since antiquity. For example, in the 1st century BC the Romans were aware of the similarities between Greek and Latin, which they explained mythologically, as the result of Rome being a Greek colony speaking a debased dialect. While traditional linguistic

studies had developed comparative methods (comparative linguistics), chiefly to demonstrate family relations between cognate languages, or to illustrate the historical developments of one or more languages, modern contrastive linguistics intends to show in what ways the two respective languages differ. Contrastive descriptions can occur at every level of linguistic structure: speech sounds (phonology), written symbols (orthography), word-formation (morphology), word meaning (lexicology), collocation (phraseology), sentence structure (syntax) and complete discourse (textology). Igbo and Yoruba belong to the Kwa language sub-family of the Volta-Congo and Atlantic-Congo branches of the Niger-Congo language. According to Heine and Nurse (2000), the languages currently known as Kwa are spoken along the Atlantic coast of West Africa from the south-eastern quadrant of Cote d'Ivoire to the extreme south-western corner of Nigeria. Ibibio language belong to the *Lower Cross* sub-group which spreads across the Cross River and parts of Rivers States. It is spoken by the Ibibio people of Akwa Ibom State in the South-South zone of Nigeria (Udoh, 2019; Udoh, Anyanwu and Sylvanus, 2025).

Tone is a central feature in the phonological systems of many African languages, particularly within the Niger-Congo language family, where it functions not merely as a lexical differentiator but also as a grammatical operator (Hyman 2011). Researches on African tone systems have played a vital role in phonological theory ever since auto-segmental phonology was propounded by Goldsmith (1976). Spread and shift of tone, floating tones and tone melodies as well as down-step are well-documented properties of African tone, manifesting the fact that tones owe little allegiance to the segments realizing them. Tone is a widespread phenomenon in Nigerian languages as most languages of Nigeria such as Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Ibibio are all tone languages, except Fulfude (Williamson 2006; Udoh, Anyanwu and Sylvanus, 2025). This study seeks to provide a comparative analysis of the tonal systems of Igbo, Ibibio, and Yoruba, highlighting their similarities and differences. By examining tone types, distribution, phonological behaviour, and lexical functional load across the three languages, the analysis aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of tone as a linguistic phenomenon and its implication in language learning.

Theoretical Framework

The Contrastive Analysis (CA) method propounded by Robert Lado in Lado (1957) is adopted for this study. Contrastive analysis is the systematic study of a pair of languages with a view to identifying their structural differences and similarities. Historically it has been used to establish language genealogies. CA research offers insight to subtle differences among languages. Chestermann (1998) summarizes CA to include two main processes - description and comparison. For him, languages are described and compared in CA; from the comparison, potential difficulties for learners are predicted from the differences and the extent to which the languages are alike are equally shown from the similarities. According to Firbas (1992) cited in Eme and Uba (2016), the contrastive method proves to be a useful heuristic tool capable of throwing valuable light on the characteristic features of the languages contrasted. This means that when we compare languages, the features of each language are clearly seen and this, in addition, contributes to a better description of each individual language. Moreover, CA is often and primarily done for pedagogical purposes, with the aim to provide better descriptions and better teaching materials for language teachers and learners. Contrastive linguistics, since its inception (Lado 1957), has often been linked to aspects of applied linguistics, to assist inter-lingual transfer in the process of translating texts from one language into

another, as demonstrated by Hatim (1997) and to find lexical equivalents in the process of compiling bilingual dictionaries, as illustrated by Heltai (1988) and Hartmann (1991).

Methodology

The analysis draws on both field data and existing corpora of previous scholarly descriptions. Using a structured corpus, data was obtained by means of elicitation from six adult language consultants (two native speakers of each of the languages – Igbo, Yoruba and Ibibio) and was digitally recorded. Purposive sampling technique based on age, competence in the languages was used to select the language consultants. The language consultants were adult native speakers of the languages within the ages of 35-50, who have spent minimum of 30 years in their native towns. The discussion is on the Contrastive Analysis (CA) of Igbo, Ibibio and Yoruba. The data in this paper shows phonological representation of the lexical items in Igbo, Ibibio and Yoruba with the gloss in English. The adopted tone marking convention marks high tone with acute accent [´], low tone with grave accent [`], over a vowel or syllabic nasal and the downstepped high tone by an exclamation mark [!] before the syllable that bears the downstepped high tone, while the mid tone is left unmarked.

Tone

Tone has been defined as contrastive pitch, a phenomenon arising from the vibration of the vocal cords. It is the use of pitch in language to distinguish lexical or grammatical meaning – that is, to distinguish or to inflect words. By pitch contrast is meant that the changes or variations in pitch affect the meaning of a word. All verbal languages use pitch to express emotional and other paralinguistic information and to convey emphasis, contrast, and other such features in what is called intonation, but not all languages use tones to distinguish words or their inflections, analogously to consonants and vowels. Languages that do have this feature are called tonal languages; the distinctive tone patterns of such languages are sometimes called tonemes by analogy with phoneme. According to Welmers (1973), "a tone language is a language in which both pitch phonemes and segmental phonemes enter into the composition of at least some morphemes". Essien (2010, p.85) views tone as "a purely phonological matter...whether one views it as a supra-segmental or Goldsmith's (1976) auto-segmental, the child learns it as part of a lexical item". Pike (1948) makes a distinction between types of tone languages, namely register and contour tone languages. Urua (2007) sees a register tone language as a language in which the tones remain as level pitches, relative to one another with little or no gliding pitches; while a contour tone language has gliding pitches where the contrasts are rising or falling without being relative to one another.

Welmers (1973) further subdivides Pike's (1948) register tone languages into two classes, which he calls discrete level and terraced level systems. A discrete level system is a language in which the relative height of the different tone units is kept separate so that there is no intersection between their phonetic realisations. And a terraced level tone system is a language in which there is intersection between the tonal realisations. In tone languages, the tone is usually marked on the syllabic segments of the language. In phonetic transcription, tones are enclosed in square brackets beside or above the segments: [ ] is a high tone (H); [ ] is a low tone (L); [-] is a mid-tone (M), [!] is a down-stepped tone (!H), [ˇ] low high/ rising tone, [ˆ] – High low/ falling tone, etc. Examples of words in Ibibio to illustrate tone marking in the language, taken from Udoh, Anyanwu and Sylvanus (2025, p.30) is shown below:

1a. mé   - endure (H)
b. dù   - exist (L)
c. ú!ké   - where? (H-!H)

Functions of Tone in Tone Languages

Tone is an important element in African and Asian languages. It is used to make lexical (meaning differentiation) as well as grammatical distinctions in these languages, some of which include tense and aspectual distinctions (Udoh, Anyanwu and Sylvanus, 2025). According to Urua (2007), in addition to the lexical and grammatical functions, the significance of tone in African tone languages is seen in the fact that tone alone can be used to communicate messages, especially in dance music, where particular dance movements are communicated to the dancers through the drum beats which correspond to the tonal component equivalent to actual speech in the form of songs. In many tonal African languages, tones are distinguished by their pitch level relative to each other, known as a register tone system. Moreover, some African riddles are strictly tonal without any segmental component in that the riddle is posed in the form of a tonal component of the correspondent speech. The resolution of such riddles is based on the appropriate interpretation of the tonal component in the speech form of the riddle (Urua, 2007). Given the work done on tone languages, there is a consensus that the pitch of the voice is a significant constituent of a tone language. In a tone language (tonal language), alteration of the meaning of the words can be caused by different tones, even if the words are spelt alike. English and almost all other European languages are not tone languages. Apart from instances where certain tone bearing segments are toneless, there are instances where tones are not borne by any segments. Such tones are referred to as floating tones. Floating tone is a tonal manifestation, which is not clearly associated with any vowel or syllable, but whose effect can be observed on the neighbouring vowel or syllable. It is usually explained as a result of a lost segment (Urua, 2007).

The Tone Systems of Igbo, Yoruba and Ibibio

The languages being examined are geographically contiguous and genetically related. Their tonal systems diverge significantly in inventory, morphosyntactic roles and tonal processes. Yoruba is analysed by Laniran and Clements (2003) as having a three-tone system (High, Mid, Low) with phonologically significant downstep while Igbo and Ibibio are typically described as two-tone systems (High and Low), although both exhibit complex tonal alternations, sandhi phenomena, and prosodic restructuring (Clark, 1990, Essien, 1990, Urua, 2007).

The Ibibio Tone System

Essien (1990) observes that Ibibio has two basic level tones, high and low. Other significant tones in the language are low-high (LH) and high-low (HL), both of which are contour tones. The contour tones are simply modifications of these basic tones (Essien, 1990, Urua, 2007). Another such modification involves the high tone which can be lowered by a phenomenon called down-step. According to Urua (2007), the level tones and the downstepped tone occur in various environments. The low tone is represented by a grave accent marked over a vowel or a syllabic nasal, e.g. ìwá "cassava". The high tone is represented by an acute accent marked over a vowel or syllabic nasal, e.g. dá "stand" and the down-stepped high tone by an exclamation mark before the syllable that bears the down-stepped high tone: ú!ké "where?".

A high tone and a low tone may occur at the beginning of a syllable, medially or finally. Secondly, a low tone may only be followed by either another low (L) tone, a high (H) tone, a low-high (LH) tone or a high-low (HL) tone but rarely by a downstepped high tone, whereas, after a high tone, any other tones (a high, a low, a downstepped tone and contour tone) may follow it (Urua 2007). Examples taken from Urua (2007, p.54-55) are shown below:

2a. ènɔ̀ - gift
b. àŋwâ - cat
c. ìtjě - place
d. ú!ké - where?
e. úfɔ̂k - house
f. dɪ́ppé - lift

The downstepped tone has a restricted distribution in Ibibio. It cannot occur in the prefix or stem initially; and "it may only occur following a preceding high tone and may not be followed by another downstepped tone except a high tone intervenes" (Urua 2007, p.55). For example:

3a. ú!ké - where?
b. ḿ!bɔ́k - please
c. ɔ́!bɔ́ɔ́ŋ - chief

In the language, contrasts (grammatical and lexical) are made based on tonal oppositions. Examples of lexical contrasts in Ibibio taken from Essien (1990, p.53) are shown below:

4a. wàk - tear
wák - be many
4b. ḿ!bɔ̀k - please
ḿbɔ́k - wrestle

The grammatical functions of tone in Ibibio includes to mark tense and to distinguish imperative constructions from progressive constructions. Examples of grammatical contrasts in Ibibio taken from Urua (2007, p. 56 -57) are shown below:

	Past tense	**Present tense**
4c.	àákon á!á dép ɔ̀fɔ̀ŋ	àákon á dêp ɔ̀fɔ̀ŋ
	Akon **has bought** (a) dress	Akon **is buying** (a) dress
	Imperative construction	**Progressive construction**
4d.	kàá ùdùà	ŋ́kâ ùdùà
	Go (to the) market	I am **going** (to the) market

The Igbo Tone System

Most varieties of Igbo, according to Emenanjo (2015), have two basic tones: High (H or ´), Low (L or `) and down-stepped High, (!). The high tone and the low tone may occur at the beginning of a syllable, medially or finally. Secondly, a low tone may only be followed by either another low (L) tone or a high (H) tone, but rarely by a downstepped high tone. For example:

5a. ìsì - blindness
b. ìsí - five
c. ńzɔ̀kɔ́ - meeting

   d. ìbèrîîbè   - foolishness, frivolity

In Igbo language, phonemic contrasts are realized in a two-way manner after a L: LL and LH as in ìsì "blindness" and ìsí "five" respectively; and after a H: HH, HL, H!H as in ísí "head", ísì "smell" and í!sí "cook" (!H is a downstepped high, that is, a high tone which is one step lower than the preceding high). Therefore, lexically, the sequence of sounds [isi] will have different meanings in Igbo depending on the tones on which it is said.

      Grammatically, Nkamigbo (2012) shows that the functions of tone in Igbo includes to distinguish statements from interrogatives, differentiate nominal constructions from verbal constructions, distinguish cardinal numbers from ordinal numbers, and to differentiate a sentence from a relative clause. Below are examples of grammatical functions of tone in Igbo taken from Nkamigbo (2012, p.1):

	Statement	**Question**
6a.	ó gàrà áhíá	ò gàrà áhíá
	S/he went to the market	Did S/he go to the market?

	Nominal construction	**Verbal Construction**
6b.	ísí ázọ̀	í!sí ázọ̀
	head of fish	(to) cook fish

According to Emenanjo (2015), gliding tones are not phonemic in Igbo, as Igbo is a discrete level tone language. Whenever gliding tones are identified on words in isolation, they are treated as two different pitch levels, on two identical vowels.

The Yoruba Tone System

In Yoruba language, there are three tones: high, mid and low. The tone bearing units are vowels and syllabic nasals. (It is important to note that the mid tone in Yoruba is usually left unmarked). Eme and Uba (2016), states that each of the tones in Yoruba can occur in all the possible environments (initial, medial, and final positions) and can be preceded or followed by any tone. In other words, the tones do not have restrictions on environments of occurrence. For instance, in Yoruba we have:

7a.pá	-	plank (HH)
kó		
pákò	-	chewing stick (HL)
kése	-	mythological place name (HM)
8. àrá	-	thunder (LH)
àrà	-	wonder (LL)
àna	-	in-law (LM)
igbá	-	calabash (MH)
igba	-	200 (MM)
igbà	-	girdle (ML)

(Some of the Yoruba words used in our examples in this section were adapted from Eme and Uba (2016) while others were provided by the informants).

Like in other tone languages, a word may have different lexical meanings depending on its tone. For example, the sequence of sounds "ere" will have different meanings depending on the tone with which it is said:

    9a. eré   - play
    Èrè   - profit
    ère   - statue

Tone also performs grammatical functions in Yoruba. Rafiu and Busari (2023), shows the use of tone in distinguishing between continuous, declarative and negative sentences in Ònkò dialect of Yoruba. Examples taken from Rafiu and Busari (2023, p. 170) are shown below:

9b. ǹ ń lɔ   - I am going (continuous sentence)
     n ń lɔ   - I will go (declarative sentence)
     n ǹ lɔ   - I am not going (negative sentence)

9c. ǹ ń jɛun   - I am eating (continuous sentence)
     n ń jɛun   - I will eat (declarative sentence)
     n ǹ jɛun   - I am not eating (negative sentence)

Comparative Analysis of Tonal Systems in Igbo, Yoruba and Ibibio Languages
In this section, the tone systems of the languages under study are compared to discover the convergences and divergences.

Similarities in the Tonal Systems of Igbo, Yoruba and Ibibio Languages
From the discussions above it can be seen that Igbo and Ibibio languages have down-stepped tones. This tonal feature involves the lowering of a high tone. Thus the down-stepped high tone has a restricted distribution. While the high and low tones may occur in various positions in a word in the languages, the down-stepped high tone may neither occur in the prefix nor stem initially; it does not follow a low tone. Since it is a high tone that has been stepped down, it can only occur following a preceding high tone and may not be followed directly by another down-stepped high tone except a high tone intervenes. In Igbo, it is phonetically indicated as [!] and orthographically (ˉ) (Emenanjo 2015), while in Ibibio it is indicated with an exclamation mark before the syllable that bears the down-stepped high tone. Below are examples of words where the down-step tone occurs in Igbo and Ibibio languages with the gloss in English.

Igbo	Gloss	Ibibio	Gloss
10a. é!lú	-top	ú!ké	-where?
b. é!zé	-teeth	ú!kó	-yonder
c. é!gé	-money	ń!né	-young woman
d. ó!ké	-boundary	ú!dó	-there

Tonal Homophones
Igbo, Ibibio and Yoruba are tone languages which manifest items that are homophonic based on tonal parameters. Beside the contrastive functions of tone, we find that lexical items which are completely identical in both segmental and tonal content have different senses in terms of meaning in the languages. Below are some examples of tonal homophones:

Igbo	English (Gloss)	Ibibio	English (Gloss)	Yoruba	English (Gloss)
11a mbà	-country	tèm	-cause to sit	ɔ̀kɛ́	-bag
b. mbà	-no	tèm	-cook	ɔ̀kɛ́	-name
12a. ɔ́gù	-hoe	bèm	-precede	ɔwɔ̀	-name of a town
b. ɔ́gù	-medicine	bèm	-watch over	ɔ̀wɔ́	-reverence
13a. ntú	-ashes	tèm mé	-show/explain	àlà	-boundary
b. ntú	-dust	tèm mé	-take off from the source of heat	àlà	-white
14a.àgwà	-colour	kpé	-plead	aʤé	-monday
b. àgwà	-character	kpé	-pay	aʤé	-trade/business
c. àgwà	-beans			aʤé	-sales

Lexical Contrast

The languages have two contrastive level tones, that is, High (H), Low (L), although Igbo and Ibibio also have a down-stepped high tone (Emenanjo 2015, Essien 1990, Urua 2007). Lexical and grammatical contrasts are made in the languages purely based on the different tones found on the syllables, since the segmental components of the lexical items are completely identical. Below are some examples of lexical contrast in the languages:

Igbo	English (Gloss)	Ibibio	English	Yoruba	English
15 a. óké	-male	òbû	-crayfish	ìgbà	-season
b. òkè	-share	óbû	-dust	igbà	-girdle
c. òké	-rat			igbá	-calabash
d. ó!ké	-boundary			ìgbá	-garden egg
16 a. àdá	-daughter	wàk	-tear	eré	-play
b. á!dá	-fall	wák	-be many	èrè	-profit
				ère	-statue
1	-head	dèp	-to rain	ò	-rain
7	-smell	dép	-to buy	j	-cowardice
a.	-blindness			ò	-personal name
ísí	-to cook			o	
b.				j	
ísì				o	
c. ìsì				ò	
d. í!sí				j	
				ó	
18a.	-year	ḿ!bɔk	-please	à	-thunder
áfɔ̀	-stomach	ḿbók	-wrestle	r	-wonder
b. áfɔ́				á	
				à	
				r	
				à	

Differences in the Tonal Systems of Igbo, Yoruba and Ibibio Languages

Contour (Gliding) Tones: Yoruba language does not have gliding tones. Gliding tones are not phonemic in Igbo, as Igbo is a discrete level tone language. As noted by Emenanjo (2015), whenever gliding tones are identified on words in isolation, they are treated as two different pitch levels, on two identical vowels; however, in Ibibio language, Essien (1990), Urua, Ekpenyong and Gibbon (2012) regard them as phonemic as they argue that both rising and falling tones contrast with level tones as seen in the following examples:

19a. èkà	- mother	
b. èkă	- go (plural)	
20a. ídém	- body	
b. ídêm	- masquerade	
21a. ákpán	- the first-born son	
b. ákpân	- a basket woven of cane	
22a. kpê	- expression of concern	
b. kpé	- plead	
23a. mé	- be patient	
b. mê	- if, or, whether	
24a. ńdó	- defect	
b. ńdô	- fish (a kind of small fish)	

Essien (1990) summarize it thus: the contrast between the level tones, which have no gliding pitch and the contour tones which have gliding pitches is similar to the contrast between simple vowels and diphthongs which have glides. In a way, the contour tones of the supra-segmental of tone can be viewed as the diphthong counterpart of the vowel segment.

Mid Tone: Whereas Igbo and Ibibio languages do not have mid tone, Yoruba does. "Each of the tones in Yoruba can be preceded or followed by any tone. In other words, each of the tones can occur in all the possible environments - initial, medial, and final positions" (Eme and Uba, 2016, p.78). This is unlike the down-step tone in Igbo and Ibibio languages whose occurrences are constrained - the down-step tone cannot begin a canonical word. Since the down-step tone is acoustically regarded as dropping from a height and is perceived as such, it cannot be preceded by a low tone, rather, it can only follow a high tone or another down-step tone.

Linguistic Implications of Differences in Tonal System of the Igbo, Ibibio and Yoruba Languages
Since all three languages belong to the Niger-Congo (Benue-Congo) family, the linguistic implications of the tonal contrast between Igbo, Ibibio, and Yoruba are complex. However, their tone inventories, phonological patterns, and functions differ significantly. Particularly in the areas of phonology, morphology, syntax, language contact, and language acquisition, the implications of the tonal disparity between the languages are significant. Below is a detailed analysis:

Phonological Implications
Ibibio typically has a level and terraced tone system (High, Low, downstep, high-low, low-high), giving it a wider tonal range, whereas Yoruba is made of level tones (High, Mid, Low). Igbo, on the

other hand, usually has a two-tone system (High and Low) with downstep, giving it a discrete tone system. The three-level tone systems of Ibibio and Yoruba allow for greater grammatical and lexical distinction. Igbo uses downstep tone to enhance expressiveness while having a simpler two-tone system. These differences result in different phonemic loads for tone in each language, thereby, affecting how much tone contributes to meaning.

Lexical Distinctions
Tone differentiates lexical items across all three languages, though the extent of variation differs. In Yoruba, there are numerous instances of lexical pairs distinguished by tone (as illustrated in example 18: ìgbá – garden egg, ìgbà - season, igbà – girdle, igbá - calabash). Ibibio language exhibits a rich tonal contrast capable of encoding subtle semantic distinctions, whereas Igbo language, despite having fewer tones, still differentiates lexical pairs (as seen in examples 18-21). The functional burden of tone is increased as a result of the tonal complexity exhibited in the languages. To prevent ambiguity, speakers and learners must rely significantly on tone.

Lexical Ambiguity
In a discourse, tone can be used to highlight contrastive aspects or delineate grammatical boundaries. More complex possibilities for intonation and sentence mood are offered by Ibibio's three-tone system. Since many of the words in Yoruba and Igbo are tonal homophones that can be disambiguated by context, as seen in Example 14-17, their tone range frequently leads to higher lexical ambiguity than Ibibio, particularly in disyllabic or monosyllabic words.

Language Contact and Interference
Even in cases where vocabulary overlaps, tone patterns act as ethnolinguistic identity identifiers, aiding in the differentiation of language speakers (for instance, Igbo versus Ibibio speakers). Furthermore, speakers are prone to transfer tonal patterns in multilingual situations, which may cause interference or tone neutralisation in speech.

Implications for Language Learning
These differences in tonal structure of the languages may constitute pronunciation problems for native speakers of one of the languages learning another, as they would unconsciously transfer the pronunciation pattern they have internalised for their mother tongue (MT) or first language (L1) into their target language (TL) or second language (L2), by often substituting the 'unfamiliar' tones with some familiar tones that do not correspond with lexical items in their target language. Non-native speakers frequently lose subtlety or cause communication breakdowns when they misapply tone rules. Second, tone contrasts cause L1 interference, which impacts fluency and language learning. To prevent these pronunciation errors, pedagogical materials must explicitly teach tonal distinctions and their grammatical roles. It is important to teach language learners how to produce and master the tones they are unfamiliar with, such as the mid, down-step, and contour tones. The teacher (s) should pay close attention during the lessons and drills in order to identify and promptly correct any pronunciation errors made by the students. Following that, teachers should assess students' ability to produce and tone-mark lexical objects that are produced with those unfamiliar tones.

Summary and Conclusion

It was observed from the foregoing discussion that a syllable prefix in Ibibio can have a high tone. A high tone may be followed by a low tone, a downstepped high tone, or another high tone. It may be followed by a low-high (L-H) or high-low (H-L) contour tone in Ibibio, resulting in an H-HL or H-LH. In Ibibio, it is the only tone that can appear at the end of a syllable when citing disyllabic verbs. In the Ibibio language, the low tone can be found medially or at the start of a syllable (either on a syllable prefix or in the stem). Again, a low tone can be followed by a high tone (H), another low tone (L), a low-high (L-H), or a high-low (H-L), but rarely by a down-stepped high tone. While the high and low tones can occur in different places in a word, the down-stepped high tone can only appear after a previous high tone and cannot be followed immediately by another down-stepped high tone unless a high tone comes before it. Therefore, in the Ibibio language, the down-stepped high tone has a constrained distribution. All of the tones in Yoruba, however, are unrestricted because they might appear in initial, medial, or final positions. One of the implications of the differences in tonal structure of the languages is that learners and speakers must rely significantly on tone to avoid ambiguity, because, there exist copious occurrences of lexical pairs differentiated by tone. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that the languages have tonal homophones, that is, lexical words with the same segmental properties but distinct meanings. This is not the same as contrastive tones, where lexical items have identical segmental composition but different tones therefore have different meanings. Tonal homophones imply that context is the sole way to distinguish between different discourses.

It is important to note that differences in the tonal systems of the languages may cause pronunciation problems for native speakers of one language learning another. Besides, it is necessary to note that native speakers of one language may unconsciously transfer the pronunciation patterns they have internalised for their mother tongue (MT) or first language (L1) into their target language (TL) or second language (L2), by frequently substituting the "unfamiliar" tones with some familiar tones that do not correspond with lexical items in their target language. The language learners, should be taught to produce and master the unfamiliar tones (such as mid, down-step, and contour tones) in order to avoid these pronunciation errors. The teacher(s) should pay close attention throughout instruction and drills in order to identify and promptly correct any pronunciation errors made by the students. Following that, teachers should assess students' ability to produce and tone-mark lexical items produced with those unfamiliar tones. Through a comparative perspective, this study has shown structural similarities and differences between the tonal systems of Igbo, Ibibio, and Yoruba. By doing so, it contributes to the broader typological and theoretical literature on tone.

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Article   **Open Access**

COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGIES IN THE NORTH EAST, NIGERIA: AN EVALUATION OF MUHAMMADU BUHARI'S ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract
Terrorism is one of the major global security threats that has become a frightening phenomenon and issue of concern to the Nigerian government and international community. The menace is pervasive and its devastating effects are felt all over the world with no nation being immune from the acts of terrorism. In the last decades, the activities of Boko Haram in the North East, Nigeria has led to the loss of thousands of lives and mass displacement of over people. Hence, this study examined government counter-terrorism strategies in the North East with a focus on the civilian administration of Muhammadu Buhari between 2015 and 2023. The objective of this study is to assess the impact of counter-terrorism strategies adopted by the Buhari's regime in the North East, Nigeria. This study adopted descriptive research design. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Self-structured questionnaires and interviews were used to gather primary data while secondary data were gathered from the journals, newspapers, and online articles. This study is anchored on Galula's counter-insurgency theory. A total of 450 copies of questionnaires were administered to the respondents whereas 400 copies were retrieved. The sample size of this study was determined using Taro Yamane formula. Data gathered from the respondents for the quantitative data was analysed using simple percentage and regression analysis utilising Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The study concluded that the implementation of counter-terrorism strategies cannot be successful in Nigeria without addressing the issues of poverty, illiteracy, poor governance and unemployment in the affected geo-political zone. The researchers recommended that the Nigerian government should embark on massive socio-economic empowerment programmes to address the alarming rate of poverty and unemployment which often provide fodder for the extremist groups. It also recommended that the corrupt public office holders should be prosecuted and government at all levels must eschew corruption in the fight against terrorism and insecurity in Nigeria.

Keywords: Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism, Muhammadu Buhari's Administration, North-East Nigeria, Insecurity.

Introduction

Over the years, terrorism has become pervasive and its devastating effects are felt all over the world with no nation being immune from the acts of terrorism. The problem posed by terrorism has become a major global security threat to the Nigerian government and the international community (Adedire, Ake & Olowojolu 2016). In Nigeria, several terrorist groups have emerged and turned the North Eastern region of Nigeria into a hotbed of terrorist activities. The Northeastern Nigeria has witnessed violent terrorist activities primarily attributed to the Boko Haram sect which has become one of the deadliest terrorist organization in Nigeria. In the last two decades, the deadly attacks carried out by Boko Haram terrorist group has led to the death of thousands of people and mass displacement of over 2.5 million people in the North Eastern Nigeria. The Boko Haram's alliance with ISIS which led to the formation of a new faction known as Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) that has given them access to deploy more jihadist ideologies and facts within the global terrorist network (Ordu, 2017). In a study conducted by the University of Maryland on global terrorism for the American Government, it was revealed that Boko Haram related deaths in Nigeria has exceeded the number of deaths inflicted by Al Qaeda in Iraq, Maoists in India and Al--Shabab in somalia (Aghedo & Eke 2017). In the 1990s, several terrorist attacks had occurred, some of which included the 1995 Sarin subway attack in Tokyo, the 1995 bombing of Oklahoma City's Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, the 1996 bombing of Saudi Arabia's Khobar Towers, and the 1998 bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. The September 11 World Trade Center attack in New York in 2001 arose the attention of the world leaders to address the menace threatening the global peace and security. Thus, terrorism is a major concern of both local and international policies with massive resources invested in it; yet, new laws and procedures aimed to combat it have significantly impacted the lives of almost everyone on the world (Jackson, et al., 2011),

In Nigeria, various security-threatening acts had occurred since 1960 when the country attained her political independence. Some of these crises include the 1964 general elections crisis and the civil war that lasted between 1967 and 1970. However, after returning finally to civilian rule in May 1999, violence in the country experienced a new dimension in 2009 with the emergence of terrorist activities in the North Eastern part of the country. However, the Nigerian Government and the international community have focused on reducing the threat of terrorism in response to this act of domestic terrorism, which is blamed on the Islamic cult known as "Boko Haram." The philosophy of Boko Haram, whose name means "western education is forbidden," is centred on extreme Sunni Islam. Their goal is to build an Islamic state in Nigeria and rid the nation of all Western influences (Uzochukwu, 2014). The Boko Haram sect have also has taken credits for numerous bombings, killings, shootings, kidnappings, and abductions across Nigeria in an effort to establish an Islamic state (Adedire, Ake & Olowojolu, 2016). Some of their activities include: the vehicle bomb explosion in Abuja in April 2014, which killed 19 persons and the abduction of about 250 Chibok school girls in Borno State on April 15, 2014 (Uzochukwu, 2014). From the foregoing, it has become a great necessity for any government to work towards protecting her territorial integrity as well as protecting lives and properties of citizens from any terrorists' threat. In this study, the researchers take a cursory look at the counter-terrorism strategies adopted by the Muhammadu Buhari's government in combating terrorism in Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

Terrorism in Nigeria had witnessed three significant waves of terrorism since 1980s, which includes Maitatsine revolt, the Niger Delta militancy, and the Boko Haram insurgency. However, 2009 saw the beginning of Boko Haram terrorism activities in Nigeria, which is now the highest wave of terrorism in the country. As stated earlier, Boko Haram was perceived during this time as terrorist group agitating for Islamic State in North Eastern Nigeria which led to formation of Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). In 2009, Boko Haram became a terrorist organization that formed alliance with other terrorist organisations such as the Al-Qaeda network to terrorise the North Eastern region. Over time, it has advanced through phases as a terrorist organization, starting with the period of covert or Islamic insurgency from 2009 to 2013. The period that followed was the time of full confrontation with the Nigerian state from 2013 to 2015 (which was characterized by the takeover of Nigeria's land). The third phase was distinguished by regional or transnational spread (regionalization and internationalization) from 2015 to 2023. However, terrorism activities in Nigeria has created a serious threat and major concern for the Nigerian Government and the International Community. Research has shown that thousands of people have been killed while over 2.5 million people has been displaced from their homes. In addition, hundreds of thousands had left Nigeria and fled into Cameroon, Chad and Niger. As at 2017, it was reported by government of Borno State that Boko Haram activities had led to destruction of N1.9 trillion ($5.2 billion) worth of properties, including one million houses and 5, 000 classrooms. Nonetheless, it is an established fact that terrorist organizations and groups have been persistently carrying out massive onslaughts on both military and civilian targets in the country since 2009. It is against this backdrop that this study tried to examine the Counter-terrorism Strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari's administration between 2015 and 2023.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the Government Counter-terrorism Strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari's administration between 2015 and 2023. Other specific objectives are to:

i.   assess the consequences of terrorism on the national development under Buhari's administration.
ii. Investigate the various counter-terrorism strategies adopted by Buhari's administration in combating terrorism in Nigeria.

Research Questions

i.   What are the consequences of terrorism on the national development under Buhari's administration?
ii. What are the various counter-terrorism strategies adopted by Buhari's administration in combating terrorism in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023?

Hypotheses

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between the counter-terrorism strategies implemented by Buhari's administration and the high level of insecurity in north east, Nigeria.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between the escalation of terrorism in the north east and counter-terrorism strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari's administration.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

i.   **Terrorism:** There is no generally acceptable definition of terrorism. This is due to the fact that terrorism is a contested concept in the literature that lacks universal acceptable definition and there is neither an academic nor an international legal consensus regarding the concept of terrorism as well. The difficulties arise from the fact that the term is politically and emotionally charged (William, 2009). The etymology of terrorism is derived from Latin words "terrere" which means "frighten". It basically implies a special crime associated with violent, victimization, threatening, frightening, and disruption of socio-political atmosphere in a particular society. It is an act of bombing, killing, kidnapping, maiming and destruction thereby creating socio-political tension, extremely fear, and destabilizing existing government or political opposition. It also entails deadly attacks on government agency and functionary, international organization, military and civilian in order to gain international recognition (Chibuike & Eme, 2019).

ii. **Counter-Terrorism:** Definitions of counter-terrorism might not be as abundant as some other concepts in social sciences but the few definitions explained below will point out to the entirety of the concept. Therefore, the term "counter-terrorism" refers to the methods, strategies, and military tactics that are employed by the government, armed forces, law enforcement, private sector, and intelligence organizations to oppose or prevent terrorism. It also includes the methods used to stop the financing of terrorists (Stigall & Donnatucci, 2019). Furthermore, counter-terrorism strategies refer to the involvement of an increase in standard police and domestic intelligence in an effort at preventing terrorism (Sexton, Wellhausen & Findley, 2019). However, resolving conflicts, ending foreign occupations, overcoming oppression, eradicating poverty, supporting sustainable development, empowering the marginalized, defending human rights, and promoting good governance are all essential to the fight against terrorism, but addressing these challenges is made more difficult by repressive counter-terrorism policies (Ezirim & Okoye, 2018). Therefore, counter-terrorism requires not only improved security but also better effort to address the underlying conditions that give rise to terrorism.

iii. **Counter-Terrorism Policy Framework in Nigeria:** The National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST), which was initially announced as a strategy framework in the fight against terrorism in Nigeria by former President Goodluck Jonathan in 2014. It was then adopted by President Muhamadu Buhari in 2016, although with amendment. Prior to the passage of the NACTEST, attempts were made to create a strong legislative framework document that would include numerous specifics and legislation to address challenges of terrorism in Nigeria. The "Terrorism Prevention Act" of 2011, which was subsequently revised in 2013, codified this endeavor. The Terrorism Prevent Act of 2013 as amended inspired the creation coordination of "inter-agency" bodies, and defined the functions and responsibilities of their various agencies and stakeholders. The Act also empowers the law enforcement agencies with the power to arrest, detain and prosecute suspected individuals linked to terrorism. According to Section 1(A) of the Terrorism Prevention Act 2013 as amended, it created for the office of the National Security Adviser also known as "ONSA". The ONSA is empowered by law to act as a chief coordinating

body to all security and enforcement agencies under the provisions of the law. Furthermore, the ONSA must ensure that Nigeria's counterterrorism framework does not run ultra-vires the international counterterrorism policy framework and laws. Therefore, the National Counterterrorism Strategy was created to lessen the likelihood that terrorism would occur in the nation. It was also intended to address difficulties linked to geographical limitations, operational flaws, and structural challenges that terrorists would use to injure or attack the nation.

iv. **Effects of Terrorism on the Economic Development of Nigeria:** Terrorism in Nigeria has significant impact on the country's economic development over the years. Nigeria, as a developing country with poor domestic capital formation and a scarcity of vital infrastructure, requires considerable inflows of foreign direct and portfolio investment to spur growth. However, the country has become increasingly unattractive to foreign investors caused by growing insecurity, shortage of critical infrastructures and the relocation of multinational companies to neighbouring countries (Chuku, Abang & Isip, 2019). No investor, whether domestic or foreign, will be inspired to invest in a risky and insecure environment. The government's apparent incapacity to provide a secure and safe environment for people, property, and the performance of business and economic operations and the country's dismal economic state is responsible for the gradual withdrawal of Portfolio as well as foreign direct investment from Nigeria to other West African countries which adversely affect government revenue generation, destroying part of the tax base and thereby increasing deficit financing (Edeme & Nkalu, 2019).

v. **Effects of Terrorism on the National Security:** There is no doubt that terrorism has significant effects on the economic development and national security of Nigeria. This becomes obvious in light of the recent tragic effects of terrorism in Nigeria. Along with fostering a mood of desolation and dislocation, it worsens the region's recent wave of instability and endangers peaceful coexistence (Akinyetun, 2017). According to Okoli and Iortyer (2014), the country has seen public security volatility as a result, which has hampered commerce and investment, stable coexistence, and sustainable livelihood and growth. Moreover, the level of violence and devastation linked to the Boko Haram conflict in Nigeria has been horrifying. Simply put, the prevalence and increasing frequency of terrorist strikes in Nigeria has created a serious humanitarian crisis and territorial vulnerabilities in the country. The maintenance of Nigeria's national security in light of this circumstance is quite challenging (Dibia, 2021).

vi. **Effects of Terrorism on the National Development:** Terrorism has devastating effects on the national development of the country and deterred foreign direct investments, leading to economic stagnation and reduced job opportunities for the teeming Nigerians youths (Akinyetun, 2017). Furthermore, the insecurity in situation has disrupted essential services such as education and healthcare, hindering human capital development. Moreover, the allocation of a substantial portion of the national budget to security measures diverts resources away from critical infrastructure projects and social programs (Adebayo, 2014). Terrorism in Nigeria has also posed a severe impediment to the country's progress, its detrimental effects on the socio-economic, and political development are enormous (Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro, 2013). Consequently, the effects of terrorism on national development in

Nigeria extend beyond immediate casualties and economic setbacks. It erodes social cohesion and exacerbates ethnic and religious tensions, potentially leading to further violence and instability (Dibia, 2021).

vii. **Assessment of Counter-Terrorism Strategies adopted by Buhari's administration in the North East between 2015 -2022:** Counter-terrorism, as discussed above involves a broader or comprehensive military and civilian strategies or response towards combating, eradicating or eliminating terrorist activities in a state. Thus, bringing this to the Nigeria level, various government administrations has devise various strategies to eradicate terrorism. This section of this research focuses on the evaluation of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration counter terrorism strategies in Nigeria spanning between 2015 and 2023. In the view of Falode (2019), Nigeria must come up with countermeasures that will successfully deal with the various dimensions of terrorism confronting it in order to contain their activities. Simply put, Nigeria must implement strategic steps to address terrorism in the country. Thus, Nigeria, under the Muhammadu Buhari's administration adopted several measures to control and stifle terrorist activities in the country. To corroborate this fact, Nosiri and Ibekwe (2021) rightly noted that, since Buhari's administration took office in 2015, it has implemented a number of tactics or developed strategies to effectively battle the Boko Haram insurgency and other terrorist activities in the nation (Nosiri & Ibekwe, 2021). However, these counter-terrorism strategies according to Nosiri and Ibekwe (2021) included the reviving or bolstering the Multinational Joint Task Force (JTF) in 2015 in order to foster the elimination of terrorist activities; moving of the Nigerian Military Command Center from Abuja to Maiduguri with the intention of centralizing operations close to Boko Haram's movement and lowering the level of bureaucracy to hasten decision-making the termination of the STTEP contract and turning it to the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF); peace negotiations with Boko Haram through an undefined amnesty offer; review of National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) in 2016 for effective prevention of violent extremism; establishment of the de-radicalization programme run by the office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) and the establishment of the North East Presidential Initiative (NPE) to combat poverty, which is the main driver of terrorism. Furthermore, the Buhari administration also embarked on launching the Operation Safe Corridor Programme in 2016 to help reintegrate terrorists who have changed their ways. There was also the creation of the National Action Plan for the prevention of violent extremism (PVE). Also, the government of Buhari formed an alliance with the Islamic Military Alliance with Saudi Arabia. This was a military alliance against terrorism that includes 39 Islamic nations. In the same vein, the Buhari administration also adopted the usage of the civilian Joint Task Force (JTF), a group of vigilante citizens, to assist the Nigerian military's Joint Task Force (JTF) in battling the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East. Under his government too, there was the establishment of collaboration with the US and the UK. This prompted the Trump administration to approve the sale of high-tech attack jets to Nigeria for around 600 million dollars. The U.K. prime minister also promised to give Nigeria military training and supplies. Additionally, the United Kingdom pledged to develop a crisis response program and invest roughly 16 million dollars in educational facilities for children living in conflict zones (Nosiri & Ibekwe, 2021). Nigeria was only able to make headway against the Boko Haram group towards the end of 2015 and early 2016 when President Muhammadu Buhari decided to blend both

conventional and unconventional countermeasures against the terrorist groups in the country. Furthermore, in the early stages of the conflict between Nigeria and Boko Haram, Nigeria, under the Buhari's administration used its police force to monitor the organization's actions. The Group's actions were perceived as civic, social, and religious disobedience to Nigeria's established norms (Ordu, 2017). Additionally, roadblocks and mass arrests were also frequently used by the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) to stop and contain the Group's activities. As one the Counter-terrorism Strategies adopted by Buhari's administration,, Nigeria hired white South African mercenaries in the early months of 2015 under the name STTEP (Specialized Tasks, Training, Equipment and Protection) to aid the nation in its fight against Boko Haram insurgency (Colin, 2015). The mercenaries, who had experience with South African bush combat, trained elite anti-terrorism soldiers there and launched operations against Boko Haram. As a result, Nigeria was able to develop a successful counter-offensive against terrorism by employing a policy of "relentless pursuit," an unusual military mobile warfare tactic developed by STTEP to counter Boko Haram's attack pattern of hit-and-run. However, the STTEP was only successful in putting the Boko Haram on the back foot by the time the MNJTF (Multinational Joint Task Force) stepped in to help Nigeria in late 2015 (Ordu, 2017). Thus, Nigeria's Counter--offensive against the terrorism generally have not been effective, with the revitalisation of Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), comprised the armed forces from Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Benin, was added to the conflict. In 2016, showing a departure from its ineffective kinetic strategy against terrorism in the country, the Nigerian military introduced what can be called asymmetric mobile tactics. The Nigerian army established a 'combat motorbike battalion' consisting of a rider and another riding shotgun (Omonobi, 2016). This strategy worked effectively than the kinetic response in combating terrorism in the North Eastern region.

viii. **Method of Warfare Adopted by Terrorist Organizations in Nigeria:** Terrorist organizations in Nigeria, such as Boko Haram and its offshoots, have deployed various methods of warfare to achieve their objectives. One prominent strategy is the use of asymmetric warfare tactics, which involve guerrilla-style attacks, ambushes, and hit-and-run operations (Azama, 2017). These groups often target security forces, government installations, and civilians, creating an atmosphere of fear and instability. Additionally, they frequently employ suicide bombings, which have been responsible for a significant number of casualties. Another method is the abduction of civilians, particularly schoolchildren, for ransom or to further their ideological goals, as witnessed in incidents like the Chibok and Dapchi kidnappings. These groups also engage in propaganda and information warfare, disseminating their extremist ideologies through videos and social media to recruit and radicalize new members. Overall, the tactics employed by terrorist organizations in Nigeria are characterized by their brutality, unpredictability, and willingness to exploit vulnerabilities in the security and social fabric of the country (Higazi, 2015). In the view of Ekwonna (2018) and Ndubuisi (2017), strategies of warfare adopted by the Boko Haram for instance, is alien to Nigeria military and thus making it difficult for them to win the battle against terrorism. The Boko Haram insurgency's unconventional or asymmetric warfare, such as terrorism and guerrilla war strategy (GWS), is a modern kind of warfare known as fourth generation warfare (4GW) that has rendered the Nigerian army or military utterly impotent in the fight against terrorism (Ndubuisi, 2017). Boko

Haram appears to be more powerful due to its development of close relationships with other worldwide terrorist groups including the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), and Al-Qaida. Thus, President Buhari believed that Boko Haram's support to ISIS had strengthened the terrorist organizations, signaling a global threat from terrorism (Nosiri & Anekwe, 2017). One of the most notable international ties of Boko Haram has been with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), an extremist organization active in North Africa. This collaboration has facilitated the exchange of resources, fighters, and knowledge between the two groups. AQIM has provided Boko Haram with training in tactics, explosives, and other militant skills, which has contributed to the group's ability to carry out more sophisticated attacks (Onuoha, 2014).The difficulty of containing terrorism in Nigeria can be said to be exacerbated by inadequate border security and management. The porous nature of the Nigerian border has aided or enhanced the operation of Boko Haram in terms of the trafficking of weapons and ammunition, easy movement or cross-border migration, trafficking of people and illegal goods for funding, establishment of training camps, and the establishment of links with international terrorist organizations (Chukwuma, 2022). Furthermore, these porous borders have been exploited by terrorist groups like Boko Haram and various criminal organizations to facilitate the movement of fighters, weapons, and contraband. The inability to effectively secure these borders has posed significant challenges to Nigeria's national security. One of the primary consequences of poor border management in Nigeria is the ease with which terrorist groups can cross into and out of the country. Boko Haram, in particular, has taken advantage of these weak points to launch attacks, kidnap civilians, and engage in other acts of violence. Also, the lack of border security has allowed the group to establish safe havens in neighboring countries, making it difficult for Nigerian security forces to eradicate the threat entirely (Ojo, 2020). Additionally, poor border management has contributed to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria. These weapons are often smuggled across porous borders, fueling conflicts and acts of terrorism within the country. The absence of effective border control measures has enabled illegal arms trafficking, exacerbating security challenges and making it easier for terrorist groups to acquire weapons (Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro, 2013).

ix. **Assessment of Buhari Administration Responses in Combating Terrorism in Nigeria (2015 - 2023):** After the assumption of office of President Muhammadu Buhari as the president of Nigeria, he took some drastic measures to fight against terrorism in Nigeria. His electoral victory came after the Boko Haram terrorist organization kidnapped more than 200 schoolgirls from Chibok in the nation's northeastern Borno state. President Buhari moved the military headquarters from Abuja to Maiduguri, the birth place of Boko Haram, upon taking office again in 2015. In the same manner, he improved the military budget and approved the purchase of arms for the security forces and agencies. However, despite these efforts to end terrorism, the menace still thrives in the North East. Therefore, it is necessary and of great importance to measure and assess the performance of Buhari's government in combating Terrorism in Nigeria. In assessing the degree to which the Buhari's administration's responses have quelled terrorism, especially the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, we must consider two factors. The first one is the frequency of attacks and the number of casualties caused by terrorist activities, and secondly, the territories the terrorist group has occupied in Nigeria. Nosiri and Ibekwe

(2021) reported the incidence of attack and casualties caused by Boko Haram in Nigeria from 2015 - 2020, in order to determine the extent to which the Buhari's government has succeeded in combating terrorism. Thus, table 1 below reveals the incidence of attack and casualties caused by Boko Haram in Nigeria from 2015 - to 2020.

Table 1: The incidence of attack and casualties caused by Boko Haram in Nigeria (2015 – 2020)

Year	No. of Casualties	Incidence of Attacks
2015	2224 casualties (2016 people killed and 208 injured)	88
2016	871 casualties (477 killed and 394 injured)	33
2017	901 casualties (590 killed and 311 injured)	65
2018	985 casualties (460 killed and 525 injured)	49
2019	292 casualties (238 killed and 54 injured)	21
2020	724 casualties (564 killed and 160 wounded)	19

Source: Nosiri and Ibekwe (2021).

Data from the table 1 above revealed that there has been reduction in the rate of Boko Haram terrorist activities and number of casualties as compare to 2015 attacks. Therefore, it indicated that the Buhari's administration had contributed in curtailing the Boko Haram terrorism activities, although they still exist.

Theoretical Framework

Counter-Insurgency Theory: This study adopted Galula's counter-insurgency theory. The reason for adoption this theory is based on its explanation to achieving counter-terrorism. The theory posits that counter-terrorism requires a combination of military, political, and social operations that are tightly controlled by a single authority. Thus, this theory is relevant in this study because it explains the rationale behind counter terrorism strategies embarked upon by President Buhari. The theory is also relevant in this work because it explores the methods and techniques of counter terrorism. This framework was propounded by David Galula. According to the theory, the development and success of a counter-insurgency operation should depend on the "political machine's" core, which requires political initiatives aimed at appeasing the insurgents' support. As this is a crucial prerequisite, the counter-insurgents must also successfully coordinate their efforts at such programs. Through committees and integrated military-civilian bureaucracies, this cooperation can be realized (Itumo & Nwobashi, 2015).

Empirical Review

Onapajo (2017) carried out a study on the appraisal of the counter terrorism approach under the Buhari Administration in Nigeria. The research was focused on identifying whether Nigeria has defeated Boko Haram. The research relied mainly on secondary sources of data. The findings revealed that, although the military approach cannot be totally abandoned because of the form of insurgency that Boko Haram has adopted, nevertheless, for a long-term solution Nigeria and its partners must complement this approach by taking a developmental approach which would ultimately address the underlying social conditions that initially created the problem. Consequently, Nosiri & Ibekwe (2021) carried out a study on counter terrorism in Nigeria, with an assessment of President Buhari government's response to Boko Haram insurgency. The research critically assessed the Buhari's government response towards combating the Boko Haram terrorist activities in Nigeria.

The research also identified the problems encountered by Buhari administration in combating the insurgency in Nigeria and proffer lasting solutions for effective counter-terrorism in Nigeria. The research data was sourced through secondary sources and analysed with both qualitative and quantitative methods. The findings revealed that despite the fact that the Buhari's government has achieved some degree of success in combating Boko Haram insurgency (in terms of reduction of incidence of attacks and number of causalities; and recapture of territories), the success has not been significant or effective in the fight against the Boko Haram insurgent. This is because the Boko Haram is still carrying out successful operations or attacks. The research recommended for the need for effective training of security personnel on counter terrorism and insurgency and adequate use of ICT or modern technologies in fighting terrorism. Also, Chukwuma (2022) carried out a study on critical terrorism studies and post-colonialism, constructing ungoverned spaces in counter-terrorism discourse in Nigeria. The study employed both primary and secondary sources of data. The findings revealed that Nigeria's counter-terrorism strategy is essentially a political activity which contributes to the production of a specific Nigerian identity by designating north-eastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin as "ungoverned" spaces. The research recommended that both "hard" approaches, including military force and anti-terrorism legislation and the need for "softer" measures should be employed in tacking terrorism in Nigeria.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study. This research design is considered valid for this study because it allows the researcher to gather data from the selected population using standardized collection procedures based on well-structured research instruments, study concepts and related variables as well as being able to describe the situation, events and phenomenon under the study effectively with an objective reality. The population of the study specifically covered the North Eastern States where the activities of Boko Haram terrorists had resulted to the deaths of thousands of people and mass displacement of people. The region consists of six states which include Bornu, Adamawa, Yobe, Bauchi, Gombe and Taraba states. Purposively, the target population was drawn from the inhabitants of Yobe State which is one of the turbulent states that is most affected by the Boko Haram insurgency which culminated to high level of insecurity in the region. The sample size of this study was determined using Taro Yamane formula. The Taro Yamane formula was be adopted because it shows that sample size is inversely proportional to the square of margin error and accurate for calculating sample size based on the specific population of this study. The statistical formula devised by Taro Yamane is as follows:

$n = N/ (1+ N(e)^2)$

Where;

n is the required sample size from the population under study

N is the whole population that is under study

e is the precision or sampling error which is 0.05

The calculation is as follows:

$$n = \frac{\dfrac{3,649,600}{[\,1 + N\,(e)^2\,]}}{N}$$

n =   3,649,600
           ──────────────────────
           [1 +3,649,600 (0.05)^2]

n =   [1 +3,649,600 (0.0025)]

n =   3649600/9125.0025
n =   399.9

The calculated sample size is 399.9 when will be approximated to 400 so as to make a perfect figure for easy analysis of data. Two research instruments include self-structured questionnaires and oral interviews were used for the study to enable the researchers gather data from the correspondence. The questionnaire was titled "Government Counter-Terrorism Strategies in the North East: An Evaluation of Muhammadu Buhari's Administration".

The content and construct validity as well as the internal consistency method to ascertain the reliability of the research instruments research instrument were carried out by educational evaluation experts for what it intends to measure and be consistent.

The quantitative data was gathered through the use of a self-structured questionnaire, 450 copies of the questionnaires were administered through the use of google form because it is very easy and convenient for the respondents to fill at their leisure time. The copies of questionnaires were administered in Yobe state and data collected was collated through the use of Google spread sheet. Only 400 copies were retrieved. The quantitative data gathered through the self-structured questionnaires was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version26 because it is easier and faster than manual calculations. The demographic data of the respondents was analysed using descriptive statistics such as simple percentage, mean deviation and frequency tables.

Results

Analysis of Quantitative Data: This section deals with providing answers to the research questions which formed the objectives of this study.

Research Question 1*:* What are the consequences of terrorism on the national development under Buhari's Administration?

Table 2: Responses on the consequences of terrorism on the national development under Buhari's Administration

S/N	Variables	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	% Agreed	% Disagreed
1	Terrorism has multifaceted negative impacts on the national development of the country	166 41.5%	194 48.5%	26 6.5%	14 3.5%	90.0	10.0
2	Terrorism has led to palpable fear among the people as security of lives and properties can no longer be guaranteed.	136 34.0%	158 39.5%	66 16.5%	40 20.0%	63.5	36.5
3	Terrorism has hindered the human capital development led to loss of job opportunities for the teeming	242 60.5%	120 30.0%	20 5.0%	18 4.5%	90.5	9.5

S/N		Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	% Agreed	% Disagreed
	youths in the country.						
4	Terrorism have negatively affected the economic growth and drastically reduced the possibilities of foreign direct investments.	156 39.0%	178 44.5%	36 9.0%	30 7.5%	83.5.0	16.5
5	Activities of the Boko Haram terrorists has threatened the peaceful progress as it poses a great threat to national development of Nigeria.	282 70.5%	84 21.0%	20 5.0%	14 3.5%	91.5	8.5

Source: Field survey, 2023

The result in table 2 showed that 90.0% of the respondents agreed that terrorism has multifaceted negative impacts on the development of Nigeria while 10.0% of the respondents rejected this opinion. It was also observed that 63.5% of the respondents agreed that the terrorism has led to the palpable fear In the North Eastern region as against the claimed by Buhari's Administration in 2016 that Boko Haram been technically defeated, while 36.5% of the respondents disagreed with this opinion. The study also observed that 90.5% agreed that activities of the terrorists has affected the human capital development and contribute to the loss of job opportunities for the teeming youths as a result of insecurity situation in the North East while 9.5% of the respondents disagreed with this opinion.

The study further observed that 83.5% of the respondents agreed that terrorism has adversely affected the economic growth of the country and drastically reduced the possibilities of foreign direct investment as the investors cannot establish their investments in area where their security are not guaranteed while 16.5% of the respondents disagreed with this opinion. Finally, the study observed that 91.5% of the respondents agreed that the activities of Boko Haram terrorists has hindered the peace, disrupting progress , increases public unrest and pose a great threat to the national development under Muhammadu Buhari's Administration between 2015 and 2022 while 8.5% of the respondents disagreed with this statement.

Research Question 2*:* What are the counter-terrorism strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari's administration in combating against terrorism and insecurity in the North East, Nigeria?

Table 3: Responses on the counter-terrorism strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari's administration in combating against terrorism and insecurity in the North East, Nigeria.

S/N	Variables	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	% Agreed	% Disagreed
1	The relocation of the Nigerian Military Headquarters from Abuja to Maiduguri with the intention of centralizing operations close to Boko Haram's movement as Counter-terrorism strategy reduced the terrorist activities in the North East.	176 44.0%	58 14.5%	140 35.0%	26 6.5%	59.5	41.5
2	Lowering the level of bureaucracy to hasten decision-making on terrorism is a great strategy by	20 5.0%	50 13.5%	246 61.5%	84 21.0%	18.5	81.5

	President Buhari.						
3	The termination of the STTEP contract vis-a-vis creation of Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) played significant role in the fight against terrorism in Nigeria under Buhari's administration	280 70.0%	58 14.5%	30 7.5%	32 8.0%	84.5	15.5
4	Peaceful negotiations with Boko Haram fighters through an undefined amnesty programme.	36 9.0%	24 6.0%	92 23.0%	48 62.0%	15.0	85.0
5	The review of the Creation of National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) in 2016 for effective prevention of violent extremism is a great strategy implemented by President Muhammadu Buhari's Administration.	50 12.5%	66 16.5%	160 65.0%	24 6.0%	29.0	71.0

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 3 presents the responses on "the counter-terrorism strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari's administration in combating against terrorism and insecurity in the North East, Nigeria". The result showed that 59.5% of the respondents agreed that the relocation of the Nigerian Military Headquarters from Abuja to Maiduguri with the intention of centralizing operations close to Boko Haram's movement is a great Counter-terrorism strategy that reduced the terrorist activities in the North East, while 41.5% of the respondents rejected this opinion. It was also observed that 18.5% of the respondents agreed that lowering the level of bureaucracy to hasten decision-making on terrorism is also a great strategy by President Buhari while 81.5% of the respondents disagreed with this opinion. The study also observed that 84.5% of the respondents agreed that the creation of Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) also played significant role in the fight against terrorism in Nigeria under Buhari's administration, while 15.5% of the respondents disagreed with this opinion.

The study further revealed that 15% of the respondents agreed that another strategy adopted by Buhari's administration was the peaceful negotiations with Boko Haram fighters through an undefined amnesty programme, while 85.0% of the respondents disagreed with this opinion. Finally, the study observed that 29.0% of the respondents agreed that the review of the Creation of National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) in 2016 for effective prevention of violent extremism is another great strategy implemented by President Muhammadu Buhari Administration, while 71.0% of the respondents disagreed with this statement.

Test of Hypothesis

H0$_1$: There is no significant impact on the counter-terrorism strategies implemented by Buhari Administration and the high level of insecurity in Nigeria.

Table 4: Regression Result Summary for Hypothesis One:

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	1.000[a]	1.000	1.000	.51466	1.914

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategies
b. Dependent Variable: Insecurity

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3533.405	1	3533.405	13339.789	.000[b]
	Residual	.795	3	.265		
	Total	3534.200	4			

a. Dependent Variable: Insecurity
b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategies

The result of table 4 1indicates that, R^2 is 1.000, which shows that all the points are explained by the regression line. We therefore reject the Hypothesis that there is no significant impact on the counter-terrorism strategies implemented by Buhari Administration and the high level insecurity in Nigeria. **H$_{02}$:** There is no significant relationship between the escalation of terrorism in the north east, Nigeria and counter-terrorism strategies deployed by Muhammadu Buhari's Administration.

Table 5: Regression Result Summary for Hypothesis Two:

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	1.000[a]	1.000	1.000	.00000	.040

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategies
b. Dependent Variable: Terrorism

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.800	1	24.800	.	.[b]
	Residual	.000	3	.000		
	Total	24.800	4			

a. Dependent Variable: Terrorism
b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategies

The result of table 5 indicates that, R^2 is 1.000, which shows that all the points are explained by the regression line. This means therefore that hypothesis two is rejected, implying that there is significant effect on the escalation of terrorism in the North East despite counter-terrorism strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari's Administration.

Discussion of Findings

The results from the responses on the consequences of terrorism on the national development under however revealed that terrorism has significant consequences on the national development under Buhari's Administration. This is in agreement with Adedire, Ake & Olowojolu (2016) who submitted that the problem posed by terrorism has become a major global security threat to the Nigerian government and the international community. The findings from this study align with submission of Edeme & Nkalu (2019) and Chuku, Abang & Isip (2019) which highlighted the severe consequences of terrorism on Nigeria emphasizing that the country has become increasingly unattractive to foreign investors caused by growing insecurity, shortage of critical infrastructures and the relocation of multinational companies to neighbouring countries as well as other negative effects on long-term growth.

The results however further showed that, while some strategies adopted by President Muhammadu Buhari's Administration were effective, others were ineffective. As shown in table 3, among the effective strategies are the relocation of the Nigerian Military Headquarters from Abuja to Maiduguri with the intention of centralizing operations close to Boko Haram's movement is one of the great Counter-terrorism strategies that reduce the terrorist activities in the North East and the termination of the STTEP contract and creation of Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) also played significant role in the fight against terrorism in Nigeria under Buhari's administration. While among the ineffective strategies are the peaceful negotiations with faceless Boko Haram fighters through an undefined amnesty programme and the review of the Creation of National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) in 2016 for effective prevention of violent extremism. This is supported by Nosiri and Ibekwe (2021) which revealed that there has been reduction in the rate of Boko Haram terrorist activities and number of casualties as a result of the strategies adopted. The findings also aligned with Colin (2015) and Ordu (2017) which emphasized that the Counter-terrorism Strategies adopted were successful to a reasonable extent but not all encompassing.

From the result in hypothesis one tested, it portrayed that counter-terrorism strategies have significant impact on the level of insecurity in Nigeria during the Buhari's Administration. The findings agreed with the view of Falode (2019), Omonobi (2016), Ordu (2017) and Nosiri & Ibekwe (2021) which found that Nigeria's countermeasures have successfully dealt with the various dimensions of terrorism to a reasonable extent. Simply put, Nigeria's government under the Muhammadu Buhari's administration adopted several measures to control and stifle terrorist activities in the country. The result of hypothesis two tested revealed that there is a significant effect on the escalation of terrorism in the North East despite counter-terrorism strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari's Administration. The findings aligned with Ezirim & Okoye (2018) who found that addressing terrorism challenges was made more difficult by repressive counter-terrorism policies and suggested that counter-terrorism requires not only improved security but also better effort to address the underlying conditions that give rise to terrorism.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Boko-Haram as a sect cannot be discussed without reference to religion, and international supports of some other groups such as ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Taliban and others. However the study concluded that poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, insecurity, poor governance, poor

socialization, social inequality, marginalization, porous international borders are the major factors that influence the activities of Boko-Haram in Nigeria. Hence, Boko-Haram insurgency has adverse effects on the socio-economic and political development of North east region and Nigeria at large. It has therefore affected the educational system, business activities, social activities, employment status and political system to mention few. It was in view of the above that the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari tried its best but failed to achieve tremendous success in the implementation of important counter terrorism strategies in North East. There is no doubt that these strategies such as the bolstering of the Multinational Joint Task Force (JTF) in 2015, the launching the Operation Safe Corridor Programme in 2016, and the establishment of international collaboration with the United States and the United Kingdom has reduced the negative activities of Boko Haram in Northeast Nigeria. However, this was not enough to stem the tides of this sect completely.

Recommendations

Consequently, the activities of Boko Haram are threats to the national development in Nigeria. The solution to the challenge posed by Boko Haram lies in an integrated holistic approach to addressing the issues raised. The state must also live up to its role of providing employment and other basic amenities and guarantee the protection of   lives and property of the citizens. The current approach of military force is unlikely to resolve the insurgency problem completely. The problem can only be solved through a negotiated settlement with moderate members of the group.

It is therefore important to suggest that the prospect for a peaceful and secured Nigeria cannot be achieved only by military suppression but require the service of the international bodies and the Nigerian leaders, who must be transparent and have a strong political will to implement result oriented programmes that will improve the lives of the citizens of the country.

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ACADEMIC COMPETENCE DIFFERENTIALS BETWEEN 16 YEARS BELOW AND 16 YEARS ABOVE ADMITTED INTO THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES OF THE UNIVERSITY IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined the influence of admission age on the academic competence of first-year university students in Osun State, Nigeria. The objective was to determine whether significant academic competence differences exist between students admitted below the age of 16 and those admitted at 16 years and above. A descriptive survey design was employed. The population comprised first-year students from Obafemi Awolowo University and Osun State University. Using Yamane's formula, a sample of 382 students was selected through simple random and convenience sampling across six faculties. The Academic Competence and Admission Age Questionnaire (ACAA-Q) was used for data collection. Instrument validity was ensured through expert judgment, while the reliability coefficient obtained via Cronbach's alpha was 0.83. Findings indicated that academic competence among students varied across performance classifications, with many demonstrating high academic achievement. However, no significant differences were observed in academic competence between those admitted below 16 years and those admitted at 16 or above, suggesting that age at entry does not independently predict academic success. Based on these findings, the study recommended that even though academic capability is essential, universities are advised to adhere to the stipulated admission age by regulatory bodies, as readiness for higher education is also tied to developmental maturity and Parents should be discouraged from encouraging class-skipping, as intellectual and emotional maturity often associated with age enhances students' academic performance at the university level.

Keywords: Academic Competence, Admission, Undergraduates. Universities.

Introduction

The variation in the academic achievement amongst the undergraduate students who were admitted to universities below the age of 16 years and those admitted above 16 years of age has become a very sensitive and controversial issue. There is not much literature on the admission age as a factor which has been explored empirically but there are related issues. An area of research that relates to this subject matter is age and educational achievement. For instance, Elacqua, Martínez, and Santos (2011) investigated the correlation between age of the university students and performance in their academics. The implies results revealed that old students were likely to have better academic results compared to the young students, which consequently supported the idea that maturity and other life experiences can enhance academic ability. Some studies have concentrated on the consequences of early or delayed enrollment in school. For instance, Bedard & Dhuey, (2006) research of the impacts of starting school late discovered no significant difference in students' educational achievement compared to peers who began schooling earlier than them. It is impossible to overemphasize on the factors of cognitive readiness to learn at any level of academic learning. Cognitive theories suggest that as people grow through various stages they acquire some cognitive abilities and skills to enable them to pursue academic activities.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of ''academic redshirting'' has also been discussed in the literature. Red shirting in academic context means the intentional delay of enrollment of a young child in kindergarten or school in order to extend the time of growth and development. Bedard and Dhuey (2016) and Elder and Lubotsky (2019) have looked at the consequences of delayed school entry and observed possible positive outcomes for achievement in subsequent years. The argument that older pupils have an initial advantage is supported by research findings of Lubotskya and Kaestner (2016). A study on the gender and age differences focused on the American kindergarteners found that a child with a median age of 5. 6 years possess better reading and math skills than the children with a median age of 5. 2 years. This benefit was also linked with increased identification of gifted and talented students (Huang, 2014). This might be very well be due to cognitive development which is age related. Hence as the child ages, he/she gains more advanced features of executive functioning like attention, working memory and self regulation, that is crucial for academic success (Coldren, 2013). According to Lubinski (2010), intelligence scores are strongly correlated with academic achievements. Higher intelligence scores typically predict better academic performance, as individuals with higher cognitive abilities tend to excel in educational settings. This relationship suggests that intelligence plays a crucial role in academic success, influencing the ability to understand, process, and apply information effectively.

Also, older children may have better social emotional developmental status and this results into better behavior and focus in the classroom (McEwan & Shapiro, 2008). But more specifically we could notice that, the differentiation between admission age does not decrease over time. Cascio and Schanzenbach (2016) also pointed out that though admission age has positive association at the beginning with the students' academic achievement but it hardly have any effect on high school or the post secondary schooling or employment outcomes. The issue of motivation, study skills, and familial income is a much stronger predictor to the lifelong achievement (Black *et al…,*. , 2011). However, carrying out the entrance age policy that addresses only the age of students when they join an institution could also lead to some undesirable effects. Both May *et al…,* (1995) and Quinlan (1996) undertook works that provided focus on the need to demystify individual readiness and note that success cannot be solely accredited to age. Admission decisions should

take into account the varying rates of maturation in children, as well as aspects such as social and emotional development, cognitive aptitude, and home environment. Additionally, it is necessary to consider the cultural and socio-economic settings. Delaying the start of school in areas with limited resources may worsen existing disparities. On the other hand, there might be some cultures where early socialisation in the organized settings can be more beneficial for the learning process. The literature review underlines how this area of research is concerned with the need for flexible and constantly evolving approaches to school enrolment.

Approaching the concept with numerous criteria defining an individual's readiness for learning, including but not limited to cognitive and socio-emotional development or age might present a broader perspective. In addition, interventions during early childhood that prioritise enhancing fundamental abilities and fostering social-emotional well-being can provide all children, regardless of their age upon entry, with the necessary resources to succeed in the academic setting. To summarise, the impact of entry age on academic competence is a multifaceted interaction including cognitive, social-emotional, and environmental elements. Although there may be initial benefits, they do not ensure sustained success. In the future, education systems should use adaptable and personalised methods that prioritise student readiness and welfare over a fixed age requirement, guaranteeing that every child may achieve their maximum capabilities. However, one should notice that the admission age is just one of the factors influencing academic competence. Other factors include past learning experiences, children's learning and developmental characteristics, and personal characteristics and educational climate. Literature review in the ever-changing context of the academic process of the higher education system, the pursuit of excellent scholarly ideals acts as an orientational beacon that defines the undergraduate student's academic journey.

Therefore, this empirical review seeks to look at the comprehensive elements of Academic Competence in this group to discover the many factors that exist, tasks these factors, and shape as well as define the education competency of this group. When discussing academic competence, it is crucial to take into consideration note-taking, analytical thinking, time organization, and information processing, intelligence, and the ability to combine academic and social life. Such factors present useful information for educators, policymakers and researchers in the following ways, This assessment recognises the significant impact that higher education may have on transforming people and emphasises the crucial role of academic competence in developing individuals into well-informed, analytical thinkers who are prepared to tackle the difficulties of an ever-evolving world. Research conducted on academic competence was examined and analysed to emphasise the significance and necessity for undergraduates to possess strong academic skills in order to achieve success in their academic pursuits. Students should engage in a variety of ways to determine the most suitable one for their needs.

According to Peverly *et al.* (2007), note-taking is defined as the process of recording information from a lecture or reading material to help with comprehension and retention. It involves selecting and organizing important information, which aids in the learning process by reinforcing material and facilitating review and study. Dunlosky, *et al.*, (2013) conducted a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of various learning techniques. Their work, "Improving Students' Learning With Effective Learning Techniques: Promising Directions From Cognitive and Educational Psychology," did not explicitly address note-taking as an index of academic competence in detail. However, they did evaluate the effectiveness of different study strategies, including the

method of taking notes. From their review, it is evident that note-taking, when used effectively in conjunction with other strategies such as self-testing and distributed practice, can contribute to academic competence. They emphasized that the quality and the method of note-taking (such as summarization or the use of concept maps) can influence its effectiveness. They highlighted that students often benefit from combining note-taking with other effective learning strategies, such as self-explanation and elaborative interrogation, to enhance comprehension and retention of the material.

Some students may have a preference for using pen and paper, while others may prefer utilising digital tools. Just as certain pupils may prefer symbols and diagrams, others may prefer headings and bullet points. Multiple studies have confirmed the importance of analytical ability as a determinant of academic competence. For instance, in a study carried by Pang, Wong, Leung, and Coombes,*et al.*, (2018), they established that analytical capacity is one of the characteristics that determines success in higher education. According to Tella, (2017), students with higher analytical ability were observed to perform well in mathematics and science classes. A study claims that it is imperative to have good analytical skills to succeed both academically and in the academic career as well as the professional occupation. Subsequently, research has demonstrated the paramount importance of analytical aptitude in assessing academic achievement. Mafarja and Zulnaidi, (2022) found that students with greater analytical skills achieved superior results in activities involving critical thinking and problem-solving in many academic disciplines. Tuononen and Parpala (2021) discovered in their research that bachelor's students had a substantial level of academic competence that is crucial for thesis writing. Skills such as information analysis are vital in the process of producing a thesis.

Effective time management within and outside the classroom is one of the major components that dictate academic performance. Effective time management, planning and organisational skills are very important for the academic success and self growth (Ackermann et al 2018). According to Loeb and Hurd (2017) another study conducted among students from the University of Pennsylvania reveled that those students who were able to balance between their academic life social life and other co-curricular activities proved to be excelling in their academic performance, were able to manage time well and have good social connection. Eccles and Barber (2019) revealed that students who were involved in extracurriculum activities and had positive social relationships improved their mental health status and performance than their counterparts without such opportunities. Similarly, Masunaga,*et al.,* (2023) observed that students who engaged themselves in various co-curricular activities, whether they were related to their area of specialization or their career goals or not, performed better on academic assessments, and possessed higher chances of completing their courses on time as compared to the students who did not engage themselves in co-curricular activities. It was also established that only those students who maintained their time table for school work, other activities, and other responsibilities had higher motivation, better performance as well as psychological well-being as compared to those who could not adhere to efficient time management. Peper, Wilson, Martin, Rosegard, and Harvey (2021) conducted a study among college students and learned that time management skills positively influenced performance.

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In a separate study, Tuckman, (2003) examined the impact of time management on the academic performance of college students. This led to a realization that those students who practiced efficient time management in the course of their study received better CGPAs than the others. Among the recent studies is that of Ye *et al..,* , (2021) which aimed at determining the associations between time management, academic procrastination among college students. The research also showed how optimising students' work schedule for the highest efficiency enhanced performance and reduced tendencies towards procrastination. In a cross-sectional study by Alnahdi and Aftab, (2020), the purpose was to establish the relationship between time management and Korean university student academic performance. The participants also showed that adopting better time management attributes directly lead to increased percentage point averages and decreased academic stress. Proper time utilization is one of the most important factors of academic performance that can greatly determine academic achievement and achievement. Improving working with time can allow the student to improve performance, decrease level of stress, become efficient and achieve academic goals. Scholars perform a study involving current literature and findings to examine the relationship between Information Processing Skills (IPS) and academic performance. Another study by Seo, Shen, and Benner *et al.,* (2019), established the relationship between IPS and the academic performance of middle college children. The study was also in a position to establish a relationship between IPS and academic achievement as indicated by scores in reading, arithmetic and science tests.

The researchers also identified students' motivation and self-regulated learning as facilitating the link between IPS and academic achievement. Ramos and Sifuentez (2021), further explains the significance of the current study to establish a link between IPS and academic achievement for college learners with learning disabilities. The research observed that there is a positive relationship between IPS and academic competence of the student based on the performance, dropout and graduation levels. This paper showed that there is a significant relationship between IPS and, academic aptitude in the students' self-efficacy and self-determination scores. Dietrich et al. (2023) hold another research study aimed at determining the mechanisms that exist between IPS and academic performance among university students across

the Netherlands. The study revealed a positive association between IPS (intrinsic Psychological States) and academic competency, as measured by GPA. Furthermore, this correlation was more pronounced among students who reported using more effective learning strategies. Chen, Tang and Chen (2020), conducted a study examining the correlation between IPS and academic achievement in Chinese university students. The study revealed a favourable correlation between IPS (Intrinsic Psychological States) and academic achievement, as measured by Grade Point Average (GPA.). Furthermore, study approaches and motivation influenced the relationship between IPS and academic success. The significance of intelligence in determining academic competence has been well recognised for a considerable period of time.

Academic competence is described as having academic mastery, which entails academic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic; critical thinking, problem-solving, and attaining academic objectives. Studies have established the fact that intelligence is a consistent mediator of academic performance in any given course and at different levels of learning. This statement is to some extent correct as many academic competencies including analysis, creative problem solving and memory are believed to be underpinned by intelligence, which is considered as a core attribute. In the sphere of academic achievement, the characteristics that define the performance of university undergraduates include note taking, information processing, time management, information analysis, evidence of intellectual capacity, and balancing social and leisure activities.

Contemporary academic programs and their heightened demands make time management to be that one conductor that establishes the right pace to productivity. Juggling between time for academic obligations and time for other activities constitutes one of the skills that prepares an individual in as much as one is likely to tackle so many responsibilities. A balance of time factors that are synchronized and set off against each other forms the basis of sustained academic advantage. University life being more than attendance of lectures and use of text books, the numerous social relationships and extra-curricular activities are part of the university experience. Thus, the opportunity to manage academic commitments and have academic and social enjoyment and different activities contribute to the students' overall development. It promotes the interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and citizenship, and creates individuals who are sociable and ready for the world beyond lectures. In other words, the integration of these factors gives the picture of intellectual ability amongst college students. This is why educational institutions ought to embrace such talents, and provide a conducive atmosphere that propels students academically and otherwise, personally and professionally. Therefore, it should be admitted that there are numerous factors contributing to the general level of academic competency and successful studying, such as notes taking, analytical thinking, time management, efficient information processing, and harmonious social and extra-curricular life. Thus, emphasizing and developing these aspects, we are raising a generation of academics who are equipped for long and effective contribution to the changing world of academic and society. Consequently, it becomes pertinent to examine academic competence differentials between below and above 16years undergraduates in universities.

Research Question: The study was guided by one research question:
What is the level of university undergraduates' academic competence?

Hypothesis: One hypothesis was formulated and tested in the study:

There is no significant difference in academic competence between undergraduates admitted to universities at ages below 16years and those above 16years.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of 8,464 newly admitted undergraduate students for the 2021/2022 academic session from the two public universities in Osun State. Specifically, 5,547 students were admitted into Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, while 2,915 students were admitted into Osun State University, as obtained from the respective institutions' admission offices. The sample consisted of 382 undergraduate (256 from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife while 126 was selected from the Osun State University proportionately) from six faculties at Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, and Osun State University. The Yamane sample size formula was used to determine the sample size. Four faculties were randomly selected from Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife while two faculties were selected from Osun State University, using the simple random sampling technique. A convenience sample technique was employed to choose 64 students from each of the four faculties(Education, Arts, Social Sciences and Science) from Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife and 63 students each from the remaining two faculties(Health Sciences and Administration) from Osun State University, resulting in a total of 382 undergraduates in order to ensure adequate representation for the study.

Data were collected with the aid of an instrument titled: Differences in Academic Competence Questionnaire (DAC-Q) to elicit information from the respondents. The DAC-Q has three sections. The first section contained demographic information of respondents which contained seven items, the second section has five items which are used to elicit questions on the level academic competence using the respondents Cummulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) while the third section has 15 items which are used to measure the undergraduates' age differentials in academic competence in Osun State, Nigeria. Validity of the instrument was ensured by subjecting it to face and content validity via presentation of the research instrument to the supervisor and other two experts in the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. The instrument was subjected to a trial testing. Data obtained were analysed using Cronbach Alpha Statistics procedure and analysed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 24). Correlation Coefficient obtained was 0.73 and was confirmed reliable and usable for the study. Data were collected for 2021/2022 academic session fresh university undergraduates across Osun State universities. With 100% return rate and for further analysis, percentage and the inferential statistical tool of t-test were used.

Results and Discussion

Research Question One: What is the level of university undergraduates' academic competence? To answer this question, respondents' responses were calculated and subjected to analysis. The results are as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Level of University Undergraduates' Academic Competence

S/N	Class	Number	Percentage	Rank
1	First Class	60	15.7%	1st
2	Second Class Upper	220	57.6%	2nd
3	Second Class Lower	56	14.7%	3rd

S/N	Class	Number	Percentage	Rank
4	Third Class	46	12.0%	4th
	Total	382	100%	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The findings reveal varying levels of academic competence among undergraduate students, as reflected in their CGPA classifications. A total of 15.7% (60 students) attained first-class honours, representing those with exceptional academic performance, critical thinking, and mastery of their disciplines. The majority, 57.6% (220 students), fell into the second-class upper category, indicating strong academic competence, consistent above-average performance, and dedication to academic success. Additionally, 12% (46 students) were placed in the third-class category. While they face academic challenges, these students demonstrate persistence and a willingness to improve. Overall, the distribution highlights a diverse academic landscape, with each classification reflecting different strengths and growth trajectories. The findings emphasize the importance of inclusive academic support to nurture students across all performance levels.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in academic competence between undergraduates admitted to universities, at ages below 16 years and those admitted at ages above 16 years. To test this hypothesis, responses were calculated and analysed using t-test. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Admission Age Differentials and Academic Competence

Variable	N	Df	F-value	t-value	p-value	Decision
Age Differentials & Academic Competence	381	379	3.84	-0.70	.651	Not Significant

Source: Field Survey

The analysis indicates no statistically significant difference in academic competence, measured by CGPA, between students admitted below age 16 and those admitted at 16 years or older. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances (F = 3.835, p = .051) shows no significant variance difference, and the independent samples t-test (t = -0.701, df = 379, p = .484) confirms no significant difference in group means. With a mean difference of -0.07100 and a 95% confidence interval ranging from -0.27022 to 0.12822, the data suggest that admission age does not significantly impact students' academic performance.

Discussion on Findings

The Level of University Undergraduates' Academic Competence: The findings highlight the impressive academic competences of respondents, as reflected in the different CGPA classifications. A notable proportion of the students, 15.7%, attained First Class honours. These learners consistently perform exceptionally in their studies, demonstrating deep understanding, critical thinking, and a strong drive for academic excellence. Their achievements reflect the university's commitment to intellectual development and serve as a source of motivation for their peers. The majority of the students, 57.6%, fall into the Second Class Upper category. This group represents the largest proportion of the undergraduate population and reflects a commendable level of academic competence. These students are characterized by effective study habits, strong analytical

skills, and a consistent commitment to their academic goals. Their performance contributes significantly to the academic strength and intellectual culture of the university. Students in the Second Class Lower category, accounting for 14.7%, also display a satisfactory level of academic competence. Their efforts indicate steady engagement with their academic responsibilities and potential for growth when provided with appropriate academic support and motivation.

Additionally, 12% of the students are classified under Third Class. These students, despite encountering academic challenges, exhibit resilience and a willingness to improve. Their learning experiences point to the importance of support mechanisms in helping students overcome obstacles and succeed in their academic journeys. These patterns of academic competence suggest that many students are not only academically capable but also demonstrate maturity in balancing academics with other responsibilities. This aligns with the views of Kuh et al. (2018) and Tella (2017), who emphasized the role of time management and co-curricular engagement in student success. Students who effectively manage their time and seek guidance from mentors tend to perform better academically. This is further supported by Ackermann et al. (2018), Alnahdi and Aftab (2020), and Coldren (2013), who established the relationship between time management, intelligence, and academic performance. The ability of students to multitask and manage academic workloads concurrently reflects their intellectual abilities. Intelligence Quotient (IQ), as highlighted by Lubinski (2010), plays a significant role in academic competence, further underscoring the need for institutions to nurture both cognitive and non-cognitive skills to enhance student success across all classification levels.

Differences in Academic Competence between Undergraduates Admitted to Universities, at Ages below 16 Years and those Admitted at Ages above 16 Years

The study found no significant differences in academic competence between undergraduates admitted to universities, at ages below 16 years and those admitted at ages above 16 years. The study shows that their age of admission does not really have an effect on their studies, it also stated that learners who are admitted earlier than the stipulated admission age, are coping academically as much as those that are admitted at the later age. The study demonstrated a high level of the respondents' Intellectual Quotient irrespective of their age. This could be as a result of their exposure to learning from their young age which had equipped them with the needed weapons to tackle any academic stress.   This is in consonance with Bedard and Dhuey (2006) study that found students who started school late had no different educational attainment compared to their colleagues who started schooling earlier than them. In agreement with this is the study of Cascio and Schanzenbach (2016) that found the initial academic benefits of admission age to tend to diminish by the time students reach high school or have limited influence on their post-secondary education and employment prospects. Factors such as motivation, study habits, and socioeconomic background have a greater influence on long-term academic success (Black et al., 2011). Moreover, implementing a uniform admission age policy can have negative consequences. May et al. (1995) and Quinlan (1996) conducted research highlighting the significance of individual readiness and asserting that success cannot solely be attributed to age.

This is on a flip side with an examination of American kindergarteners that revealed that older kids (with a median age of 5.6 years) exhibited superior reading and math abilities in comparison to their younger peers (with a median age of 5.2 years). This benefit was also associated with heightened identification as gifted and talented (Huang, 2014). Cognitive

maturation may help explain this phenomenon. As children get older, they exhibit more advanced executive function abilities such as attention, working memory, and self-regulation, which are essential for achieving academic achievement (Coldren, 2013). In addition, older kids may have enhanced social-emotional maturity, resulting in improved classroom engagement and participation (McEwan and Shapiro, 2008). University management should follow the stipulated admission age to the later irrespective of the students academic performance as the higher institutions required more than the development cognitive domain of the learners. On the part of the parents, grade skipping should be avoided a this is a great factor that contributed to students' early graduation from the high school as learners who followed the stages of learning religiously are not expected to have left high school earlier than 16year of age. The age stipulated for admissions is expected to be enough for learners to have been developed cognitively, psychomotively and affectionately for the higher institutions tasks ahead of them.

Conclusion

This study concluded that age is not enough as a factor to determine the academic competence of students. Other factors such as parental genes, parental socio-economic factors, environment, intellectual readiness and others are also responsible for the university undergraduates' academic competence in Osun State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the followings were recommended:

i.   That since academic capabilities are not only the required skills by universities, it also required readiness of the learners, which is rooted into the learners' age, universities are advised to follow the stipulated age by the admission regulatory body.

ii. Parents are to be advised to avoid class skipping for their children in order to allow the learners to be matured intellectually in order to enhance their academic performance while in the university.

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