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Article

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### SHORT-TERM SKILL ACQUISITION AS A STRATEGY FOR REDUCING DROPOUT VULNERABILITY AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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#### Abstract

Some secondary school students in Nigeria had dropped out of school as a result of certain economic, social and cultural factors, the former being the most prevalent. This study examined the effect of short-term skill acquisition intervention strategy (SSAIS) on dropout vulnerability among senior secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted a mixed-methods research design. The population comprised all teachers, principals and indigent students in 8 oldest flagship public senior secondary schools in the four divisions of Ogun State as well as officials of State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents. In-depth Interview Guide, Short-Term Skill Acquisition Training Guide, and Students' Drop out Vulnerability Questionnaire (SDOVQ) were used for data collection. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis while quantitative data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). Findings suggested that a substantial number of students were at the risk of leaving school prematurely. Also, the result revealed that there was a significant main effect of short-term skill acquisition on dropout vulnerability of Senior Secondary School students in Ogun State ( $F_{(1, 397)} = 455.634, p < .05$ ). The study concluded that short-term skill acquisition strategy has an effect on reducing dropout rate of students. The study recommended among other things

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that policymakers should consider developing a comprehensive framework that embeds skill acquisition programmes as a core component of the educational system, particularly in public schools to promote self-reliance and improve school completion rates.

**Keywords:** Short-term skill, Acquisition, Student Dropout, Secondary Students.

### **Introduction**

Education is regarded as a crucial tool for citizens' proper training and development. The secondary level of education is also seen as strategically designed to equip young ones with fundamental knowledge, skills and values, to fully develop their potentials and contribute significantly to the development of the society. It is therefore supposed to be a fundamental human right of every citizen irrespective of background, location and gender. However, the world is currently experiencing harsh economic conditions, leading to high inflation rate and soaring prices of goods and commodities, making it difficult for people to meet their basic financial obligations. Amid this ugly situation, some innocent children, who naturally should enjoy quality and uninterrupted secondary education are not exempted from the effect of the ugly situation, as some of them had dropped out of school for economic reasons. Dropout vulnerability can be regarded as the likelihood, risk or susceptibility of a student to leave school before completing their education. Although, the dropout syndrome is considered a global issue, it has become so alarming in a developing country like Nigeria. As a matter of fact, the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2023 fixed the number of out of school children in Nigeria at 10.5 million with dropout accounting for more than 35 per cent (UNICEF, 2023). This situation is shocking and has led to public outcry among members of the public. Several strategies had been implemented by the Nigerian Government to reduce school drop-out rate among secondary school students (including conditional cash transfer, scholarship and implementation of free education policy), they appeared ineffective especially as the free education policy covered tuition only. Recent studies conducted by Adeyemo *et al.* (2022) and Ige *et al.* (2024) suggested alternative strategy such as Short-Term Skill Acquisition (STSA) to combat dropout rate among secondary school students. Their suggestion was borne out by the appreciable level of success recorded when the strategy was implemented in higher institutions of learning across different countries. Short-term skill acquisition strategy is a planned, time-bound intervention that equips secondary school students with practical, job-relevant, and life-oriented skills within a relatively short period of time. There is therefore an urgent need to assess the prevalence rate of dropout among secondary school students in Ogun State and determine the possible effect of Short-Term Skill Acquisition (STSA) intervention strategy on dropout reduction among secondary school students in Ogun State.

### **Problem Statement**

The prevailing harsh economic condition in the country has incapacitated some parents from their responsibilities of providing basic educational support for their children, making school attendance, retention and completion uncertain. Therefore, a large number of secondary school students in Nigeria are regrettably dropping out of school mostly for economic reason. As the number kept increasing on daily basis, stakeholders are worried that if nothing is done to reverse the ugly development, it could result to high illiteracy population, poor manpower index and dangerous security concerns in the future. Although, short-term skills acquisition strategy had been adopted to combat the menace at higher institutions with appreciable success, it has not been implemented primarily at the secondary school level.

This is the gap that this study has come to fill by assessing the effect of short-term skills acquisition intervention strategy (SSAIS) on drop-out rate among secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of this study was to determine the effect of SSAIS on dropout rate among secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study were as follows:

- i. To identify the common challenges faced by Senior Secondary School students that increase their vulnerability to dropout in Ogun State, Nigeria;
- ii. To determine the extent of students' vulnerability to dropout in secondary schools in Ogun State;
- iii. To examine the effect of short term skill acquisition strategy on students' dropout rate in secondary schools in Ogun State; and
- iv. To develop a comprehensive Short-Term Skill Acquisition Implementation Plan (WSIP) that could mitigate dropping out of school for secondary school students in Ogun State.

### **Research Questions**

- i. What are the common challenges faced by Senior Secondary School students that make them vulnerable to dropout in Ogun State, Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent are Senior Secondary School students vulnerable to dropout in Ogun State, Nigeria?
- iii. Is there any significant effect of short term skill acquisition strategy on students' dropout rate in secondary schools in Ogun State?
- iv. What Short-Term Skill Acquisition Implementation Plan (WSIP) could be used to mitigate dropout among senior secondary school students in Ogun State?

### **Hypothesis**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant effect of short term skill acquisition on students' dropout rate in secondary schools in Ogun State.

### **Assumptions**

This study assumed that the common challenges faced by Senior Secondary School students increase their vulnerability to dropout in Ogun State. The qualitative component assumes that the lived experiences of teachers, principals and Ministry of Education officials will provide insight into the nature dropout vulnerability, and the role of SSAIS in addressing it. These assumptions position the qualitative data as essential for complementing and interpreting the quantitative findings.

### **Literature Review**

**Theoretical Framework:** The Self-Reliance Theory (SRT) served as the theoretical basis for this study. According to Ralph (1846), Self-Reliance Theory is the ability of a country and citizens to plan, finance and implement solutions to its developmental challenges (EduBirdie, 2021). The relevance of this theory to the study is that the high rate of school dropout in Nigeria, fueled by economic hardship is negatively impacting on the growth and development of the society and therefore required concerted efforts by government and other education stakeholders to motivate young citizens to deploy their energy to useful ventures that can fetch them monetary and other positive gains, without interrupting their schooling process.

### **School Dropout Vulnerability**

School drop has been described by different authors according to their perspectives. Generally, it refers to leaving school before certification class. No matter the situation, stakeholders believed that School drop-out should not be allowed for any reason. This is because of the importance of education to individual development and societal growth. Although, the reasons for students' drop out are diverse, it is expedient that countries around the world should ensure that economic reasons do not push students to drop out of school. In a developing country like Nigeria, dropout rate is extraordinarily high. This is extremely dangerous for her development. According to Babalola *et al.* (2022), the high school dropout problem in Nigeria has created serious crisis negatively impacting on the society. The abandonment of formal education by students before the graduation period spells doom for the nation's development and security. Inah and Uzoigwe (2024) suggested some of the causes of high school dropout rates in Calabar Metropolis to include inability to pay school-related costs such as levies, transportation, uniforms, and books. They recommended scholarship schemes, free distribution of educational materials, and government financial aid as effective interventions. A report by Nsofor (2024) suggested that students in semi-urban and rural areas were particularly affected, with absenteeism rising by as much as 40% in some regions. In the same vein, Adeyemo *et al.* (2022) found out that adolescents from single-parent and non-nuclear families were significantly more likely to disengage from school in Ibadan, Oyo State. Again, Ige *et al.* (2024) revealed that high costs of schooling, gender-based cultural expectations, and early marriage were the main determinants of dropout among girls. In a related development, Okpoko (2025) linked poor funding, low infrastructure, inadequate learning materials, and high student-to-teacher ratio to increased dropout rates, especially in public secondary schools.

### **Short-Term Skill Acquisition**

Short-Term Skill Acquisition (STSA) has been successfully practiced in several countries around the world. It is the ability to be trained on a particular simple task or function and become expert in it. Globally, college students' involvement in part-time jobs has increased enabling them to support themselves and supplement their family incomes (Dawar,2025). The current economic situation in Nigeria suggests that sustainable economic activities can be achieved through Short-Term Skill Acquisition that help people (especially school children) to overcome the current economic hardship impacting on their education. The nature of work there could fit under this initiative are phone repairs, confectionaries, catering, dress making, machine assemblage, candle and soap making. These jobs as noted by Igwe *et al.* (2019) are not in any way infringing on the fundamental rights of children but beneficial to them by having access to extra cash to support themselves in schools and reduce the risk of dropping out of school. In their empirical study, Inah and Uzoigwe (2024) analysed the factors contributing to high school dropout rates in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State. Using a descriptive survey design and a sample of 392 students from public secondary schools, the study found out that poverty was a statistically significant predictor of dropout rates. These researchers observed that many students left school prematurely due to the inability to pay school-related costs such as levies, transportation, uniforms, and books. They recommended scholarship schemes, free distribution of educational materials, and government financial aid as effective interventions. The study's quantitative rigor and focus on student-reported experiences made it a strong relevance to this present study citing that poverty-induced dropout is a recurring national issue. A report by Nsofor (2024) presented

real-time evidence on how rising transportation costs impacted school attendance in Nigeria. Citing interviews with parents, school authorities, and economic experts, the article detailed how inflation in fuel prices has made daily commuting unaffordable for many students. It reported that students in peri-urban and rural areas were particularly affected, with absenteeism rising by as much as 40% in some regions. Although not a peer-reviewed study, the report was grounded in contemporary observations and supported by expert commentary, offering relevant, empirical insight into how economic shocks, especially those affecting transportation can directly lead to increased dropout vulnerability.

Adeyemo *et al.* (2022) conducted a community psychology study that examined the relationship between family structure, mental health, and adolescent dropout risk in Ibadan. Utilising standardised instruments and statistical correlation methods, the researchers found out that adolescents from single-parents and non-nuclear families were significantly more likely to disengage from school. The study linked low parental support and unstable home environments to poor mental health outcomes, which in turn reduced academic motivation. Their work provided important empirical support for findings, on the link between lack of family encouragement and dropout consideration. The study's strength rested in its multidimensional approach to vulnerability, combining psychological, familial, and educational variables. Ige *et al.* (2024) carried out a field-based study in rural communities of Kwara and Osun states to identify the factors influencing girl-child dropout from secondary school. Through surveys and key informant interviews, they found out that high costs of schooling, gender-based cultural expectations, and early marriage were the main determinants of dropout among girls. The study emphasised that households with limited income were more likely to prioritise male education, leaving girls at higher risk. The researchers called for gender-sensitive policies, community sensitisation, and economic empowerment programmes for rural families. This study is relevant to the present study, as it demonstrated how intersecting socioeconomic and cultural constraints influenced dropout vulnerability among adolescents. Okpoko (2025) investigative report critiqued the Nigerian government's under-investment in education, drawing from budget analyses and interviews with educators across different states. It highlighted that national education funding remained below the UNESCO-recommended benchmark of 15–20% of total government spending. The report linked poor infrastructure, inadequate learning materials, and high student-to-teacher ratio to increased dropout rates, especially in public secondary schools. Although journalistic in nature, the article is grounded in fiscal data and stakeholder interviews, which made it a credible source, and relevant to the present study to confirm that systemic underfunding is a key structural driver of educational disengagement.

### **Methodology**

The authors adopted a mixed-method research design involving both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The qualitative approach adopted a narrative research design while the quantitative approach adopted the pretest, posttest, control group quasi-experimental research design. The population of this study included teachers, principals and indigent students in the 8 oldest flagship public secondary schools in the four divisions of Ogun State, Nigeria. These included Remo, Ijebu, Yewa and Egba. It also involved officials of State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. The sample size for the study was 427 participants that comprised 8 principals, 16 teachers, 400 students, and 3 officials of the Ministry of Education and Technology. The 8 principals were selected using total enumeration. The 16 teachers were purposively selected based on their utility status. The

400 students were purposively selected based on their vulnerability to dropout of school as identified by their class teachers. The selected schools were: Yewa College, Ilaro, Comprehensive High School, Ayetoro, Abeokuta Grammar School, Idi Aba, African Church Grammar School, Ita-Iyalode, Remo Secondary School, Sagamu, Remo Divisional High School, Sagamu, Ijebu-Ode Grammar School, Ijebu Ode and Ijebu Muslim College, Ijebu-Ode. Three Ministry officials were purposively selected based on the vast information at their disposal on senior secondary education and their ability to effectively grant key informant interview.

Three research instruments were developed by the authors for the current investigation. These include Students' Dropout Vulnerability Questionnaire (SDOVQ), In-depth Interview Guide, and Short-Term Skill Acquisition Training Guide. Students' Drop out Vulnerability Questionnaire (SDOVQ) was used to collect data on the vulnerability of secondary school students to dropping out of school. This questionnaire was adapted from Dropout Risk Assessment Questionnaire developed by Yaseen (2014). It has a total of 10 items structured using four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The In-depth Interview Guide were developed to collect qualitative data from principals, teachers and officials of Ministry of Education on the feasibility and effect of Short-Term Skill Acquisition strategy, challenges affecting school attendance among secondary school students, mechanisms of identifying at risk students, and current intervention and support programmes for at risk students. The Short-Term Skill Acquisition Training Guide is a module developed by the researchers alongside three highly-skilled and experienced artisans who specialised in phone repairing and accessories. The training manual was used as treatment package for participants in the experimental group.

The content validity of the instruments was established through expert opinions of three Professors of Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Management. The test-retest reliability method was used to establish the coefficient of stability of the questionnaire. The coefficients of stability obtained was .88 for Students' Drop out Vulnerability Questionnaire. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethical Review Committee of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education, Ijagun, and permission was sought from the Honourable Commissioner, Ogun State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology before the researchers proceeded to the field for data collection. The researchers visited each of the selected school to obtain permission from the principals for the students' participation in the study and also educate them on the purpose of the research work and what they stand to gain from it. The administration was done in phases: pre-session activities, pre-test, treatment, monitoring and evaluation, sustainability and follow-up, and post-test. The pre-session activities include the screening, recruitment, and assignment of participants to the experimental group and control group. The researchers alongside a certified trainer in mobile phone repairs used an average of 60 minutes per day for training sessions on participants in the experimental group for four weeks by following the pre-designed treatment package template (see supplemental page in Appendix 1) while those in the control group were taught only entrepreneurship education. The two groups were administered with the same pre-test and post-test instruments after their respective training sessions. Qualitative data was analysed using content analysis while quantitative data was analysed using frequency counts, percentages, descriptive mean and standard deviation as well as inferential statistics of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). Hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance using the SPSS computer software program.

## Results

The results obtained in this study were divided into two main sections: The quantitative and the qualitative results. The results are presented below.

### Participants' Demography

Result in Table 1 showed that out of the total 400 students who participated in the study, 243 (60.8%) were males, while 157 (39.3%) were females. This indicated a higher representation of male students in the sample, suggesting either a gender imbalance in school enrollment or a possible male-dominated participation in the skill acquisition programme. Age distribution of participants showed that the majority, 284 students (71.0%) were between 15 and 18 years old, which aligned with the typical age range for senior secondary school students in Nigeria. Ninety-two participants (23.0%) were younger than 15 years, possibly indicating early starters or accelerated learners. Only 24 participants (6.0%) were above 18, which reflected students who have repeated classes or started schooling late. Participants were drawn from all three levels of Senior Secondary School. SS1 students made up the largest group with 193 students (48.3%), followed by SS2 students with 148 (37.0%), and SS3 students at 59 (14.8%). The lower number of SS3 students may be due to proximity to external exams, causing a lower participation rate or early school-leaving trends. Participants were nearly evenly splitted between urban (174 students, 43.5%) and semi-urban (173 students, 43.3%) areas, while 53 students (13.3%) came from rural communities. This distribution suggested the study captured a balanced representation from diverse geographic settings in Ogun State, which is essential for understanding how locality affects dropout and poverty-related challenges. Table 1 also showed that a significant portion of the students, 353 (88.3%), lived with their parents, indicating a traditional family structure. A smaller percentage resided with family members (7.5%), relatives (3.0%), or in foster care (0.5%). Only 0.8% lived alone, which highlighted the vulnerability of a very small group who may lack direct family support. These living arrangements have implications for economic stability and educational continuity.

**Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Participants' Students (n = 400)**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	male	243
	female	157
Age	less than 15 years	92
	15-18 years	284
	above 18 years	24
Class	SS1	193
	SS2	148
	SS3	59
Residence	urban	174
	semi-urban	173
	rural	53
Living with	parents	353
	family	30
	relatives	12
	foster care	2
	alone	3

Data Source: Researchers' field experiment data (2025)

### **Qualitative Results of Key Informant Interviews**

This section used thematic analysis to analyse interview notes taken from interviewees, key informants and respondents of this study. Their responses provided firsthand insights into dropout vulnerability of participants of this study. The thematic analysis technique used for reporting the interview notes was to aggregate the views, responses and submissions of participants, that included teachers, principals, and officials of the Ministry of Education in Ogun State. Each theme analysed was associated with a number of interview questions relevant to these three categories of respondents.

### **Thematic Analysis of Participants' Responses to Short-Term Skill Acquisition and Dropout Vulnerability**

The sub-section presents a qualitative analysis based on responses from teachers, principals, and officials of Ministry of Education to interview questions that focused on identifying challenges that contributed to school dropout and exploring the potential of short-term skill acquisition programmes in mitigating these challenges among secondary school students in Ogun State. Some of the emerging themes from respondents are identified below.

#### **Challenges Affecting Students' Attendance**

Majority of the interviewed teachers and principals emphasised that economic hardship is a significant barrier to sustained school attendance and academic success. Although the state government offers free education, parents often struggled to afford supplementary school needs such as uniforms, textbooks, and transport. Additionally, poor nutrition was frequently cited, with reports of underfed students who found it difficult to concentrate in class. Some students were also affected by family instability or were required to work to support their households, leading to chronic absenteeism. The moral decline among youths, attributed partly to the misuse of digital tools, further detracts from effective learning among students. These are captured in one of the interviewees' responses as stated below:

Looking at the effort being put together by the state government in providing free education to our learners, you will see that the government has gone a long way in assisting all learners through the need of primary and secondary school so that they can get formal education, but the constraints that I see is the issue of the economy of the country (KII: TCH, 2025).

Another one said:

You know, like the programme you are bringing now, looking at those, not all of them, the issue of the economy, hike in prices of things, parents find it very difficult to provide necessary things for their children. Let us start from the issue of textbooks. Some of them struggle to get school uniform, after we bring them to school giving them the exercise book but the textbooks that will help them to continue...that lead them to steady learning ..., you know when they get back home the parents might not be able to provide such thereby it will affect such learner because the teacher cannot give all to the class (KII: TCH, 2025).

An interviewed teacher attested that:

You can see, so there will not be concentration in whatsoever even if the teacher comes from heaven, and the learner is hungry, so there is nohow

they will be able to assimilate so it will just come down, and it will just go like that. So another thing is the issue of ehmm degeneration in morality within our youth these days can also be a part of the challenges that we face, and that has to go a long in the issue of our ICT you know everybody is being exposed to one area or the other of things but it is good when you look at the students most of them that involved in such are not making good use of...they're using it negatively so is another way it affecting them (KII: TCH, 2025).

### **Economic Pressures Lead to Dropout**

Interviewees unanimously agreed that economic pressure constitute potent challenges that cause students to drop out of school. The inability to afford transport or daily meals, as well as the expectation to contribute to family income through hawking or menial jobs, often leads to prolonged school absence. When students miss school repeatedly, they fall behind academically and are more likely to discontinue their education entirely. This is reflected in one respondents' statement as observed below.

Yes! Like somebody that the parents may not feed properly cannot come down to school. Definitely it's going to affect. The child that leaves, maybe from here to Rounder, you cannot expect that learner to be trekking everyday. So definitely it's going to be one way or the other affect such learner. At the end of the day, the parent can say hawk to sell these before you can get somethings for school, and that student may not come to school today, and tomorrow. Definitely he will be missing out, and it can affect the learner not to finish (KII: PR, 2025).

### **Mechanisms for Identifying at Risk Students**

Teachers being in close daily contact with students, are well-positioned to identify those in need of intervention. Observable indicators such as torn uniforms, lack of school materials, and absenteeism can be used as criteria for selection. This grassroots approach ensures that the programme reaches those who are genuinely in need and can benefit the most. A school principal reported this as stated below:

It's through their teachers, you know they know them they are together in and out. Definitely they will be able to spot out those students in need of this programme [short-term skill acquisition]. You can go through the teachers, by doing that you will be able to get those learners that're in need of your programme. Getting into the class to see a student with thorn uniform will give an insight that the student needs help, or seeing a student among others without a textbook will tell me that there is a serious challenge (KII: PR, 2025).

### **Current Intervention and Support Programmes**

Majority of the participants interviewed for the study revealed that while some Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) occasionally provide uniforms, books, and scholarships, there is no formal or consistent programme designed to keep vulnerable students in senior school. The support that exists is fragmented and insufficient to address the systemic causes of dropout. There is therefore, a pressing need for a more structured, sustainable intervention. One of the school principals remarked that:

We only have NGOs that do come out with various programmes. Like the one I read, the NGO distributed uniforms to students. Some do come up with distribution of exercise books, and others. There is another one coming up which is arrange to address brilliant learners but facing financial issues to further their education. There is an NGO [they have been granted approval] that is requesting for the names of such students (KII: PR, 2025).

An official of the State Ministry of Education reported thus:

I don't think presently in Ogun State we have anyone that belong to the ministry that is doing something like this [short-term skill acquisition training programme] (KII: MoE, 2025).

Based on the insights provided above, short-term skill acquisition programme hold considerable promise as a dropout mitigation strategy. This programme can provide: students with practical, income-generating skills, reduce their economic dependence on struggling households; serve as motivation for students to remain in school by showing immediate and tangible benefits; alleviate the pressure on students to seek work outside school hours; and offer a pathway to financial independence, thus encouraging continued education. The qualitative evidence from key informants strongly supports the implementation plan of short-term skill acquisition as a viable strategy to effect hunger alleviation, dropout rate reduction, and poverty alleviation among senior school students.

### **Analysis of Quantitative Data**

The section provides the analysed data from participants obtained through the administered Students' Dropout Vulnerability Questionnaire instruments alongside the results of the main effect of short-term skill acquisition strategy on dropout vulnerability.

### **Extent of Students' Vulnerability to Dropout**

Results in Table 2 showed that the grand mean dropout vulnerability score among the students was 2.12 (SD = 1.053). According to the study's rating criteria, a mean between 2.00 and 2.99 signified moderate vulnerability to dropout. This suggested that a substantial number of students were faced with challenges that put them at risk of leaving school prematurely. The standard deviation indicated moderate variability in responses, meaning that while dropout risks were not uniform across all students, they are common enough to warrant systemic concern. The item "I find it challenging to meet the financial demands of my education" had a mean of 1.97 (SD = 1.095), placing it just below the moderate vulnerability threshold. This indicated that many students were under financial pressure, though some may still be managed to cope. The relatively high standard deviation reflected high variability in students' financial circumstances. While some students can afford schooling, others likely struggled with tuition, uniforms, or exam fees, making them vulnerable to dropout.

The response to "I often struggle to balance academic commitments with personal responsibilities" yielded a mean of 1.85 (SD = 0.913). This fell within the low vulnerability range but still signaled that a considerable portion of students experienced difficulty balancing school with responsibilities such as household chores, caregiving, or economic activities. This struggle may not be the most immediate factor in dropout risk but is a contributing stressor. On the item "Generally, there is no feeling of happiness in this school", the mean was 2.25 (SD = 1.193). This suggested moderate emotional disengagement, which

is an important predictor of potential dropout. Students who do not feel emotionally or socially connected to school are more likely to disengage and ultimately drop out. The high standard deviation indicated significant individual differences in how students perceived their school environment. The mean score for “Lack of motivation affects my ability to attend classes regularly” was 1.62 (SD = 0.808), which showed low dropout vulnerability from motivational factors alone. Similarly, “I feel unsupported by my institution when dealing with academic difficulties” had a mean of 1.86 (SD = 1.039). These scores suggested that, while motivation and institutional support were relevant, they were not as critical as financial or environmental barriers in this population.

Significantly, “Cost of transportation makes it difficult for me to attend school regularly” scored 2.56 (SD = 1.151), and “I face financial challenges accessing learning materials” had a mean of 2.58 (SD = 1.163). These are the highest mean scores among the items and fell within the moderate vulnerability range, strongly indicated that transport costs and lack of resources like books and writing materials were critical threats to students’ school continuity. These financial barriers were widespread and impactful. The statement “My financial struggle has significantly impacted my academic performance” received a mean of 2.48 (SD = 1.191), and “My family do not encourage me to graduate from secondary school” had a mean of 2.33 (SD = 1.135). These findings reinforced the influence of economic and familial support on educational success. Students who lack family encouragement or experience financial setbacks were more likely to underperform and become discouraged, increasing their risk of dropping out. Interestingly, the lowest mean was for “I have considered dropping out of school due to hunger and poverty”, with a score of 1.77 (SD = 0.844). Although this indicated a low vulnerability level, it is still a concerning sign that a notable minority of students are contemplating dropout because of hunger and poverty. This item points to the intersection of basic needs and education access.

**Table 2: Dropout Vulnerability Among Participants of Senior Secondary Schools in Ogun State**

S/N	Statements	Responses (%)				Mean	S.D
		SA	A	D	SD		
1	I find it challenging to meet the financial demands of my education.	12.3	21.8	17.0	49.0	1.97	1.095
2	I often struggle to balance academic commitments with personal responsibilities.	7.3	13.3	36.3	43.3	1.85	.913
3	Generally, there is no feeling of happiness in this school.	23.3	16.5	21.8	38.5	2.25	1.193
4	Lack of motivation affects my ability to attend classes regularly.	4.5	7.3	33.8	54.5	1.62	.808
5	I feel unsupported by my institution when dealing with academic difficulties.	13.5	7.3	30.8	48.5	1.86	1.039
6	Cost of transportation make it difficult for me to attend school regularly.	26.8	29.8	16.5	27.0	2.56	1.151
7	I face financial challenges accessing learning materials or resources needed for my studies.	33.3	13.3	31.5	22.0	2.58	1.163
8	My financial struggle has significantly impacted my academic performance.	29.0	19.3	22.5	29.3	2.48	1.191
9	My family do not encourage me to graduate from secondary school.	20.8	23.5	23.3	32.5	2.33	1.135
10	I have considered dropping out of school due to hunger and poverty.	0.5	25.0	25.0	49.5	1.77	.844

Grand mean	2.12	1.053
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Note. SA = Strongly agree (4), A = Agree (3), D = Disagree (2), SD = Strongly disagree (1); S.D = Standard deviation; Criteria for evaluation of mean: Highly vulnerable (3.00-4.00), vulnerable (2.0-2.99), less vulnerable (1.00-1.99); N= 400, % = Percentage.

**Effect of Short-Term Skill Acquisition on Dropout**

The results in Table 3 showed that the participants with the lowest mean of dropout vulnerability was observed in the Short-term skill acquisition treatment group ( $\bar{X}$  = 14.54, SD = 3.924) while the highest mean of dropout vulnerability was observed among participants in the Control group ( $\bar{X}$  = 20.26, SD = 6.860). The estimates in Table 4 showed that in the control group, the adjusted mean was 20.568 compared to the unadjusted mean of 20.26, while in the Short-term skill acquisition treatment group, the adjusted mean was 14.227 compared to the unadjusted mean of 14.540. The covariate pretest was set at 21.2475 which was the average value for pretest for dropout vulnerability in this study. From the adjusted mean scores, it could be deduced that the Short-term skill acquisition treatment group showed reduced dropout vulnerability, and the adjusted mean of participants in this group, had its adjusted mean lesser than the mean value of the pretest dropout vulnerability which was set at 21.2475. The result in Table 5 showed that there was a statistically significant main effect of Short-term skill acquisition on dropout vulnerability of Senior Secondary School students in Ogun State,  $F_{(1, 397)} = 455.634, p < .05$ . From the pairwise comparison in Table 6, it can be seen that dropout vulnerability was greater in the Control group compared to Short-term skill acquisition treatment group, a mean difference of 6.342 (95% CI, -6.926 to -5.758). These results confirmed that Short-term skill acquisition training programme significantly diminished dropout vulnerability among public Senior Secondary School students in Ogun State.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Participants’ Post-test on Dropout Vulnerability**

Treatment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Short-term skill acquisition	200	14.54	3.924
Control	200	20.26	6.860
Total	400	17.40	6.272

**Table 4: Adjusted Means of Participants’ Post-test on Dropout Vulnerability**

Treatment	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Short-term skill acquisition	14.227 <sup>a</sup>	.210	13.814	14.639
Control	20.568 <sup>a</sup>	.210	20.156	20.981

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: pre\_Dropout Vulnerability = 21.2475.

**Table 5: Analysis of Covariance of Post-test Dropout Vulnerability by Treatment**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	12204.728 <sup>a</sup>	2	6102.364	694.351	.000	.778
Intercept	542.393	1	542.393	61.716	.000	.135
Pre dropout vulnerability	8938.605	1	8938.605	1017.069	.000	.719

treatment	4004.376	1	4004.376	455.634	.000	.534
Error	3489.070	397	8.789			
Total	136763.000	400				
Corrected Total	15693.798	399				

a. R Squared = .778 (Adjusted R Squared = .777)

**Table 6: Pairwise Comparisons of Adjusted Means for Dropout Vulnerability for Each Experimental Group**

(I) Treatments	(J) Treatments	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. <sup>b</sup>	95% Confidence Interval for Difference <sup>b</sup>	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Short-term skill acquisition	control	-6.342*	.297	.000	-6.926	-5.758
control	Short-term skill acquisition	6.342*	.297	.000	5.758	6.926

Based on estimated marginal means

\*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least Significant Difference (equivalent to no adjustments).

### Discussion of Findings

Findings of this study revealed that dropout vulnerability profile showed that motivation and institutional support may not be pressing issues for most students, financial hardship especially transportation costs and lack of educational materials are the most common drivers of dropout risk. These outcomes corroborated previous findings in literature that financial constraints, transportation challenges, lack of family support, socioeconomic and cultural factors, and inadequate educational funding contribute to students' dropout vulnerability. Emotional detachment from school and poor family support also played meaningful roles. The study's finding that financial challenges contributed to students' dropout vulnerability aligned with broader research in Nigeria. Inah and Uzoigwe (2024) conducted a study in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, and revealed that poverty is a significant factor leading to high school dropout rates. Their research, involving a sample of 392 students, found that financial constraints hindered students' ability to meet educational demands, leading to increased dropout rates. They recommended implementing scholarship programmes to alleviate the financial burden on students from low-income families. Also, transportation costs emerged as a barrier to school attendance, with students reporting difficulty affording daily commutes. A report by Nsofor (2024) highlighted similar situation that soaring transportation costs in Nigeria forced families to choose between schooling and survival. The study indicated that students in low-income families missed up to 40% of school days due to unaffordable transport options, leading to increased dropout rates.

The lack of family encouragement and support was identified in the study as a factor contributing to students' dropout vulnerability. This corroborates the finding of a study by Adeyemo et al. (2022) in Ibadan Municipality. Socioeconomic and cultural factors were also found to play a role in students' dropout vulnerability. A study by Ige et al. (2024) in rural areas of Kwara and Osun states had also identified high schooling costs and low household

income as critical factors influencing dropout rates among girl-child students. The study's findings also pointed to inadequate educational funding as a contributing factor to dropout vulnerability. According to a report by Okpoko (2025), the Nigerian government's expenditure on education has remained below recommended levels, resulting in overcrowded classrooms, lack of learning materials, and insufficient infrastructure. These conditions hindered effective teaching and learning, leading to increased dropout rates.

### **Conclusion**

The project revealed that short-term skill acquisition has a significant effect on reducing the dropout rate among senior secondary school students in Ogun State. Quantitative results showed a marked reduction in dropout vulnerability among students who participated in the short-term skill acquisition programme. Specifically, students in the experimental group recorded significantly lower mean scores compared to the control group. This indicated that the skill acquisition programme enhanced reduced dropout vulnerability among senior secondary school students. In addition, the dropout vulnerability assessment further supports the effectiveness of the intervention. Students exposed to the short-term skill training demonstrated a significant improvement in school retention and engagement, as reflected in lower dropout vulnerability scores. This suggested that empowering senior school students with marketable skills not only enhances their financial capacity but also motivates them to remain in school. The intervention helped them to overcome financial barriers that often lead to absenteeism and eventual dropout most especially among families who struggled to meet basic educational needs. Qualitative data revealed similar findings of daily struggles of students and their families in coping with economic hardships. Interviews with teachers, and principals revealed that lack of educational materials, poor nutrition, and family pressure to engage in income-generating activities were key drivers of school dropout. However, participants also affirmed that introducing skill acquisition programmes in schools offers a practical solution, enabling students to support themselves and reduce the financial burden on their families. The study concluded that short-term skill acquisition was an effective strategy for tackling school dropout and poverty among public senior secondary school students in Ogun State. Short-term skill acquisition provided both immediate and long-term benefits by equipping students with sustainable skills, reducing their economic dependency, and enhancing their educational commitment.

### **Recommendations for Policy Implementation**

Findings of this study have significant implications for educational and social policy formulation in Ogun State. The study demonstrated the effectiveness of short-term skill acquisition in reducing school dropout as well as the need for integrating vocational training into the mainstream secondary school curriculum. Policymakers should therefore consider developing a comprehensive framework that embeds skill acquisition programmes as a core component of the educational system, particularly in public schools serving low-income communities. Such a policy would not only improve school retention but also equip students with practical competencies that enhance their employability and self-reliance. Education policies should be aligned with social protection measures, such as school-based feeding, stipends for vocational participants, and partnerships with NGOs and private sector stakeholders to provide resources and mentorship. With these, government policies can effectively reduce the financial pressures that push students out of school and into child labour or street trading thereby breaking the circle of poverty within the populace. For lasting impact, the researchers recommended that the programme should be scaled up,

institutionalised within the senior school system, and supported through partnerships with government agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and community stakeholders. This would ensure that education remains inclusive, relevant, and responsive to the socio-economic realities of students.

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**Appendix 1**  
**Short-Term Skill Acquisition Implementation Plan**

<b>Phone Repairing Training Implementation Plan Template</b>				
<b>Pre-sessional Activities</b>				
<b>Pre-test</b>				
<b>Treatment (Short-Term Skill Acquisition Training)</b>				
<b>Programme Title:</b>	Short-Term Skill Acquisition in Phone Repairing			
<b>Duration:</b>	Four (4) Weeks (20 Training Days)			
<b>Target Group:</b>	Public Senior Secondary School Students in Ogun State			
<b>Venue:</b>	The selected 8 Schools in Ogun State			
<b>Facilitators:</b>	Certified trainers in mobile phone repairs and experienced artisans			
<b>Daily Duration:</b>	Sixty (60) Minutes			
<b>Week 1:</b>	<b>Introduction to Phone Repairing (Foundation Skills)</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Lesson Topics</b>	<b>Activities/Discussion</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Consolidation with Artisans</b>
1	Orientation and Introduction to Phone Technology	Overview of training, career prospects, safety rules, basic phone components.	Q&A session, safety rule quiz.	Observe local artisan shop operations.
2	Basic Tools and Equipment	Identify and handle screwdrivers, multimeters, soldering irons.	Practical demo and checklist assessment.	Hands-on demo with artisan.
3	Phone Architecture	Internal components: battery, PCB, ICs, camera, speakers.	Labeling and matching exercise.	Discuss with artisan about real-life applications.
4	Types of Phones and Operating Systems	Android, iOS, button phones; pros and cons.	Group discussion, phone OS identification exercise.	Pair with artisan to disassemble phones.
5	Safety and ESD Precautions	Electrostatic discharge control, workstation setup.	Safety drills, peer review.	Artisan mentoring on safe practices.
<b>Week 2:</b>	<b>Hardware Repair Skills</b>			
6	Disassembling Techniques	Opening phones without damage, part identification.	Guided disassembly task	Supervised practice at artisan's shop
7	Soldering and Desoldering	Use of soldering iron, replacing small components.	Practice exercise, peer critique.	Artisan guides on soldering technique.
8	Replacing Screens, Batteries, and Ports	Practical component replacement.	Role-play repair scenerios.	Hands-on repair tasks with artisan.
9	Troubleshooting Non-Functioning Devices	Diagnosing dead phones, no power issues.	Fault identification worksheet.	Case review with artisan.
10	Mid-Training Assessment	Practical test covering all learned skills.	Individual assessment	Feedback from both trainer and artisan mentor.

<b>Week 3:</b>	<b>Software and Intermediate Repairs</b>			
11	Flashing and Firmware Installation	Introduction to flashing tools and software.	Simulation using flashing box	Artisan-assisted firmware update.
12	Virus and App Issues	Common malware symptoms, uninstallation techniques.	Practice diagnostics	Hands-on work with artisan.
13	Unlocking Phones	Password and network unlocking tools and software	Software walkthrough, practice on test phones.	Artisan demo and student practice.
14	Network and Signal Issues	Antenna, SIM tray faults, IMEI problem.	Fault diagnosis worksheet	Artisan shares real cases and fixes.
15	Software Troubleshooting	Factory reset, hanging issues, recovery mode	Student-run software clinic	Shadowing artisan during software repairs.
<b>Week 4:</b>	<b>Business Integration and Finalization</b>			
16	Customer Handling and Communication	Attitude, ethics, handling complaints	Role-playing, feedback session.	Artisan mentoring on customer service.
17	Pricing and Documentation	Cost estimation, inventory tracking.	Pricing worksheet and invoice demo.	Observe artisan pricing strategy.
18	Setting Up a Workshop	Tools needed, branding, local licensing	Business setup checklist.	Visit artisan shops for feasibility analysis.
19	Final Practical Evaluation	Repair a faulty phone independently	Full practical test and oral defense.	Artisan evaluates trainee competence.
20	Certification and Networking	Presentation of certificates, artisan-trainee match-up	Showcase event and testimonials.	Assign mentor artisans to each trainee for follow-up.
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Daily observation checklists</li> <li>■ Mid-week quizzes and practical exercises</li> <li>■ Final project-based assessment</li> <li>■ Artisan feedback and mentoring reports</li> </ul>				
<b>Sustainability and Follow-Up:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Assign participants to artisan mentors for 2-weeks follow-up</li> <li>■ Register trainees (participants) in a WhatsApp group for continuous learning.</li> </ul>				
<b>Post-tests</b>				

### **Data Availability Statement**

The raw data supporting the conclusion of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

### **Ethics Statement**

This study involved human participants and were approved by Ethical Review Committee of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education. The study was also conducted in accordance with Ogun State Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology requirements. Written informed

consent for participation in this study was provided by individual participant, and/or parents/guardians.

**Authors Contributions**

ADE: Writing, review and editing. OLA: Writing, review and editing. ADR: Writing, review and editing. OSH: Writing, review, editing, and data analysis.

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Article

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### IN SERVICE AND IN SILENCE: THE SACRIFICIAL ROLE OF THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE, 1960–2000

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#### Abstract

This paper explored the often-overlooked narrative of sacrifice within the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) between 1960 and 2000, a period marked by political instability, regime transitions, and institutional neglect. Drawing on historical records, eyewitness interviews, and Scholarly literature, the study repositions the police not merely as instrument of state power or agent of coercion, but as an institution which bears the psychological, physical, and moral burdens of national service which is often performed in silence and without ample recognition. It interrogates the paradox in which the police are simultaneously feared and called upon, vilified yet indispensable, and exposed to danger without institutional dignity or societal gratitude. The analysis unfolds across eight interconnected themes: the colonial roots of policing, operational hazards, civil-military distortions, public misunderstanding, and the glaring absence of honour-based institutional memory. Using detailed testimonies, official documents, and critical literature the paper demonstrates how the image of the NPF has been shaped by structural contradictions and moral indifference rather than professional failures alone. It argues that the culture of sacrifice which manifest in poor pay, inadequate housing, fatal deployments, and emotional trauma, has persisted because the state and society have normalized neglect while demanding loyalty. The paper concludes that restoring dignity to Nigerian policing harps on memorialization, improved welfare, and the creation of a national honour system for fallen officers. Ultimately, the study calls for a moral reorientation in the national consciousness: one that understands sacrifice not as disposable labour but as a civic debt deserving of memory, justice, and public appreciation.

**Keywords:** Nigeria Police Force, Professionalism, National Security, Operational Risk, Responsibility, In-Service, In-Silece.

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## **Introduction**

The phrase "The Police is your friend" has long been the motto of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). It is often emblazoned on station walls and police vans, yet seldomly echoed in public sentiment. From independence in 1960, the story of Nigerian policing unfolded not only as a tale of law enforcement, but also of immense institutional sacrifice. This story remained one written in silence, shadowed by indifference, and largely forgotten in the national memory. The sacrifices made by the police were not always seen in gallant battles against criminals alone, but also in the mundane yet perilous daily grind of duty: underpaid, underappreciated, and overexposed to violence. From inception, the NPF was charged with upholding the law and preserving order in a complex, multi-ethnic nation struggling with unity, civil conflict, and political instability. Yet this expectation came without the essential safeguards of institutional dignity, welfare, or consistent public trust. Too often, the men and women in uniform served not with applause but in silence. They performed their duty in a state where service to the nation was simultaneously glorified and neglected. To understand the sacrificial role of the police, it becomes necessary to look beyond the documented crimes and reported misconducts. Indeed, Nigeria's police system has not escaped rightful criticism. But to dwell only on failure is to obscure the deeper philosophical question: What does it mean for a national institution to give so much and receive so little in return? Sacrifice, when unrewarded and unacknowledged, is not only a moral problem but a societal failure. As Sunday Effiong reflect in the twilight of his service:

We wear this uniform, neither for glamour nor beauty. We are always seen as moving target and public enemy no 1; whether in peace time or conflict situation. When the bullets fly, it is the police they call. When the chaos begins, they send us first. When it is over, they forget us. No one to speak for us; neither are we allowed to speak. No memorial, no pension, and just a whisper that we were once there. Our reward is in heaven.<sup>1</sup>

This sense of institutional neglect is commonly echoed in public commentaries. Scholars have documented the recurrent patterns of abuse, both by and against the police. This pattern has shown that behind the brutalized police image lies a brutalizing system. The institutional failure to address welfare, training, and public legitimacy has shaped not just how the police are seen, but equally how they see themselves. As Alemika and Chukwuma observe in their influential study on police reform:

Numerous structural constraints as well as organizational inadequacies such as poor training, poor remuneration and working conditions, scarcity of and poorly equipped office and residential accommodation, inadequate transportation and communication facilities, obsolete (sic) and firearms and inadequate ammunition within the Nigeria. Police Force continue to engender police ineffectiveness, inefficiency and even insensitivity, all of which create enduring negative police image.<sup>2</sup>

This paper attempts to reposition the Nigeria Police Force not merely as an agency of order, but equally as a community of men and women who sacrifice and serve in silence. Using

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<sup>1</sup> Oral interview with Sunday Effiong, 64, retired Superintendent of Police at his office on November 20, 2024. He served at different capacities including as Divisional Police Officer (DPO), Studied at Police Staff College Jos, former trainer at Police College, Ikeja.

<sup>2</sup> Etannibi E. O.Alemika, *History, Context and Crises of the Police in Nigeria*. (Jos, University of Jos Press, 1993.), p.19.

verified historical and scholarly sources, this analysis unfolds in eight interconnected sections. Each explores different dimensions of police sacrifice: from colonial legacies to operational hazards, from public misunderstanding to policy neglect, from military misuse to forgotten memorials. The goal is not to excuse wrongdoing and systemic anomalies in the police. It is rather meant to enrich an understanding of their story from multiple perspective. By so doing scholarly criticism of the police would be just, particularly when one first sees them fully. The uniform may not inspire admiration in every heart, but the daily risks borne by its wearers demand a considerable appreciation.

### **Conceptual Annotations**

The phrases "in service" and "in silence" encapsulate core principles often associated with police work, emphasizing public service and disciplined restraint. "In Service" explained the NPF's mandate to protect and serve the public, uphold law and order, and foster community trust.<sup>3</sup> This was done within the codes of professionalism, which involved ethical behaviour, operational competence, and responsiveness to citizens' needs.<sup>4</sup> "In Silence" ensured a principle of discipline, restraint, and impartiality, often interpreted as avoiding public controversy or bias. It may also imply secrecy, which can conflict with transparency, a cornerstone of professionalism.<sup>5</sup> During the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970), the NPF's focus on security operations required disciplined silence to maintain strategic coherence. This was aimed to bolster internal professionalism, as officers adhered to hierarchical orders often under pressure without questions.<sup>6</sup> After the war, police public relations efforts required the institution of the culture of silence as damage control mechanism to fortify the force from potential criticism. The Police Public Relations Department, established in the 1970s, used restrained communication to manage public perception. By avoiding inflammatory responses to criticism, the NPF aimed to project professionalism, though with mixed success.<sup>7</sup> Equally, the NPF's early codes of conduct emphasized restraint and neutrality, aligning with service "in silence." Officers were trained to avoid public disputes or political bias, especially during the First Republic's regional tensions. This fostered a sense of professionalism by promoting a unified force.<sup>8</sup> Tamuno confirmed the emphasis that discipline and impartiality in the 1960s necessitated the NPF's codes of conduct, which stressed restraint and neutrality to maintain public order during regional tensions. He wrote, "Officers were expected to act with impartiality, avoiding entanglement in political disputes"<sup>9</sup>

### **Origins of Duty: Colonial Legacies and Post-Independence Expectations**

The burdens of sacrifice shouldered by the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is traceable to pre-independence. A better understanding thus traces its lineage to colonial policing. The force was not born out of democratic ideals but out of imperial necessity. Its earliest foundations

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<sup>3</sup> Oral interview with Udom Ekpoudom, 72, Retired Deputy Inspector General of Police, fwc, mni; Chairman, Governing Council, University of Calabar. at his office, Tower of Ivory Schools, Abak, April 24, 2025.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid,

<sup>5</sup> Oral interview with Sunday Effiong, 20, November 2024

<sup>6</sup> Ibid,

<sup>7</sup> Tekena N. Tamuno, *The Police in Modern Nigeria, 1861–1965: Origins, Development and Role*. (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970.), pp. 210, 211.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid,

<sup>9</sup> Tekena N. Tamuno, *The Police in Modern Nigeria, 1861–1965: Origins, Development and Role*. (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970.), pp. 201, 202.

in the 1860s were laid to protect trade routes, suppress local resistance, and enforce British authority. It was not meant to serve indigenous communities. This legacy at independence in 1960, profoundly shaped both its institutional culture and the expectations of the service thrust upon the force.<sup>10</sup> By 1906, British colonial authorities had formally amalgamated the various constabularies into the Northern and Southern Nigeria Police Forces. These were paramilitary in nature. Their organizational style was modeled after the Royal Irish Constabulary, and operated under a strict chain of command. Their primary role was not to protect citizens in the modern sense but to enforce order on behalf of the Crown.<sup>11</sup> Tekena Tamuno, in his classic study,<sup>12</sup> described the early function of the colonial police with clarity. According to him, the primary objective of colonial policing was the maintenance of public order as defined by the colonial state. Public order in this sense had little to do with safeguarding the rights or liberties of the colonized. Rather, it involved the suppression of dissent, the enforcement of tax collection, and the protection of commercial interests, especially those of the British.<sup>13</sup> This coercive framework set the tone for what would become an enduring pattern. By the time Nigeria achieved independence in 1960, the police had already acquired negative reputations for being harsh, repressive and militarized. And this resulted in alienating the police from the very people they were meant to serve and protect.<sup>14</sup>

### **Transition from Imperial Enforcement to National Security**

The expectation at independence was that the police would shed their colonial skin and embrace a new identity grounded in democratic accountability and public service. But the transformation proved difficult. The police remained a centralized institution, bound by military-style discipline and directed hierarchically from above. Even the 1960 Constitution did little to democratize policing; it offered limited mechanisms for the state or community input. As Rotimi noted in his historical overview, although independence brought new symbols and rhetoric of national service, the structural and philosophical foundations of the police remained unchanged. The same colonial doctrines, the same top-down management hierarchical styles, and the same instruments of coercion continued under the flag of the new republic.<sup>15</sup> No doubt, there were early attempts at reforming the police. For instance, the push for unification of regional forces and the appointment of indigenous Inspectors-General of police prevailed. However, these were more symbolic than structural. The deeper issue remained: the institution was still geared more toward control than community engagement.

### **Early Burdens of National Service**

Despite institutional inertia, the expectations placed on the police at independence were immense. They were tasked with maintaining peace in a newly federated nation. Meanwhile the system was already wracked by ethnic tension, political rivalry, and weak infrastructure.

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<sup>10</sup> Etannibi E. O.Alemika, *History, Context and Crises*, p.2.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Tekena N. Tamuno, *The Police in Modern Nigeria, 1861–1965: Origins, Development and Role*. (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970.) ., pp. 4, 64

<sup>13</sup> Human Rights Watch. *"Everyone's in on the Game": Corruption and Human Rights Abuses by the Nigeria Police Force*. ( New York: Human Rights Watch, 2010.). p. 14

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, pp 14-16

<sup>15</sup> K. Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State: The Nigerian Experience*. Ibadan: College Press and Publishers, 2001. P. 72

Without adequate preparation or resources, the police were thrust into crises ranging from electoral violence to regional uprisings. The situation deteriorated rapidly in the mid-1960s. Political turmoil led to widespread disorder and, eventually, military coups. The First Republic collapsed, and the police were caught in the crossfire of partisan politics and authoritarian repression.<sup>16</sup> Femi Odekunle captures the impossible position of the force in these years. Police officers found themselves torn between conflicting loyalties to the law; to political patrons; and to their own survival. Without adequate training, logistical support, or public legitimacy, they were asked to safeguard a volatile polity. Their failures were inevitable, yet they bore the blame manly.<sup>17</sup> As coups gave way to the Nigerian civil war between (1967–1970), the role of the police expanded beyond envisaged constitutional responsibilities. They were involved in managing crises at war zones and counter-insurgencies, including refugee control. The Nigerian Civil War placed immense demands on a police force that was already struggling with morale, identity and its reputation. Officers were deployed with minimal logistics including protective gear, inadequate firearms, and little psychological support. A retired Police Mobile Force (PMF) officer recalled those years in haunting terms:

We were neither soldiers nor civilians. We were sent to guard relief centers in the East, man checkpoints in hostile towns, and suppress riots in the North. Sometimes we went without food for days. When we returned, there were no medals. Just silence. And more deployments.<sup>18</sup>

This narrative of self-effacing service continued through the 1970s and beyond. The early burden placed on the NPF became not merely administrative but also existential. The police were expected to redefine themselves while holding together a fracturing state. And it became the origin of the long, unbroken chain of sacrifice that this paper seeks to unearth. A sacrifice rendered invisible not because it was absent, but also because it was seldomly a scholarly narrative. This silent tradition was marked by risk, fatigue, and neglect. It became the operational culture of the Nigeria Police Force embellished in “loyalty and discipline”.

### **Professional Duties, Culture of Endurance and Silent Service**

The burden of duty within the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is not merely a function of law enforcement, it is a philosophical condition shaped by the paradox of expectation and neglect. From the early post-independence years through decades of civil unrest and authoritarian rule, the Nigerian policeman was expected to perform tasks imbued with constitutional legitimacy but executed in the shadows of inadequate logistical support, strained public legitimacy, and muted institutional recognition. This condition cultivated a culture of silent endurance. Here the existential risk of life was exchanged just for little more than subsistence, amidst suspicion. The daily duties of the police officers in Nigeria involved a multiplicity of risky engagements. They are utilized for patrols in crime-infested neighborhoods, riot control in politically volatile cities, conflict resolution in domestic disputes, and surveillance in insurgency-prone territories. Yet, these functions are

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<sup>16</sup> Solomon E Arase and Iheanyi P. O. Iwuofor (eds.), *Policing Nigeria in the 21st Century* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd 2007), p. 201.

<sup>17</sup> Femi Odekunle, Overview of Policing in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects.” In Tekena N. Tamuno, Isaac Olawale Albert, Emanuel E Alemika, Kayode O Oguntuase, *Policing Nigeria: Past, Present and Future*, 130–150. Lagos: Malthouse Press, 1993, p. 136

<sup>18</sup> Anonymous Inspector (Rtd.), oral history recorded 2000, retrieved from NPF unpublished source material at FHQ on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025

historically being undertaken with meager remuneration, sparse logistical support, and limited career incentives. The physical and psychological toll of such responsibilities cannot be overstated.

### **Daily Operational Risks and Responsibilities**

Policing in Nigeria entailed constant exposure to violence and uncertainty. Officers are regularly deployed to volatile areas, ill-equipped and poorly briefed. During internal crises, they are sent to confront armed militias, bandits, and mobs without commensurate preparation, briefing or protection. In the face of rising criminal sophistication, their tools (both material and procedural) often lagged behind. As noted in a personal testimony by a police commander who served during the oil boom years:

It was very common seeing officers killed in ambushes. While some were hacked in communal riots, others were shot in bank robberies. Most of them had no bulletproof vests, no communication gadgets. Sometime they carried obsolete rifles with limited ammunition. And yet, they kept showing up. Not because the system respected us, but because we had chosen the job with an oath of loyalty.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the constant exposure to danger, the institutional response to these sacrifices are often lethargic. Deaths in active service rarely culminated in official recognition or posthumous compensation. Widows and orphans are left to navigate bureaucracies too slow to respond and too indifferent to care.

### **Policing without Voice: Media, Morale, and Muteness**

The silence surrounding police sacrifice is compounded by the voice that denied the police institution in national discourse. Rightly, the media is positively instrumental in exposing abuses. However, they historically presented the police in one-dimensional terms: as extortionists, brutes, or agents of political oppression. Rarely did the fourth estate highlight the humanity of the average constable, or the existential dilemmas faced in carrying out duties under impossible conditions. Alemika and Chukwuma have identified this asymmetry in representation: The image of the police in Nigeria is often constructed through the lens of misconduct and brutality. While these issues are real, they obscure the deeper institutional problems of neglect and underinvestment. The police officer is simultaneously expected to be a hero and scapegoat, protector and predator, without sufficient voice to articulate his predicament.<sup>20</sup> The result is police force whose morale is persistently undermined by public ridicule, administrative silence, and psychological fatigue. In the past Police officers were demotivated not only by poor wages or living conditions but also by the absence of affirmation in a nation that routinely questioned their purpose but rarely acknowledged their peril. Even if the police did not always command citizens' respect, their courage and sacrifices deserved appreciation.

### **Emotional Labour and Psychological Toll**

The psychological strain of policing in Nigeria is seldom discussed in policy circles. Officers often bore the emotional weight of engaging daily with death, domestic violence, child abuse, violent robbery, and mob justice. Yet, the institution provides no structured

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<sup>19</sup> Sunday Effiong, interviewed November 20, 2024

<sup>20</sup> Etannibi E. O. Alemika, and Innocent C. Chukwuma. *Police-Community Violence in Nigeria*. (Lagos: Centre for Law Enforcement Education, 2000), p. 38

psychological support, trauma counselling, or mental health services. The stigma attached to expressing emotional vulnerability within a militarized police culture only compounds the crisis. In her seminal analysis of internal resistance to police reform, Alice Hills contends, “the command culture within the Nigerian Police discourages introspection and empathy. Officers are trained to suppress emotion, not process it. In such an environment, exposure to chronic violence produces not resilience but emotional detachment and moral disorientation.”<sup>21</sup> This condition not only affects performance but erodes interpersonal conduct and community relations. Officers under psychological strain often become irritable, brutal, or indifferent. This response is then criminalized or condemned without reflection on the institutional stressors that produced them. Within the force, stories abound of officers who died from preventable stress-induced conditions, or who committed suicide after years of silent suffering. Yet, the institution had no mechanism for documenting such losses or integrating them into collective memory. The recurrent narrative reflects not only the cost of physical service but also the crushing weight of institutional silence. In such a context, sacrifice became not an act of valour but a ritual of disposability. And yet, amidst the despair, one thread remained a constant: namely, duty in silence. The sense of enduring commitment, whether misplaced or heroic, continued to animate many officers despite the odds. Their silence, while painful, became their voice.

### **Sacrifice without Reward: Conditions of Service and Institutional Neglect**

While sacrifice is often regarded as noble, its nobility wanes in the absence of recognition, reward, and institutional dignity. In the case of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), service to the nation historically translated into a perpetual deficit of care. This was manifested in poor salaries, inadequate housing and dilapidated training infrastructure. It was further aggravated by the indifference to the risk and fatal deployments encouraged by bad leadership. From the post-independence era through the end of military rule in 1999, the police operated within a structure that demanded loyalty without offering protection, and service without verifiable promise backed with committed reward system.

### **Salaries, Welfare, and Housing**

Remuneration in the Nigeria Police rarely reflected the risks and responsibilities associated with policing. Officers, particularly those in the lower cadres, earned minimum wages that fell below the national living standard. This therefore compelled many to seek alternative income through more problematic instances like extortion. The Udoji Public Service Review Commission of 1974 exposed this imbalance. It recommended a comprehensive salary adjustment for the civil service. Yet, implementation was piecemeal and often stalled by bureaucratic inertia and political resistance. As the Commission stated: “the remuneration of police personnel must reflect the danger and discipline inherent in their duties. A force that secures life and property cannot itself be left insecure by poverty and uncertainty.”<sup>22</sup> In practice, these ideals were rarely realized. Police barracks remained overcrowded and squalid, with leaking roofs, shared toilets, and no running water. Officers’ children were raised in these environments, shaped early by deprivation. Officers lived in perpetual anxiety, not

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<sup>21</sup> Hills, Alice. “The Dialectic of Police Reform in Nigeria.” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 46, no. 2 (2008): pp. 215–234.

<sup>22</sup> *Federal Republic of Nigeria. Report of the Public Service Review Commission (Udoji Report)*. Lagos: Government Printer, 1974. p. 212.

only of death in the line of duty but of domestic collapse due to economic strain.<sup>23</sup> The systemic underinvestment in police welfare was not accidental. It reflected a political culture in which the police were viewed as expendables. They became a necessary instrument of statecraft, but were not viewed as the other citizens who deserved protection or comfort.

### **Training, Equipment, and Operational Limitations**

Another dimension of institutional neglect lies in the realm of training and operational preparedness. Though successive regimes paid lip service to police reforms, training institutions remained underfunded and often neglected. Underqualified instructors were often deployed to the college on punitive expedition while the syllabi remained outdated. The Police College Ikeja and Staff College Jos, being flagship institutions struggled with crumbling infrastructure and obsolete teaching materials. According to Alemika and Chukwuma; "Training Institutions of the Nigeria Police are emblematic of broader institutional decay. Recruits are drilled more in parade than in procedure, and human rights modules are taught without passion or pedagogical coherence. The result is a constabulary more adept at command compliance than community engagement."<sup>24</sup> Operationally, the situation was not better. Officers were often deploy without required walkie-talkies, patrol vehicles, or functioning firearms. In many divisions, the only patrol van was frequently immobilized due to lack of fuel or mechanical failure. Divisional Police Officers (DPOs) who wished to achieve results must turn to 'beggars' in the name of community policing.<sup>25</sup> Cases were investigated without forensic support, and criminal databases were either non-existent or manually outdated. As one officer sarcastically noted in a post-deployment debrief:

We were asked to hunt armed robbers with batons. We ran after motorcycles on foot. We 'beg' to fuel and maintain the patrol cars. We wrote statements on torn or improvised files. Still, they said we were inefficient. Little mistake we are defaulted, queried and dismissed. But nobody asked how we survived.<sup>26</sup>

This irony underscores a recurrent theme in Nigerian policing: high expectations and minimal support. The contrast between the duties assigned and the tools provided created a functional gap that no amount of patriotism could fill.

### **Case Studies of Fatal Deployments and Official Responses**

The ultimate test of any institution's ethical foundation is its response to the death or incapacitation of its personnel. In this, the Nigeria Police Force failed to pass the test. The risk of the job entails that officers are frequently endangered and sometimes killed in the line of duty. This occurred particularly during political unrest, sectarian conflict, and anti-robbery operations. However, the institutional response is often typified by delay, silence, or bureaucratic entanglement or total neglect.

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<sup>23</sup> Solomon E Arase and Iheanyi P. O. Iwuofor (eds.), *Policing Nigeria in the 21st Century* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd 2007), p. 79.

<sup>24</sup> Alemika, E. E. O. and Chukwuma, I. C. *Criminal Justice and Police Reform in Nigeria*. Lagos: CLEEN Foundation, 2004.p. 72

<sup>25</sup> "Begging" could be considered to also be a form of extortion

<sup>26</sup> Oral Interview with Victor Lekan, on November 13, 2024. 60, Retired Superintendent of Police, widely trained; pass student of Police Staff College Jos, Police College Ikeja, holds MSc, LLB, BL. Interviewed by author

In the 1987 Kaduna riots, several police officers lost their lives trying to quell sectarian violence. Eyewitnesses and colleagues reported that the officers were deployed without riot gear and communication devices. When the situation escalated, they were overwhelmed, outnumbered, and killed. Their families received condolence letters, but no compensation followed for years.<sup>27</sup> The former Inspector-General of Police, M.D. Yusuf, lamented this systemic apathy in his submission to the 1994 Police Reform Panel: “We ask these men and women to die for the country, yet we are unwilling to remember them. This is not just a policy gap. It is a moral failure.”<sup>28</sup> This constituted the tragic irony of policing in Nigeria where: a police officer is hailed as a hero only in death, and even then, selectively. When alive, he was mocked, mistrusted, or ignored; when dead, he was mourned with bureaucratic slowness. And yet, the service continued. While public trust wavered, the sacrifices of the Nigerian police remained constantly worthy of national respect.

### **Public Perception and Misunderstanding of the Police Role**

The relationship between the Nigeria Police Force and the public it serves had long been strained by suspicion, mutual disappointment, and deeply entrenched stereotypes. Public perception, shaped by daily encounters, media representations, and historical narratives, often painted the police as predatory, corrupt, and untrustworthy. While these criticisms are not without merit, they failed to capture the complex sociological and institutional dynamics that underlaid policing in Nigeria. The result is a paradox. The very institution responsible for public safety is widely feared, even loathed; yet it were their members that were the first to be called upon in moments of crisis.

### **Civil Society, Media Narratives, and Public Trust**

From the 1960s onward, civil society organizations and the Nigerian press played an important role in scrutinizing police conduct. The media, particularly in urban centers, consistently reported on incidents of police brutality, extortion, and misconduct. This watchdog function was essential for democratic accountability, yet it also helped entrench a singular narrative of police as abusers, obscuring the less visible daily sacrifices of thousands of officers working in hazardous and thankless conditions. As noted by Chukwuma and Alemika:

The media's fixation on police misconduct, while crucial for reform, has often been selective and sensational. Rarely are acts of bravery, restraint, or sacrifice reported with equal vigor. This imbalance has contributed to a skewed public consciousness in which the policeman is always suspect, never hero.<sup>29</sup>

While public distrust is rooted in real grievances, including extrajudicial killings and harassment<sup>30</sup> at checkpoints, it is rarely nuanced. The psychological toll this reputation

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<sup>27</sup> Sunday Effiong, Oral Interview in 2024

<sup>28</sup> Yusuf, M. D. *Report of the Presidential Committee on the Reform of the Nigeria Police Force*. (Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1994.), p. 19

<sup>29</sup> Etannabi E. Alemika, and Innocent Chukwuma, *Police Accountability in Nigeria: Proceedings of a Seminar on Civilian Oversight and Accountability of Police in Nigeria*. (Lagos: CLEEN Foundation, 1999), p. 66.

<sup>30</sup> Alemika, Etannabi E. O. *History, Context and Crises of the Police in Nigeria*. (Jos, University of Jos Press, 1993), p. 16.

Alemika, Etannabi E. O., and Innocent C. Chukwuma. *Police-Community Violence in Nigeria*, p. 72

imposed on officers is severe. Many served in communities where they were never greeted, never thanked, and sometimes openly despised. This alienation fueled resentment within the ranks and deepened the gulf between law enforcement and society. This vivid reality contradicts the romanticized motto "Police is your friend," transforming it into an object of ridicule in public discourse.<sup>31</sup> Yet, beneath the slogan lies a profound truth: friendship in this context is not about affection but about shared responsibility, mutual protection, and reciprocal recognition. The cognitive dissonance at the heart of public-police relations in Nigeria is salient: the same police officer who arrests armed robbers and rescues kidnapped victims is also the one who demanded bribes at checkpoints. This contradiction arose not from individual pathology alone but equally from structural and systemic dysfunction. This is transient through poor training, inadequate welfare, lack of institutional accountability, and pervasive corruption across society.

The Nigerian police are both resented and relied upon. They are condemned as the agents of repression and simultaneously summoned as the guardians of order. This paradox reflected the unresolved contradictions in Nigeria's state-society relations, where law enforcement is simultaneously feared and needed.<sup>32</sup> This duality bred what sociologists call "moral ambiguity fatigue".<sup>33</sup> It refers to situations where right and wrong are unclear, or where actions have both good and bad consequences. In such cases, decisions are morally complex, blurry, or easily compromised. Fatigue in this context refers to the mental and emotional exhaustion that comes from constantly having to navigate, justify, or endure morally ambiguous situations. Here, the public becomes resigned to corruption, and officers internalize public hatred as part of their job. In such an environment, professional motivation gives way to survival instincts, and mutual distrust becomes normalized. The rise of vigilante groups, such as the "Bakassi Boys" in the late 1990s, further underscored the distrust. Many communities turned to non-state actors for protection, not because they preferred violence, but because they felt abandoned or victimized by the state's own law enforcement architecture. Such developments are not only dangerous for the rule of law but also corrosive to the moral authority of the police.

### **Policing the Ungrateful: Societal Dissonance and discordance?**

To serve a public that does not recognize one's humanity is one of the most profound forms of alienation. Nigerian police officers frequently recounted situations where their interventions saved lives or property, yet no gratitude. What followed was only criticism, cynicism or complaint. This persistent lack of appreciation depleted morale, encouraged withdrawal, and fostered institutional culture of indifference. While it was necessary to hold the police accountable, there was the greater need to also recognize their humanity. The police are citizens too. They have families and feelings just like every other men and women who bleed, grieve, and fear. To reform the police, the public's perception of the police also requires reformation. Indeed, the culture of ingratitude extended beyond the public. Government officials frequently exploited the police for personal or political gain, only to abandon them when public backlash ensues. During election cycles, officers were deployed to flashpoints without insurance, proper feeding, or protective equipment. When violence

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<sup>31</sup> Alemika, Etannibi E. O. *History, Context and Crises of the Police in Nigeria*. Jos, Nigeria: p.16

<sup>32</sup> Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State*, 2001, p. 119

<sup>33</sup> Cris Parker, *Moral Fatigue and Decision Making*, The Ethics Center Publication, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2020  
[https://ethics.org.au/moral-fatigue-and-decision-making/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://ethics.org.au/moral-fatigue-and-decision-making/?utm_source=chatgpt.com), retrieved on 2nd July 2025

erupted, their deaths go unreported. When they acted with force, they were accused without investigation. No one speaks for them.

This institutional scapegoating left many officers with a deep sense of betrayal. A divisional police officer posted to Jos during the early 1990s religious crises confessed; “they sent us to the scene without briefing and no backup. We were outnumbered, outgunned, and no friend. When it ended, our Commissioner shook hands with the governor. We buried three men. Nobody came to the funeral.”<sup>34</sup> These testimonies illustrate the profound disconnect between public expectation and institutional capacity. To demand professionalism from the police without offering public respect or systemic reform is to demand sacrifice without compensation, loyalty without love. The trajectory of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) between 1960 and 2000 cannot be understood without details of the volatile interference between authoritarianism and democracy. During this period, the country oscillated between brief democratic interludes and prolonged military dictatorships. Each regime brought with it shifting burdens and altered expectations for the police. Under civilian governments, the police were framed as guardians of constitutional order. Under military rule, they were deployed as instruments of repression. Yet, across both systems, the constant denominator was that their sacrifice was exploited but never honored. Military regimes redefined the role of the police from law enforcement to regime preservation. Police officers were often co-opted to enforce draconian decrees. This militarized role engaged them to suppress dissent, detain political opponents, and manage the dynamics of “order” while the real administrative power remained in military hands. This created a hybrid security arrangement in which the police were both subordinate to and scapegoated by the military.<sup>35</sup> As Alice Hills states:

Under military rule, the police were neither autonomous nor protected. They were required to implement decisions they did not make, in ways that exposed them to public hatred while shielding the military from direct culpability. Their loyalty was demanded, but their sacrifice was disavowed.<sup>36</sup>

This above assertion led to recurrent operational confusion and institutional demoralization. Police morale plummeted as their professional identity was subsumed under military authority. In field operations, they were expected to follow orders from military officers, usually their junior in ranks, who often viewed them with disdain and treated them as lesser operatives. The infamous Decree No. 2 of 1984, which permitted detention without trial, exemplified this dynamic. The police were to enforce it through arrests, surveillance, and custodial detentions. But, when public outrage ensued, it was the police who bore the blame while the military architects of the decree went absolved. A retired Chief Superintendent of Police, Lekan, who served under General Buhari’s regime recounted thus:

Police were the front line. When students marched, they sent the police. When journalists wrote, they asked us to arrest them. How can they speak for us when we were always stopping them? When unions protested for their rights, we were ordered to disperse them. We became perceived as

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<sup>34</sup> Oral interview with Victor Kalejeiyi, CSP, MSc. Worked in various capacities including as Unit Commander, DPO, Widely trained Officer, Former trainer at Staff College Jos. Interviewed by author, November 9, 2024.

<sup>35</sup> Alemika, Etannibi E. O., and Innocent C. Chukwuma. *Police-Community Violence in Nigeria*. p. 66

<sup>36</sup> Hills, *The Dialectic of Police Reform in Nigeria*, 2008, p. 122.

their enemies. But when the nation cursed, it cursed the police, not the men who gave the orders.<sup>37</sup>

The paradox here is glaring. In serving the state, the police undermined their own legitimacy. In obeying the regime, they were alienated from the public. And when death or injury occurred, they were left to mourn alone.

### **Civilian Governance and Reform Rhetoric**

In contrast, the brief civilian administrations of the First (1960–1966) and Second Republics (1979–1983) projected a more humane vision of policing. There was rhetorical emphasis on constitutionalism, civil liberties, and professionalism. However, the translation of these ideals into policy was marred by political manipulation and weak oversight structures. Political elites often used the police to harass rivals, rig elections, or suppress protests. State governors lacked operational control over Commissioners of Police, though they used informal channels to influence postings and deployments. The result was a politicized force caught between loyalty to the federal command architecture and subservient to state actors. As Rotimi observed: In Nigeria's pseudo-federal arrangement, the police were both centralized and localized, autonomous in law but vulnerable in practice. Civilian politicians manipulated the police with impunity while denying them the resources, dignity, or stability needed for professional development.<sup>38</sup> The police were expected to uphold democratic norms in an environment where such norms were fragile or almost non-existent. Officers tasked with electoral security were often deployed without training or support. They were made pawns in violent contests which they could neither control nor refuse. A common example was the experience of officers during the 1983 elections, which were perceived widely marred by violence and rigging. Lekan maintains that:

They were often told to maintain order without specific plan. When politicians invade polling booth with thugs snatching ballot boxes, they became helpless. When riots broke out in reaction to the politician's thuggery, they were blamed for doing nothing. But nobody cared to ask what their specific roles were. And they had no one to speak in their defense while they remained silent in compliance with force directives.<sup>39</sup>

This structural contradiction deepened the moral crisis within the police and compounded public distrust. They demanded lawful neutrality from a force under unlawful means and control.

### **The Police as Victims of State Contradiction**

What emerged from both military and civilian regimes was a pattern of instrumentalization. The police were used, but never empowered; exposed, but never shielded.<sup>40</sup> They became highly and visibly subservient to the rich and powerful politicians.<sup>41</sup> Their role was critical, yet their institutional dignity was systematically eroded. As observed by Alemika:

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<sup>37</sup> Oral interview with Victor Lekan on November 13<sup>th</sup> 2024.

<sup>38</sup>K. Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State*, 2001, p. 95

<sup>39</sup>Oral interview with Victor Lekan by researcher on November 13, 2024

<sup>40</sup> Etannibi E. O Alemika, *History, Context and Crises of the Police in Nigeria*. Jos, Nigeria p1

<sup>41</sup> The role of the police, compliance with the rule of law. *Journal of Social Science and Public Policy* Volume 3, March 2011

Police are the most visible governmental agents through which the character of a government and political system may be assessed. This is so because the police are the guardian or vanguard of the status quo. To a large extent, the actions and behaviours of the police reflect the political and economic character of society as well as what those in power are willing or able to tolerate or condone.<sup>42</sup>

The M.D. Yusuf Panel on Police Reform convened under General Abacha in 1994 tried to articulate this contradiction. Although the panel operated under an authoritarian regime, it nevertheless laid bare the internal crisis within the force. The Nigeria Police Force had become a casualty of political opportunism and administrative neglect. It was asked to perform miracles with no tools, to show restraint with no training, and to defend law in a state that often subverted it. This was not reformable by rhetoric alone. It required moral clarity and institutional courage.<sup>43</sup> Tragically, this moral clarity was absent in both the military and civilian government. The price was paid by rank-and-file officers who served silently, and often fatally through riots, coups, curfews, and regime transitions. This silence was ritualized, institutionalized, and recurrent. It became the enduring language of police sacrifice in Nigeria. The police may not always be revered, but their unseen battles for public safety merited enduring gratitude.<sup>44</sup>

### **The Institutional Identity of Sacrifice: Memory, Honour, and the Forgotten**

Institutions endure (whether military, religious, or civic) and survive not only by policy or structure but by memory. Memory confers meaning. It sacralizes and binds generations through a shared sense of purpose. For the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), however, the institutional memory of sacrifice is frail, fragmented, and often silenced. Unlike militaries that commemorate fallen soldiers with parades, medals, and monuments, the NPF had no standardized ritual of remembrance for its dead. No walls of honour, no public roll calls, no institutional mourning. Only the silent departure of another officer whose sacrifice is quickly buried.

### **The Culture of Silence within the Force**

One of the most pervasive yet least discussed features of Nigerian policing is its internal culture of silence. This silence remains:

- i. Operational: this is reflected in the disciplined suppression of dissent. Police do not go on strike. They are not permitted to address the press. They are simply required to be 'loyal'.<sup>45</sup>
- ii. Existential: whereby the institution refuses to speak openly about the human cost of service. Within barracks and offices, death and injury are absorbed as routine incident, and they may not be revered.<sup>46</sup>

Innocent Chukwuma observe this institutionalized amnesia. When a police officer dies in the line of duty in Nigeria, there is often no institutional follow-up, no psychological support

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<sup>42</sup> Etannibi E. O. Alemika, *History, Context and Crises of the Police in Nigeria*. p1

<sup>43</sup> Report of the Presidential Committee on the Reform of the Nigeria Police Force, 1994, p. 47

<sup>44</sup> Oral interview with Regina c Udoette PSC, CP, at her Office Commissioner of Police, Commandant Police College Oji River, Enugu, May, 14 2025

<sup>45</sup> Oral interview with Regina c Udoette PSC, CP, at her Office Commissioner of Police, Commandant Police College Oji River, Enugu, May, 14 2025

<sup>46</sup> Oral interview with Sunday Effiong, 2024

for colleagues, and no public commemoration. The event disappears into paperwork. This culture of erasure delegitimizes sacrifice and weakens professional identity<sup>47</sup> Younger officers learn early to suppress grief beginning from the college. Senior officers are trained in the ethos of militarized obedience.<sup>48</sup> They often view emotional expression as weakness. The cumulative effect is a police culture where bravery is muted, loyalty is unrewarded, and death is unceremoniously replaced by a transfer order. Etido Udoh has it that:

When my husband died in active service, they said there was no option than to bring his replacement the following day. I was immediately informed to pack from his office and the quarters for the new officer to resume duty. There was no minute of silence, no letter to his wife and children. Even preparing for his burial was a challenge. No fund to begin. And when it was time to process his death benefit, I saw hell. It took me years before I could figure out the way forward.<sup>49</sup>

Such experiences produce not just trauma but a loss of professional pride. Without rituals of honour, officers feel interchangeable. And when a profession ceases to honour its dead, it begins to forget its soul.

### **Impact of Silence in Police Professionalism**

The expectation of silence stifled internal dissent, preventing officers from addressing systemic issues like poor welfare. Low morale, with salaries as low as ₦500/month in the 1980s, led to unprofessional behaviour, including bribery and desertion.<sup>50</sup> Equally, under military rule (1966–1979, 1983–1999), "in silence" meant compliance with authoritarian directives. Officers were pressured to remain silent about political abuses, such as election rigging or suppression of dissent, undermining ethical conduct. For instance, the NPF's role in silencing activists during the 1990s Abacha regime damaged its professional reputation.<sup>51</sup> "In silence" often translated into a lack of transparency and culture of secrecy. Incidents of police misconduct, such as extrajudicial killings (e.g., the 1990s Apo Six case), were rarely addressed publicly, eroding accountability. This secrecy contradicted professional standards, as it shielded corrupt officers and fueled public distrust.<sup>52</sup> Silence in the face of criticism, such as media exposés of brutality, reinforced the NPF's repressive image of the force. By the 1990s, this lack of engagement deepened the gap between police and communities, contradicting the professional goal of public trust.<sup>53</sup> The ideals of "in service" and "in silence" sometimes conflicted, thus creating tensions between the principles. Serving the public required openness and engagement, while silence often meant withholding information or avoiding accountability. This tension is evident in the NPF's response to human rights abuses, where silence protected officers but undermined service credibility.

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<sup>47</sup> Innocent Chukwuma, "Donor Support and Police Reform in Nigeria." In *Policing a New Democracy: A Review of Police Reform Initiatives in Nigeria*, edited by Etannibi E.O. Alemika and Innocent Chukwuma. Lagos: Frankad Publishers, 1998. P. 44

<sup>48</sup> Oral interview with Sunday Effiong, 2024

<sup>49</sup> Oral interview with Regina Etido Udoh, 49, widow of a colleague who died in active service, interviewed by the researcher through phone on October 21, 2024

<sup>50</sup> Tekena N. Tamuno, *The Police in Modern Nigeria*, p. 198.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p.232.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p. 244.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 236.

Tekena Tamuno indirectly notes that the NPF's service mandate was undermined by secretive handling of misconduct, and that the police's commitment to public service was questioned when errors were concealed<sup>54</sup> Both principles, when misapplied, contributed to public disillusionment. By 1999, surveys indicated that over 70% of Nigerians distrusted the NPF, reflecting a failure to professionalize despite reform efforts. Tamuno noted growing public disillusionment and distrust due to corruption and brutality, writing, "the police's failure to inspire confidence weakened its legitimacy"<sup>55</sup> To reimagine professionalism in the Nigeria Police Force is to reimagine dignity. Professionalism is not a technical term; it is a moral vision which accentuates a belief that those who serve the public must be equipped, protected, and honoured. This means adequate salaries, functional housing, modern equipment, and transparent promotion systems. But it also means cultural change within the police and in society at large. As Hills argued, professionalism cannot survive in a climate of disdain. Professional identity requires esteem, not just from within, but from outside. A police force treated as a national embarrassment will behave accordingly. A police force honoured as a pillar of peace will aspire to that image.<sup>56</sup> Professionalism begins with how the state sees its officers. If officers are treated as expendable, they will not internalize the ethical values necessary for modern policing. But if they are seen as agents of national care and community dignity, they will be empowered to reflect those values in action.<sup>57</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The Nigerian police officer, from independence in 1960 through the close of the twentieth century, laboured in a space defined by contradiction—visible yet invisible, empowered yet unprotected, public yet unhonoured. The story of the Nigeria Police Force during this period was not simply a history of institutional failure; it was also a philosophical inquiry into the cost of civic service without moral reciprocity. The silence that has enveloped their sacrifice was not accidental, it was structural, systemic, and sanctioned by a nation that grew comfortable expecting everything from its police and offering them nothing in return. There is a heavy moral cost to institutional silence. Every unrecognized sacrifice, every unhonoured death, and every dismissed act of duty corroded the social contract between the state and its peacekeepers. As has been evidenced throughout this paper, police officers had died protecting communities that refused to acknowledge their humanity, served regimes that discarded them, and endured public ridicule while enforcing the very laws that hold the republic together. Alemika and Chukwuma's conclusion is unequivocal: The legitimacy of the police is not just a function of performance; it is a moral pact. That pact is broken when the state demands sacrifice without care, and society demands security without gratitude. Silence in the face of sacrifice is not neutrality, it is betrayal.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 244.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. p. 237.

<sup>56</sup> Hills, Policing Africa, 2000, p. 132

<sup>57</sup> Regina C Udoette, PSC, CP, at her Office Commissioner of Police, Commandant Police College Oji River, Enugu, May, 14 2025

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Article

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### A PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE ON LOGICAL AND ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF GAMBLING

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#### Abstract

This paper critically analyzes the philosophical underpinnings of gambling, concentrating on utilitarianism as a framework for assessing the moral consequences of gambling. Gambling, which is commonly viewed as a game of chance, risk and reward, is at the nexus of human desire and logical calculation. The ethical ramifications of placing bets on unpredictable and sometimes illogical results, is at the basis of human rationality and probabilistic thinking. Utilitarianism provides a useful ethical framework for assessing gambling because of its focus on maximizing pleasure and reducing misery. Through a critical engagement and analysis of behaviours of gamblers and utilitarian theory, this research investigates whether the apparent advantages of gambling, such as leisure, economic contribution, and psychological fulfillment justify its moral consideration amidst its possible drawbacks; which include addiction, financial ruin, and individual instability. We posit that gambling has logical and ethical appeals which promote social cohesion. The study comes to the conclusion that, although gambling is frowned at in some quarters, utilitarianism offers insightful analysis to the morality of gambling. The paper suggests the importance of placing gambling under societal control to reduce or prevent addiction of interested individuals since the hope gambling offers is of social importance.

**Keywords:** Gambling, Gamblers' Psychology, Induction, Rationality, Utilitarianism.

#### Introduction

The roots of gambling could be traced to ancient civilizations like Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, and others, where games of chance were an important part of social and economic life. Around 3000 BCE, six-sided dice, one of the oldest gambling instruments ever unearthed, were found in Mesopotamia (Ashton, 2016: 42). These dice, which were probably made of

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bone or ivory, were used in a variety of games of chance, which reflects the early interest in chance-based activities in the area. Additionally, gambling was ingrained in Egyptian culture, as seen by the objects connected to gambling that archaeologists have found in tombs, indicating that both the living and the dead appreciated games of chance (Schwartz, 2006: 76). Senet, a board game with casting sticks in which participants probably bet on the results, is a prominent example. A wide range of gambling activities are indicated by the references to sports-betting in Egyptian writings, including chariot races and wrestling fights. Comparably, there is evidence of gambling in ancient China as early as 2300 BCE, when simple lottery-style games were employed as a source of state income in addition to being a source of pleasure (Reith, 1999: 78). One well-known example is an early form of keno that was purportedly used to finance significant government initiatives such as portions of the Great Wall of China. This demonstrates how gambling was not merely a pastime but also a tool for public financing, a practice that continues today through modern lotteries.

From crude betting methods in ancient civilizations to extremely complex internet gambling systems in the present day, gambling has always been a fundamental component of human communities. Though scholars have defined gambling in various ways, however, one widely recognized position defines it as the act of placing money or valuable items on an uncertain occurrence with the primary goal of obtaining greater monetary or material benefits (Reith, 2019: 171). Gambling is a seductive and contentious activity due to its intricately entwined psychological, economic, and societal elements. The elements of chance, risk-taking behaviour, and the expectation of financial reward are what make this sector prosper. Nevertheless, gambling presents serious ethical issues, especially in light of its effects on people and society, even if it offers economic advantages and amusement (Shaffer & Korn, 2020:387). Analyzing gamblers, their motives, and the institutions that support them critically is necessary to comprehend the dynamics of gambling. Understanding gamblers' psychology is essential to comprehending their behaviour. There are several sorts of gamblers, from seldom gamblers to pathological or problem gamblers (Blaszczynski & Nower, 2021:179). Problem gamblers have obsessive behaviours that cause them to suffer financially, socially, and psychologically, whereas casual gamblers bet for fun and without negative repercussions. Different psychological drives, including thrill-seeking behaviour, the illusion of control, and the promise of financial breakthrough, might motivate people to gamble (Toneatto & Nguyen, 2022: 256). Furthermore, according to behavioural addiction theories, drug dependence and gambling addiction are similar, with dopamine-driven reward processes being a major factor in recurrent involvement (Grant *et al.*, 2020: 235). By using smart marketing, game design, and incentive systems that promote sustained engagement, gambling firms take advantage of these psychological inclinations.

Casinos, sports' books, and internet gambling sites are just a few of the gambling institutions that have a big influence on gambling culture and its effects on society. These organizations function under a complicated regulatory environment that differs depending on the jurisdiction; some nations enforce stringent laws, while others take a more lenient stance (Williams, Volberg, & Stevens, 2010: 21). By creating jobs and generating large amounts of tax income, the gaming business supports national economies. But it also brings up moral questions about compulsive gambling, consumer protection, and dishonest business tactics (Hing *et al.*, 2019: 235). To draw in and keep consumers, a lot of gaming companies use 'gamification tactics', compelling advertising, and technology developments. The effectiveness of responsible gambling measures, such as spending limitations and self-exclusion programs, are still up for discussion, even when some regulatory authorities

enforce them (Gainsbury, 2020:123). Therefore, assessing the advantages and difficulties of this complex sector requires a thorough grasp of the nature of gambling, the psychology of gamblers, and the operational tactics of gaming enterprises.

### **The Concept of Gambling**

Risking money or possessions on the outcome of an event, game, or contest whose conclusion is unpredictable and dependent on skill or chance is commonly referred to as gambling (Blaszczynski, 2017: 45). Although the definition of gambling varies depending on the culture and legal system, it usually consists of three main components: prize (the possible reward), risk (the uncertainty of the outcome), and consideration (the amount wagered). Commercial gambling, charitable gambling, and informal gambling are among the various forms of gambling. Commercial gambling includes government-regulated enterprises including lotteries, casinos, and sports betting. Raffles and fundraiser lotteries are examples of charitable gaming that is frequently utilized to assist nonprofit organizations. Although there is no official regulation of informal gambling, which includes betting among friends, it is still very common. Due to the expansion of gambling chances through online platforms brought about by the digital era, accessibility and involvement have grown (Gainsbury, 2015:190). People may now gamble whenever and wherever they want thanks to smartphone apps and internet betting services, which raises the risk of addiction and financial disaster. It goes without saying that gambling has a big impact on the international economy, both positively and negatively. On the one hand, governments, casinos, and internet platforms all profit greatly from legalized gambling. Tax money from casinos and lotteries supports social programs, infrastructure, and public services in nations where gambling is allowed (Walker & Barnett, 1999:187). Additionally, the gambling business generates jobs in industries like technology, hospitality, and tourism, supporting millions of people globally. However, gambling may cause people to lose money, which frequently leads to debt buildup and unstable economies. Research shows that as people look for methods to make up for their losses, problem gambling may lead to an increase in crimes including theft and fraud (Markandya & Pearce, 1989:473). This has led to the ethical assessment of gambling in the society, and because of these dualistic effects of gambling worldwide, governments everywhere are being forced to decide whether to continue in permitting gambling, regulate it, or completely ban it.

There have been many discussions concerning the ethics of gambling, with points of contention ranging from worries about exploitation to debates about individual liberty. According to certain psychologists and philosophers, gambling preys on people's impulsive tendencies and cognitive biases, frequently causing them to make illogical financial decisions. According to Tversky and Kahneman (1971) prospect theory, people are especially susceptible to the appeal of gambling because they have a tendency to misinterpret probability, overestimating their odds of winning and underestimating their potential losses (p. 270). The practice of "loss chasing," in which people keep gambling in an effort to recoup past losses, exacerbates this exploitation even more and frequently has detrimental financial and psychological effects. It seems that some libertarian viewpoints stress that gambling is really a personal choice. According to this perspective, excessive government involvement may be viewed as an unfair limitation on individual liberty as long as people are aware of the dangers and are able to make their own decisions. Proponents of this position contend that gambling should only be restricted to the degree required to avoid direct harm, such as fraud or underage involvement, because it offers amusement, much like other recreational

pursuits. The idea of responsible gambling has surfaced as a framework to encourage safer practices in the gaming business in response to the moral dilemmas surrounding the activity. To assist people in making better decisions, governments, oversight organizations, and advocacy groups have implemented a number of harm reduction tactics, such as age limitations, self-exclusion plans, deposit caps, and public awareness campaigns (Hing *et al.*, 2016:12). A lot of states have also made it mandatory for gambling companies to give consumers tools to track their gaming habits and clear information about odds. The function of advertising and its propensity to promote excessive gambling is a seemingly divisive topic in gambling ethics. The pervasiveness of gambling ads, especially those aimed at susceptible groups like young adults and those with a history of gambling issues, has stoked discussions about the need for more stringent laws. Aggressive marketing tactics, such as celebrity endorsements and promotional incentives, are criticized for potentially raising irrational expectations and normalizing gambling as a risk-free pastime. In response, various governments have looked into ways to reduce the impact of marketing connected to gambling, including required warning labels, advertising prohibitions, and restrictions on promotional offers. In the end, the ethical discussion around gambling keeps changing, striking a balance between the industry's financial gains and personal autonomy while also taking consumer protection issues into account.

Problem gambling, often known as pathological gambling, is one aspect of gambling that needs to be put into consideration. "Pathological gambling" and "problem gambling" are the most often used terminology to define a gambling condition. A mental illness identified by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV) is referred to as "pathological" in psychiatric or medical contexts. As an impulsive disorder that cannot be explained by the existence of a manic episode, compulsive gambling was first added in the DSM-III in 1980 (Lesieur & Rosenthal, 1991:6). (Petry, 2005: 9). Pathological gambling is defined by the DSM-IV as "persistent and recurrent maladaptive gambling behaviour" that has the potential to "disrupt personal, family, or vocational pursuits" (Petry, 2005:219). At least five out of ten criteria must be met for a diagnosis, which is often made during a clinical interview. Items pertaining to cravings, withdrawal (such as restlessness and irritation upon quitting gambling), and tolerance (such as the urge to gamble to get the same thrill) that were taken from the diagnostic criteria for known drug use disorders are included in this categorization. Other topics include diminished self-control or the monetary and psychological damage brought on by compulsive gambling (Lesieur & Rosenthal, 1991:7). The next DSM-V categorization will also include pathological gambling, albeit it will probably be altered in a number of ways. For instance, the categorization will probably be changed from impulse control disorders to the section on addictive disorders and called "disordered gambling." An increasing amount of research indicates that the traits of compulsive gambling and other addictive behaviours have numerous physiological and neuro-physiological similarities, which is the basis for this transformation (Conversano *et al.*, 2012:8). Additionally, the diagnosis may be made using four criteria instead of five, and the last one—illegal activities to supply money for gambling—may be eliminated due to its extremely low degree of support (Petry, 2010:285).

On the other hand, the phrase "problem gambling" has been used in a variety of contexts. Some studies have defined "problem" and "pathological" gambling as existing on a continuum, where they have examined differences in the disorder's intensity. The most severe type of the condition has been referred to as "pathological gambling," while those whose gambling is deemed less severe have been referred to as "problem gamblers." The

famous South Oaks Gambling Screen, for instance, clearly demonstrates this distinction (Lesieur & Blume, 1987: 1184). On this test, people who score 5+ out of 20 are considered "pathological gamblers," whereas those who score 3–4 are considered "problem gamblers." A similar distinction is evident in the recently developed Pathological Problem Gambling Measure (PPGM) by Williams and Volberg (2010:15). In different settings, the phrase "problem gambling" has been used as a public health term to describe situations in which gaming leads to a variety of negative outcomes (Korn & Shaffer, 1999:291). For instance, "difficulties in limiting money and/or time spent on gambling which leads to adverse consequences for the gambler, others, and for the community" is the definition of problem gambling in Australia (Neal *et al.*, 2005:3). In its first significant national assessment, the Australian Productivity Commission (1999: 2) used similar concepts. These kinds of definitions focus on the negative effects gambling has on society and health, as well as the obligations placed on governments and regulators to implement laws and provide funding for programs that lessen the burden placed on the populace. Although conceptually these phrases seem to be distinct, variations between disciplines and nations may generate misunderstandings. Because they want to concentrate on the negative effects of gambling, most researchers in the fields of public health, epidemiology, and psychology refer to anyone who is a candidate for clinical therapy as "problem gambling." Approaches to public health also include an emphasis on varying risk levels or case severity. As with other mental health problems such as depression or anxiety, problem gambling is thought to fall on a continuum. Problems vary in severity from less to more severe, and it is assumed that people will move between categories.

The phrases "compulsive" and "excessive" are also occasionally employed in the literature of gambling. The disorder known as compulsive gambling is characterized by a person's inability to control their impulse to gamble, difficulty in quitting once they have begun, and/or having trouble in gradually reducing their gaming. The idea that the disease involves compulsive components is generally supported by recent reviews (e.g., el-Guebaly, Mudry, Zohar, Tavares, & Potenza, 2011, p. 122). Various types of poor control (O'Connor & Dickerson, 2003: 415) and intense, often uncontrolled cravings to gamble are common complaints from gamblers (Raylu & Oei, 2004:108). The fact that the term "compulsion" only refers to one acknowledged aspect of gambling behaviour presents a challenge, though. When parallels are drawn between obsessive-compulsive disorders (OCD) and pathological gambling, further conceptual challenges emerge. Despite certain behavioural parallels (such as uncontrolled repetitive behaviour), OCD and pathological gambling exhibit distinct neuro-physiological and psychological characteristics, as noted by el-Guebaly *et al.* (2012:345). The motivating factors that influence the behaviours are the main starting point. OCDs are frequently motivated by a desire to regain control over one's surroundings in order to alleviate dysphoric feelings, whereas gambling is typically motivated by attempts to get positive reward. While OCD sufferers frequently score higher on measures of neuroticism (Hwang *et al.*, 2012: 67) and harm avoidance (el-Guebaly *et al.* 2012:346), pathological gamblers tend to score higher on measures of novelty-seeking and impulsivity. Nevertheless, it is also conceded that the two disorders may become increasingly difficult to distinguish in their most extreme forms. At these levels, people with severe problem gambling will increasingly gamble to escape dysphoric states and experience less enjoyment/positive reinforcement from the activity.

When researchers are unable to adopt any specific language (such as issue or problematic) or wish to steer clear of terminology that suggests the presence of an

underlying personal condition or pathology, they may use the ultimate word, "excessive gambling." For instance, Orford (1985:6) favours the term "excessive" in order to circumvent what are thought to be serious problems with the pathology-based definitions. Orford (1985: 7) argues for a more psychological and sociological perspective that avoided the imputation that gambling problems arise from deep-seated and intractable factors that were not amenable to modification over time, based on observations that a significant number of people resolved their gambling difficulties over time or shifted between categories. In other words, his views challenge the assumption inherent in the DSM classification that pathological gambling is always a persistent problem for all individuals affected by the disorder. The conceptual framework that underpins the nomenclature is subject to qualification, even if it is still true that some standardized, valid and reliable methods are still required to help epidemiologists, therapists, and others measure problem gambling at a certain moment in time. For example, labeling someone as 'clinically depressed' at a particular point in time should not automatically lead to assuming they are a 'clinical depressive.' In other words, to be clinically depressed is a temporary state of mind rather than a defining characteristic of a personality. In the same way, identifying a person as a compulsive or problem gambler in a given context should not define them as such permanently. A positive classification or diagnosis may be useful in identifying people who are more likely to be experiencing difficulties at that point in time and who are more at risk in the future. However, one cannot assume that these people will fall into the same category if they were to be interviewed or surveyed again in the future.

### **Logical Principles and the Act of Gambling**

Gambling can be examined philosophically as a decision-making exercise that provides valuable insights into human reasoning in the face of uncertainty. Inductive reasoning, inductive generalization, abductive reasoning, and counter-inductive reasoning are some of the main types of reasoning used in gambling. Each style of cognition represents both the strength and limitations of the human intellect in handling ambiguity using their reasoning capacity. These concepts draw attention to the logical or illogical premises that gamblers use to predict possible outcomes. In some ways, gambling is a stage for epistemological investigation, where individuals actively apply or misapply sophisticated reasoning patterns to uncertain situations. Analyzing these trends demonstrates human rationality's cognitive advantages and disadvantages when it comes to chance. Probably the most popular way of thinking among gamblers is inductive reasoning, which is the act of inferring likely conclusions from patterns in historical occurrences. A person may use inductive reasoning to conclude that a slot machine is "due" for a win if they see that it hasn't paid out in a while. Assuming some degree of consistency in the random processes that underlie gambling mechanisms, this type of reasoning entails extrapolating historical data into the future. A consistent wins of Man United over Bolton for instance creates a persistent behavior for a gambler to stake on the winning team again.

This ignores the statistical independence of many gaming occurrences, dice rolls and roulette wheel spins. The gambler's fallacy, which is based on inductive reasoning, ignores the independence of each game played at different times with different people. It is based on the mistaken notion that short-term errors or differences in a random sequence will be corrected (Tversky&Kahneman, 1971: 106). But since induction represents a natural cognitive disposition—humans are pattern-seeking animals that want to impose order on randomness—its appeal endures. It is impossible to overstate the importance of inductive

reasoning in gambling, just as it is essential in science and daily life. Inductive generalization, in which a general rule is deduced from a small number of facts, is closely associated with inductive reasoning. For instance, a gambler may infer that he is talented or that a "hot streak" is happening if he has won three straight games of poker. This is a shift from specific observations to more general assertions on competency or rational thinking. The quality and size of the sample provide an epistemological risk in this case since biased or small samples typically produce weak generalizations. Inductive generalizations are especially brittle in the gambling industry because results are frequently impacted by factors that the gambler is unaware of or misunderstands. The epistemic problems with inductive generalization are made worse by the modification or downplaying of intelligence by operators and promoters of gambling.

Philosophers like David Hume, who maintained that "all our reasoning concerning matters of fact are founded on a species of analogy" (Hume, 1748/2000: 35), highlighted the need of regularity and recurrence for plausible generalization. Humean caution is especially appropriate in gambling, where regularity is thwarted by the problem of induction; which undermines future outcomes on the basis of the past. Abductive reasoning is another logical way of examining the gambler's mental process. It is what philosophers called inference to the best explanation. Abduction aims to explain observable occurrences in terms of fundamental causes or principles, as opposed to induction, which infers likely outcomes based on frequency. After losing often through inductive consistency, a gambler may believe that the game is "rigged" by agencies or that they were being punished by fate. These are abductive conclusions that were reached as a demonstration of a very close relationship between the aftermath of an occurrence and some underlying fundamental causes. Therefore, gamblers tend to results to prayer, rituals or manipulate the agencies by involving in match fixing, bribing agents or hacking the internet systems of gambling houses. They hope by these actions to eliminate chance and control the fundamental cause of the system. According to Charles Sanders Peirce, abduction is a crucial component of scientific discovery because it enables theories to arise from unusual or unexpected facts (Peirce, 1931–1958, Vol. 5, para. 189). However, when abduction results in magical beliefs or conspiracy theories, it can become epistemologically dangerous in the gambling context. For instance, gamblers frequently depend on unrelated factors like lucky charms or rituals for their success or failure. These abductive leaps reflect a contradiction between intellectual explanation and subjective comfort. Gamblers aim to make meaning of random occurrences by fitting them into bigger narratives or causal frameworks, even when those theories lack factual support. Therefore, in gambling, abductive thinking frequently focuses on the most fulfilling or psychologically comforting answer rather than the best one.

Another odd logic that emerges in gambling environments is counter-inductive reasoning, which is the practice of anticipating the opposite of what repeated experience implies. Counter-induction contradicts inductive thinking, which bases expectations on historical patterns. For example, a gambler would assume that black is "guaranteed" to appear next since a roulette wheel has landed on red five times in a row. This is a certain natural (although flawed) attempt to balance randomness, but it is an inversion of probabilistic reasoning. Philosophers like Imre Lakatos utilized counter-inductive reasoning as a tool in scientific methodology, where it plays a stimulating role in questioning dominant paradigms (Lakatos, 1970:100). In gambling, however, counter-induction typically lacks this intellectual rigor and instead shows as irrational betting behavior. It originates from a misapplication of statistical theory, notably a misunderstanding of the law of big numbers.

The rule of large numbers does not deterministically apply to brief sequences of separate occurrences, even if it does imply convergence over time. However, gamblers often behave as if deviations need to be fixed right now.

### **Utilitarianism as the Ethics of Gambling**

In an effort to provide a standard for what constitutes moral behaviour, the field of ethics in philosophy has given rise to a number of ethical theories. Natural law theory, deontological theory, consequentialist theory and others, are examples of such ethical views. Each of these ethical systems has a standard by which it measures the morality of human actions. Just like other ethical issues such as abortion, suicide, euthanasia, gambling also arouses different perspectives as regards its morality. Ethical issue arises when a situation, decision, or action involves a conflict or potential conflict between different moral principles, values, or duties, leading to question about what is right or wrong, good or bad. It is a situation where there is no clear-cut "correct" answer, or where choosing a seemingly right course of action might violate another social or individual consideration. Gambling thus, falls under the gamut of ethical issue by virtue of dualistic opinions that emerge in the quest to determine whether the act of gambling is right or wrong. If one wants to formulate the yardstick for the morality of gambling, utilitarianism is the appropriate principle because it argues for the consideration of the consequences or expectations associated with actions, and see whether they generate greatest happiness for the greatest number of people or reduces suffering. To a utilitarian, gambling would be a right action if its consequence of high winnings is measured in relation to the little amount one bets with. Such outcome which generates great utility for greatest number of people involved in the act would be right. So, gambling being an act that is capable of increasing the financial status of both society and individual would be a right action because it increases riches over poverty, happiness over suffering. Even if a gambler fails to win, their hope is still not diminished; which is positive feeling.

In a bid to formulate a philosophical foundation for the assessment of gambling, utilitarianism which argues for the consideration of the consequences or the outcomes plays a vital ethical role as it helps to explore logical and ethical implications of the result of gambling on individual and the society at large. Utilitarianism is a consequentialist ethical theory that judges the morality of actions based on their outcomes, emphasizing the maximization of happiness and the minimization of suffering. The principle of utility, first articulated by Jeremy Bentham, holds that the right action is the one that produces "the greatest good for the greatest number" (Bentham, 1789/1988: 14). Thus, to the utilitarian, especially Bentham, gambling would be a right action if its consequence is measured using felicific calculus and such outcome generates greatest happiness for greatest number of people involved in the act, and wrong if it generates pain for the greatest number of people involved. Although utilitarianism may not exactly be a philosophical issue, it is a challenging approach to moral philosophy that has always drawn fervent supporters and detractors. The harsher of its detractors, such as Bernard Williams, have denounced utilitarianism as a pernicious doctrine that disregards the most cherished values of human life and reduces morality to expediency (Williams, 1973: 136). Similarly, John Rawls criticized it for permitting the violation of individual rights in pursuit of aggregate welfare, thereby undermining justice and fairness (Rawls, 1971: 27). In contrast, defenders like J. J. C. Smart argue that utilitarianism is a practical and liberating moral framework that promotes an empirical approach to ethical decision-making and challenges entrenched (Smart & Williams, 1973: 9).

More balanced perspectives, such as those presented by Julia Driver, acknowledge both the strengths and weaknesses of utilitarian reasoning, suggesting that while it offers valuable guidance in many cases, it may also struggle with complex moral contexts (Driver, 2014, para. 2).

Despite the doubts about the theory's ultimate sufficiency, many philosophers have acknowledged the intuitive attraction of fundamental utilitarian concepts. The traditional utilitarian idea that deeds are morally right when they bring happiness or lessen suffering has an indisputable allure: A person is expected to count the consequences for happiness of an act or another course, and they go with the one with the highest favourable consequence. A poor person cannot afford to do nothing when a simple bet can provide them with a fortune. So, it is more reasonable to gamble with little amount, with the hope of reaping something higher. Utilitarianism deals with something that is undoubtedly important in human life, the promotion of happiness (or, as many modern theorists would have it, the satisfaction of human preferences); but it is less clear whether the relationship between our calculation of increment in happiness and the real life situation is justifiable. This is because hope is not always realized even when it produces good feelings. Consequentialist ethical theory like utilitarianism assesses the morality of deeds according to their results, particularly in terms of minimizing pain or suffering and enhancing total happiness or pleasure (Mill, 1863: 9). The works of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill are most frequently linked to this moral theory. They maintained that human behaviour should be assessed according to its utility, or its ability to benefit the largest number of people (Bentham, 1789:24). This theory, which promotes a logical and scientific approach to morality, has influenced ethical decision-making in fields including public policy, economics, and law. Although utilitarianism is widely used, it has also been criticized for having the ability to excuse immoral behaviour in spite of the fact that it increases happiness for majority (Smart & Williams, 1973: 35). For instance, a gambler who most of the time spends hours in gambling houses to the detriment of family bonding will be seen as doing right if he wins enough money to pay for children school fees. After all family bonding may not be valued if there is no money to meet family goals.

John Stuart Mill developed Bentham's theory by highlighting the importance of moral and intellectual abilities to human well-being and by proposing qualitative differences between higher and lower pleasures (Mill, 1863: 13). This change offered a more sophisticated interpretation of utilitarian ethics and allayed certain worries about Bentham's purely quantitative methodology. The idea has been used to support market rules, democratic government, and social programs that maximize the well-being of society. The quality of life promised by gambling with huge reward for little money or risk remains an ethical justification for the act of gambling. However, critics have countered that the quality principle of utilitarianism is likely to produce unfair results, especially when it can sacrifice majority happiness for minority rights (Rawls, 1971: 54). The quality of life at times is subjective and value laden and as such its determination gives room for manipulation.

For instance, people have argued that gambling addiction contributes to misunderstanding and conflicts in families, yet this may not be totally correct since some families have benefited or are benefiting from the wins. The argument of majority losing in gambling can only be valid if a world assessment or survey is carried out. But we know the difficulties that can militate against this. It has also been alleged that gambling-related debt undermines household financial stability and broader economic health. This may be true because some addicts do not care when they have to play with all the money in their

accounts. But this only speaks to addiction rather than the act of playing responsibly. So, what authorities should speak to and control is the addiction that is likely to crop up from long term in playing a game. What is not controvertible is that gambling industries, such as casinos and lotteries, contribute significantly to national tax revenue (Walker & Jackson, 2011: 21). Governments at all levels benefit from the taxes paid by gambling organizations alongside other businesses (Calcagno & Walker, 2016: 93). Beyond revenue, some scholars argue that gambling provides psychological hope and entertainment, which can foster social cohesion, particularly in times of economic hardship (Orford, 2011: 67). The expectation of wealth, whether realistic or not, generated by large gambling wins often sustains optimism among the general public, helping individuals cope with economic uncertainty.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

We have been able to show that gambling promotes logical reasoning and human involvement is not unreasonable. The ethical acceptability of gambling may be very low when one applied ethical theories such as natural law and Kantian deontology; and also, when one considers some negative impact of gambling on families, individual finance, and social perception as a whole. However, completely banning gambling would pose serious danger to both individual freedom and economic growth. Authoritarianism, poverty, and societal crisis can arise from restricting people's freedom to explore chances of survival and thus impedes hope and economic growth. According to Mill (1859:16–18), limiting individual freedom stunts moral and intellectual advancement and jeopardizes the advancement of society. Sen also contends that economic bondage, such as restricted access to markets and jobs, fosters poverty and restricts human potential (1999:4–5). Innovation is stifled and social mobility is impossible in the absence of liberty and progress. A thorough analysis of gambling reveals that there are many advantages to it, particularly when it is controlled. Both individual gamblers and the overall economy will benefit from gambling when it is controlled and engaged sensibly. Through excitement, social engagement, and strategic thinking, gambling can improve psychological well-being for individuals (Reith, 2005:120–122). A regulated setting for taking risks, which is associated with elevated dopamine levels and improved mood management, may also be offered by occasional gambling (Griffiths, 2007: 135). At the societal level, gambling makes a substantial tax revenue contribution to the government. These revenues support vital public services including infrastructure, healthcare, and education in many jurisdictions (Walker & Jackson, 2007: 598). The gaming business boosts local economies and creates jobs, especially in the travel and hotel industries (Eadington, 1999: 175). Additionally, many state-run lotteries and casinos allocate a portion of their profits to charitable causes, amplifying their social impact (Walker & Jackson, 2007: 600). With the consideration of these enormous positive effects of gambling, this long-essay, though assessed gambling from the purview of utilitarianism, concludes on the note that the subject-matter should be ethically permissible, but should be placed under and enhanced policy that regulate its activity.

In order to guarantee that gambling is morally acceptable, governments must enact thorough regulatory laws that uphold public welfare and encourage personal responsibility. People should be assisted to control their gambling and avoid addiction. Policies should also include time reminders, betting limits, and self-exclusion measures. Furthermore, advertisement should be strictly controlled to prevent deceptive or manipulative messaging, particularly when it presents gambling as a surefire way to get rich or as a way out of a difficult situation (Orford, 2011: 204–205). Conclusively therefore gambling may serve as a

morally acceptable means of promoting social cohesion and economic advancement when it is governed by the principles of harm reduction, informed consent, and accountability.

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Article

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### INVESTIGATING 1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20 AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL FOR GENDER ETHICS IN THE NIGERIAN SOCIETY

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#### Abstract

This paper investigates the potential of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 as a psychological model for understanding and shaping gender ethics within the Nigerian society. The study addresses the existing gap in the literature concerning the intersection of biblical texts, psychological theories, and socio-cultural contexts in the discourse of gender ethics. Through an exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, the paper explores the theological implications of the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, bought with a price, and its call to glorify God in the body. Concurrently, it examines prevailing psychological models of gender identity and ethical decision-making, alongside the cultural and religious influences on gender ethics in Nigeria. The research employs a qualitative, interpretive, and interdisciplinary approach, utilising secondary data from academic journals, biblical commentaries, and sociological studies. This paper proposes a synthesised psychological model derived from 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, demonstrating its applicability in addressing specific gender ethical challenges in Nigeria. It explores how the concepts of self-worth, identity, and psychological ownership, rooted in the biblical text, can foster gender equality, respect, and healthy relationships within the Nigerian context. The study concludes with a summary of findings and recommendations for further research and practical application in religious institutions, counselling, and community development in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Psychological Model, Gender Ethics, Nigerian Society.

#### Introduction

Gender ethics, encompassing the moral principles and values that govern interactions and relationships between genders, is a critical area of discourse in contemporary global society.

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Its significance is particularly pronounced in diverse socio-cultural landscapes such as Nigeria, where traditional norms, religious beliefs, and modern influences intersect to shape perceptions and practices related to gender. The ongoing evolution of gender roles and identities necessitates a robust ethical framework that promotes equity, respect, and well-being for all individuals. This paper delves into the intricate relationship between biblical teachings and psychological insights to propose a novel approach to gender ethics within the Nigerian context. Specifically, it focuses on the profound implications of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, a passage that speaks to the sanctity and ownership of the human body, as a potential psychological model for navigating complex gender-related issues.

### **Concept of Ethics**

Ethics in Greek is *êthikos*, literally meaning something concerned with *êthos* (Greek, character), which in turn is connected with *ethos* (social custom, habit). This is equivalent to moral (Ozumba, 2001). It means a customary way of acting, contrasted with a historical or anthropological way of acting. Ethics is the branch of philosophy known as moral philosophy or philosophical thinking about morality. It includes moral problems and moral judgments. Ethics, therefore, deals with judgment as to the rightness or wrongness, virtuous or vicious, desirability or undesirability, approval or disapproval of our actions. Nagel (2005:379) defines ethics as the philosophy that tries to understand a familiar type of evaluation: the moral evaluation of people's character traits, their conduct, and their institutions. It is concerned with what bothers us about good and bad, the morally right and the morally wrong thing to do, just or unjust regimes or law, how things ought and ought not to be, and how people should live.

### **Exegetical Analysis of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20**

The passage of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 holds profound theological and ethical significance within the Christian tradition. To fully grasp its implications as a psychological model for gender ethics, it is imperative to undertake a thorough exegetical analysis, considering its historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts. The city of Corinth, to which Paul addressed this epistle, was a bustling commercial hub known for its diverse population and, notably, its pervasive sexual immorality. The city was renowned for its wealth and its notorious temple of Aphrodite, which reportedly housed a thousand temple prostitutes (Stacy, 1997). This context is crucial for understanding Paul's strong admonitions regarding sexual conduct. The historical and Cultural Context of Corinth was a cosmopolitan city in ancient Greece, strategically located on an isthmus connecting mainland Greece with the Peloponnese. Its prosperity was largely due to its trade routes and two major ports. This economic vibrancy, however, was accompanied by a reputation for moral laxity, particularly in sexual matters. The term "*Corinthianize*" (κορινθιάζεσθαι) even became a byword for engaging in sexual promiscuity. The city was home to various cults and temples, including the temple of Aphrodite, which was associated with sacred prostitution. This environment presented significant challenges for the nascent Christian community in Corinth, as believers struggled to reconcile their new faith with the prevailing cultural norms. Paul's letter, therefore, directly addresses these moral challenges, providing guidance on how Christians should live distinctly in such a context.

### **Detailed Textual Analysis of Key Terms**

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 states: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were

bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body.” Each phrase in this passage carries significant weight:

- i. **“Your body” (τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν):** The use of the singular “body” with a plural possessive pronoun “(your,” referring to “you all”) has been a subject of scholarly debate. As Gupta (2010:1) highlights, this grammatical construction raises questions about whether Paul is referring to the individual body or the corporate body of believers. Traditionally, it has been understood as referring to the individual’s physical body. However, some scholars argue for a communal interpretation, suggesting that Paul is emphasising the church as a collective body. Gupta (2010:522) notes that while the phrase can be understood distributively (i.e., “the body of each of you”), Paul’s broader theological concerns often lean towards communal identity. Regardless of the primary emphasis, the passage unequivocally asserts the profound significance of the physical body in Christian ethics.
- ii. **“Is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you” (ναὸς τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματός ἐστιν ἐν ὑμῖν):** This metaphor is central to Paul’s argument. In the Old Testament and Jewish tradition, the temple was the dwelling place of God’s presence. By declaring the believer’s body (or the collective body of believers) as a temple of the Holy Spirit, Paul elevates the status of the human body to a sacred space. This implies that the body is not merely a physical entity but a spiritual one, consecrated by the indwelling presence of God. This concept directly challenges the Corinthian worldview, which often separated the spiritual from the physical, leading to a devaluation of the body and its actions.
- iii. **“Whom you have from God” (ὃν ἔχετε ἀπὸ Θεοῦ):** This phrase underscores the divine origin and ownership of the Holy Spirit, and by extension, the body as its temple. It emphasises that the Spirit is a gift from God, reinforcing the idea that the body, as the Spirit’s dwelling, is also ultimately God’s possession.
- iv. **“And that you are not your own” (καὶ οὐκ ἐστε ἑαυτῶν):** This declaration directly refutes the prevalent Corinthian slogan, “All things are lawful for me” (1 Corinthians 6:12), which was often used to justify immoral behaviour. Paul asserts that believers do not have absolute autonomy over their bodies because they belong to God. This concept of divine ownership forms the ethical foundation for Paul’s subsequent exhortations.
- v. **“For you were bought with a price” (ἠγοράσθητε γὰρ τιμῆς):** This refers to the redemptive work of Christ on the cross. The “price” is the sacrifice of Jesus, through which believers have been liberated from sin and death and brought into a new relationship with God. This act of redemption signifies a transfer of ownership from sin to God, making believers, including their bodies, God’s property. This concept of being “bought with a price” establishes a profound sense of gratitude, obligation, and sacredness concerning the body.
- vi. **“Therefore glorify God in your body” (δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν Θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν):** This is the ethical imperative that flows from the preceding theological statements. Because the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and has been redeemed by Christ, it should be used in a way that honours and brings glory to God. This includes all aspects of bodily existence, including sexual behaviour, self-care, and interactions with others. It calls for a holistic approach to discipleship where the physical is not separated from the spiritual.

## **Diverse Theological Interpretations and Their Implications for Individual and Communal Ethics**

The interpretation of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 has significant implications for both individual and communal ethics. As Gupta (2010:1) discusses, the debate often centres on whether the passage primarily addresses individual purity or corporate holiness. While the traditional view emphasises individual responsibility for one's body as a temple, a communal reading suggests that the collective body of believers, the church, is the temple, and individual actions impact the holiness of the entire community. Both interpretations hold validity and offer complementary insights. The individualistic reading highlights personal accountability, self-respect, and the importance of bodily integrity. The communal reading underscores the interconnectedness of believers, emphasising that individual choices have broader implications for the witness and purity of the Christian community. In the context of gender ethics, this duality is crucial: individual decisions about gender identity and expression impact personal well-being, while collective norms and practices shape the ethical landscape of the broader society.

### **Pauline Anthropology and its Relevance to the Body and Sexuality**

Paul's understanding of the human person, or Pauline anthropology, is foundational to his ethical teachings on the body and sexuality. As Bailey (2012:2) elucidates, Paul builds his theology of sexual practice on core Christian doctrines, including the Resurrection, the Cross, the Trinity, the doctrine of the Church, and the doctrine of Creation. For Paul, the human being is a unified whole, not a dichotomy of spirit and body. The body is not merely a temporary vessel for the soul but an integral part of the person, destined for resurrection. This holistic view contrasts sharply with dualistic philosophies that denigrate the physical. Because the body is created by God, redeemed by Christ, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, it possesses inherent dignity and sacredness. Therefore, sexual immorality is not merely a physical act but a sin against one's own body and, by extension, against God who owns it. Paul's emphasis on the body as a member of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:15) further reinforces the idea that sexual acts have profound spiritual implications, integrating the individual into either Christ or a prostitute. This robust anthropology provides a theological basis for a comprehensive gender ethic that values the body, promotes purity, and encourages responsible sexual behaviour within the context of divine ownership and purpose.

### **Gender Ethics in Nigerian Society**

Gender ethics in Nigerian society is a complex and multifaceted subject, deeply intertwined with cultural traditions, religious beliefs, and socio-economic realities. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for any meaningful discussion on how a psychological model derived from 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 might be applied.

### **Cultural and Traditional Perspectives on Gender Roles and Norms in Nigeria**

Nigerian society is characterised by a rich diversity of ethnic groups, each with its unique cultural practices and traditions. However, a common thread across many of these cultures is the prevalence of patriarchal structures that assign distinct roles and expectations to men and women. Traditionally, women are often relegated to domestic roles, primarily responsible for childcare and household management, while men are seen as the primary breadwinners and decision-makers. These gender roles are often reinforced through socialisation processes from childhood, shaping individuals' perceptions of their own and others' capabilities and responsibilities. Despite the growing global concerns for and efforts

to protect women's rights to land and other tangible assets with economic value, various studies reveal that women still encounter challenges concerning these rights (Adekile, 2010; Folarin & Udoh, 2014; Aluko, 2015; Anyogu & Okpalobi, 2016; Akinola, 2018; Chaves, 2018). In addition, some scholars (Le Beau et al., 2004; George, 2010; Kalabamu, 2000) assert that patriarchal systems and institutions are the underlying causes of the denial and discrimination that women experience concerning their rights to property and inheritance in general, while others opine more specifically that, religion (Obioha, 2013), customs and traditions (Benschop, 2004; George et al., 2015; Obioha, 2013) are causal factors in the violation of women's rights which cannot be over-emphasised. In the same vein, Udoh et al. (2020:4) highlight how traditional customs and religious laws significantly impact women's rights, particularly concerning property ownership, underscoring the deep-seated nature of these gendered norms. The emphasis on male lineage and inheritance in many cultures further marginalises women, limiting their access to resources and power. While some traditional practices promote complementary gender roles, many contribute to gender inequality, restricting women's autonomy and opportunities for self-actualisation.

### **Challenges and Issues Related to Gender Inequality and Ethical Dilemmas in Nigerian Society**

Gender inequality in Nigeria manifests in various forms, leading to numerous ethical dilemmas. These challenges are often exacerbated by the interplay of cultural, religious, and socio-economic factors:

- i. **Limited Access to Education and Economic Opportunities:** Despite progress, girls and women in many parts of Nigeria still face barriers to accessing quality education and economic opportunities. This limits their agency and perpetuates cycles of poverty and dependence. Gender-Based Violence (GBV): GBV, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and harmful traditional practices like female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage, remains a pervasive issue. These practices are often justified by cultural norms or misinterpretations of religious texts, posing significant ethical challenges to bodily autonomy and human dignity.
- ii. **Political Underrepresentation:** Women are significantly underrepresented in political leadership and decision-making positions at all levels of government. This lack of representation hinders the development and implementation of gender-sensitive policies.
- iii. **Health Disparities:** Women and girls often face unique health challenges, including high maternal mortality rates, limited access to reproductive health services, and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. These disparities are often linked to gender inequality and cultural norms that restrict women's control over their bodies and health decisions.
- iv. **Property and Inheritance Rights:** As highlighted by Udoh et al. (2020:4), women's rights to property and inheritance are often curtailed by customary laws and religious practices, leaving them vulnerable and economically insecure.

Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of the underlying cultural and religious dynamics, as well as a commitment to promoting ethical frameworks that uphold the dignity and rights of all individuals, irrespective of gender. The subsequent sections of this paper will explore how 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 can offer a psychological model to address these complex issues within the Nigerian context.

### **Synthesising 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 as a Psychological Model**

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, with its profound theological statements about the body, offers a rich foundation for a psychological model of gender ethics. The passage asserts three core principles: the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, divine ownership through redemption, and the imperative to glorify God in the body. These principles can be translated into powerful psychological constructs that inform self-perception, identity, and ethical behaviour.

#### **Connecting the Concept of the Body as a Temple to Psychological Well-being and Self-Perception**

The declaration that “your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you” (1 Corinthians 6:19) carries significant psychological weight. In psychological terms, a “temple” can be understood as a sacred space, a place of reverence, purity, and divine presence. When individuals internalise this concept, it can profoundly impact their self-perception and psychological well-being. Viewing one’s body as a temple fosters a sense of inherent worth and dignity, irrespective of societal standards of beauty, ability, or gender. This can counteract negative body image issues, promote self-care, and encourage healthy boundaries. Psychologically, this concept cultivates a positive self-schema, where the body is not merely an object but a subject of divine indwelling. This internal validation can be particularly empowering for individuals whose bodies may be marginalised or devalued by societal norms, such as those with non-conforming gender identities or those who have experienced bodily harm or exploitation. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit implies a constant, internal source of guidance and strength, contributing to psychological resilience and a sense of purpose.

#### **Interpreting “Bought with a Price” in Terms of Self-Worth, Identity, and Psychological Ownership**

The phrase “you were bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:20) speaks to the concept of redemption and divine ownership. Psychologically, this can be interpreted in terms of self-worth, identity formation, and psychological ownership. The “price” paid signifies an immense value placed on the individual, transcending any perceived personal failings or societal devaluations. This understanding can foster a deep sense of self-worth, as individuals recognise that their value is not contingent on external achievements or societal approval but on a divine act of redemption. This concept directly impacts identity: if one is “bought with a price” by God, then one’s primary identity is rooted in this divine relationship, rather than in societal roles, gender expectations, or personal accomplishments. This can liberate individuals from the pressure to conform to harmful gender stereotypes or societal pressures that undermine their authentic selves. Furthermore, the idea of divine ownership implies a form of psychological stewardship. While individuals do not “own” themselves in an ultimate sense, they are entrusted with the care and management of their bodies and lives. This fosters a sense of responsibility and accountability for one’s actions, not out of fear, but out of gratitude and reverence for the divine owner. This psychological ownership, grounded in divine love, encourages responsible decision-making regarding one’s body and relationships.

#### **“Glorify God in Your Body” as a Psychological Imperative for Ethical Behaviour and Self-Care**

The ethical imperative to “glorify God in your body” (1 Corinthians 6:20) translates into a psychological call for ethical behaviour and holistic self-care. To “glorify God” in one’s body

means to use one's physical being, actions, and relationships in ways that honour divine principles. Psychologically, this involves aligning one's behaviour with deeply held values and a sense of purpose. This can manifest as:

- i. **Responsible Sexual Behaviour:** In the context of 1 Corinthians, this primarily refers to sexual purity and avoiding sexual immorality. Psychologically, this translates to engaging in sexual relationships that are consensual, respectful, and contribute to the well-being of all parties involved, fostering emotional and psychological health.
- ii. **Self-Care and Bodily Health:** Glorifying God in the body implies a commitment to physical and mental health. This includes practices such as proper nutrition, exercise, adequate rest, and seeking medical or psychological help when needed. It is a rejection of self-neglect or self-harm, recognising the body as a precious gift.
- iii. **Ethical Interactions:** The body is the primary means through which individuals interact with the world. Glorifying God in the body extends to how one treats others, promoting empathy, compassion, and justice in all interactions. This includes challenging gender-based discrimination, violence, and exploitation.
- iv. **Authentic Self-Expression:** When the body is seen as a temple and divinely owned, it encourages authentic self-expression that aligns with one's true identity, free from societal pressures to conform to restrictive gender norms. This can foster psychological integration and reduce internal conflict. This imperative provides a powerful internal motivation for ethical conduct, moving beyond external rules or fear of punishment to an intrinsic desire to honour a loving God through one's bodily existence. It transforms ethical behaviour from a burden into an act of worship and self-respect.

### **How the Proposed Psychological Model from 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 can Address Specific Gender Ethical Challenges in Nigeria**

The psychological model derived from 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 offers a compelling framework for addressing the complex gender ethical challenges prevalent in Nigerian society. This includes:

- i. **Challenging Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** The model's emphasis on the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit and divinely owned directly contradicts any justification for violence or abuse against the body. If every individual's body is sacred and belongs to God, then any act of violence, sexual assault, or harmful traditional practice (like FGM) is not only a violation of human rights but also a desecration of a divine temple. This provides a powerful theological and psychological argument against GBV, fostering empathy and respect for bodily integrity. It can empower victims to recognise their inherent worth and seek justice, and challenge perpetrators to acknowledge the sacredness of others' bodies.
- ii. **Promoting Bodily Autonomy and Reproductive Rights:** The concept of "you are not your own" (1 Corinthians 6:19) can be reinterpreted not as a denial of personal agency, but as a call to responsible stewardship of a divinely entrusted body. This can inform discussions around reproductive rights, encouraging decisions that honour the sacredness of life and the well-being of both individuals and communities, while also challenging practices that deny women control over their bodies. It shifts the focus from external control to internal, divinely guided responsibility.
- iii. **Redefining Gender Roles and Expectations:** Traditional Nigerian gender roles often limit individuals' potential based on their biological sex. The psychological model, by emphasising an identity rooted in divine ownership rather than societal expectations, can encourage a re-evaluation of these roles. If one's primary purpose is to glorify God

in their body, then talents and abilities, regardless of gender, should be utilised for that purpose. This can empower women to pursue education, leadership roles, and economic opportunities, and encourage men to embrace nurturing roles and challenge harmful masculine stereotypes. It promotes a more egalitarian understanding of gender, where value is placed on character and divine purpose rather than rigid societal prescriptions.

- iv. **Addressing Discrimination and Inequality:** The principle of divine ownership and the sacredness of everybody imply inherent equality. Discrimination based on gender, whether in access to education, employment, or legal rights, directly contradicts the idea that all bodies are equally valuable as temples of the Holy Spirit. This model provides a theological and psychological basis for advocating for social justice and challenging discriminatory practices, fostering a society where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper embarked on an investigation into the potential of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 as a psychological model for gender ethics within the Nigerian society. Through a comprehensive exegetical analysis, it was established that the passage profoundly asserts the sacredness of the human body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, its divine ownership through redemption, and the imperative to glorify God in one's body. These theological tenets were then translated into psychological constructs, emphasising inherent worth, identity rooted in divine relationship, and an intrinsic motivation for ethical behaviour and self-care. Furthermore, a critical examination of gender ethics in Nigerian society revealed the pervasive influence of cultural traditions and religious beliefs, often leading to patriarchal structures, gender inequality, and various ethical challenges such as gender-based violence, limited access to opportunities for women, and disparities in property rights. By synthesising these diverse fields, the paper proposed a psychological model where the principles of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 serve as a framework for addressing these challenges. The model posits that recognising the body as a sacred temple and divinely owned can counteract negative body image, foster a strong sense of self-worth, and redefine gender roles away from restrictive norms. The imperative to glorify God in the body was presented as a psychological drive for responsible sexual behaviour, holistic self-care, ethical interactions, and authentic self-expression. Based on the findings and implications of this study, the following recommendations are put forth:

- i. **Curriculum Development:** Religious institutions (churches, seminaries, Bible colleges) should develop curricula that integrate the theological insights of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 with psychological principles of gender ethics. This can educate congregants and future leaders on a holistic and equitable understanding of gender.
- ii. **Pastoral Counselling and Therapy:** Counsellors and therapists working in Nigeria, particularly those with a faith-based approach, can utilise this model to help individuals develop a healthy self-perception, address body image issues, and navigate gender-related conflicts. It can provide a framework for healing from gender-based trauma and promoting psychological resilience.
- iii. **Community Engagement and Advocacy:** Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community development initiatives can leverage the principles of this model in their advocacy efforts for gender equality. By framing gender justice within a biblically and psychologically informed context, these efforts may gain greater traction and acceptance within religious communities.

- iv. **Leadership Training:** Training programs for religious and community leaders should incorporate discussions on gender ethics from this interdisciplinary perspective, equipping them to challenge harmful norms and promote equitable practices within their spheres of influence.

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Article

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### FRANTZ FANON'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND THE PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS (SALWS) IN BENUE STATE

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#### Abstract

There have been persistent widespread SALWs in Benue State with their associated consequences. This is in spite the various kinetic measures to stem the tide of the phenomenon. Although scholars have explored the situation, political philosophies of philosophers as explanatory tools seem not to attract their attention. This paper therefore employs Frantz Fanon's political philosophy on colonialism, decolonization, and violence as an explanatory tool for the proliferation of SALWs in the state. The conceptual method of research was employed for the study, which reveals that governance in Benue State is akin to colonialism as features of colonialism that reflect a complex interplay of socioeconomic marginalization of the masses, historical grievances, and systemic failure are present in the state. The study also finds that Fanon's philosophy on decolonization mirrors the situation in the state, as evidenced by the expressed disaffection of the masses towards the ruling elite's domination, oppression, and exploitation. It is also the finding of the study that the proliferation of SALWs in the state reflects Fanon's assertion that the moment a person realizes his humanity; he begins to sharpen the weapons with which he will secure his victory from the shackles of domination, exploitation, and oppression of the ruling elite. Violence as a solution to the ruling elite's misrule is criticized for bringing about increased incidences of depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, and suicide; increased risk of cardiovascular disease; and the cause of premature mortalities. The study concludes that in spite of the criticisms of Fanon's philosophy, it offers eloquent explanations to the proliferation of SALWs in Benue State, which serves as a guide to reversing the ugly trend only if the ruling elite will summon the political will.

**Keywords:** Benue State, Frantz Fanon, Political Philosophy, Proliferation, SALWs.

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## **Introduction**

The increase in the number of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) in the hands of civilians across the globe (Karp, 2018) has emerged as one of the most pressing security challenges of the 21st century. It has increased the number of fatalities in countries of the world and is a direct cost to peace, security, and development. In the United States of America, where Karp (2018) avers that 45.9 percent of the global firearms are in civilians' possession, there is an exacerbation of suicides, domestic violence, homicides, violent crimes, mass shootings, unintentional deaths, and injuries. The BBC News May 25, 2022, corroborates this when it reveals that between 1968 and 2017, 1.5 million people lost their lives as a result of the aforementioned in the supposedly safest country in the world. In 2020 alone, Gramlich (2022) held that "a total of 45,222 people died from gun-related injuries of all causes during 2020" in the United States of America. In India, Muggah and Guple (2015) indicate that SALWs are responsible for the country's inglorious second-largest position in the world with the number of homicides. Criminal violence, which has a correlation with the proliferation of SALWs according to Muggah and Guple (2015), generates at least ten times more deaths and injuries than terrorism and conflict in India. The story is not anything different from what obtains in Russia. This is because the EMISS Government Statistics (n.da) and EMISS Government Statistics (n.db) reveal that, between 2015 and 2019, there were 45,910 deaths in Russia by SALWs available in civilians' possessions. The proliferation of SALWs is also a pressing security challenge in Brazil, as the World Population Review (2022) indicates that the country recorded 49,436 gun deaths in 2019 alone. The same thing applies in Nigeria, as the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (2015-2021) reveals that between 2015 and 2021, 94,489 SALW deaths were recorded. These deaths were attributed to cattle grazing, crime, and land issues, which shows that there is a strong relationship between violence and the over six million SALWs that are said to be proliferating in Nigeria.

Benue State, located in the North-Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria, has witnessed escalating violence, often fueled by the widespread availability of SALWs. It is in a bid to uncover the deeper ideological and historical currents driving one of Benue's most pressing security challenges that we explored in this paper, the proliferation of SALWs through the lens of Frantz Fanon's political philosophy. Fanon's political philosophy emphasizes the psycho-social legacies of colonialism, the role of violence in decolonization, and the struggle for dignity among the oppressed. Fanon's theory that violence can be both a symptom and a response to structural injustice sheds light on why marginalized communities may resort to arms as a form of resistance or survival. It is against this background that this paper adopts Frantz Fanon's political philosophy in explaining the proliferation of SALWs in Benue State. This paper is segmented into seven sections for logical analysis starting with an introduction as the first section, followed by Fanon's biography which is the second section. Section three looks at the factors that influenced Fanon's political philosophy while section four is the exposition of Fanon's political philosophy. Section five is styled the influence of Frantz Fanon's political philosophy on the proliferation of SALWs in Benue State. Section six is a critique of Fanon's political philosophy and the paper is wrapped up with a conclusion in section seven.

## **A Biography of Frantz Fanon**

There are no conflicting accounts of Fanon's birth, as Peterson (2021), Boumghar (2019), and Macey (2012) are unanimous that the Martinique-trained psychiatrist and philosopher was born on July 20, 1925, in the French West Indies, in Fort-de-France, Martinique. Micklin

(2008, para. 1) averred that Frantz's father, Félix Casimir Fanon, was a black descendant of an African slave who worked as a customs service inspector. His mother, Eléanore Médélice, was half French and owned a hardware and drapery shop (Gordon & Cornell, 2015). Frantz was the third of four sons in a family of eight children. He, however, did not have as many children as did his parents. Frantz had a child outside wedlock, Mireille, in 1948, four years before he was married to Marie-Joséphine Dublé in 1952 (Micklin, 2008). His marriage to Marie-Joséphine Dublé was fruitful, as she birthed Oliver.

The young Fanon studied at Lycée Schoelcher in Fort-de-France, the capital of Martinique. In 1946, he enrolled at the University of Lyon, France, where he studied medicine and psychiatry and qualified as such in 1951 (Micklin, 2008). Before his university education, Micklin (2008) contended that Fanon was enlisted in the Free French Army in 1943 and fought the Second World War. As it were, he served in Morocco and Algeria in 1944 and 1945 and then took part in the battle for Alsace. Fanon also had an ephemeral career in politics as he worked for the parliamentary campaign of his friend and mentor, Aime Césaire. After qualifying as a psychiatrist in 1951, Cherki (2000) recalled that Fanon did a residency in psychiatry at Saint-Alban-Sur-Limagnole under the radical Catalan psychiatrist François Tosquelles, who strengthened Fanon's thinking by underscoring the role of culture in psychopathology. After his residency, Fanon practiced psychiatry at Pontorson, near Mont Saint-Michel, for another year before moving to Algeria in 1953 (Cherki, 2000; Macey, 2000). Between 1953 and 1956, Peterson (2021) avers that Fanon worked as the head of the psychiatry department of Blida-Joinville Hospital in Algeria, which was then part of France. Upon his deportation to Algeria in January 1957, Fanon found refuge in Tunis, where he openly joined the National Liberation Front (Front de Libération Nationale; FLN). Here, Fanon worked as the Front's newspaper's editor, "*El Moudjahid*," which was published in Tunis. In 1960, he was appointed ambassador to Ghana by Algeria's FLN-led provisional government, a position he did not enjoy long before succumbing to the venoms of leukemia in a Bethesda hospital, Maryland, United States of America, on December 6, 1961 (Micklin, 2008).

### **Factors that Influenced Fanon's Political Philosophy**

Personality, thinkers, schools of thought, socio-political context, and/or the existing circumstances usually influence philosophers in conceiving and expressing their thoughts. Fanon is no exception, as his experiences of the Vichy regime in Martinique informed his thought and description of the regime as "taking off their masks and behaving like "authentic racists" (Macey 2004, p. 214). Zeilig (2021) also noted that the abuse of Martinique people by the French Navy influenced Fanon, reinforcing his feelings of alienation and his disgust with colonial racism. While treating Algerians and French soldiers during the Algerian War of Independence, Fanon also observed with dismay the effects of colonial violence on the human psyche. This obviously led to his resignation from the services of the French colonial administration in Algeria, as he was quoted to have said he could no longer continue to support French efforts, even indirectly via his hospital work (Cherki, 2000; Macey, 2000).

Fanon also drew influences from a variety of thinkers and intellectual traditions, including Jean-Paul Sartre, Lacan, Negritude, and Marxism (Cherki, 2000). Aime Césaire was also of no mean influence in Fanon's life. Césaire, a leader of the Negritude movement, was a teacher and mentor to Fanon during his secondary school days at Lycée Schoelcher. This is reflected in Fanon's referencing Césaire's writings at length in his works. In particular,

Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks* bore imprints of Césaire's "The Lived Experience of the Black Man." Richards (2021) contended that Fanon's "Black Skin, White Mask" also bears imprints of Jacques Lacan's early theory of language. Fanon's preference for Jean-Paul Sartre, the French political activist and literal critic, to write the preface to his "The Wretched of the Earth," suggests Fanon's regard for Jean-Paul's thoughts. Fanon's assertion that "all forms of exploitation are identical because all of them are applied against the same object: man; and that "I want the enslavement of man by man to cease forever" is consistent with Marx's postulation, as cited in Forsythe (1973, p. 160), that "labor in the white skin cannot emancipate itself until labor in the black skin is free," hence Marx's influence on Fanon's political thoughts.

### **An Exposition of Fanon's Political Philosophy**

Fanon's political thoughts are found in books he penned down himself, namely "Black Skin, White Masks" (1952), "A Dying Colonialism" (1959), "The Wretched of the Earth" (1961), and "Toward the African Revolution" (1964). Apart from books, Fanon's political thoughts are also found in the editorials of "El Moudjahid," the newspaper where he served as one of its editors, as well as in books written about him. Fanon's political thoughts are primarily focused on but are not limited to colonialism, decolonization, and violence. It is therefore under these headings that we discussed Fanon's political philosophy. For Fanon, colonialism is a form of domination whose necessary goal for success was the reordering of the world of indigenous (native) people (Peterson, 2021). Having observed closely the workings of colonialism, Fanon (1964, p. 68) postulated that "colonialism cannot be understood without the possibility of torturing, violating, or massacring. Torture is an expression and a means of the occupant-occupied relationship". Fanon's experience as a psychiatrist in Algeria, an outstandingly colonialist country, makes him feel Algerians are in the best position to explain what colonialism is when he held that "the Algerian people are not unaware of the fact that the colonialist structure rests on the necessity of torturing, raping, and committing massacres" (Fanon, 1964, p. 72). Before Fanon's identification of torture, violation, and massacre as necessary indices of colonialism, he had vividly described the colonialists' thinking and perception of the colonized people in one of his books entitled *The Wretched of the Earth* in the following lines:

At times, this Manichaeism goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the native, or, to speak plainly, turns him into an animal. In fact, the terms the settler uses when mentioning the natives are zoological terms. He speaks of the yellow man's reptilian motions, of the stink of the native quarter, of breeding swarms, of foulness, of spawn, of gesticulations. When the settler seeks to describe the native fully in exact terms, he constantly refers to the bestiary. The European rarely hits on a picturesque style, but the native, who knows what is in the mind of the settler, guesses at once what he is thinking of. Those hordes of vital statistics, those hysterical masses, those faces bereft of all humanity, those distended bodies that are like nothing on earth, that mob without beginning or end, those children who seem to belong to nobody, that laziness stretched out in the sun, that vegetative rhythm of life all this forms part of the colonial vocabulary (Fanon, 1961, pp. 41-42).

Fanon also philosophized on the concept of decolonization, which Belfi and Sandiford (2021, para. 4) conceive to mean “cultural, psychological, and economic freedom for indigenous people with the goal of achieving indigenous sovereignty—the right and ability of indigenous people to practice self-determination over their land, cultures, political, and economic systems.” According to Fanon (1961, p. 35), decolonization:

Sets out to change the order of the world and is obviously a programme of complete disorder. But it cannot come as a result of magical practices, a natural shock, or a friendly understanding. Decolonization, as we know, is a historical process; that is to say, it cannot be understood; it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements that give it historical form and content.

Apart from the historical form and content of decolonization, which Fanon emphasizes as critical to understanding the phenomenon, he also spoke about its significance when he held that:

The extraordinary importance of this change is that it is willed, called for, and demanded. The need for this change exists in its crude state, impetuous and compelling, in the consciousness and in the lives of the men and women who are colonized. But the possibility of this change is equally experienced in the form of a terrifying future in the consciousness of another "species" of men and women: the colonizers (Fanon, 1961, p. 35).

Fanon also gave significant attention to the concept of violence, and his thoughts on violence bore out of the conditions that existed under colonialism. This is evident in his assertion that:

The native knows all this and laughs to himself every time he spots an allusion to the animal world in the other's words. For he knows that he is not an animal, and it is precisely at the moment he realizes his humanity that he begins to sharpen the weapons with which he will secure its victory. For the native, this violence represents the absolute line of action (Fanon, 1961, p. 42).

Fanon (1961, p. 93) spoke glowingly about violence when he also held that “violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect.” Therefore, for him, this justifies the use of violence against the colonialists. It was also his belief that “for the native, life can only spring up again out of the rotting corpse of the settler” (Fanon, 1961, p. 92), which is why he resigned his appointment from the colonial service and publicly joined the FLN to fight among other colonized people like himself.

### **The Influence of Frantz Fanon’s Political Philosophy on the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Benue State**

The relevance of Frantz Fanon’s political philosophy to the proliferation of SALWs in Benue State cannot be overemphasized. First of all, Fanon’s view that colonialism is a form of domination whose necessary goal for success was reordering the world of the indigenous (native) people is very relevant in understanding how the ruling elite govern Benue State. Having observed closely, governance in Benue State is akin to colonization as all the features of colonialism are present in the state. These include but are not limited to political and legal

domination of the masses by the ruling elite, relations of economic and political dependence, exploitation of the masses by the ruling elite, and inequalities between the ruling elite and the masses. To sustain these features, there have been growing violent attacks on the Benue masses by government agents or their sponsors. The Zaki Biam massacres in 2001 where Ogundele (2013) held 1, 000 civilians were killed and the killing of over 70 innocent persons, demolition of farms, schools, and hospitals in Mbator, Shangev-Tiev of Konshisha Local Government Area by the military as reported by Sahara Reporters April 9, 2021, shows the occurrence of carnage perpetrated by the ruling elite against the masses. The issues of summarily execution and disappearance of some people are also not in want in Benue State and these are orchestrated by the ruling elite in the state. The disappearance of nine people in two separate instances in Ado Local Government Area of the state as reported by the Daily Trust newspaper on October 15, 2021, is a testament to this ugly situation. The incessant invitation and maltreatment of critics of the ruling elite in Benue State by security agents and sponsored thugs is also a witness to this fact. The ruling elite in the state has also increasingly instigated inter and intra-community clashes, imposed “disaster” economic and social policies, employed divide-and-rule tactics as it were during colonialism, repressed popular resistance, and has always regrouped and strategized to perpetually stay in power to accumulate wealth from the common patrimony of state at the detriment of the masses.

Torturing, violating, or massacring which Fanon spoke of, that colonialism cannot be understood without their possibilities are very visible in Benue State. This is mirrored in the instigation of ethnic and sectional conflicts in the state which is more of the ruling elite programme of causing “disaster” to divert the attention of the masses from the violent economic and social policies imposed on them, especially since the return of democracy in 1999. Some policies aggravate multidimensional poverty, inequality, and hopelessness which manifests in unemployment, unpaid salaries, abandonment of infrastructure, and public funded education, security, and health care. As it were, the masses in the state are not unaware of the fact that the ruling elite governance structure rests on the necessity of torturing, raping, and committing massacres as Frantz Fanon philosophized. The postulation by Fanon about the colonialist thinking and perception that “at times these Manichaeism goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the native, or to speak plainly, it turns him into an animal (Fanon, 1961, p. 41)” is very true of the situation in Benue State. The refusal to pay pensioners in the state their due and labeling them as “dead” people that should be ignored and their maltreatment by the ruling elite sponsored thugs represents what was obtainable during colonialism that prompted Frantz Fanon’s postulations as outlined above. The calling of civil servants’ animals by the ruling elite in the face of their agitation for salaries to be paid was also put to Fanon’s postulations.

Frantz Fanon’s philosophy on decolonization is also very relevant to what obtains in Benue State. Decolonization in today’s Benue State could be interpreted to mean the expressed discontentment with the ruling elite’s domination, oppression, and exploitation. It is a programme of complete disorder, to use Fanon’s words. And as Fanon noted, this expressed dissatisfaction with the ruling elite’s domination, oppression, and exploitation which has led to the socioeconomic conditions of the people of the state cannot be pursued in a friendly manner or understanding. This is because; the pains experienced by the people drive the process of dissatisfaction. This explains why Fanon said, that dissatisfaction is willed, called for, and demanded. The elite domination, oppression, and exploitation of the masses make the people call and demand a reversal that is willed to take their destinies into

their hands as seen in the Benue masses' struggle to emancipate themselves which violence is not spared.

It is unarguable that the masses in Benue State are frustrated with their socioeconomic conditions and there exists sufficient evidence to prove this. Blaire (2020) outlined the indices of frustration to include but are not limited to lower expectations of life in general (and low self-esteem), higher rates of drug and alcohol abuse, abject, debilitating poverty, susceptibility to mental illness, and low life expectancy. All these indices individually and collectively are not in short supply in Benue State. It is not an overstatement to say that the majority of the masses in Benue State have low expectations of their lives in general. The human development index which captures a multidimensional and capacity approach to economic development including especially health, education, and income shows that Benue State occupies a distant 21<sup>st</sup> position out of the 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory with a paltry score of 0.32 for the year 2017 (UNDP, 2019). With this result, it is certain that if Rosenberg's (1965) self-esteem scale is measured in Benue State, it will produce a very negative result. It will not be a surprise that many people will strongly agree on the whole that they are not satisfied with themselves. They will certainly express feelings of uselessness and the majority will be inclined to think that they are a failure which is indisputable among other critical indices that measure people's self-esteem. So, having established that the masses in Benue State are sufficiently frustrated which is a sequel to the ruling elite oppression; it is only natural as Fanon philosophized, that some section of the masses will engage in aggressive behaviour. And aggression cannot be carried out with a profound effect without the use of SALWs. As it were, the frustrated masses in Benue State find these SALWs necessary and useful tools of aggression hence their proliferation in Nigeria and Benue State in particular.

It would be an understatement to suggest that the people of Benue State lack the basics of life. The regular payment of workers' salaries, entitlements, and pensions to retirees, and welfare packages for the masses to boost human development by strengthening human potential are among the things that the masses in Benue State want from the state's ruling class. Others include the availability of jobs, the development of an environment that supports people in starting and maintaining long-term profitable enterprises, and the provision of reasonably priced public schools to guarantee high school enrollment and a high literacy level. Due to the ruling class's ostensibly purposeful failure to offer these, there is a significant disparity in wealth and income. Not more than a fraction of what the masses in Benue State seek is realizable. The civil servants in Benue State are owed several months of salaries in arrears, and until recently, the salaries were not even regular, much less other entitlements, which they have not enjoyed for very many years. This has created a discrepancy between what the masses in Benue State seek and what is attainable, and it is significant enough that it has generated anger and the propensity toward violence, hence the proliferation of SALWs in the state as the tools of violence.

There is also no single welfare package designed and implemented by the Benue State Government to build the capacity of the poor, empower them, and reduce poverty. Rather, the ones designed and being implemented by the Federal Government under the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP) has been hijacked by the ruling elite and their cronies in the state. The ruling elite and their cronies are the beneficiaries of programmes that are conceived as ways of fostering resource distribution, especially for women, youth, and children, to contribute to poverty reduction and economic development. As it were, the number of beneficiaries is not proportionate to the people in need of such welfare packages

in the state; hence, the target of the programmes has been thwarted. As such, there is a significant difference between what the masses in Benue State seek and what is attainable, and it is apparent that it has generated anger and the inclination to violence has escalated, hence the proliferation of SALWs in the state as tools of aggression.

Also, the poor working conditions and lack of motivation of staff in public schools in Benue State, as reflected in but not limited to owed arrears of salaries and lack of refresher programmes, have made the public schools unattractive for some people to enroll their wards in them. These, coupled with the high cost of especially state-owned tertiary institutions, explain the exodus of Benue indigenes to especially the far northern part of the country to seek education. Those who could not afford education either way have been seen dropping out, which explains the rising number of out-of-school children and adult illiteracy in the state. The Federal Ministry of Education, as cited in Duru (2020), indicates that as of November 2020, Benue State accounted for over 260,000 out-of-school children in Nigeria, thereby placing the state on the list of states with low school enrollment rates in the country. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2012) also held that 54.9 percent of the adult population in Benue State is illiterate. So, the inability of the ruling elite in Benue State to provide functional, affordable, and staff-motivated public schools for the people has created significant differences between what the masses in Benue State seek and what is attainable. As it were, it has generated anger and the inclination to violence, which has escalated, hence the proliferation of SALWs in the state as tools of aggression.

The situation of unemployment in Benue State is also pathetic and at variance with the expectations of the people from the ruling elite. Sasu (2022) averred that Benue State registered by the end of 2020 the highest unemployment rate in Nigeria, as the figures were 43.5 percent using the most common international definition of unemployment as a gauge. This means that 43.5 percent of the labour force in Benue State did nothing or worked for less than 20 hours a week. With these statistics, it is crystal clear that there is a great difference between what people in Benue State seek from the ruling elite and what is realizable. The situation is not anything different from the creation of an enabling environment for businesses to thrive in the state. So, anger and the inclination to violence are not in short supply in this unfortunate situation, and as it were, the proliferation of SALWs, which are tools of aggression, has become necessary. Fanon's philosophy on violence is also very relevant to the understanding of the prevailing socioeconomic conditions and the proliferation of SALWs in Benue State. Fanon's assertion that "... it is precisely at the moment he realizes his humanity that he begins to sharpen the weapons with which he will secure his victory (Fanon, 1961, p. 42) suggests that people will take to violence if they are dominated, oppressed, and exploited, as is the case in Benue State. Viewed from the prism of Fanon's philosophy, therefore, violence is an unpleasant way of alerting the elite of the masses' realized humanity. As Fanon said, for the frustrated masses in the state, violence represents the absolute line of action to secure their victory from the inhuman treatment that they have been subjected to by the elite. This is because, as Fanon philosophized, the use of violence by some sections of the masses in Benue State frees them from their inferiority complex, despair, and inaction, makes them fearless, and restores their self-respect. Violence is a cleansing force, and its tools are SALWs; hence, they are proliferated in the state.

For the masses in Benue State, the ruling elite are the major cause of their frustration. This is because the ruling elite has seemingly deliberately refused to provide what the

masses seek from them, both in quantity and quality, disproportionate to the teeming population of the people. The ruling elite in Benue State is also the major cause of the masses' frustration because they have consistently dashed the hopes of the masses in the face of persistent increases in expectations as reflected in the socioeconomic conditions without a genuine commitment to addressing the issues. In effect, there has been a demand for SALWs as the most potent tools of aggression, with the ruling elite as the major target. Aggression has also been directed at the security agents who shield the ruling elite because they constitute a threat to the SALW-bearing people in Benue State. As a result, many security agents have been killed by these SALW-bearing people, in addition to some of the ruling elite they shield. However, not only the ruling elite, who are the major cause of frustration for the masses in the state, are the target of aggression. Many people's lives have been cut short by SALWs bearing people in the state. In this category are real and/or perceived informants of the ruling elite and security agents, people who are opposed to the aggression of the frustrated SALW-bearing aggressors, those who resist the "authority" of the SALW-bearing people, and innocent people who are caught in crossfires between these aggressors and security agents.

Though the violence by some sections of the masses in Benue State cannot be said to be a direct collective confrontation of the governance of the ruling elite, members of the ruling elite are individually targeted by the SALW-bearing section of the masses. There are also strong tendencies that, if not brought under control, may sooner or later snowball into seeking to take over and control the governance of the state, as it was during colonialism that spurred Frantz Fanon to philosophize. After all, the collection of taxes and levies by SALWs bearing people in some areas of the state and the constitution of "courts" or "judges" for settlement of disputes among people, and some people are more comfortable taking their cases to them without let or hindrance by security agencies in the state, is a clear indication of usurpation of the powers of the ruling elite governance in the state.

Though we acknowledged the fact that the issue of proliferation of SALWs is a global problem, hence in our introductory segment, we also mentioned the developed countries as also being plagued with the menace. And issues of frustration resulting from oppression and other forms of enslavement, which give rise to aggression that demands the use of SALWs, are also not lacking in those countries. In the United States of America, for instance, the vice chair of the Joint Economic Committee of the United States Congress, Don Beyer, admitted the visible economic and political progress made by Black Americans as reflected in the rise in the number of Black members of Congress and the House of Representatives over the past decades. He was nevertheless, quick to note that "these very visible signs of improvement, however, mask deep inequities that relegate tens of millions of Black Americans to second-class status, with far fewer opportunities to achieve good health, political influence, prosperity, and security than other Americans" (Beyer, 2020, p. 1). This is also reflected in the country's criminal justice system, where Thompson (2020, p. 226) noted that "the overzealous policing of people of colour, and their disproportionate subjection to ill-treatment at the hands of police in the nation's cities and correction officers in the nation's prisons eventually led them to rebel in the 1960s." Over sixty years after the rebellion of the people of colour, their oppression has not abated, as incidents of police brutality against them are still on the rise. Between July 17, 2014, and April 4, 2022, Lyn (2022) indicated that there were fourteen incidents of white police officers brazenly murdering Black Americans. The task to put a stop to such incidents is arduous. This is mirrored in the not too fruitful several protests and movements against this in the country

that ironically champions human rights. The ruling elite's oppression of the masses, which has led to their frustration in America, is obviously the reason for the rising gun violence witnessed in the country. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (2020, p. 1) justifies the oppression of the American masses as mirrored in income and wealth inequalities as the reason for frustration and violence in the country when it held that to address the problem of gun violence, "policymakers must address the social and economic inequalities that are the root causes of gun violence in impacted communities of colour". This therefore shows how relevant Frantz Fanon's political philosophy is in analyzing the issue of the proliferation of SALWs.

The justification for Frantz Fanon's political philosophy in analyzing the socioeconomic conditions and the proliferation of SALWs in Benue State is evident from its ability to concretely, independently, wholly, and convincingly explicate the proliferation of SALWs in Benue State. It has explained the Benue masses' frustration in a manner that is unparalleled by any known philosophy in the social sciences. The philosophy has laid bare in a captivating manner the deprivations that the Benue masses have suffered, as mirrored in the socioeconomic conditions of the people occasioned by the ruling elite, which has frustrated them. The socioeconomic conditions of the people of Benue as a source of frustration are also adequately explained, devoid of ambiguities and gaps. This is unequal to all philosophies and theories that seek to explain the menace of the proliferation of SALWs. The philosophy has also unequivocally explained in an unprecedented manner why members of the ruling elite, their relations, associates, and cronies are attacked by frustrated and aggressive SALW-bearing people in Benue State, hence its choice in this study.

### **A Critique of Fanon's Political Philosophy**

Fanon's postulations are heavily criticized on the basis of his view on the indispensability of violence as a solution to the problem of colonialism. As Smith (1973, p. 32) noted, "Fanon's view of the necessity of violence as part of the anticolonial struggle has been a particular topic of contention for critics, commonly leading to accusations of 'barbarism and terrorism'". The effects of violence are manifold, as it is found to increase incidences of depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, and suicide; increase the risk of cardiovascular disease; and cause premature mortalities. Though the proliferation of SALWs, which Fanon's philosophy finds useful in understanding its prevalence in the prevailing socioeconomic conditions in Benue State, may not be exclusively culpable for the indices of the effects of violence, it could however be said to have and/or will aggravate the situation in the state. The depressive and anxiety figures in Nigeria for 2016 were 7, 079, 815 and 4, 894, 557, representing 3.9 percent and 2.7 percent of the country's population, respectively. The proliferation of SALWs in the country and Benue State in particular can also not escape culpability, though not exclusively for the occurrence of the 42 percent post-traumatic stress disorder in the country, as contended by Sheihk *et al.*, as cited in Aluh *et al.* (2020). WHO (2019) also indicates that Nigeria had 17,710 suicide cases in 2016, which is the highest among countries on the African continent. According to Odili *et al.* (2020), 38.1 percent of Nigerians were also hypertensive in 2017, indicating that the proliferation of SALWs cannot be abated.

Though evidence exists that Fanon's solution to the ruling elite domination of the masses has rather led to another problem, his critics seem not to have seen this as a consequence of the ruling elite oppression. In other words, the frustration that has bred the aggression of the masses leading to the proliferation of SALWs in Benue State is apparently

not considered. Perhaps Fanon's abhorrence of negotiation for independence stems from the fact that anything gotten on the platter of gold is not valued. This conceivably explains why the conditions that have accentuated the proliferation of SALWs are most prevalent in countries that got their independence devoid of violence, of which Nigeria, which has birthed Benue State, is one. This is reflected in these countries' Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI scores of Benin, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria, who negotiated their independence, are 0.55, 0.43, 0.39, and 0.54, respectively, for the year 2019 (Statista, 2020). This is unlike Algeria, whose HDI is 0.75 for the same year. In spite of criticism of Fanon's thoughts, they have deeply influenced social movements beyond the African continent. They provide valuable insights into the effects of the ruling elite's dominance, exploitation, oppression, and insults to the masses across the globe.

### **Conclusion**

It is clear from the foregoing analysis that the deplorable socioeconomic condition of the people of Benue State is responsible for the high rate of the proliferation of SALWs in the state. This is because the high rate of unemployment, low income rate, inequalities, unmet expectations from the ruling elite, and other factors have made some sections of the people of the state susceptible to crime, which demands the use of SALWs as tools, hence their widespread in the state. This situation has long been envisioned by Frantz Fanon, whose philosophy was influenced by the brutal Vichy regime in Martinique, the effect of colonial violence on the Algerian psyche during the country's war of independence, and other influences. As it were, Fanon's philosophy persuasively explains the Benue situation in spite of the philosophy's criticism of fostering depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, suicide, increased risk of cardiovascular diseases, and premature deaths. This suggests that the solution to the proliferation of SALWs in the state does not necessarily lie in kinetic approaches, as is being done, but in addressing the socioeconomic conditions of the people.

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Article

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### AN ANALYSIS OF THE ONTOLOGY OF TECHNOLOGICAL ARTEFACTS IN ERNST KAPP'S THEORY OF ORGAN PROJECTION

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#### Abstract

This study investigates the ontology of technological artefacts adopting Ernst Kapp's theory of Organ Projection. In this theory, Kapp proposes that technological artefacts are not merely utilitarian tools but meaningful extensions of human faculties that play a constitutive role in human self-understanding. However, this projectionist framework, while historically significant, offers an anthropologically rich yet ultimately limited account of artefact ontology. Thus, drawing a critical-analytic methodology, this paper interrogates Kapp's perspective that artefacts are externalizations of human organs and mental faculties; mirroring the human subject in material form. It also evaluates Kapp's ontological position by juxtaposing his Organ Projection theory with alternative philosophical models, including Martin Heidegger's concept of *readiness-to-hand*, Gilbert Simondon's theory of individuation, and post-phenomenological accounts of technological mediation. Through this comparative engagement, the paper critiques Kapp's biological reductionism, his inattention to socio-technical dynamics, and his neglect of the emergent and multi-stable nature of contemporary technologies. The paper concludes that while Kapp successfully initiates a framework in which technology is essential to human self-reflection and development, his ontology remains too anthropocentric and static. Consequently, the paper takes a moderate position; it recommends a more comprehensive ontological model that views artefacts not only as projections but also as autonomous and context-sensitive entities capable of shaping human behavior, perception, and social structure. By reassessing Kapp's contribution within a broader philosophical discourse, this paper not only updates his insights in the genealogy

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of philosophy of technology but also advances a more robust, dynamic and relational understanding of technological artefacts in the digital and post-industrial age.

## **Introduction**

The intersection between philosophy and technology has emerged as a crucial space for interrogating how human beings relate to the tools and artefacts they create. At the core of this inquiry lies the question of the ontology of technological artefacts. Hence, one queries into what technological artefacts are in themselves and how they exist in relation to human nature. While modern technology studies often focus on the functionality, social impact, or ethical implications of artefacts, there remains a profound philosophical need to understand their ontological foundations. Ernst Kapp, a 19th-century German philosopher and a pioneer in the philosophy of technology, offers an essential but underexplored framework for this understanding. His notion of Organ Projection posits that all technological artefacts are externalized extensions of human organs, functions, or faculties. This bold thesis establishes a deeply anthropological view of technology that precedes and anticipates much of 20th-century thought. Kapp's *Elements of a Philosophy of Technology*, published in 1877, is one of the earliest systematic philosophical engagements with technology. He argued that technologies such as tools, machines, and communication devices are not merely instruments serving external purposes but are ontologically tied to human embodiment and cognition. For instance, the hammer is not just a striking tool but a projection of the human fist; the ship is an extension of the human body's ability to navigate. As Kapp himself writes, "technology is the organ projection of man" (Kapp 50), a formulation that places artefacts within the structure of human corporeality and cognitive life. This theory of organ projection situates technological artefacts within the very structure of human being, thus challenging the long-held Cartesian dualism between subject and object, nature and culture, self and world.

The originality of Kapp's insights has not received sustained attention in contemporary discussions of the philosophy of technology. Modern theorists such as Martin Heidegger, Gilbert Simondon, Don Ihde, and Bruno Latour have dominated the field, often without reference to Kapp's early contributions. As Andrew Feenberg notes, "Kapp's theory of Organ Projection is an overlooked treasure in the history of technology studies" (Feenberg 17). This paper seeks to fill that lacuna by offering a comprehensive ontological analysis of technological artefacts through the perspective of Kapp's philosophy. It asks: What does it mean for an artefact to be a projection of the human body or mind? What ontological status do these projections acquire? Can Kapp's framework help us make sense of contemporary technological artefacts such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and bioengineering? The central aim of this paper is to analyze and critically evaluate the ontology of technological artefacts in Ernst Kapp's philosophical thought, focusing on how his Organ Projection theory reveals the deep interconnection between humans and their technologies. This inquiry is not merely historical but seeks to apply Kapp's insights to contemporary contexts, thereby bridging early philosophical thought with present-day technological realities. The significance of this research lies in its potential to provide a more coherent and human-centered understanding of technology—one that moves beyond utilitarian or instrumentalist perspectives to grasp the ontological implications of our technological existence.

## **Kapp's Theory of Organ Projection**

Ernst Kapp's theory of Organ Projection is the foundation stone of his philosophy of technology, articulated most prominently in his 1877 seminal work titled, *Elements of a*

*Philosophy of Technology*. This principle asserts that technological artefacts are not merely external or accidental additions to human existence but are, rather, projections or externalizations of human organs and mental faculties. Through this anthropological lens, Kapp provides one of the earliest systematic attempts to define the *essence* of technological artefacts. His insight foreshadows major developments in the philosophy of technology while offering a unique, physically grounded ontology. The principle of organ projection holds that all tools, machines, and technical systems originate as extensions of the human body. In Kapp analysis, “all technical constructions can be interpreted as projections of human organs” (50). This notion reconfigures the relationship between humans and their artefacts by framing tools not merely as inert instruments of utility, but as living expressions of human embodiment. For example, a hammer is not merely a device to strike nails but a material amplification of the human fist; similarly, a telescope is a projection of the eye, extending the capacity for visual perception. Thus, artefacts are ontologically continuous with the human body, that is, they are materializations of bodily possibilities.

Kapp’s organ projection thesis is grounded in a broader anthropological and idealist framework influenced by German Idealism, particularly Hegel. However, his contribution is original in that it places the human body, not abstract reason or spirit as seen in Hegel, at the center of technological genesis. According to Kapp, projection is not a metaphor; it is a literal, observable process by which internal capacities are exteriorized into the world. He states that this projection is “not arbitrary but necessary and lawful, governed by the inner constitution of man” (53). This necessity gives artefacts their ontological status: they are not separate from the self but manifestations of its structure and logic. This theory introduces a novel understanding of artefact creation. Rather than being defined primarily by their utility or mechanical function, technologies are meaningful because they mirror human faculties. In Kapp’s words, “Technology becomes an expressive organ, akin to language, through which humanity comes to know itself” (58). In this sense, Kapp’s projection is both ontological and epistemological: artefacts are part of human being and, simultaneously, media for self-understanding. Through creating and using artefacts, humanity reflects upon and refines its own nature. Andrew Feenberg recognizes the originality and foresight of Kapp’s organ projection theory in his reflections on early philosophies of technology. Feenberg observes, “Kapp’s organ projection is not merely a functional metaphor; it is a deep ontological insight into the continuity between human embodiment and the technical object” (17). Feenberg further notes that Kapp’s theory escapes both the technological determinism and the naive instrumentalism that plagued later 20th-century thought. By positing that technological artefacts are internal to the structure of human being, Kapp prefigures phenomenological and post-phenomenological approaches that treat tools as mediating the subject-world relation. Similarly, Don Ihde argues that “Technologies are not merely means to ends; they transform the conditions under which humans experience and engage the world” (29). This sentiment resonates deeply with Kapp’s idea that technological artefacts, as organ projections, restructure human orientation. The telescope, for instance, does not just increase sight but redefines what it means to *see*, thereby shifting the boundaries of perceptual experience.

One of the clearest implications of Kapp’s organ projection is his denial of ontological autonomy of technological artefacts. He claims that artefacts are not ontologically autonomous entities; they are derivative yet indispensable extensions of human being. This is neither to deny artefacts their reality nor to suggest they are mere shadows of human form. Rather, artefacts are co-constitutive, hence, they emerge from human faculties and, in

turn, help define and refine those faculties. As Kapp explain further, “the artefact is at once a result of man’s powers and a condition for their fuller realization” (Kapp 61). This dialectical relationship ensures that projection is not a one-time event but a continuous process of mutual shaping. Scholars have also noted the radical implications of Kapp’s projection principle for contemporary technological society. For instance, Bernhard Irrgang comments that, “Kapp’s philosophy shows us that technology must be understood from the inside out – that it is not something we simply use, but something we already are” (94). This interpretation highlights the foundational nature of organ projection in understanding modernity, where technological artefacts have become inseparable from identity, labour, and sociality. It is crucial, however, to emphasize that Kapp’s principle is not meant to reduce artefacts to human anatomy. Rather, organ projection reflects a symbolic and functional relation: artefacts preserve the form of human capacities while exceeding their biological limits. The wheel, for instance, is not a literal leg, but it is a projection of the leg’s locomotion. Through such projections, human beings transcend their natural limitations and create new realms of action and perception. In Kapp’s vision, this is not a mark of alienation but a testament to human creativity. To corroborate this, “the human being is not diminished by technology,” Kapp argues, “but multiplied in space, power, and thought” (64). This projection is both a generative and reflective process: it gives rise to tools and systems while also offering a mirror for human self-understanding. Artefacts, in this framework, are not external to human life but fundamentally *of* it. They are born from the structure of the human organism and, in return, help articulate that very structure. Kapp’s principle thus lays a philosophical foundation for viewing technology not merely as utility but as ontology, that is, a living continuation of the human self into the world.

### **Technology and Human Nature**

Rather than conceiving of technology as an external tool that humans happen to use, Kapp argue that technology is constitutive of human existence. From this view, to be human is already to be technological. This perspective radically reorients our understanding of both artefacts and human beings, suggesting that technology is not simply a product of human action but a revealing of human nature itself. Kapp establishes that all technological artefacts are externalizations of human organs and mental faculties. Thus, technological artefacts arise not as chance inventions, but as material manifestations of the human body and mind. This projection is not symbolic but factual in its philosophical implication, thus, artefacts are ontologically continuous with human nature. They are not independent objects imposed upon the world but are manifestations of our embodied capacities. Kapp further elaborates, that “the entire history of technology is a history of self-knowledge, for in projecting his organs into the world, man learns to understand himself” (58). This understanding finds strong resonance in contemporary thought. Peter-Paul Verbeek asserts that “technology and human existence are fundamentally intertwined,” adding that “humans shape technologies, and technologies shape humans in return” (12). Verbeek’s insight captures the reciprocity at the heart of the human-technology relation. While humans may initiate technological projection, the resulting artefacts, once integrated into daily life, feed back into human behaviour, perception, and identity. For example, the development of writing restructured memory and cognition, and the use of digital devices (like cell phones) today alters attention spans, communication styles, and even emotional expression.

Furthermore, Kapp's vision challenges traditional dualisms that separate humans from their tools. In classical philosophy, tools were typically viewed as neutral instruments; external to the self, defined only by their utility. Kapp overturns this by insisting that technological artefacts arise from and reveal the internal structure of the human being. As Andrew Feenberg notes, "The technical object is not simply a means to an end but a crystallization of human capacities, desires, and social relations" (23). Technology, in this sense, is not optional or alien, it is essential to human flourishing and self-realization. Martin Heidegger also offers a significant contribution to this discourse, although with a different emphasis. In his essay *The Question Concerning Technology*, Heidegger writes, "the essence of technology is by no means anything technological" (4). Rather than focusing on function or projection, Heidegger views technology as a mode of revealing which for him refers to a way in which the world is disclosed to human understanding. He argues that modern technology enframes the world, ordering it as a standing reserve to be used. However, even in this critique, Heidegger implies that technology is integral to how humans relate to Being—it is not peripheral, but ontologically grounded in human existence. Similarly, Don Ihde emphasizes that technologies mediate the relationship between humans and the world. He writes, "technologies are non-neutral; they are transformational in the ways humans and the world are experienced" (Ihde 45). This idea echoes Kapp's insight that the use of technology is not a simple interaction with an object, but a reconfiguration of perception, agency, and environment. For example, eyeglasses change not only what we see but how we inhabit space. Smartphones alter our sense of presence, memory, and even identity.

From this perspective, human nature cannot be fully understood apart from the technological artefacts through which it is realized. Technologies do not simply serve needs, they create new forms of human activity, new desires, and even new conceptions of the self. In this context Bernhard Irrgang observes, "technology must be understood from the inside out—that it is not something we simply use, but something we already are" (Irrgang 94). This insight underlines a core truth of Kapp's Organ Projection thesis that the boundaries between the human and the technical are not fixed but porous, ever-evolving through the dialectic of projection and reflection. Consequently, one can say that technology is not accidental to human nature; it is constitutive of it. Human beings are not simply tool users; they are, in a profound sense, technological beings. Therefore, in Kapp's perspective, understanding technology is inseparable from understanding ourselves. It requires more than analysis of mechanical efficiency or social impact; it demands ontological reflection. In the final analysis, human nature and technology are co-constitutive: each finds its meaning, form, and evolution in relation to the other. As man continues to project himself into an increasingly digital and artificial world, the question of what it means to be human must remain deeply entangled with the question of what it means to create and inhabit a technological reality.

### **Artefacts: Extension or Independent Entities**

The ontological status of technological artefacts remains a central and contested issue in the philosophy of technology. Are artefacts mere human extensions (tools designed to amplify biological or cognitive capacities) or do they attain a degree of independence once externalized into the world? This question strikes at the heart of how one should understand agency, responsibility, and human-technology interaction. While Ernst Kapp treats artefacts as organ-extensions rooted in human embodiment, contemporary thinkers challenge the sufficiency of this framework by emphasizing the emergent autonomy, mediating function,

and social embeddedness of technological objects. Kapp's thesis of Organ Projection, as explored above, sets the foundation for thinking of artefacts as anthropological expressions. According to him, all artefacts are rooted in a bodily analogy, that is, they are projections of human organs, such that "each technical form is grounded in an organic form" (Kapp 49). The artefact is, therefore, ontologically subordinate to the human, deriving its meaning and purpose from the human structure it replicates or extends. This view places human intentionality at the center of technological genesis and function. However, critics argue that such a reductionist view fails to account for the complexity of contemporary technological systems. The assumption that artefacts remain passive tools under human control no longer holds in an era of autonomous systems, artificial intelligence, and complex socio-technical networks. Shannon Vallor directly challenged this assumption when she writes, "technological artefacts develop trajectories of use and impact that cannot be wholly anticipated or controlled by their designers" (64). Her observation introduces a key shift in perspective; that artefacts, though born of human intention, can exceed that intention through dynamic interactions with users, environments, and other artefacts.

Indeed, modern technologies often enter contexts that imbue them with meanings and functions far beyond their original design. Pieter Vermaas and Anthonie Meijers captured this duality in asserting that "artefacts possess a dual nature: they are both physical objects and carriers of functions embedded in socio-technical systems" (101). This insight stresses that artefacts are never isolated material entities; they are enmeshed within relational networks including economic, political and ethical networks that endow them with varying roles and effects. A smartphone, for instance, may begin as a communicative device but soon becomes a surveillance node, a tool of labour exploitation, or a medium of political dissent. In each case, the artefact evolves in significance based on its systemic insertion, not merely its physical or functional properties. This complexity challenges the traditional view that artefacts are ontologically secondary. Instead, recent philosophies of technology emphasize the partial autonomy of artefacts by emphasizing their ability to influence, constrain, and redirect human action. Don Ihde's theory of Multi-stability is central here. He contends that "technologies are non-neutral; they transform experience" and can be appropriated for different uses depending on the user and context (*Postphenomenology and Technoscience*, 36). This instability of meaning undermines any static view of artefacts as mere tools. Instead, artefacts emerge as dynamic mediators that co-constitute human-world relations. Their function is not fixed at the point of design but evolves as they circulate through diverse interpretive frameworks and user communities. Moreover, the emergence of intelligent and adaptive systems raises ontological concerns that Organ Projection alone cannot resolve. As Susan Schneider noted in *Artificial You*, "AI systems can operate with levels of complexity and adaptiveness that render their behaviour opaque even to their creators" (72). This phenomenon signals a break from earlier technological models where the artefact's behaviour could be reliably predicted and its agency fully traced back to human input. With machine learning and self-modifying code, artefacts no longer simply project human intention, they develop patterned responses and evolve based on algorithmic logic and environmental feedback.

### **Kapp's Technological Artefacts and Human Self-Understanding**

As already established, Kapp's position on technological artefacts remains profound. Artefacts are not only products of human faculties but also reflective surfaces through which humans gain insight into themselves. Far beyond utility or function, technological objects in

Kapp's framework play a hermeneutical role. They mirror, disclose, and even deepen human self-awareness. Kapp contends that technological artefacts are externalizations of human bodily and cognitive structures. However, this is not simply a material or mechanical claim; it is fundamentally epistemic. Kapp writes, "it is through these projections that man begins to see himself, as though reflected back from the things he has made" (Kapp 61). Artefacts, in this light, function as mirrors. Just as language enables introspection through externalized thought, so do tools and machines disclose human structure, intention, and limitations. This feedback loop between artefact creation and self-awareness places Kapp's thought in alignment with later hermeneutic traditions. His position implies that by studying the material artefacts a culture produces – its tools, infrastructures, and machines – one can decode the implicit self-conceptions and existential orientations of that culture. Hans Achterhuis relates that, "Kapp's originality lies in his claim that technology is not just something we use but something through which we learn who we are" (143). This makes Kapp a precursor to what would later be recognized as the cultural and philosophical turn in technology studies. Kapp's insights emerge with particular clarity when he addresses the telegraph system, which he interprets as a technical analogue of the human nervous system. He argues that "the transmission of messages across distances in the telegraph mirrors the structure of communication within the body itself" (87). Here, the artefact not only extends a bodily function but also offers a clearer understanding of that function. The telegraph becomes a material model that elucidates the distributed nature of human perception and cognition. Thus, the artefact becomes not just a tool but a informative structure providing a concrete means of conceptualizing the abstract.

Contemporary scholars continue to draw out this interpretive dimension of Kapp's theory. Michael Friedewald, in his historical analysis, observes, "Kapp's theory suggests that technological artefacts are not neutral but are laden with anthropological significance, they are repositories of human self-knowledge in material form" (97). This anthropological layer complicates the idea of technology as value-free or strictly instrumental. Tools are crystallizations of the human condition, material answers to existential questions, and external forms of inward states. Furthermore, this account of technology as self-reflective provides a unique perspective on the continuity between the organic and the artificial. Little wonder that Bernhard Irrgang argued that, "In Kapp's conception, the boundary between the natural and the artificial becomes blurred; artefacts belong to the human as organically as limbs and language" (102). Artefacts are not alien impositions upon a pure human essence; they are constitutive elements of human existence. To study technology, then, is not to investigate a secondary domain of applied science but to engage directly with the unfolding of human subjectivity in material form. Kapp's conception of self-understanding through artefacts resonates with modern philosophical attempts to ground identity in practice. Philosopher David Kaplan, though writing in a very different context, indirectly affirms Kapp's insight when he writes, "what we build reflects what we value, fear, and hope for – and what we overlook" (34). Technological artefacts serve as unintended confessionals; they speak truths about their makers that even those makers may not fully grasp. A surveillance camera, for instance, not only performs a security function but also reflects an ethos of distrust, control, and visibility.

In this way, the artefact reveals psychological and political dimensions that extend beyond its function. Additionally, Kapp's approach anticipates phenomenological and postphenomenological traditions that see technology as mediating human-world relations. Unlike Heidegger, who saw modern technology as a danger to authentic being, Kapp views

artefacts as pedagogical—teaching humans about their capacities and their place in nature. Jan Kyrre Berg Olsen observes that, “Kapp does not problematize the artefact-world relation as alienating but treats it as revelatory. It is through our externalized organs that the internal becomes known” (62). This underscores Kapp’s optimism about technology as a vehicle for epistemic expansion. This optimistic vision makes Kapp’s theory particularly valuable in contemporary debates about digital technology and artificial intelligence. In a world increasingly shaped by non-biological systems of cognition, the question of what it means to be human is once again tied to technological artefacts. Kapp offers a framework for approaching this not with fear but with philosophical curiosity. As the boundaries between human and machine blur, Kapp reminds implies that it is precisely in these artefacts that man encounters himself anew. Artefacts, in Kapp’s view, are not merely utilitarian projections but epistemic mirrors – material forms that reflect, clarify, and extend human self-conception. His theory challenges reductive accounts of technology and affirms the artefact’s role in human development not only physically but spiritually and intellectually. In doing so, Kapp lays the groundwork for a philosophy of technology that is not about control or efficiency, but about self-discovery.

### **Juxtaposing Kapp’s Organ Projection and Heidegger’s Ready-to-Hand**

The philosophical traditions of Ernst Kapp and Martin Heidegger present two foundational approaches to understanding the ontology of technological artefacts. Kapp’s Organ Projection and Heidegger’s concept of the “ready-to-hand”, each offer rich but distinct frameworks for thinking about the relationship between human beings and their tools. While both thinkers reject simplistic, instrumentalist views of technology, their philosophies differ in motivation, methodology, and outcome. Kapp views technology as a mirror of human faculties, a vehicle for self-understanding. Heidegger, in contrast, situates technological artefacts within a broader existential analytic, emphasizing their embeddedness in practice and their role in disclosing the world. While Kapp treats artefacts as “projections of bodily organs,” arguing that technologies “externalize” human faculties into material form (56), Heidegger’s account or “ready-to-hand” demonstrate a slightly different ontological relationship between man and technology. Martin Heidegger’s account of the ready-to-hand (*zuhanden*) in *Being and Time* (1927) departs from a representational or anatomical model. Heidegger rejects the notion that tools are primarily understood through abstraction or projection. Instead, tools become intelligible through use; in practical engagement, not theoretical observation. He writes, “the less we just stare at the hammering, and the more we use it, the more primordial our relationship to it becomes” (Heidegger 98). In other words, the meaning of a hammer is not revealed by analyzing it or by identifying it as an extension of the hand, but by hammering – by performing the activity for which it is meant. For Heidegger, this practical involvement discloses the world not as a collection of objects, but as a meaningful network of relations.

This leads to a striking divergence in their approaches. Kapp offers a biological metaphor for understanding technology, locating its essence in a mimetic relationship to the human body. In doing so, he ties technological meaning to the anatomical and psychological structure of the individual. Heidegger, on the other hand, proposes a phenomenological model in which meaning arises from being-in-the-world. The artefact’s significance is not derived from human anatomy but from its role within a referential whole, a context of equipment and activity. As Heidegger notes, “Equipment is essentially ‘something in-order-to’” (97), highlighting that an artefact is understood through its purposeful integration in the

lifeworld. Despite their methodological divergence, both thinkers agree that artefacts are more than inert objects. For Kapp, they are expressive and reflective; for Heidegger, they are revelatory and contextual. Yet the ontological implications differ. Kapp maintains that technology reveals the inner structure of the human being. Michael Kroes explains that, “Kapp’s philosophy emphasizes that human essence is realized and interpreted through the exteriorization of internal faculties into technological form” (63). By contrast, Heidegger holds that technology reveals the structure of worldhood. The ready-to-hand hammer is not about the human body per se, but about the totality of involvement that constitutes being-in-the-world. As a result, “Heidegger’s concern is not with the maker or the user but with the way in which technology shapes our mode of encountering reality” (Feenberg 142).

This distinction becomes even more pronounced when considering their views on breakdown. Heidegger argues that when an artefact ceases to function, when the hammer breaks, it shifts from “ready-to-hand” to “present-at-hand” (*vorhanden*), and we begin to notice it as an object. This moment of breakdown reveals the tool not as an extension of the body but as a withdrawn background structure that had silently supported our activity. “The hammering itself uncovers the specific ‘manipulability’ of the hammer,” Heidegger writes, “but when it breaks, it is for the first time that the hammer becomes an object of attention” (99). For Kapp, on the other hand, the artefact is always an object of reflection, even in use, it functions as a mirror through which human faculties become knowable. Another key difference lies in their normative implications. Kapp maintains a progressive view of technology, suggesting that the history of human development is also the history of self-realization through artefacts. Technology is thus humanizing. Heidegger, particularly in later works like *The Question Concerning Technology*, adopts a more hesitant stance, warning against the danger of enframing (*Gestell*), where the world is revealed only as a resource to be ordered and controlled. While his critique does not apply directly to the ready-to-hand concept, it casts a shadow over any overly optimistic embrace of technological mediation. It is premised on this that Olsen suggests that “Kapp and Heidegger can be viewed as engaging different moments of the same phenomenon; Kapp emphasizes the projection involved in creating tools, while Heidegger analyzes the world that those tools reveal in use” (75). This view opens the possibility of integrating Organ Projection and ready-to-hand as successive phases of artefact engagement; projection as design and ready-to-hand as lived experience. The juxtaposition of Kapp’s organ projection and Heidegger’s ready-to-hand reveals two robust and philosophically rich accounts of technology. Kapp situates technology within a self-reflective anthropological framework, asserting that artefacts are external mirrors of the human body and psyche. Heidegger, meanwhile, grounds technological meaning in practical, pre-reflective engagement, suggesting that artefacts disclose the relational structure of the world. Both approaches contribute uniquely to the philosophy of technology, namely; Kapp, by tracing technology to human self-understanding, and Heidegger by revealing how artefacts co-constitute the fabric of meaningful existence.

### **Critique of Kapp’s Ontology of Technological Artefacts**

Kapp’s ontology has raised concerns with regards to the biological reductionism inherent in the organ projection theory. Kapp maps artefacts directly onto the human body, drawing anatomical parallels between organs and tools. However, this approach often oversimplifies the complexity of technological development and design. As Don Ihde points out, “Kapp’s thesis tends to privilege a one-to-one correspondence that risks reducing technology to an exercise in anatomical mimicry” (*Technology and the Lifeworld* 113). Such reduction fails to

account for the layered cultural, symbolic, and functional dimensions that artefacts often exhibit. A telescope may project the eye, but it also embodies theoretical principles of optics, observational practices, and even cosmological assumptions. Furthermore, critics have noted that Kapp's theory is largely decontextualized, lacking sensitivity to the social and political structures in which technology operates. This was clearly explained by Langdon Winner when he argues that "Kapp's analysis overlooks the fact that artefacts are not just projections but products embedded in systems of power and authority" (41). By focusing exclusively on the individual human body as the basis for artefactual meaning, Kapp neglects the socio-technical networks that give rise to, shape, and constrain technological development. A railway system, for example, cannot be adequately understood as a projection of human locomotion alone; it must also be read as a function of industrial capitalism, urban planning, and labor politics. From the problems above one can deduce that Kapp's framework underestimates the emergent functionality and autonomy of technological artefacts. Once created, artefacts do not merely mirror their human origin but participate in shaping human activity, perception, and organization in unforeseen ways. It is not surprising, then, that Carl Mitcham remarks that, "the assumption that tools merely extend man obscures the dialectic whereby tools transform man's relation to nature and to himself" (152). The artefact is not just an expression of a pre-existing organ; it is a medium through which new forms of practice and thought become possible. Kapp's theory lacks the ontological flexibility to account for this transformation.

Additionally, the hermeneutic role Kapp assigns to artefacts, stating that they reflect human faculties back to the self is criticized for being overly idealized. While this interpretive function is insightful, it presumes a transparency between artefact and self-understanding that may not hold in practice. As Andrew Feenberg observes, "Kapp tends to treat the technological object as a static mirror, when in reality technologies often obscure, mystify, or even alienate the self they supposedly reflect" (65). Artefacts can conceal as much as they reveal, especially when wrapped in ideological or market-driven forms. A smartphone might reflect our communicative capacities, but it also constructs compulsions, filters perception, and mediates identity in complex, non-reflective ways. Peter-Paul Verbeek notes that "technological artefacts have hybrid roles: they are at once instruments, mediators, and actors within socio-material practices" (77). Consequently, one can say that Kapp's framework does not adequately address technological pluralism which is the fact that many artefacts serve multiple and shifting purposes. The notion of a singular organ-function relation fails to capture the multistable nature of modern technologies. A drone, for instance, cannot be straightforwardly analogized to any one human faculty; it encompasses vision, mobility, computation, and weaponization simultaneously. Kapp's model, being primarily analogical and anthropocentric, lacks the conceptual resources to describe this hybridity.

It can be noted, too, that contemporary philosophy of technology often emphasizes the relational ontology of artefacts relating to how artefacts gain meaning through interaction, not isolated projection. Gilbert Simondon's theory of individuation, for example, suggests that artefacts evolve through a process of technical becoming, rather than springing forth fully formed as expressions of human intention. Simondon purported that, "The technical object should be understood in terms of its genesis and internal coherence, not merely as a human instrument" (*On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects* 47). This developmental view contrasts with Kapp's static correspondence model and foregrounds the autonomy of technological evolution. As a result, while Ernst Kapp's theory of organ projection provides a foundational insight into the anthropological dimension of technology,

it falls short as a comprehensive ontology of technological artefacts. His analogical and bodily-centric model fails to accommodate the social, political, functional, and evolutionary complexity that artefacts exhibit in practice. The assumption that technologies are transparent projections of human faculties underestimates their transformative power and social embeddedness. Future philosophical inquiry must build upon Kapp's insights while moving beyond his limitations, incorporating more dynamic, relational, and contextual models of technological being.

### **Implications of Kapp's Ontological Stance on Technological Artefacts**

From our discussion so far, it becomes evident that Kapp's ontological stance offers a hesitant legacy for the philosophy of technology. His claim that technological artefacts are projections of human organs opens a provocative way of interpreting technology as an extension of the human self. Yet, this view entails far-reaching philosophical implications for how we conceive of human identity, technological agency, and the boundary between the natural and the artificial. While it fosters a deeper anthropological understanding of artefacts, it simultaneously risks diminishing the complexity and autonomy of technological systems in the modern era. One of the most immediate implications of Kapp's position is that it distorts the line between the organic and the mechanical. In projecting internal structures outward into the material world, human beings externalize their faculties in ways that shape their environments and, in turn, themselves. This results in a reciprocal relation between human nature and the technological artefacts it produces. As philosopher Siegfried Zielinski remarks, "Kapp is one of the first to locate the origin of machines within human embodiment, not outside of it" (Zielinski 49). The human is not merely a tool-using animal but a being that reveals and develops itself through technical creativity. This suggests that technology is not an alien force but part of human becoming. This is a notion that challenges narratives of technological alienation found in later thinkers like Heidegger.

However, Kapp's ontology also carries normative implications that can be problematic. By positioning artefacts as essentially derivative of human anatomy and intention, his framework renders them ontologically subordinate. This reinforces a human-centered teleology in which technology is always defined by its origin rather than its consequences or emergent roles. In an age of autonomous systems and algorithmic decision-making, such a view may be dangerously reductive. Artefacts like machine learning models or AI-generated content often escape the narrow boundaries of original human purpose, suggesting a more distributed and complex account of agency. Moreover, Kapp's stance implies a linear view of technological development tied to human evolution. As technology progresses, humans externalize increasingly abstract functions ranging from motor control to cognition into devices. This trajectory assumes a kind of progressivism that neglects historical ruptures, failures, and ethical dilemmas that often accompany technological advance. Gunther Anders critiques this view implicitly when he observes, "we are smaller than our products; they outgrow us and become incomprehensible to their own creators" (18). In this light, Kapp's projectionism appears idealistic, insufficiently attentive to the alienating and unintended dimensions of technological mediation. Nevertheless, Kapp's theory positively invites an anthropotechnical perspective, emphasizing that to understand human nature, one must also study the technologies that materialize it. The implication here is that artefacts are hermeneutic tools; they do not merely function, they interpret. This makes Kapp's thought invaluable for any ontology that seeks to integrate embodiment, expression, and the material constitution of meaning.

## **Conclusion**

This paper is grounded on the thesis that technological artefacts, as conceived by Ernst Kapp, are not merely tools or extensions of human functionality but ontologically significant entities that reflect and mediate human self-understanding. Drawing from Kapp's principle of organ projection, the study critically examines the claim that artefacts externalize human organs and cognitive faculties, thereby offering philosophical insight into human nature. However, the study goes beyond explicating Kapp's original thesis to explore and challenge the adequacy of this framework within contemporary debates in the philosophy of technology. The central argument pursued is that while Kapp's organ projection model effectively inaugurates a human-centered ontology of technology, it is ultimately limited by its reductive analogical method and its anthropocentric assumptions. The paper demonstrates that by reducing artefacts to one-to-one projections of human anatomy or psyche, Kapp overlooks the socio-technical, contextual, and emergent dimensions of technological existence. The study contends that technological artefacts are not passive reflections of human faculties but active participants in the shaping of human experience, perception, and social structure.

To support this position, the paper juxtaposes Kapp's views with other key philosophical approaches, including Heidegger's concept of readiness-to-hand, Simondon's individuation of technical objects, and postphenomenological accounts of technological mediation. These frameworks are employed to argue that the meaning and ontology of artefacts are relational, dynamic, and not strictly tied to original human intentions or bodily analogues. Through this comparative critique, the paper establishes that technological artefacts often gain autonomy, multistability, and contextual functionality that challenge the core of Kapp's projectionist ontology. The conclusion reached is twofold. First, Kapp's work remains foundational in situating technology as central to human self-conception, making a significant historical and philosophical contribution to understanding the human-techno relation. Second, for a more robust ontology of technological artefacts, it is necessary to move beyond Kapp's projectionism and adopt models that account for artefactual agency, socio-material interaction, and the evolving nature of technological mediation. Thus, the research repositions Kapp's theory as a necessary but incomplete step toward a more comprehensive philosophical account of technology in contemporary world.

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Article

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### PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS AND WORKERS' PRODUCTIVITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF UYO, UYO, AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA (2021-2023)

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#### Abstract

Public and private organizations are increasingly appreciating the importance of employee performance evaluation as a tool for enhancing productivity in any organization. Performance appraisal of employees has the propensity of re-positioning the organizational workforce on the jobs for which they are best suited, thus, leading to improved productivity and organizational profitability. Therefore, poorly and untimely appraisal of staff significantly leads to redundancy and low productivity in any organization. The aim of this study was to appraise the effect of performance appraisal of workers in the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. In addressing this, the study posed two research questions: (i). How effective is performance appraisals in determining workers' promotion in the University of Uyo? (ii). How effective is feedback on performance appraisals in increasing workers' productivity in the University of Uyo? The study adopted descriptive and survey research design. The study relied on the Theory of Organizational Justice as its theoretical framework. The population of the study was the staff (academic and non-academic staff) of 14 Faculties in the University ( $\mu=5649$ ). However, a sample of 374 respondents was drawn using simple random sampling technique from the population using Taro Yamane formula. Data collected using a structured questionnaire were analysed using Chi-square statistical test. The study revealed, among others, that effective performance appraisal can lead to enhanced productivity through timely promotions of staff. The study recommended that staff of the University should be promoted as at when due, and

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that staff training and development needed to be given serious attention. It was also recommended that reports of performance appraisals should be communicated to staff concerned as well as using them to reward and compensate outstanding staff of the University by way of accelerated promotions and letters of commendation.

**Keywords:** Employee, Employer, Motivation; Performance Appraisal, Productivity, Promotion.

### **Background of the Study**

In any organization, performance appraisal represents the most importance process aimed at evaluating organizational achievements in relations to its objectives and goals, vis-à-vis, its workforce and administrative structures (Bratton and Gold, 1999). The long-term success of an organization directly relates to its ability to measure its employees' performance within a particular time and how effective it uses the information generated to ensure that performance align with the standards laid dawn and also improve them over the time. Grote (2012) refers to performance appraisal as directing and motivating employees to maximize their efforts on behalf of their organizations. Thus, it forms an essential component, if an organization must meet its strategic objectives. Atiomo (2000) avers that performance appraisal provides organizations with ways of ascertaining not only workers' performance, but areas of their weaknesses. According to Mullins (2012), the fundamental objectives of performance appraisal is to improve the performance of individual employee as a proclivity to the improvement of overall organization performance. It represents the effective tool that can be used to effectively evaluate organizational performance in relation to its set goals and objectives. It is an evaluative process relating to obtaining, analyzing and recording information or data about the role and impact of an employee to the entire organisation (Obisi, 2011 and Riggio, 2013). Performance appraisal, according to Mathis and Jackson (2014), is often related between additional pay, promotion and rewards that employees receive and their performance at work. It imperative to note that workers can improve their performance, if they are properly appraised, but if they are not, the outcome may lead to inefficiency, waste of resources, low productivity and overall poor performance of the organization (Fisher, Schoenfeldt and Shaw, 2013; Mwema and Gachunga, 2014 and Onyije, 2015). For performance appraisal to be effective, it must rely on the performance criteria designed for the job evaluation. Riggio (2013) contends that the performance criteria serve as determining factor for successful or unsuccessful evaluation or appraisal of job performance, thus, the criteria involve spelling out the specific elements of a job as well as developing methods of evaluating levels of successful or unsuccessful job performance. Therefore, any appraisal method not based on the above elements can either be inappropriate or impartial, especially to the employee, whose performance is being appraised (Onyije, 2015).

According to Eldman, Manolova, Shirokova and Tsukanova (2016), the objective of performance appraisal is to estimate job performance of each worker towards the realization of organizational goals or objectives. They assert that performance appraisal is carried out for the purpose of promotion and transfer to new job positions and responsibilities within an organization or government establishments. Within this context, performance and productivity of each employee are evaluated in order to determine his or her contributions to the achievement of organization set goals and objectives. This process and its conclusion can be

useful for both administrative and developmental purposes. Therefore, performance appraisal defines the procedures and processes used by organizations to improve work design, process and feedback (Werner, Schuler and Jackson, 2012). For instance, Atiomo (2000) submits that every organization should ensure that their workers are aware of their roles and tasks, if performance appraisal is to be effective and efficient. According to Rao (1990), performance appraisal entails taking routine of manpower, capacity, interest of each worker, their strengths and weaknesses as well as their potentials for improvement. Therefore, data generated thereof, should be communicated to the workers for improvement. The major issue in performance appraisal, according to Rao is communication. If individual worker's performance is not communicated to him or her, it would be difficult for the worker to improve his or her performance in subsequent future appraisal, thus, defeating the purpose of the performance appraisal. However, Atiomo (2000) agree that performance appraisal can serve a wider range of purposes, which includes: improving performance of employees for higher productivity, identifying training and development needs, enhancing workers' potentials, enhancing communication and relationships, improving incentives and helps in salaries and wages determination.

According to Nwachukwu (2011), the major reason for performance appraisal is to give information for promotion, transfer, training, development and discharge of an employee. For Ubeke (2014), under good evaluation and appraisal, those who have contributed to the achievement of organizational goals should be rewarded adequately and promoted into higher tasks. Therefore, training and reward are basic components of performance appraisal process which enhance effectiveness, efficiency and productivity of employees (Armstrong, 2012 and Raji and Jackson, 2012). The above position accentuates the significance of human resources to the general functionality of any organization. It should be noted that within this context, for human resources in an organization to function effectively and efficiently, there is need for organisation to develop and activate a distinctive and strategic human resources development policy that will effectively improve the performance of their workforce. According to Zahra and Nielsen (2012), organizational capability depends on human resource capacity which is crucial to the development of any organisation. An organizational competitive advantage can be realized if such organisation rewrite and maintain well-trained workforce and managers whose skills, knowledge abilities serve as a source of improvement. It is therefore, pertinent to have enabling environment for the employees to develop their full potentials capable of enhancing organizational productivity. This conducive or enabling environment plays an important role in enhancing skills, knowledge, abilities and other needed attributes by employees to retort to existing work demands and plan for the future tasks and challenges. The implication of this is that the proper working tools, equipment and facilities are made available in the work place. Therefore, performance appraisal can improve organizational productivity through its workforce, but seemingly, that is not happening in many cases (Mooney, 2012). According to Elverfeldt (2015), most organisations normally conduct performance appraisal on its workforce, but the challenge has always been application of performance appraisal reports and appropriate feedback communication mechanism. It is against the background of the foregoing that this study examines the relationship between performance appraisal and workers' productivity in the University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria (2021-2023).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Performance appraisal offers a good opportunity for organizations to formally evaluate their employees' contributions and achievements towards the organizational goals and objectives. This can be done or achieved through maintaining a clear link between reward, compensation and productivity. Most organizations, both in public and private sector, perform abysmally because their workers are not encouraged to work harder. Thus, the chief executives and employees of organizations are the life blood of such organizations. Therefore, if the management of such organizations do not prioritize welfare of their employees, the resultant effect will show in low commitment to work, morale and productivity. Generally, workers in many organizations are usually dissatisfied over lack of motivation, ill treatment, poor welfare schemes, delay in promotions and rewards as well as poor or absence of proper feedback to them arising from their performance appraisals. Sometimes, organizations select some job elements for evaluation and give preference or higher points above others in which the employee was engaged during the evaluation period. Within this context, performance appraisal may not necessarily produce anticipated results, because the management of the organisation may appraise staff performance concerns that have no direct impact on what motivate them to increase their productivity.

In the University of Uyo, staff appraisal is a yearly ritual, where staff members are given forms to fill every year without proper assessment with commensurate rewards and compensation system to the performing or outstanding ones as a way of motivating them for greater productivity. Hence, this process has a significant effect on staff productivity in relation to the achievements of the institutional objectives and goals. Delays in promotion of staff of the University as and when due, absence of appropriate reward or compensation system such as lack of issuance of commendation letters to performing staff, accelerated promotions as well as lack of payment of entitlements/arrears of promotions to affected staff have the propensity of de-motivating the staff. As these continue, the effectiveness, efficiency and productivity of staff of the University dwindle, thus, posing a threat to the achievement of the institutional goals and objectives. However, the studies carried out to examine the effect of performance appraisal on workers' productivity in the University system failed to acknowledge certain elements raised above, particularly, issues relating to feedback, hence, this study to fill the identified gaps in the current literature. It is based on the above, that this study posed the following research questions:

- i. How effective is performance appraisals in determining workers' promotion in University of Uyo?
- ii. How effective is feedback on performance appraisals in increasing workers' productivity in University of Uyo?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are to:

- i. Establish if performance appraisals are effective in determining workers' promotion in University of Uyo.
- ii. Ascertain if feedback on performance appraisals increases workers' productivity in University of Uyo.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, the study will contribute to the scholarly debate on effect of performance appraisal on workers' productivity. This study has shown that effective performance appraisal has propensity of engendering workers' productivity. The findings of this study will create adequate knowledge and awareness about the impact of performance appraisal on workers' productivity, as it will serve as relevant material to other researchers who may wish to conduct further research on the subject area. Practically, the study will be of immense benefit to managers and administrators of both public and private organizations, heads of government units, departments or institutions as well as public policy analysts on how best the reports of performance appraisal can be handled to engender workers' productivity with an organization. The study will advance the frontiers of knowledge by providing workable solutions to the challenges facing workers' promotions and productivity in University of Uyo, Uyo. Finally, the study will enlighten both the employer and employees in the University on the effective ways of conducting performance appraisals and achieve the desired goals/results.

### **Literature Review**

To properly review the existing literature on the subject matter, the review will be carried out under some related sub-heads.

### **Performance Appraisals and Workers' Reward System**

According to Jamieson (2011), performance appraisal started in early third century in the Wei dynasty in China, where performance of members of the royal family were appraised. Likewise, legislators in Dublin, Ireland were appraised using a rating scale based on personal qualities in 1648 (Jamieson, 2011). However, Wren (2012) avers that Robert Owen first use performance appraisal to evaluate workers' performance in cotton mills in Scotland and according to him, it was mainly deployed for punishing poor performance. But, as time goes on, organisations modify performance appraisals and thus, associating its effect to rewards, trainings, promotions, etc. The implication was that workers' achievements should not only be measured but assessed and managed (Kennedy and Dresser, 2011). Performance appraisal has become inescapable means of evaluating workers' performance and sustaining organizational efficiency, productivity and effectiveness. The techniques used in performance appraisal includes: secret appraisal, graphic rating scale, ranking method, essay method, management by objectives, etc. Performance appraisal is the regular assessment of individual job performance and their prospect for development. Young (2010) conceptualizes performance appraisal as assessment exercise carried out by an organization on its workers periodically or annually or performance based on work content requirements and behaviour. At the centre of this evaluation are efficiency, effectiveness and productivity.

According to Nwachukwu (2011), the essence of performance appraisal is to generate information for transfer, pay increase, training and staff development, promotion and dismissal of employee. The primary purpose of evaluating workers' performance for a particular period is to assess their contributions to the organizational growth. Dessler (2012) contends that assessing workers job implies supervisor-subordinate relationship that has to do with the situation of an organization and what may be needed to enhance its achievement of goals.

According to Stone (2012), in a competitive environment, and if organizations must survive, it must appraise the performance of its staff. In addition, the current realities and demands for improved workers' accountability, more emphasis is placed on performance appraisal. Levine and Juan (2010) and Huber (2015) argue that performance appraisal is indispensable in any organizations that aim to achieve its objectives and goals. On the other hand, workers' productivity, according to Bernadin (2010) implies the effect of labour in relations to organization's goals, economic contributions and customer's satisfactions. Bela (2010) states that productivity encompasses both behaviour and consequences, thus, results, outcomes and consequences are physical effort put to activities and may be evaluated independently. In the words of Mihaiu (2014), employee productivity represents a combination of employee's ability, motivation and the environment he or she works. Okereke and Daniel (2010) suggest that workers' productivity entails a consequence of efficiency and effectiveness on the part of the workers. Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011) aver that job attendance, responsibilities and organizational behaviour can be used to assess performance of workers in an organisation. Bhatia and Jain (2013) contend that workers' productivity is directly related to quality of service, contributions over time and job completed. For Wasiu and Adebajo (2014), workers' productivity implies collection of actions and behaviours of workers that may be examined, evaluated and considered in terms of individual achievements.

Performance appraisal in the public service represent a system of setting targets for each employee, monitoring those targets, assessing the results through evaluation and reward the performing workers while at the same time, correct the underperforming ones. It is therefore process of assessing employees' contributions to organizational goals and objectives (Obisi, 2011). In Nigerian public service, workers are appraised using the Annual Performance Evaluation Report (APER). It is based on the worker's overall contributions to the organisations on a yearly basis. According to Gilbert (2006) and Obisi (2011), the annual APER is divided into five segments:

- i. **Segment 1** covers employee's personal record and leave records;
- ii. **Segment 2** comprises responsibilities and targets set, work description, major achievements, course/trainings attended in the year under evaluation and work performance.
- iii. **Segment 3** assesses character traits, performance assessment by superior, job ethics, leadership qualities, training requirements and collaboration.
- iv. **Segment 4** stipulates next year's responsibilities and targets, comments by the worker on the appraisal, affirmation through signing by the employee and evaluating officer.
- v. **Segment 5** encompasses the counter-signing officer's evaluation. The counter-signing officer creates room for feedback and monitoring.

However, the APER form is structured and all-inclusive. It consists of important aspects that are to be assessed in terms of work description and performance. The form makes it easier for workers to identify their future training needs that can enhance their job, and facilitate effective and efficient human resource development through proper trainings (Obisi, 2011). But Gilbert (2006), submits that as a result of the format of APER forms, marks scored are awarded rather than earned thereby making the evaluation to be impractical in an objective situation, hence, no clear evidence of high performance or excellence with commensurate reward exist in Nigeria's public service.

### **Performance Appraisal, Feedback and Workers' Productivity in Nigerian Universities**

According to Boice and Kleiner (1997), workers' assessment is vital to organizational operation as well as advancement of workers' productivity, Workers' evaluation is necessary in any organisations because it helps the organisations to identify people for leading positions in the organisations. To achieve this, a proper job review of the employees is necessary to help reward them where necessary. Therefore, the implementation of performance appraisal report may be complex since it entails correct and fair evaluation of workers' performance, but it surely yields positive results. Ubeda and Almada (2007), while commenting on the implementation of performance assessment, noted that it is pertinent to inform the worker(s) appraised which skills, attitudes or knowledge needs to be developed in order to contribute substantially to organizational improvement. When workers get feedback on their appraisals, it motivates them to do more for the good of the organization. Therefore, feedback from workers if properly managed, not only help in identifying area of needs, but also in distributing professional tasks to workers in the organisations. More so, Caruth and Humphreys (2008) argues that to appraise the performance of workers, the appraiser should rely only on those factors relating to the job rather than general traits and effective assessment of workers has direct implications on workers' commitment and motivations. Therefore, effectiveness, efficiency and clearly defined/frequent evaluation of performance has propensity for increasing workers' productivity.

In Nigerian Universities, performance appraisal is a process of assessing and summarizing work performance of staff in the University, both academic and non-academic. Every staff of Universities in Nigeria including University of Uyo gets an appraisal form yearly from his/her University for a performance appraisal and the appraisal process justifies management promotions, reward or discipline toward staff (Okafor, 2015). This form comprises a self-appraisal section for staff to fill and on completion sent to the respective Heads of Departments who make their comments. The completed forms are then forwarded to the Dean and then to the Appointments and Promotions Committee (Academic) chaired by the Vice Chancellor in case of academic staff. In case of Senior Administrative and Technical Staff, the completed forms passed through the Head of Department/Reporting Officer to the Appointments and Promotions Committee of Senior Administrative and Technical Staff (SATS) chaired by the Vice Chancellor. And for the Junior Staff, the completed forms go through to the Head of Department/Reporting Officer to the Appointments and Promotions Committee of Junior Staff, chaired by the Registrar. The various appointments and promotion committees re-assessed those forms and made recommendations for further actions. The consequences therefore could be used for promotion, query, warning, training, termination, etc. The behaviour standards that form the core components of performance appraisal in University of Uyo are spelt out in University of Uyo Regulations Governing Staff Conditions of Service (as amended) (2016) and these regulations relates to responsibilities that enhance excellence and productivity. Therefore, evaluation of staff performance in the University environment is based on qualification, task performed, capacity to assume higher responsibilities, professional experience/creativity, teaching experience, research/ publications, community services, administrative experiences, etc. In summary, the justifications for performance appraisal in University of Uyo and other Universities in Nigeria include:

- i. **Administration:** For promotion, warning, query, dismissed and organizational planning;
- ii. **Developmental:** For identification of training needs;

- iii. **Motivational:** For rewards, incentives and compensation and
- iv. **Performance Enhancement:** This is achieved through management by objective (MBO), participatory goal setting and adequate workplan processes.

Performance appraisal occurs yearly and it is the period staff of an institution begins to document proper performance, inconsistencies and deals with performance deficit. However, conducting the appraisal on a particular time of the year places more emphasis on promotion than improvement (Okafor, 2015). According to Jabeen (2011), performance assessment relates the performance of workers with already established procedures and places emphasis on them for promotions and/or rewards or disciplines. Assessment of workers' performance has the propensity of discovering what type of trainings and skills needs by workers within the organisation, hence, it results in quality improvement (Walklin, 2013). The evaluation of staff performance in University system seems to pay much attention to promotion related-issues rather than physical evaluation of individual staff performance in relation to the organizational goals. Therefore, during the appraisal process, the information, supplied does not provide necessary facts on effective teaching, effective discharge of responsibilities, good character, personal integrity and loyalty to the institution (Nakpodia, 2011). For instance, Bernett (2012) maintains that evaluation of proficiency or performance based on publications is not sufficient to determine competence of the lecturers. Also, some University staff, particularly, lecturers are employed seemingly to teach on the assumption that their performance in their first or second or third degrees will enhance them to teach effectively. These assumptions may not be tenable because knowledge of subject matter is different from method/skills of teaching. Therefore, a good appraisal process should make provision for the management of the University to advise its staff on how to improve their teaching, administrative and technical competence.

Moses (2012) submits that appraisal of staff performance in the University should include measurement of competence, communication skills, commitment to institutional goals and the degree of concern to assign tasks. It is on this note that it could be deduced that performance appraisal does not provide information about staff emotional, mental and moral stability in relation to its organisation. However, the role and impact of feedback on staff productivity in the University system cannot be over-emphasized. Marsor (2011) examined the workers' performance in relations to productivity and submits that performance appraisal affords organisations to reposition itself for higher productivity, hence, boosting the general output of workers. Odunayo, Salau, Fadugba and James (2014) modelled relationship between performance appraisal and organizational productivity in government sector of Nigeria corporations. Their result showed a significant relationship between performance appraised and workers' productivity. Using supermarkets in Nkuru town in Kenya, Gichuhi, Abaja and Ochieng (2014) discovered performance appraisal has a significant influence in employees' performance. In similar vein, Onyije (2015) conducted investigations into the effect of performance appraisal on workers' productivity and concluded that there exists a strong relationship between them.

Homayounizadpanah and Baqerkord (2012) discovered that performance appraisal is strategic to advancing employees and organizational productivity if properly carried out. In a study conducted by Peleyeju and Ojebiyi (2013) to assess workers' productivity in public Universities in South-Western Nigeria, using lecturers' performance, it was discovered that

there exists a significant relationship between performance evaluation and employees' productivity in the institutions. For Chetana, Pattnaik and Mohapatra (2015), performance appraisal is not only connected with organizational productivity, but it represents the basis for career and organizational development. Therefore, creativity, professionalism, organizational and management skills constitute the core public measurement indicators in public service. In a study conducted by Vivekananda and Mohan (2015), it was revealed that performance appraisal practice in private sector differs from that of the public sector. The study showed that workers in private sector focus more on career development and training unlike in the public sector where employees are expected to develop the expertise and knowledge continually in order to accomplish their job requirements. Mello (2015) observed that effectiveness, efficiency and performance of public sector workers rely on skills and qualifications of the workers. However, the study did not account for effect of feedback on performance because the performance of workers not communicated to them can affect their subsequent performance, not necessarily qualification and skills. However, Singh and Vadivelu (2016) submit that there exists difference between performance measurement in private and public sectors in Nigeria. According to them, public sector organisations rely on experience in terms of seniority, knowledge and skills, while private sectors organisations measure both tangible and intangible actions. These may include: level of efficiency, effectiveness, timeliness and cost of operations, level of customer satisfaction etc.

According to Tailor (2017), performance of each worker can be measured with their effectiveness and efficiency at their place of work. Within this context, the purpose of performance appraisal is to enhance productivity in organisations. Mollel-Eliphaz, Mulongo and Razia (2017) uses Muheza district in Tanzania to conduct an investigation into the influence of performance assessment on employees' productivity and discovered that employees' performance and productivity in an organisation is directly related to recognition of achievements and feedback. However, various studies such as those of: Obiora (2002), Ajayi (2011), Onusuebe and Kimcnichege (2013), and Hayford, Boakye and Ovasu (2016) strongly submits that performance appraisal correlates with workers' productivity. The major gap in the above studies is that it failed to account how effective is feedback on performance appraisal in increasing workers' productivity hence, this study. According to Banjoko (2002), who conducted a study on performance appraisal of workers and its effect on productivity, which data were draw from primary and secondary sources, performance appraisal assist organisations to assign tasks to workers based on their capability and capacity. Adopting descriptive method, the study concluded that effective workers' assessment determines the type of training and development needed as well as designing programs aimed at correcting deficiencies identified. The study then recommended that organizations should establish and conduct effective performance appraisal on its employees that would offer opportunities for the management to identify training and development needs of the organisation.

Cook and Crossman (2004) adopted a survey and descriptive research design to conducted investigation on performance appraisal and job satisfaction in Nigeria, with data drawn from both primary and secondary sources. The study concluded that employee job satisfaction is determined by organizational evaluation system, hence, when the evaluation is unbiased, improvement in workers' productivity is inevitable. Their study recommended unbiased, transparent and impartial appraisal of workers to enhance their effectiveness,

efficiency and high productivity. Lindsey (2005) investigated performance evaluation, using management basic for libertarians. The study used descriptive and survey research design, with data drawn from primary and secondary sources. The study revealed that effective performance evaluation aids the management of organization to find out training needs of workers as well as how to motivate them with best talents to enhance organizational collective goals. As part of the findings, the study concludes that actions and behaviours of employees significantly contribute to the overall organizational output. However, the study recommended the setting up of regulatory agencies to perform oversight functions on issues relating to performance appraisals both in private and public sector organizations. Kane and Lawler (2009) adopted historical and descriptive method to assess performance appraisal effectiveness. The study discovered that organizational reward system has an important impact on workers' productivity. Accordingly, when workers are regularly promoted, with all entitlement and benefits paid, it will stimulate them for higher efficiency and productivity. Based on the findings, the study recommended that organizations should prioritize rewards, promotions and commendations to workers who are exceptional in their tasks or responsibilities.

Grote (2012) utilizes primary and secondary sources of data to evaluate performance appraisal in relation to effectiveness, efficiency and productivity. The revelations of the study showed that performance appraisal aid in rewards, compensation, decision-making, employee motivation, organizational planning, etc. which if properly conducted and executed, has propensity of enhancing evokers' productivity. The study recommended proper appraisal of workers' performance to identify their strengths and weaknesses. According to Gichuhi, Abaja and Ochieng (2014), in their historical and descriptive studies on effective performance appraisal and employees' efficiency in Nigeria's public service, performance appraisal represents evaluation of both mental and physical health for each worker and their contributions to the organization. The study revealed that workers' morale is focused towards high productivity when they are appraised timely, promoted when due and rewarded when exceptional. The study also revealed that poor appraisal of performance and promotion results directly in poor attitude to work. The study later recommended timely staff assessment, promotion as well as thorough implementation of evaluation reports. Similarly, Lithakong (2014) choose selected steel organizations to conduct research on evaluating the effectiveness of a 360-degree performance appraisal and feedback, using survey research design, with data drawn from primary and secondary sources. The study discovered that the level to which workers perform in steel organizations is depended on the efficiency of the evaluating system used by their organizations. Therefore, workers' performance, efficiency, effectiveness and productivity tend to reduce if the appraisal systems or method is faulty or ineffective. The study, based on investigations, recommended the use of effective evaluation systems or methods in order to generate adequate feedback that will aid the organizations to enhance its productivity of workers.

In a study carried out by Oravee, Hangeior and Solomon (2017) to examine the effect of performance appraisal on employees' productivity in Plateau State Internal Revenue Service, using descriptive and survey research design, with data gathered from primary and secondary sources. The study revealed that poor appraisal methods/s/systems and inadequate rewards system implemented by the Plateau State Government results in poor workers' productivity. As a result of the revelations, the study strongly recommended the adoption of management by

objectives (MBO) method of appraising workers of the revenue service to allow workers to partake in organizational goal setting as well as understanding areas of task for the purpose of improving productivity within the service. Binta, Muhammad, Ahmed, Bazza and Magaji (2019) used the Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja to conduct a study on the effect of performance appraisal on employees' productivity. The authors adopted survey research design, with sample size of 400 respondents, which was determined using Taro Yamane formula on population of 1797 employees. The data for the study were collected using structured questionnaire. The study established that performance appraisal improves workers' productivity in Federal Ministry of Education. According to the study, performance appraisal represents the core indices for enhancement of productivity as well as identifying areas of deficiencies in the performance of workers. The study ended with recommendation that multiple appraisal system should be introduced to reduce bias and boost fairness in the assessment of workers in the Ministry.

### **Gap in the Literature**

In the literature reviewed, little attention has been given to the role the feedback on performance appraisals plays on workers' productivity, hence, this study. Therefore, this study aims to fill the identified gap in the existing literature.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopted the Organizational Justice Theory by Jerald Greenberg propounded in 1987. The theory holds that the way a worker view organizational attitude, may affect the employee's contribution to the organization. This theory relies on three assumptions: impartial outcomes (distributive justice), fairness of procedures in allocating results (procedural justice) and courtesy of interpersonal relations (interactional justice). Distributive justice assumes that individuals having recognized a choice of social exchange, perceive their commitments to the organization as reward oriented. Procedural justice typifies equitable procedures used in deciding several consequences because it assumes that fair evaluation of workers may cause positive responses from the workers. The implication is that unbiased assessment of actions and behaviours of workers is accompanied by corresponding commitment to organizational goals (Al-Zubi, 2010). Interactional justice symbolizes equal interpersonal activities. Therefore, in applying Organizational Justice Theory to performance appraisal and workers' productivity, it could be deduced that workers are likely to contribute their best towards achieving organizational goals and objectives when they view organizational attitude towards them as fair, just and impartial. Essentially, if employers conduct fair and impartial performance appraisals on their employees, they are most likely to enhance their productivity towards their organisations. For instance, performance appraisal exercises often turn out to be mere annual ritual in universities, where staff (particularly academic) are appraised without commensurate rewards, promotions when due or clear feedback communication processes. This, to a considerable extent is viewed by workers as injustice. Performance appraisal reports in many organisations do not translates to rewards or promotions for staff appraised, and such actions may demotivate the hard-working/performing staff, thereby leading to low productivity, inefficiency and ineffectiveness of staff of such organizations.

However, according to this theory, poor feedback mechanism and procedures involved in assessing workers progress in an organization affects workers' productivity, because the

satisfaction of performance evaluations procedure by workers can be achieved, when it integrates the principles of fairness, impartiality, equity and justice. Therefore, according to Greenberg (1987), effective and efficient performance appraisal is not only just, fair and impartial, but provides clear feedback to workers appraised, which invariably leads to job satisfaction and enhances productivity.

### **Hypotheses**

The hypotheses below are articulated to provide this study with an analytical guide:

- i. Effective performance appraisals tend to determine workers' promotion in University of Uyo.
- ii. Feedback on performance appraisal tends to increase workers' productivity in University of Uyo.

### **Research Design**

This study adopted survey research design and relied on both primary and secondary data. This research design adopted helps the researcher to elicit information from a subset of the entire population. This research design involves the use of questionnaire to gather and analyse sample data from the population and draw inferences. According to Flink (2002b), survey represents a strategy for collecting information for description, comparison or explanation of attitudes and actions. As Sapsford (2006) points out, survey is a comprehensive and quantified description of a population, and it entails a systematic collection of data either through interview, questionnaire or observation. However, the questionnaire generated the primary data while the secondary data were collected from textbooks, journals, unpublished works and official document. The data collected were analyzed descriptively and quantitatively using chi-square statistical technique at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study comprises all academic and non-academic staff in 14 faculties in the University of Uyo. The faculties are: Agriculture, Arts, Basic Medical Sciences, Business Administration, Clinical Sciences, Communication Arts, Education, Engineering, Environmental Studies, Law, Pharmacy, School of Continuing Education, Sciences and Social Sciences. According to 2021/2022 appraisal report, the total academic and non-academic staff of the University is put at one thousand, five hundred and twenty-one (1,521) and four thousand, one hundred and twenty-eight (4,128) respectively (Wikipedia, 2023).

### **Method of Data Collection**

The study used documentary and survey methods. Using Taro Yamane formula for the population of five thousand, six hundred and forty-nine (5,649), that is  $(1521+4128 = 5649)$ , the sample size of three hundred and seventy-four (374) were chosen. Copies of questionnaire were distributed to each of them, selected through simple random technique to avoid bias. A total of two hundred and ten (210) copies of questionnaire were distributed equally (15 each) to academic staff in the fourteen (14) faculties that make up the University. Also, sixteen (16) copies each of questionnaire were distributed to non-academic staff of faculties of Education and Sciences because of large numbers of staff there and eleven (11) each to the remaining twelve (12) faculties, bringing the total distributed to non-academic staff to one hundred and six-four (164). However, of the total of 374 questionnaire distributed, 348 were retrieved, representing **93.05** response rate. This data for the study comes from both primary and

secondary sources. The study adopted a 5-point Likert scale structured questionnaire with 7 statements. The response option is: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Undecided (UN). The research design used has help in advancing tangible insight into performance appraisal and workers' productivity in University of Uyo.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The study used qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. Qualitatively, the study employed deductive-inductive logical reasoning and qualitative descriptive methods of content analysis. Quantitatively, the study used chi-square statistical technique to test the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the data so collected were analyzed descriptively and quantitatively. The empirical verification carried out to validate the hypotheses helps in achieving valid, reliable and verifiable conclusion

### **Empirical Verification**

Empirical verification was undertaken to validate the formulated hypotheses for the study. This has help in achieving reliability and verifiable conclusion for the study. However, this section handled socio demographic characteristics of respondents, distribution of responses to the statements on the questionnaire, testing and validation of the two hypotheses formulated of the study.

**Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency (N = 348)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Sex:</b>		
Male	196	56.3
Female	152	43.7
<b>Age:</b>		
18 – 27	88	25.3
28 – 37	97	27.9
38 – 47	104	29.9
48 and above	59	16.9
<b>Educational Qualification:</b>		
SSCE	68	19.5
OND/HND	78	22.4
BSc	99	28.5
MSc and above	103	29.6
<b>Staff:</b>		
Academic	200	57.5
Non-academic	148	42.5
<b>Respondents' Faculty:</b>		
Agriculture	24	6.9
Arts	25	7.2
Basic Medical Sciences	24	6.9
Business Administration	24	6.9
Clinical Sciences	25	7.2
Communication Arts	25	7.2
Education	27	7.7
Engineering	25	7.2
Environmental studies	25	7.2
Law	24	6.9

Pharmacy	24	6.9
School of Continuing Education	25	7.2
Sciences	26	7.4
Social Sciences	25	7.2

**Source:** Field work (2023).

In **Table 1** above, the sex distribution of the respondents shows that 196 (56.3%) were males, while 152 (43.7%) were females. The table also shows that 18-27 age range of respondent were 88 (25.3%), 28-37 were 97 (27.9%), 38-47 were 104 (29.9%) and 48 and above were 59 (16.9%). On educational qualification, 68 (19.5%) had SSCE, 78 (22.4) had OND/HND 99(28.15%) had BSc. and 103 (29.6%) obtained MSc and above. The table further shows that 200 (57.5%) were academic staff while 148 (42.5%) were non-academic staff. The table also revealed that respondents from the faculties were as follows: Agriculture 24 (6.9%), Arts 25 (7.2%), Basic Medical Sciences 24(6.9%), Business Administration 24 (6.9%), Clinical Sciences 25 (7.2%), Communication Arts 25 (7.2%), Education 27 (7.7%), Engineering 25 (7.2%), Environmental Studies 25 (7.2%), Law 24 (6.9%), Pharmacy 24 (6.9%), School of Continuing Education 25 (7.2%), Sciences 26 (7.4%) and Social Sciences 25(7.2%).

**Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Responses**

S/N	Statement (s)	SA	A	D	SD	UD	Total
1.	Effective performance appraisals help in determining workers' promotion and productivity in University of Uyo	167	120	21	30	10	348
2.	Motivations, timely promotions, rewards and compensations increases workers' productivity in University of Uyo.	162	105	35	26	20	348
3.	Effective feedback on performance appraisals helps in increasing workers' productivity in University of Uyo.	150	103	39	29	27	348
4.	Conducive working environment may influence how workers perform in any organisation	139	127	36	28	18	348
5.	When workers are informed of their performance, they are likely to improve on their performance.	170	124	26	19	09	348
6.	Effective performance appraisals help in the achievement of organizational goals and objectives	173	121	26	10	18	348
7.	Proper implementation of performance appraisal reports has propensity of improving workers' productivity in University of Uyo.	148	130	27	30	13	348
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1048</b>	<b>831</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>2436</b>

**Sources:** Field work (2023)

### Testing and Validation of Hypothesis 1

**Table 3: Chi-square Test of Hypothesis**

Hypothesis 1	Df	P	Critical Value	$\chi^2$	Decision
Effective performance appraisals tend to determine workers' promotion in University of Uyo	8	0.05	15.51	19.12	Reject Ho Accept H <sub>1</sub>

Statements 1, 2 and 6 were used to test hypothesis 1

$$\chi^2 = 19.12$$

$$P = 0.05$$

Critical value = **15.51**

Degree of freedom = **8**

The result of the chi-square test of hypothesis 1 validates the hypothesis. The analysis revealed that effective performance appraisals can improve workers' productivity through timely promotions of staff in University of Uyo. The outcome of the analysis revealed that performance appraisal allows management of organizations to decide which worker is to be promoted, which worker has contributed much to the organizational growth and those that needs to be trained. From the analysis, it could be deduced that motivations, timely promotions, rewards and compensations in organization can enhance the performance of workers in the organization. This finding supports the views of Armstrong (2012) and Raji and Jackson (2012) who emphasized that rewards are basic components of performance appraisal process if effectiveness, efficiency and productivity is to be enhanced. According to them, effective training can reduce costs, enhance individual team spirit and corporate performance in terms of output, improve productivity, increase level of competence, enhance workers' skills and development prospects, etc. The result of the analysis also aligns with Atiomo (2000) who posits that performance appraisal can serve a wider range of purposes, including improving performance of workers for higher productivity in organization, promoting deserving workers as at when due, identifying training and development needs of workers, enhancing workers' potentials, enhance communication and relationship, improving incentives as well as help in salaries and wages determination. This study's finding further supports Danvila-delvalle, Mignel and Antonio (2011) work as they conclude that training and promotion of employees facilitates their contributions to overall organizational objectives and empowers them to perform their assign task effectively. They contended that training of workers by their organizations gives them confidence to contribute more efforts as well as giving their best towards the overall effectiveness, efficiency and productivity of the organization. Similarly, the validated hypothesis supports Dessler and Akram (2012) study, as they averred that training, motivation, rewards as well as promotion of workers empowers them to imbibe skills required for performance of organizational tasks. According to Armstrong (2003), training represent deliberate and systematic modification of behaviour through learnings, programmes and instructions which facilitates individuals' accomplishment of tasks, attainment of goals, increase in skills, knowledge and competence needed to effectively discharge assigned responsibilities.

Javadein (2011) contends that one of the major objectives of performance appraisal is to identify the personnel's educational, promotion and training needs. In terms of training, it will afford the employees the opportunity to access latest technological skills similar to other organizations, identifying latest strategies and operational skills needed in the organization to achieve effectiveness. Therefore, organizations engaging in identifying these potentials will definitely succeed in any competitive environment. Lending credence to the above, Abedi (2014) avowed that performance appraisal if not properly conducted may result in poor productivity, inefficiency and in effectiveness in the organization. The revelation of the analysis also showed that effective performance appraisal translates to positive impact on workers' job improvement and promotion. Generally, achievement of organizational goals and objectives depends on how performances of workers in organisations are appraised; hence, majority of the respondents declared that effective performance appraisals help in the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Sometimes, performance appraisal does not really translate

to personnel job output as a result of maintaining same instruments and standards of appraising staff over the years. Thus, this may have little impact or on impact on workers' productivity.

Sorush (2011) avowed that performance appraisal in Nigeria Universities failed to impact meaningfully on promotion and productivity of staff, since the exercises are only carried out for mere formality without corresponding effects. This is so because performance appraisal reports need to generate appreciable impact in terms of resulting in workers' rewards, promotions, productivity, effectiveness and efficiency. However, despite, consistent performance appraisals in the University of Uyo, workers' promotions are still delayed, showing the exercise has little or no effect on personnel efficiency, promotion and training. It is on this note that this study has found that proper or effective performance appraisal can generate positive impact on workers' promotion, productivity and training in University of Uyo. According to Sorush (2011) and Rostami, Bahramzadeh and Saedii (2015), adequate, timely and effective performance appraisal of workers as well as timely release of promotions will make the workers to exhibit their talents and to be more productive and committed. However, this finding aligns with the views of Muya and Nganga (2012) who stated that regardless of the substantial wage increase, promotion of staff acts as strong incentives and motivators to workers as it offers them opportunity to attain higher position. Thus, the delay in promotion of workers may cause them not to contribute their best towards organizational growth. According to them, timely promotion and training enhances workers' productivity. In support of the findings of this study, Jabeen (2011) and Binta *et al.* (2019) stated that promotion, motivations and other incentives increase the level of work performance and commitment to organizational goals and objectives. Accordingly, career advancement, incentives and motivation promote workers' productivity. The analysis and facts supplied have strongly validates hypothesis 1

### Testing and Validation of Hypothesis II

**Table 4: Chi-square Test of Hypothesis II**

Hypothesis II	Df	P	Critical Value	$\chi^2$	Decision
Feedback on performance appraisals tends to increase workers' productivity in University of Uyo.	8	0.05	15.51	21.92	Reject Ho Accept H <sub>1</sub>

Statements 3, 5 and 7 were used to test hypothesis II

$\chi^2 = 21.92$

P = 0.05

Critical value = 15.51

Degree of freedom = 8

The result of the analysis of hypothesis II revealed that feedback on performance appraisals can increase workers' productivity in University of Uyo. This finding suggests that there is a significant relationship between rewards, motivation, feedback and workers' productivity. Thus, feedback on performance appraisals may come by way of promotions, rewards, compensations and commendations, and the importance of these indices is that they can predict performance. Therefore, improvement in rewards and motivations of workers results in quality performance as well as commitment to assigned tasks. The result of the analysis of hypothesis II aligns with Mottaz (2011) who says that value place on feedback and/or motivation boast workers' morale and enhance their productivity. When workers are informed of their performance, may be through rewards, compensations, commendations and promoting,

they are most likely to improve on their performance. According to Mihaiu (2014), workers' productivity encompasses combination of employee's ability, motivation and the environment he or she is working. In other words, proper implementation of performance appraisal reports has propensity of improving of improving workers' productivity in University of Uyo. Therefore, commitment to staff welfare by the organisation contributes largely to staff output and/or performance. The amount of money staff is paid, delay in promotion, uncondusive working environment, lack of risk allowance, etc. contributes to poor productivity and efficiency of workers (Mihaiu, 2014).

The findings of this study revealed that the result of performance appraisal in the University of Uyo has not really contributed to rewards, promotions and training needs, thus rendering the appraisal exercises as yearly ritual that does not translate to effective workers' productivity booster. In support with the study findings through hypothesis II testing, Lithakong (2014) submits that the level to which workers perform in steel organisations is dependent on the efficiency and effectiveness of the evaluating system used by the organisation. Therefore, workers' performance, efficiency, productivity and effectiveness tend to reduce if the appraisal system or method is faulty or ineffective. Generally, respondents for the study opined that training and development, promotion through effective performance assessment can assist organisations in cutting administration and operational costs as well as boast the strength and quality of human resources. Therefore, effective performance assessment has positive effect on organization's job performance. The implications of the tested hypotheses II are that when workers in any organization are satisfied with the processes and procedures of evaluation, they will endeavour to contribute their best towards increasing productivity in the organisation. Conclusively, Onyije (2015) submissions aligned with the finding of this study, when he concludes that effective, efficient and adequate performance appraisal facilitates the placement of the right people at the right time for the right job in a changing environment. Therefore, the organizational performance depends on effectiveness and efficiency of human resources working in the organization. The above arguments and submissions validate hypothesis II.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

This study focuses on performance appraisal and workers' productivity and Nigerian public service; with special interest in University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, 2021-2023. Every organization relies on its workforce for productivity and effectiveness. Therefore, improving the performance of academic and non-academic staff of universities in terms of output becomes the utmost importance to the University Governing Council and the Management. However, performance appraisal is one of the major human resource exercises undertaken by the Universities which have implications for workers' motivations, performance and productivity in the Universities. The primary goals of this study were to examine how effective is performance appraisals in determining workers' promotion as well as how effective is feedback on performance appraisals in increasing workers' productivity in University of Uyo. In Nigeria, various public sector organizations have been faced with productivity challenges and that gives attention to various public sector reforms in the country. Therefore, performance appraisal has been an essential tool for enhancing productivity. The productivity-related challenges include, poor reward system, poorly defined human resources objectives, lack of motivation, and delay

in promotion, low budgetary allocation for staff training and development as well as poor/lack of feedback on staff performance appraisals.

The springboard of this study was background of the study, statement of the problem (research questions), objectives and significance of the study. The study reviewed relevant literature and adopted the organizational justice theory as its theoretical framework as well formulated two hypotheses. The study employed descriptive and survey research design. The population of the study was made up academic and non-academic across the 14 faculties of the University (5649), but a sample of 374 respondents was drawn using Taro Yamane formula through a simple random process. Chi-square statistical technique was used to test the two formulated hypotheses. The empirical verification conducted for the study revealed that effective performance appraisals can improve workers' productivity through timely promotions of staff. The study further revealed that feedback on performance appraisals can increase workers' productivity in University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. This research has addressed the gap in the literature regarding performance appraisal and workers' productivity in Nigerian public service, with focus on University of Uyo. The research design adopted for this study helps in gathering survey opinion on the subject matter. Finally, the study in line with its objective and significance delves into providing and recommending some policy alternatives for effective and efficient performance appraisal in public service and in University of Uyo. Therefore, the revelations of this study have important policy implications.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were put forward based on the analysis of the literature and empirical verification:

- i. Staff of University of Uyo should be promoted as at when due as well promotion issues given serious attention.
- ii. Reports of performance appraisals should be communicated to staff concerned as well as using them to reward and compensate outstanding staff of the University of Uyo by way of accelerated promotions and letters of commendations.

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Article

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### THE ALL-LOVINGNESS OF GOD AND PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS IN NIGERIA: A REACTION TO AUGUSTINE'S PRIVATION THEORY

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#### Abstract

This paper employs the philosophical tools and research method of critical analysis in examining the viability of Augustine's privation theory (especially its advocacy of the all-lovingness of God) in addressing the traumatic experience of persecution and ameliorating its impacts on Christians particularly among those in Nigeria. Augustine's privation theory obviously has great popularity in philosophical and theological scholarship primarily because it is a form of theodicy, and it asserts that evil of any kind is mere absence of good. It also posits that evil originated from man's abuse of his free will, and can be said to be non-existent because it lacks substance in created reality. Scholarly reactions to this theory have consistently been objectified either by furtherance of it as safe defense of God's omnibenevolent and omnipotent attributes in the face of reality of evil, or by a descent of it as a mere metaphysical defense of God whose identity and existence is logically inconsistent with the reality of evil. However, not much has been done in examining the implications of the basic claims of Augustine's privation theory, as a pro-theistic theory has on the life and the religiosity of Christians experiencing persecution, especially amongst Christians in Nigeria. This research establishes the fact that although Augustine's privation theory may be suitable for the strengthening of one's faith in God, its uncritical application in all aspects of life does not help persecuted Christians to relate sensibly to their experience. It therefore advocates a balanced position that strengthens trust in God, as well as the utilization of human potential in response to persecution.

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**Keywords:** All-lovingness, God, Christians in Nigeria, Persecution, Augustine's Privation Theory.

## **Introduction**

Persecution is a fact of life for millions of Christians across the globe. By way of definition, persecution is the act of harassing, oppressing, or killing people because of their difference from society (Barrett 693). This definition readily suggests that the one being persecuted is usually considered to have an identity at odds with others within the same social class. It could imply that the persecuted are considered to behave contemptuously of the accepted norms and traditions of the people, and subversive against constituted authority. While the quality of subversion is not usually a regular attribute, disparity in identity is essential. Identity in this sense does not refer to physical appearance or genealogy, but distinctive and defining habits and characteristics that are foundational to one's belief system. In the case of Christians, rejection of other gods because of their faith and confession of Christ as the only begotten Son of God in whom man's redemption and eternal life is guaranteed is undoubtedly an exclusive identity marker. From the first century A.D until today, Christians have become the primary victims of persecution and martyrdom. In Acts of the Apostles, Luke records accounts of the persecution and martyrdom of some Christians, including: the martyrdom of Stephen (chapters 6 and 7); Herod's persecution of the Church (chapter 12); the arrest and imprisonment of Paul in Jerusalem and Caesarea (Chapters 21–26). In addition, Eusebius of Caesarea, an early church historian, asserts that Peter and Paul were crucified in Rome, that James, sometimes called "James the Just," was thrown down from the parapet of the temple in Jerusalem and beaten to death with a fuller's club, and that James the son of Zebedee was beheaded (72). Post-Apostolic Christians who are often remembered for suffering persecutions and martyrdom include: Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, Cyprian of Carthage, Perpetua of Carthage, Irenaeus of Lyon, Felicity of Carthage, and others.

Apart Christians experiencing persecution perpetuated them by external forces, early centuries Christianity witnessed what could be term internal conflicts owing to doctrinal difference. Such conflicts were between Orthodoxy and perceived heretic movements including Gnosticism, Arianism, Nestorianism, Marcionism, and others. Whether such conflict could be termed intra-Christian persecution is still a matter of scholarly debate. In our age, persecution of Christians is also rampant and severe. In January 2020, *Open Doors* (4), an international NGO advocating on behalf of persecuted Christians, released their annual *World Watch List*. *The World Watch List* provides an assessment of 50 countries where Christians face the most severe types of persecution. At the very top of the list are countries which show extreme levels of persecution: North Korea, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, Pakistan, Eritrea, Sudan, Yemen, Iran, India, Nigeria, and Syria. Indeed, in the reporting period:

Over 5,500 churches have been destroyed, closed down or confiscated. In India, Christian minorities are subjected to extreme persecution which manifested in at least 1,445 physical attacks and death threats against Christians in 2019. In Nigeria, in 2019, approximately 1,350 Christians were killed for their faith.

The *World Watch List* 2020 does not give much hope for the persecuted communities, (7). Indeed, it presents a grim picture of the situation of Christians globally making it very clear that the persecution encountered by Christians continues to get worse. The report identifies that "in 2020, 260 million Christians live in 50 countries where Christianity is at risk of high,

very high or extreme levels of persecution. This is up from 245 million in 2019.” The report also emphasized some important, negative changes within global trends on the persecution of Christians. In the face of this reality, the question that continually begs for answer for ages is “why God would expose Christians (His faithful and lovely children) to such experience?” Blaming God for evil or defending Him has proven disoriented with the enormity of the reality of persecution, hence, the need for an alternative approach is advanced by this paper.

### **God and His Attribute of Love**

Within the theistic tradition, God is conceived as the Supreme Being, the only being worthy of worship because he is uniquely perfect. By its etymology, the terms used for the main ways of thinking about God are formed around the Greek word for God, Θεός *theos* and its Latin equivalent, *deus*. Θεός according to *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* primarily refers to “a transcendent being who exercises extraordinary control in human affairs or is responsible for bestowal of unusual benefits, deity, god, goddess” (Danker, 450). St. Anselm in his popular *Proslogion* describes God as “a Being than which nothing greater can be conceived” (Anselm, 45). This requires that whatever qualities are attributed to God, He must possess them to an absolute and ultimate degree. Hence, it is not just that God is the greatest conceivable Being but rather, being ascribed with such attributes, must possess all conceivable qualities to the greatest conceivable extent. Among those qualities traditionally applied to God, three stand out: God must be all-powerful (omnipotent), all-knowing (omniscient) and all-good (omnibenevolent). These qualities however, are not the only attributes that have been so ascribed. Amongst others, it has been claimed that God’s existence must be independent of any other existences. God is accordingly a ‘necessary’ being, distinguishable from the ‘contingent’ beings of his creation. Also, Itene explains that God must be incapable of experiencing emotions or passions (and so impassible); that he must be independent both of matter (and so immaterial) and of time (and so eternal), and incapable of change (and so immutable) (17). By these explanations the existence of God is already inferred as well as His transcendence. By His transcendence we mean that God is above man and above the world in everything. He is neither a stranger to this world as with deism nor is he to be confused with the world as with pantheism. Amongst theistic believers, the belief in the existence of God who possesses the above listed attributes is most often indubitably taken for granted.

However, the fact of evil as a ubiquitous, and personal experience of same have also affected some believers resuscitation from their seeming “dogmatic slumber”. This awakening naturally arouses in them a query about the rationale to believe in God, and the rationality to continue to believe in God; a supreme being, who is highly held to be all-powerful, all-knowing, and perfectly good in the face of seemingly needless suffering. The question that often begs for answer is; why an all-loving God would allow or expose His lovely children to suffering and persecution? Put it differently, why should evil happen to innocent (good) people with the full awareness of the omnipotent and omnibenevolent God? Such inquiry and reflection is usually associated with the theological, religious, and philosophical problem of evil. Udofia et al. (157), simplifies the problem of evil as a philosophical critique which emphasizes the inconsistency in the nature of God at the instance of the reality of evil, thus posing challenges on the traditional theological beliefs about God.

### **God's Attribute of Love in Christianity**

Among Christians, the term 'love' enjoys popularity of usage and emphasis in families, communities, association and so on. This is because of its value in human relational affairs. Love is loosely characterized amongst Christians because of the conviction that its true meaning is perfectly epitomized in the person of God. It is on the strength of this premise that Etuk and Etuk (57), conclude that "the Bible in its entirety is described as God's love letter to mankind". Hence, for Christians the term 'love' in its perfect form can be interchangeable with the person of God. The following biblical expressions substantiate this point; "He who does not love does not know God; for God is love (*agape*)" (1John 4:8, 16, RSV), "The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love (*hesed*)" (Psalm 145:8, RSV), "Greater love (*agape*) has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friend" (John 15:13 RSV), "But God proves His love (*agape*) for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8 RSV), "For God so loved (*agape*) the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16 RSV). The Greek language and culture identify three (3) types of love, namely: *eros*, *philia*, and *agape*. *Eros* is erotic or sexual attraction or affection to another person. *Philia* is a sort of love between siblings, friends, parents and children. *Agape* is the God type of love for mankind. Appraising the love of God for sinful mankind, Etuk and Etuk (61), submit; "*Agape* is loving until it hurts." Here an unconditional, selfless and sacrificial nature of God's love which manifests in creation and providence, and redemption of mankind is already inferred.

The entire narrative of the Bible is an encapsulation of these two events; creation/divine providence, and redemption. In creation, mankind (*Adam*) apart from other creatures was privileged to share an identity with his Creator by being "made in the image of God". Also, God proved His providence by evidence of the sufficiency in the Garden of Eden. When this dignity was lost in the Fall, God took the initiative to restore it in the act of redemption. The whole process of rescuing mankind from the bondage of sin and eternal damnation through the sacrificial work of Christ known as sacrificial atonement is a profound manifestation of God's love for man. The sacrificial death of Christ is the pick of God's love for man. This narrative of God's love is known in philosophical and religious discourse as God's omnibenevolence. Philosophically, God as omnibenevolence is understood and seen as God who is all-good, and all-loving at all-times. Within the context of God's omnibenevolence, His omnipotence and omniscience are already presumed. This is because if God must be all-good then He must not be limited in power or knowledge of any sort to exercise His goodness. Therefore, to be omnibenevolence infers ultimately omnipotent and omniscient. This necessarily follows that, since God is all-good and all-loving, accordingly, He must act always in ways that are absolutely ultimate. That is, His actions or inactions are expected to be the best possible approach in any prevailing circumstance. This implies also that plausibly, if there is no best option or action available, for the sake of His lovely children, He must necessarily change the events, situations, and circumstances. Consequently, if possible and when necessary, He is trusted to bring about the state of affairs that are both determinable and creatable as well as optimal within the limitations of physical reality.

Therefore, when Christians speak of their God as being omnibenevolent, the above points are the expectations they have in Him. These expectations are founded on divine categorical assertions and imperatives such as: "It is the Lord who goes before you; he will be with you, he will not fail you or forsake you; do not fear or be dismayed" (Deut. 31:8 RSV), "...I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children" (Isa. 49:25

RSV). "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matt. 7:7 RSV) and many similar promises of providence. Consequently, when Christians experience suffering and persecution, the import of such experience on them transcends beyond the academic level of mere contraries between divine attributes and the existence of evil. Indeed, whenever one experiences suffering, the first and immediate emotion the experience naturally arouses in every Christian is a feeling of disappointment and doubt in God. Not even the best of Christians has overcome such feeling. For instance, John the Baptizer who had earlier declared Christ as the Messiah (John 1:29) became doubtful of the messianic identity when Jesus failed to rescue or even visit him in prison. John sent this message to Jesus, expressing his seeming disappointment in him; "Are you the Messiah (redeemer), or should we look for another?" (Matt. 11:3). Also, Job cursed the day he was born when his suffering became unbearable (Job 3:1). This is the reality surrounding the concept of divine benevolence.

### **Instances of Persecution of Christians in Nigeria**

It will be an onerous task to give a complete synopsis of instances of persecution of Christians in Nigeria given the fact that Christians in Nigeria are persecuted almost daily, especially after Governor Ahmed Sani Yerima declared Sharia Law in Zamfara State in 1999 (Hammed and Egbewole 369), and the advent of Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen subsequently. However, for reason of currency and precision of the work, some of the instances of persecution of Christians in recent times are documented here. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January, 2025 according to Balog (1), "Islamist extremists attacked Christian communities in Nigeria's Middle Belt. It was one of the worst massacres that claim 47 lives." A year before, killing of Christians was reported in the same State at the Gboko Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church. Such incident of massacre of Christians on the very glorious and happy day of Christmas could be very disheartening. Accordingly, *Aid to the Church in Need* (ACN) added that the militants also "burnt down eight Catholic Churches including, St. Mary's Parish, as well as the parish house, clinics, schools and other houses." On account of that incident, at least 6800 people were reported missing or displaced from the affected communities. In Borno State on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January 2025, *Persecution.org* (International Christian Concern) reported:

Boko Haram is escalating attacks on Christian communities in Chibok, Borno state, displacing more than 4,000 Christians in recent days. In a series of coordinated raids, Boko Haram targeted the Christian villages of Njila, Banzir, Shikarkir, and Yirmirmug, burning homes, torching churches, and killing five people. During the most recent attack on Monday, terrorists descended on Shikarkir and Yirmirmug in the early morning, displacing more than 1,500 residents.

Eyewitnesses account provided in that report included the fact that "Boko Haram militants targeted Christians during these raids, intimidating them and demanding they convert to Islam or face death." The violence destroyed Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa, a church, and the loss of livestock, food supplies, and livelihoods. On the February 14, 2025, the *Baptist Press* reported that "about 50 Christians were killed, dozens kidnapped and homes destroyed since late January in several attacks spanning southern to northern Nigeria." The publication also included a report that in the month of January 2025, at least three pastors were killed in attacks in Kaduna and Gombe states. Some of the major incidents of Christian attack highlighted in the report included; the killing of Rev Bala Galadima, an Evangelical Church

Winning All (ECWA) pastor, in an attack at his home in Lubo, Gombe State, on February 9, 2025, the killing of Rev Bitrus Saleh still of ECWA, was kidnapped along with three other Christians in Majagada village on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February, 2025 by suspected Fulani militants.

Similarly, on the February 12, 2025, *Persecution.org* (1) reported that, “at least 22 Christians were killed in series of attacks on villages in Plateau state, Nigeria when armed groups occupied Christian communities in Mangu Local Government Area, the hometown of Plateau State Governor, Caleb Mutfwang, preventing residents from accessing their homes, farms, and places of worship. The affected Christians were shown on record lamenting over the loss of their loved ones, destruction of their homes, farms (their major source of livelihood) and their place of worship. On the 26 of July, 2025 the *National Public Radio* NRP (an American based international broadcasting firm) reported the brutal killing of 160 people in Yelwata community of Benue State. Highlighting the excruciating impact of the incident, NRP (1) laments:

Villagers scrub streaks of blood from the walls of brick huts and barns. Others still search through torched sacks of crops, clothes and scattered belongings, to salvage what they can, weeks after the massacre. Dozens of attackers stormed the farming village of Yelwata in Benue state—Nigeria’s fertile breadbasket—killing at least 160 people. Armed with rifles, machetes and fuel, they struck as families slept. The assault, one of the deadliest in recent memory, sparked outrage from religious leaders and lawmakers around the world.

Although NRP attributed the cause of the massacre to the deepening crisis between farmers and herders in northern Nigeria, it also described Yelwata as Christian community, thus alluding to the possibility of the massacre being motivated by some religious factors. However, some scholars are skeptical about describing the killing of Christians in Northern Nigeria as a form of persecution. They prefer squeezing the experience into a more secular and global phenomena like violence and insecurity. For instance, Olusakin and Sibani (56), apart from swiftly avoiding the use of the term “persecution” in describing the unfortunate killings of Christians in Nigeria, carefully debated the attribution of such killings to religious differences. They argue, “Many factors contribute to insecurity and violence in Nigeria. They are socio-political, socio-economic and socio-religious”(58). The prefix “socio” to all the identified causes stated above to contextualizes or limits all incidents of ‘insecurity’ in Nigeria to some social factors. This is a subtle way of saying that even some conflicts with religious coloration are primarily motivated by social factors. However, contrary to the views of Olusakin and Sibani, Williams Abba unequivocally stated that the killing of Christians in northern Nigeria is a clear case of persecution. He attributed the root cause of persecution to; a global rise in radical or fanatical Islam, poor Islamic theological education, and the quest by Islamic scholars and politicians to persecute Christians for the gains of political and religious dominance in the country (Abba 33). Nevertheless, while debate remains an academic issue, the existential implications of the persecution of Christians in northern Nigeria cries aloud for concern. In the face of these calamitous incidents, one cannot help but wonder how much toll such incident has taken on their physical and mental health. Also, how that has influenced their faith and love for God, and their general perception of life, and most essentially why God would allow His lovely children to suffer such agony repeated.

### **God's Love and the Reality of Persecution: The "Why" Question**

Although, some pastoral theologians like John Pless have argued that whenever anyone is faced with persecution on his own part or the part of others, a philosophical argument is often the last thing such a person wants to hear. In his words, "agonizing inquiry like the "Why" question may appear irritatingly superficial at the instance of suffering"(6). Accordingly, Long (75) opined that, "what usually appeal to the heart most are compassion and empathy, and the proper response may simply be to listen and try to share the other's grief and questions." Following Pless and Long's positions, we are persuaded to believe that at the experience of evil such as persecution the problem of evil calls more for pastoral care than for a philosophical debate. Perhaps, that may be true at least from a pastoral perspective. However, David Hume's analysis of one's disposition as a Christian in the face of agony affirms that asking the "Why" question (a philosophical inquiry) is inevitably natural. Hume (524) opined:

Each man feels, in a manner, the truth of religion within his own breast and from a consciousness of his imbecility and misery, rather than from any reasoning, is led to seek protection from that Being, on whom he and all nature is dependent. I am indeed persuaded that the best and indeed the only method of bringing everyone to a due sense of religion, is by just representations the misery and wickedness of men.

With this assertion, David Hume declares suffering, first as an undeniable and unavoidable reality of life. Second, he alludes to suffering as a factor associated with religious belief and identity. As Christians, the experience of persecutions conflicts with our deepest convictions and expectation about God for love, protection and care. It arouses fundamental reflections which challenges the reasonability of our belief in God whom we consider all-loving and all-powerful, in addition to other virtuous qualities. The imports and implications of such reflections cannot be undermined. The mystery then is how to unravel the reasonability of God in permitting His beloved children to be subjected to all forms of persecution, when He has all the powers and "love" to stop same. In reaction to this perplexity, philosophers and theologians have passed the following verdicts on God:

- i. **God is not the Creator of this Wicked World:** Gnosticism is a first century Christian sect which was later considered heretic because of its supra-biblical nature of explaining natural realities. According to Castillo (2), "Gnosticism comes from the Greek word "*gnosis*" which means to know or knowledge." One of the realities that occupied the interest of the Gnostics was the existence of evil in the world. Wondering the source of evil in the world said to be created by a perfect God, the Gnostics filed a suit for logical inconsistent against any attempt to associate the creation of this with an infinitely wise, perfect, powerful and just deity. They accuse the Christians for dragging their God to hopeless state of logical contradiction, by their confession of Him as both Creator and Father Almighty. Accordingly, Shahbazi (16) argues that, to the Gnostics, based on the apparent imperfection of the world, the conclusion is self-evident that God Almighty; perfect and just, cannot be the creator of this imperfect world. Setting the premises for their argument, the Gnostics among other views holds that there is an irreconcilable separation between matter and spirit, the former being totally evil, the latter being purely holy. The world they say is completely constitutive of matter which explains the cause of the attendant evil in it. On those premises they submit that the world could not have been created by a holy, perfect, and just God, rather it was created by a lesser god

whom the world is a reminiscence of his imperfection. The creator they called “Demiurge”. On the strength of this argument, Christians are fixed with a dilemma. They either admit that their Almighty God is not the creator of this imperfect world, or to accept the logical contradiction of a “Perfect God” creating an imperfect world. The Gnostic position though very old still command popularity in modern time of its logical consistency. However, for the Christians, admitting any part of this dilemma will obviously rob God of his identity and dignity as the Creator Almighty.

- ii. **God has Abandoned the World:** Another way to account for evil in the world created by a perfect God is the consolation of one’s self with the conviction that God has abandoned the world after creation. This position is rooted in deism. According to Umoh (45), “Deism is a religious view which affirms the existence of God and His status as the creator of the world, but at the same time denying his interference or intervention in the course of its development or progress.” The implication of this view as Duzgun (888, cf, Umoh 45), noted is that “God has no hand in the running of the universe after creation. God only traces the route of his creation but does not accompany them in their journey.” For the deist therefore, the universe is on its own after creation. Similarly, suffering resulting from either moral or natural causes is assumed to be influenced by natural laws to which God left the functioning of the world unto. J. L. Mackie is famous for the advancement of the view in contemporary era. In his work *Evil and Omnipotent*, Mackie (206-7) argues that it is logically inconceivable to admit both the existence of God and the existence of evil at the same time. He argues:

The good is opposed to evil, in such a way that a good thing always eliminates evil as far as it can, and that there are no limits to what an omnipotent thing can do. From these it follows that a good omnipotent thing eliminates evil completely, and then the propositions that a good omnipotent thing exists, and that evil exists, are incompatible.

Therefore, by inference from Mackie, the acceptance of persecution as an existential reality is technically an announcement that God may not exist or if He does exist, He has abandoned the world. This position strongly suggests to Christians a humanistic approach to persecution. That is, when experiencing persecution and other forms of suffering, they need not lament to anyone including God. Rather, they should hold their destiny in their hand, and make effort to defend themselves. This also, implies that Christians should accept persecution as their fate and be ready to endure its ordeal, or change the narrative by fighting back. The “God has abandoned the world” ideology is absolutely in sync with contemporary humanistic philosophy where man is challenged to accept his rightful position as the master of his own destiny and the measure of all thing. But has God really abandoned the world? That is a question for philosophical debate.

- iii. **God must be forgiven for the Evil in the World:** In the 19<sup>th</sup> century an American Psychologist and Philosopher, William James opined that evil is indeed real, but God lacks the power to remove it. James’ dilemma is that either God is able to remove it but chooses not to, or God wishes to remove evil but lacks the power to do so. Either way, God’s goodness and omnipotence is put to test. To James, it is absolutely unthinkable profoundly contradictory to the identity of God, conceiving that God is wanting in benevolence. Consequently, James accents the second proposition. Asserting that God in His benevolent would naturally wish to remove evil, but obviously lacks the power to

do so. This point is elaborated in Rabbi Harold Kushner's best-seller book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* published in 1981. The book is an anguish-laden attempt of the Rabbi to come to terms with a painful illness that claimed the life of his young son. Struggling with issues of God's providence and mercy, creation and chaos, the Rabbi can finally only conclude that those who suffer must "forgive God." Believing that God's intentions might be good, but that His power is limited seems to be a better solution than calling into question His goodness (16; Cf. Pless 6). Both James and Kushner's arguments resonate with the tenet of a third century philosophical cum religious movement, Manichaeism. "Manichaeism teaches that the world is an arena in which two opposing cosmic forces incessantly contend, one good, and the other evil" (Coyle 8). Therefore, in response to the reality of evil, the Manichean submits, "God is doing the best he can against evil but find himself facing an independent opponent as formidable as he" (Biegalska 95). The religious term for such view and other related ones is Dualism. However, the exclusivity of divine attributes such as; incorruptibility, inviolability, and immutability and so on, are a strong testament against the notion of two beings with opposing moral identity having those attributes. Nonetheless, the reality of evil seems to furnish Manichaeism with existential justification for its belief. In the face of such demeaning appraisal of God, believers and Christians in particular are left with the challenge of deciding whether their God is lacking in love or lacking in power, since it is natural to conceive that He cannot possess both in absolutism yet allow evil in the world.

### **Augustine's Privation Theory: Damage Control**

Privation theory is credited to Saint Augustine of Hippo (13<sup>th</sup> December 354 to 28<sup>th</sup> August 430 AD). Saint Augustine was exposed to the agonizing reality of persecution that seemed to define Christianity in that era. Christians were generally rejected as unenlightened and uneducated religious fanatics, who practiced cannibalism and incest (González 27). There were also an institutional disapproval and repudiation of Christianity as an illicit religion. Christianity's status as an "illegal religion" (*religio illicita*) enabled the then Roman government to sanction the killing of Christians by anyone including non-government officials. Such killing was usually justified by a '*liturgia*' (worship or service) to the Roman gods and a propellant for divine blessing to the State. Instances of such killings provided in both sacred and secular literatures include: stoning of Stephen (Acts 6), incessant killing of Christians by Saul (Acts 9), crucifixion of Peter and Paul in Rome, persecution of Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna (Litfin 45).

Indeed, such unfortunate reality of persecution which apparently subjected God's omnibenevolence to rational test motivated Augustine's interest on the reality of evil. On a general note, the difficulty associated in confessing the divine attributes of God and accepting the reality of evil defines what is called problem of evil. The question then was; how can an omnibenevolent, omnipotent, and omniscient God allow His lovely children to suffer the affliction of evil when he has the power to stop same? But for Augustine, a privation theory of evil holds that evil originated from man's abuse of his free will, and can be said to be non-existent because it lacks substance in created reality. This was not only an answer to the problem of evil but a clarification of terms before dealing with the problem (Jiang 2). A careful study of some of the major works of Augustine such as; *Confession*, *City of God*, *Freedom of the Will*, and *Enchiridion* in which he addressed this reality attest to this fact. In his writings, one can readily see in him, a philosopher and a theologian, who was not merely interested in the logical or intellectual exercise or debate concerning the problem of

evil, but also engrossed with the task of consoling physically, emotionally, and psychologically bastardized people whose life or existence had no worth in the eyes of their persecutors. Such consolation Augustine believed must be characterized by a proper definition of evil, elucidating the fact about its origin, and a testament about the place of God in the face of it.

Consequently, for the definition of evil, Augustine said it is a privation (absence) of good (Augustine 12). To say that evil is privation is to believe that all evil reduces down to a lack something that should be there. "Thus, for a human, blindness is a privation, but a lack of wings is not" (Collins 2). On this model, evil is an absence of due goodness, rather than a positive, independent existing thing. In the opinion of Collins (2), "Evil, according to this view, is metaphysically and perhaps epistemologically parasitic on good. Situating his definition within the context of creation, Augustine argued that evil has no substance in existence; meaning that evil does not truly exist (Augustine 97). This is because to Augustine, existence is grounded in creation, which means that anything that could be said to exist must have necessarily had an instance in creation. Evidently therefore, Augustine concludes that evil was not part of God's creation because at the completion of creation account God appraised all creature as good and devoid of evil. For Augustine, to be is to be good. "A thing "is" only insofar as it is good, and insofar as it is not good as it could or should be, it *is not*." Hence, evil came in subsequently as a corruption of the good nature of God's creation through man's abuse of his freewill. This abuse is traceable to the narrative of man's fall according to Genesis 3. With the above argument, Augustine dismissed the Gnostics claim that the world is too imperfect to be a creation of a perfect God who is full of love and power. According to Augustine, the world was created perfect. However, seeming imperfection in the world came through man's sin which resulted from the abuse of his freewill (Augustine 131). In his analysis of God's love, Augustine gave a subtle attack on erroneous claims that God has abandoned the world, and that He must be forgiven having the good will to save mankind but lacking the power to do so. In his words; "The love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind" (Paul 2). The argument here is that the Gnostic conclusion is erroneous because it is limited to what Augustine called "Human Perspectival Prejudice."

Perspectival prejudice suggests that human beings by their finitude nature are confided to assessing their problem in life from a narrow and myopic perspective. Having a broad view of human problem will include assessing God's reason(s) for allowing suffering and pain, although we may not fully comprehend the meaningfulness of such reason(s). From this premise Augustine concludes that indeed, there is no pointless evil in the world. God does not allow evil to exist because he lacks the power to stop it but because he has a reason for allowing it. To every "evil" there is an implicit good. In his *Enchiridion* Augustine asserts "God is so powerful that He can even make good out of evil" (6). In sum, Augustine recognizes that there are many things we call evil which are not truly evil. This is because we often take a limited view of the world, comparing certain things to others, focusing on how certain things are destructive of others. Because our common conception of evil involves disharmony, we are led by our limited perspective to apply the term "evil" to things that appear, from our limited vantage point, disharmonious even though they are, in the grand scheme of things, perfectly harmonious with the natural order. Therefore, the claims that the existence of evil implies the non-existence of God or that he allows evil in the world because he lack the power to stop it could best be described as a subject of man's limited understanding of realities around him, without any recourse to sound reasoning. After all, according to Evans (139), "It is hard to see how finite human beings, with our imperfect and

selected understanding of the ultimate meaning and pattern of the universe could claim to know that any evil is utterly pointless.”

When confronted with the question: Why would God create man with natural proclivity to do evil through the gift of freewill? Augustine argues in his book, *Confessions*, that man was created perfect. The creation of man with freewill and the consequent ability to do both good and evil is the true identity and uniqueness of man in comparison with other creatures (195). God’s purpose for giving free will to man was not to expose him to the possibility of choosing to do evil, but to make him unique and morally responsible. He adds that if God stops us from exercising our freewill even in choosing evil, our freedom is denied, and then we would not even be able to do good (Augustine 131). Hence, it is better that God allows us to be free even though our freedom has resulted in evil. God’s goodness and omnipotence are compatible with the existence of evil in the world.

### **The Weakness of Augustine’s Privation Theory**

Augustine’s Privation theory can be summarized with the following propositions:

- i. Evil as a privation means it is lacking in substance.
- ii. Evil originated from man’s abuse of free will therefore man and not God is to blame for evil in the world.
- iii. God has a purpose for allowing evil in the world.

No doubt, this position has a therapeutic advantage on the believers. This is because, by claiming that evil does not have substance in existence, Christians are pacified not to concentrate their emotions on the fact of evil in the world which is transient, and evident in the fact that one can be sick now, but gets well the next moment. Augustine’s privation encourages believers to keep trusting in God’s omnibenevolence especially given the fact that the seemingly imperfection in the world was not part of God’s creation and plan for mankind. Also, his privation theory provides that God has desirable purpose for allowing His beloved children to experience evil, thus building a ray of hope even in the face of unfortunate circumstances. However, Augustine’s privation is unfortunately lacking in a realistic and intentional approach to the problem of evil. The bottom line is the weakening of man’s proper sense of engagement with the reality around him. Let us analyze these points diligently. In relation to the claim that evil lacks substance in reality, this presupposes it non-existence; that may be obvious to any persons with an average philosophical acumen, the explicit weakness of this argument is a sharp disintegration of the union between substance and existence. If existence and reality could only be associated with the things that were created, how do we account for emotional feelings of love, affection or pain and hate?

Indeed, this position plays down on the relevance of human emotions to the overall well-being of the human person. This view apart from its tardy attack on realism as a fact limited to creation. It is an artful attempt to undermine the principle of idealism which accents the importance of the mind; the act of comprehending reality. If the existence of evil which in most cases is merely felt emotionally is considered non-existent then the reality of the suffering especially when experienced by others will be approached not with the required compassionate spirit of love and empathy. Insensitivity to the ordeals faced by others will enjoy a glorious ascension. Here, we will succeed in creating a world not different from Thomas Hobbe’s ‘State of nature’ or Charles Darwin’s ‘Natural Society’ where life becomes insecure, brutal, nasty, and short (Sheikh et al. 41), because the value of social existence and co-existence is abnegated by principle of survival of the fittest. Thus, no proactive measure toward the amelioration of human experience could be advanced.

### **Finding a Balance**

It is unarguably true that a philosophical discussion on the reality of evil, especially at the instance of such brutal killing of Christians may not really be an interesting line of conversation. No one who is faced with the excruciating effects of persecution would be interested in the claim that evil is unreal, or even the atheistic view that God does not exist because evil does. Indeed, such conversation could be rightly considered the height of one's insensitivity to another's plight and a trait of sadism. This is how often Augustine's privation could sound to people who feel the hurt of evil. Privation could readily be concluded as a philosophical or theological disposition which is completely detached from human reality. Notice also that faithful Christians at the instance of persecution would not quickly appreciate a proposition that directly undermines their faith in God no matter how grievous such attack might be especially given the conviction that persecution is a moral evil. If through religious experience and revelation, a Christian had come to know God as a loving and good being, he would not only have evidence that God is not the cause of persecution, suffering, pain, and other evils in the world but also that He has reasons for allowing evil, even if he does not know what those reasons are. In fact, to faithful Christians all through ages, Christianity has never supposed that God's purpose in the creation of the world was to contrast a paradise whose inhabitants would experience a maximum of pleasure and a minimum of persecution. The world to them is a pathway to eternal bliss and not the place of such bliss.

In the words of a second century Greek Church Father, Irenaeus (145) "The world is a place of 'soul making' or 'person making' in which free beings, grapple with the tasks and challenges of their existence in a common environment, may become "children of God" and heirs of eternal life." This implies that there is no guarantee of a total state of fulfillment in this world, human life in the world is in a state of transition to the ideal world. This implies that, in contrast to the philosophical conversation around the reality of evil, which seeks to either defend or blame God, Christians must be encouraged to accept persecution as reality inevitable and intrinsic to their identity. Jesus said, "If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:19 ESV). Such a statement which identifies Christians as people not at par with others naturally raises the question of identity. What does it mean to be a Christian? Particularly, what does it mean to be a Christian in the midst of other religions especially in Northern Nigeria? For Christians, their faith in Christ as the only condition for having a relationship with God and the only path to eternal life is an exclusive identity marker. This implies that just as Christ was hated because of His messianic identity, Christians are bound to experience such hatred for their identity as Christians. Such experience does not negate God's benevolence, or imply His impotence or ineptitude, but stresses the overriding corruption in this world to the extent of accenting the inestimable value and necessity of eternal life in heaven. On the other hand, in the spirit of pragmatism, Christians in the affected areas have the constitutional rights to call on the government of Nigeria that is obligated by the Constitution for protection of life and the property of the citizens to be sensitive and proactive to their safety and security. Blaming God or defending Him offers no meaningful solution to the reality of persecution in Nigeria.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Evidently, neither Augustine's privation theory which seems to play down the reality and gravity of human suffering nor the atheistic argument which demeans the person of God and

the sensibility of believing in Him could really console and give hope to persecuted Christians. Our proposal is a pragmatic approach to persecution. This approach involves accepting persecution as an existential reality inherent in Christianity and consoling oneself with an eternal hope. The position of this paper therefore is in agreement with Lewis (45) on the subject of God's Omnipotence. Omnipotence means the possession of an unlimited right and freedom to do anything; hence, God's omnipotence is not undermined if he allows suffering, but same could be undermined when in our desire to be free from the experience of suffering pushes hard to condition Him in order to always make Him to act in tune with our perceptions and desire. Such a God whose existence and functionality are determined by finite beings will certainly not be worthy of worship. Let God be God!

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Article

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### AI SEXTING ADDICTION: AN EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS INVOLVEMENT FROM ABDULLAHI FODIO UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ALIERO, NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** The advent of technology and communication industries that provide modern electronics devices, software applications and artificial intelligence, raises complex concerns regarding, economy, mental health, privacy and potential misuse of technology. This paper was designed to assess the risk associated with sexting addiction using artificial intelligence (AI) among students of Abdullahi Fodio University of Science and Technology Aliero (AFUSTA), Nigeria. This study was a case study design. A sample of 600 students was selected randomly from 6,600 undergraduate students of three faculties who secured admission into (AFUSTA) for 2024-2025 academic session. A pre-designed Students Attitude and Perception on AI-sexting Questionnaire (SAPAIQ) was employed for data collection. Cronbach's Alpha Statistical method was used to determine the reliability coefficient of 0.80 for the tool. Two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance, which guided the study. Descriptive Statistics, Analysis of Variance (One-way ANOVA), Independent samples t-test were used to test the hypothesis. The finding of this indicated the following major risks associated with the use of AI sexting thus; physiological effect, behavioral effect, economic cost, and time consumption. The study also recommended the establishment of AI-monitoring and evaluation centers need to be mandated to checkmate the usage of all AI bots across the country and Relevant laws should be formed to regulate the use of social media, apps, and bots, among others. In concluded the existential threats of Ai-sexting affected the majority of undergraduate students and male were prone to the use of AI-sexting than their female counterparts.

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**Keywords:** AI-sexting, Cultural Understanding, Sexting, Students, Social Media.

## **Introduction**

The emergence of technology has led to the development of virtual sex, which has further evolved into AI-integrated sexual experiences. The differences observed between the Chatbot's perspectives and the well-established acceptance of teen sexting as a common behavior underscore the ongoing presence of moralistic views within AI systems (Ricon & Cohen, 2024). Today, mobile devices and the internet are integral to the everyday experiences of teenagers. As "digital natives," young individuals encounter technology from an early age, significantly influencing their development and social interactions. The significant time spent by teenagers online over the past ten years has intensified concerns regarding the effects of technology. During the critical phase of identity formation, peer interactions, and the pursuit of new experiences, adolescents may face challenges related to sexuality on social media platforms. Recent study indicates that between 93% and 97% of young people engage with social media (Felice et al., 2022). Ricon (2022) posits that sexting is a component of sexual development among teenagers. In both serious and casual relationships, adolescents explore their sexuality in digital spaces. They may share suggestive messages and images with both acquaintances and strangers, allowing them to engage with their sexuality in a relatively low-risk environment, which can enhance their self-esteem and interpersonal relationships. Nevertheless, sexting carries inherent risks, such as the potential for unauthorized distribution of images (Hu et al., 2020).

Sexting has become a concerning problem in human civilization. Majority of people are using mobile phones to access social media platforms. More than 500 million people in Africa use mobile phones, according to a 2013 report from the International Telecommunication Union (Parliament of Victoria, 2024). Mobile phones are used for a variety of purposes such as messaging, accessing the internet, and perusing various social media platforms. This trend persisted, with numbers rising from 24% in 2010 to 32.9% in 2012. Adolescents make up a significant percentage of mobile phone users, making up more than 30% of the user base overall (Olabode, 2018). According Strassberg (2013), survey revealed that 18% of respondents had engaged in sending peers sexually suggestive photographs and messages in the United States. Additionally, studies on the popularity of sexting among young teenagers found that between 30% and 89% of this group participated in such behaviors, indicating a high frequency of sexting among young people. Study on adolescent sexting has examined its prevalence, motivations, outcomes, and legal issues, and has explored associated factors and connections to well-being. A meta-analysis of 39 studies from 2009 to 2015 found that sexting activity increased during that period. By 2015, 19.3% of teenagers were sending sexts, 34.8% were receiving them, and 14.5% were forwarding sexts without consent. Females received more sexting than males and older adolescents sent more than younger ones (to both younger and older teens). Sexting education should thus begin early and encourage ethical online conduct (Mori et al., 2022). Some studies emphasized the adverse effects of sexting, linking it to risky behaviors, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem (Gasso et al., 2019). However, other studies cite its potential benefits, including self-expression, sexual exploration, relationship enhancement, intimacy maintenance, arousal, pleasure, learning about consent and health, and body positivity (Doyle et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2021).

## **Sexting**

Sexting refers to any behaviors that involve sharing vulnerable images of a sexual nature using digital media and it could be applied to mobile-based cyberbullying or other types of cyberbullying. The act of sending, receiving, or sharing messages or images that are sexually explicit content through electronic devices, especially among minors, with implications for mental health, privacy, and online security has been considered to be sexting. In another way, sexting messages can include text, photographs, or emojis or emoticons (Stephy, 2009; as cited in Amali, et al., 2024). The concept (in question) differs from cybersex or other forms of computer-mediated sexuality in that it is enacted through smaller devices that can easily be transported, such as mobile phones or handheld computers and in that regards, most people who engaged in sexting each other have met face-to-face. With the development of mobile applications such as Tinder or Grindr, where participants can meet others online for exchange, the number of sexters who have not met face-to-face continues to increase. Sexting, as a concept and as a word, is relatively new, being added to the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary in 2012. As such, cultural understanding and response to sexting practices are still in development. Adolescent sexting practices appear to differ from how adults use sexting and that cultures at least, Western cultures, given that virtually almost all sexting research done earlier using participants from North America or Europe generally assign stigma to the practice and invoke moral panic by suggesting sexting is representative of sexuality gone amok. This entry further describes sexting as an activity then, looks at research on sexting among adolescents and among adults. It concludes by discussing the types of scandals involving sexting that have drawn the attention of the news media Jimmie (2020).

## **AI-sexting**

A world is driving by technology and human communication is a new way of finding and rebuilding relationship boundaries. Artificial intelligence communication has become one of the most talked about technologies in cities because of its simplicity, privacy, and intelligence. Many platforms were designed to simulate a human-like experience, allowing people to express their opinions, encourage discussion, and explore their interests without needing other people. With high anonymity and awareness, people can use robots to protect their needs and interests. Therefore, there is need for third party users who can discretely procure an AI-bot with a good privacy policy. The market may be flooded with AI messaging bots to help users make decisions (Suffescom, 2024). Sexting has gained a surge in popularity. AI bots improve user experience on digital platforms by facilitating smoother and more efficient interactions. People look for joyful experiences to please their desires most especially what could trigger them to become sexting addicted. This is where a sexting AI bot comes into the picture. Business owners and entrepreneurs looking forward to investing in this technology are cognizant of the 300% increase in searches for AI sexbots. It presumes as a game-changing technology and an opportunity for you to help people indulge in the joys of flirting without any embarrassment or shame. Sexting AI apps are chatting apps that blend advanced AI technology with a dash of steamy creativity. They allow users to engage in naughty conversations with virtual characters. Picture having an AI friend who only gets your vibe and keeps up with your wildest fantasies. These AI sexting bots simulate real, intimate conversations from time to time; have you questioning whether you are talking to an actual human or an AI (Topaiinfluncer, 2024).

### **Sexting at Educational Institutions**

Dramatic shift has occurred in sexuality education over a decade that reflects social and political changes. Scholars like Butler (1990) and Foucault (1978) critiqued sexuality's construction and enforcement by learning institutions. Political and social forces equip sexual morality, especially for teens. The nexus between evolving sexuality education programs and socio-political processes demonstrated the power of these forces. While the trend is toward comprehensive liberal programs that present sexuality as a fundamental human rights matter, conservative abstinence-only approaches persist (Winkelmann & Ketting 2013; Lamb et al., 2013). Effective sexuality education programs equip youth and teen to navigate relationships, sexual development, online misinformation, and conflicting messages. It fosters values, knowledge, and skills for the body, intimacy, and sexuality (Bonjour & vander 2018). Conservative programs promote abstinence-only education as ideal for risk prevention. They utilize cautionary messaging to dissuade teen sexual permissiveness. A parent-centric approach is also common, though research shows teens do not discuss sex with parents and instead seek information online (Ricon & Dolev-Cohen, 2024). Students sexting attitudes reflect its risks and negative publicity. Research in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia has shown that sexting is rejected mainly due to consequences or coercion, while it is tolerated as part of flirting and intimacy or without considering outcomes (Van Ouytsel et al., 2016). Positive motivations like promoting intimacy and arousal contribute to acceptance (Burkett, 2015). Teens sext to flirt, initiate intimacy, feel sexy, get attention, conform to perceived norms, joke around, or in response to pressure or blackmail (Ojeda, 2022). These digital interactions have become an integral part of modern adolescent social and sexual development, reflecting the increasing integration of technology into all aspects of teen life and relationships. Parents significantly influence adolescent sexual socialization but seldom discuss sexting, leaving teens without guidance or support if pressured. Teens are upset and at risk for further harm due to low help-seeking rates for issues like sextortion, underscoring the importance of candid communication (Wittes et al., 2016; Wolak et al., 2018). Although research supports the normal role of teen sexting in teenage sexual maturation, this analysis of AI conversational and questionnaire responses demonstrates enduring conservative beliefs toward teen sexting. It is necessary to conduct additional research on the causes and consequences of such AI-generated communications.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Plethora interest emerged in research about the sexual influence of sexting and AI-sexting among students of various institutions of learning. These acts of risky sexual involvements had repercussions for the student's mental health, economic loss of resources (Drouin, 2012). The risky sexual behavior associated with female adolescents' tract many questions that needs to be studied in their relationship with social media, sexting, and AI sexting. Sexting has rapidly become a social problem that endangers and changes the caricature of the society as a whole. The increase in the use of social media has resulted to the rise in the prevalence of sexting, which is currently being integrating into AI-sexting or sextbots, which in turn resulted in risky sexual behaviors (Klettke, 2014). Therefore, this paper is an attempt to checkmate the risk associated with sexting and AI-sexting among the students of Abdullahi Fodio University of Science and Technology, Aliero (AFUSTA), Nigeria.

## **Objectives**

The general aim of this study is to investigate the negative implication of AI sexting among students while specific objectives are to examine the implication of the use of smart phones/computers to misuse of technology among students; determine the prevalence of AI Sexting among Students; and identify the level of threats associated with sexting addiction using AI by students.

## **Hypotheses**

- i. There is no significant difference in AI-sexting involvement between undergraduate students based on programme of study, level of student, age of student and gender
- ii. There is no significant difference in risk associated with the use of AI-sexting among undergraduate students based on programme of study, level of student, age of student and gender

## **Methodology**

The target population consisted of 6,060 undergraduate students in 200, 300 and 400 level who were enrolled into full time degree programs of Abdullahi Fodio University of Science and Technology Aliero during 2024-2025 academic session. Various department were cluster into three cognate faculties such as Science Education and Sciences, Engineering and Clinical and Health Allied. The simple random sampling technique was employed to select 600 students who were representatives of the target population of 200, 300 and 400 levels respectively from three faculties. A pre-designed Students' Attitude and Perception on AI-sexting Questionnaire (SAPAIQ), which contained five dependent variables and coded as follows: Psychological Effect (PE1), Physiological Effect (PE2), Behavioural Effect (BE), Time Consuming (TC), and Economic Loss (EC) was employed using Google form and Kobo tools. The instrument was sorted based on variables and scores of 1,2,3,4 and 5 were assigned to SA, A, N, D and SD respectively for all positively worded items. In addition to this, Sexual Risk Survey (SRS) scale by Muhammad (2022) and Sexting Scale by Weisskirch and Delevi (2011) were employed to assess the perception of adolescents about their sexual risks with uncommitted partners, and to assess the sexting attitude and intention of adolescents, and how regular suggestive photo or video was sent to a receiver. The scores obtained from students' responses were subjected to Cronbach's Alpha Statistical Method of Analysis and the outcome yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.80.

## **Results**

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

<b>Age</b>	<b>Age (in years)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
	17-23	466	77.7	77.7%
	24-27	122	20.3	20.3%
	28-30	5	0.8	0.8%
	Above 30	7	1.2	1.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
	Male	480	80.0	80.0%
	Female	120	20.0	20.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Marital Status	Marital Status	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Single	394	65.7	65.7%
	Married	182	30.3	30.3%
	Divorced	5	0.8	0.8%
	Separated	19	3.2	3.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Ethnic Groups	Ethnic Groups	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Hausa	427	71.2	71.2%
	Yoruba	117	19.5	19.5%
	Igbo	32	5.3	5.3%
	Fulani and Dakarkari	24	4.0	4.0%

**Source: Field work, 2025**

Table1 revealed the age range of the participants in this study. 17-23 has the highest frequency of 466 (77.7%), followed by 24-27 with 122 (20.3%), and above 30 years. 7 (1.2%), in which 28-30 has the least frequency of 5 (0.8). The gender participation in this study indicated that male participants had the highest frequency of 480 (80%), followed by female participants with a frequency of 120 (20%). The marital status of the participants indicated that single respondents had the highest frequency of 394 (65.7%), followed by married participants with 182 (30.3%), 19 (3.2%) separated, and the least among the participants were divorcees with 5 (0.8%) frequency. Ethnic group played a vital role in this study, in which Hausa had the highest frequency of 427 (71.2%), followed by Yoruba with 117 (19.5%), and Igbo had 32 (5.3%), while Fulani and Dakarkari was the least with a frequency of 24 (4.0%).

**Table 2:** Analysis of variance (One-way ANOVA) of students’ involvement in AI-sexting based on Level of study (N=600)

Descriptive Statistics					
Level of Study	N	Mean Score	SD	Std. Error	
200-Level	297	279.11	168.74	9.79	
300-Level	251	311.68	174.61	11.02	
400-Level	52	368.73	173.77	24.08	
ANOVA					
Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	t-cal.	t-crit.
Between Groups	409356.356	2	204678.178	6.946	.001
Within Groups	17590593.644	597	29464.981		
<b>Total</b>	<b>17999950.000</b>	<b>599</b>			

\* Significant at  $p < .05$  alpha level; N = 600

Table 2 shows that 400-level students had the highest mean score of 368.73, followed by 300-level (311.68) and 200-level (279.11) respectively, in their involvement in AI-sexting. This indicates that 400-level students involved more in AI-sexting than 300 level and 200 level students. It also revealed that the calculated  $t$  of 6.946 is higher than the critical  $t$

of .001 at 0.05 alpha level with 2 and 597 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected which stated that there is no significant difference in undergraduate students' involvement in social networks based on level of study, and the alternative hypothesis is chosen. This entails that there is a significant difference in undergraduate students' involvement in AI-sexting based on level of study. Given the significant F-ratio, a post hoc analysis using Levene's Statistic Test of Homogeneity of Variances was done to locate the source of differences. The result of the analysis indicates a significant difference exists between 400-level, 300-level and 200-level undergraduate students.

**Table 3:** Results of Independent Samples T-test of Gender Involvement in AI-sexting

Independent Samples Test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.109	.741	.476	598	.634	7.50661	15.77182	-23.46829	38.48151
Equal variances not assumed			.479	308.224	.632	7.50661	15.67392	-23.33481	38.34804
Group Statistics									
Gender	N		Mean		Std. Deviation		Std. Error Mean Decision at $P < 0.05$		
Male	432		302.6019		174.14019		8.37832		
Female	168		295.0952		171.69710		13.24672		
Total	600								

\* Significant at  $p < 0.05$  alpha level; N = 600

Table 3 presents independent samples of *t*-test to compare the involvements of gender in AI-sexting. The mean score of male with (302.60) is significantly different with female with (295.09). This indicated that male had more influence in AI-sexting than female. The equal variance was assumed and the null hypothesis was retained. The value of *P* is .741, which is > 0.05. [*t* (.476) = 598]. The degree of freedom is 598 which significantly different with (308.22). The male Standard Deviation was higher than Female Standard Deviation. Also the magnitude of the differences in the means differences =7.51, 95% which inferred that, the Null hypothesis was retained.

**Table 4:** Results of independent Samples t-test of Age-range Involvement in AI-sexting

Independent Samples Test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	2.952	.086	-136.593	598	.000	-.99379	.00728	-1.00808	-.97950
Equal variances not			-277.705	482.000	.000	-.99379	.00358	-1.00082	-.98676

assumed								
Group Statistics								
Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Mean Decision at $P > 0.05$			
18-24 years	483	1.0062	.07865	.00358				
25-30 years	117	2.0000	.000000	.00000				
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>							

\* Significant at  $p < 0.05$  alpha level; N = 600

In table 4 an independent samples  $t$ -test was conducted to compare the participants' age range in participating in AI-sexting. The mean score of 2.00 (25-30 years) of students is higher than the mean score of 1.00 (18-24 years). This indicated that 25-30 years had more influence with AI-sexting than the students with age range of 18-24 years. The calculated  $t$  of  $.086 > 0.05$ , which is higher than the critical  $t$  of  $.000 < 0.05$ . Therefore, the equal variance was assumed, and the null hypothesis was retained. The degree of freedom is 598, which significantly different from 308.22. The 18-24 (.078) standard deviation was higher than the 25-30 (.00) standard deviation; also, the magnitude of the differences in the mean differences is equal to  $-.99, 95\%$ , which infers that the null hypothesis was retained.

**Table 5:** Analysis of Variance (One-way ANOVA) of Risk Associated with AI-sexting Based on Faculty/Programs of Study

Faculty/Programs	N	Mean Score	SD	Std. Error		
Science Education and Science	324	1.2346	.73853	.04103		
Engineering and Environmental Sciences	147	2.7687	1.00047	.08252		
Clinical Health and Allied Science	129	3.2016	.40272	.03546		
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>2.0333</b>	<b>1.15951</b>	<b>.04734</b>		
ANOVA						
Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F-cal.	F-crit.	
Between Groups	462.265	2	231.132	402.211	.000	
Within Groups	343.069	597	.575			
<b>Total</b>	<b>805.333</b>	<b>599</b>				

\* Significant at  $p < 05$  alpha, level. N=600

Table 5 reveals that undergraduate students from the Faculty of Clinical Health and Allied Sciences had the highest mean score of 3.20 on students' involvement in AI-sexting, followed by the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Science Education and Science, with mean responses of 2.77 and 1.23 respectively. Therefore, students having the highest mean score had more tendency of risk associated with AI-sexting than others did. It also shows that the calculated  $F$  of 402.21 is higher than the  $F$ -critical of  $.000$  at  $0.05$  alpha level of significance with 2 and 597 degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant difference in risk associated with AI-sexting based on Faculty of study, is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is retained. This means that there is a significant difference in risk associated with AI-sexting based on Faculty of study. Given that, the significant  $F$ -ratio, a post hoc analysis using Levene's Statistic Test of Homogeneity of Variances was done to locate the source of differences. The result of the analysis indicates a

significant difference exists between Faculty of Engineering and Environmental Science, the Faculty of Science Education and Science, and Clinical Health and Allied Science.

**Table 6:** Analysis of Variance (One-way ANOVA) of Risk Associated with AI-sexting Based on Students Level of Study

Students Level of Studies	N	Mean Score	SD	Std. Error
200 Level	357	1.4006	.89587	.04741
300 Level	134	2.7388	.99570	.08602
400 Level	109	3.2385	.42815	.04101
Total	600	2.0333	1.15951	.04734

  

ANOVA					
Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F-cal.	F-crit.
Between Groups	367.957	2	183.979	251.123	.000
Within Groups	437.376	597	.733		
Total	805.333	599			

\* Significant at  $p < 05$  alpha level. N=600

Table 6 Shows 400 level students who have the highest mean score of 3.23, followed by 300 level (1.27) and 200 level (1.40) respectively. This indicates that 400 level students were more vulnerable to the risk associated with AI-sexting than 300 level and 200 level students. It also revealed that 300 level students have higher standard deviation of 0.99 seconded by 200 level with 0.89 and 300 level 0.42 respectively. The calculated F is 251.12 is higher than the F critical of 0.000 at 0.05 alpha level with 2 and 597 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference in risk associated with AI-sexting based on level of study is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is chosen. This entails that there is a significant difference in risk associated with undergraduate students' involvement in AI-sexting based on level of study. Given the significant F - ratio; a post hoc analysis using Levene's Statistic Test of Homogeneity of variances was done to locate the source of differences. The result of the analysis indicates a significant difference exist between 400-level, 300-level and 200-level respectively.

**Table 7:** Results of Independent T-test Samples Analysis of Risk Associated in AI-sexting based on Gender

Independent Samples Test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	36.587	.000	-82.368	598	.000	-.95274	.01157	-.97546	-.93002
Equal variances not assumed			-51.830	130.883	.000	-.95274	.01838	-.98910	-.91638

  

Group Statistics				
Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean

				<b>Decision at <math>P &lt; 0.05</math></b>
Male	478	1.0063	.07906	.00362
Female	122	1.9590	.19907	.01902
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>			

\* Significant at  $p < 05$  alpha level.

Table 7 revealed that the mean score of females (1.95) is higher and significantly different from that of males (1.00). This indicated that females were more vulnerable to risk associated with AI-sexting than males. The equal variance of 36.58 was assumed and the null hypothesis was retained. The calculated  $t$  is 0.00 is equal with the critical  $t$  of .00, which is  $< 0.05$ . The degree of freedom is 598, which is significantly different with equal variances of 130.883 not assumed. The standard deviation of female is 0.19, which is higher than the standard deviation of male of 0.07. The magnitude of the differences in the mean differences is also equal to -.95 (95%), which infers that the null hypothesis is retained.

**Table 8:** Results of Independent Samples T-test of Risk Associated with AI-sexting Based on Age Range.

Independent Samples Test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	242.773	.000	-51.214	598	.000	-.86670	.01692	-.89993	-.83346
Equal variances not assumed			-29.787	137.419	.000	-.86670	.02910	-.92423	-.80916
Group Statistics									
Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Mean Decision at $P > 0.05$				
18-24 years	466	1.0064	.08006	.00371					
25-30 years	134	1.8731	.33407	.02886					
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>								

\* Significant at  $p < 0.05$  alpha level

In Table 8, an independent samples t-test was conducted to determine the age range associated with risk in AI-sexting. The mean score of 25-30 (1.87) of students is higher than the mean score of 18-24 (1.00). This indicated that 25-30 were more vulnerable to risks associated with AI-sexting than students with an age range of 18-24 years. The calculated  $t$  of 0.00 is equal to the critical  $t$  of 0.00, which is  $< 0.05$ , therefore, the equal variance was assumed and the null hypothesis was retained. The degree of freedom is 598, which is significantly different from the equal variances not assumed of 137.42. 18-24 has a 0.08 standard deviation, which is less than 25-30 of 0.33 standard deviation. The magnitude of the differences in the means differences is also equal to -.87; 95%, which infers that the null hypothesis was retained.

### Discussion

The analysis of the results showed that there was significant difference in undergraduate students' involvement in AI-sexting. Student from the Faculty of Clinical Health and Allied

Sciences has the highest mean score, which indicated that they are more influence in AI-sexting followed by Faculty of Engineering and lastly Faculty Educational Science and Science. This result could be attributed to the nature of their program of study. More so, engineering students more often involved in workshop, laboratory and practical work in their studies, thus, leaving them with less free time to involve oneself in to AI-sexting. The result of the analysis also shows that there exists a significant difference in risks associated with undergraduate students towards their usage of AI-sexting based on faculty and program of study. Undergraduate students from the Faculty of Clinical Health and Allied Science have the highest level of vulnerability to risks associated with the use of AI-sexting, followed by Faculty of Engineering and lastly Faculty of Education Sciences.

This result may be attributed to the nature of program undertaken by the students. Clinical Health based courses generally tend to involve practical work and empirical studies. Science students may therefore see lesser need for AI-sexting. On the other hand, Education Science based courses and the Science rely heavily on collation of theoretical information and facts from different sources. The students in these courses could therefore see higher need for integration of social networking in the process of teaching and learning. This finding is in consonance with the findings of Ahmad (2012) which showed that there was significant difference in the disposition of university students towards social networking based on Faculties. Faculty determines the course of study. The result of the analysis showed that there was a significant difference in students' involvement in social networking based on year (Level) of study. The 200 Level undergraduate students had the highest involvement in social networking, followed by 300 Level undergraduate students and finally 400 Level undergraduate students. This result could be explained by the fact that at the 300 Level (penultimate year) and the 400-Level (final year) the students are likely to be more concerned with their academic work since they are more conscious of their Cumulative Grade Point Average and final class of degree on graduation. Therefore, they are more likely to pay greater attentions to their academic work than social networking. Furthermore, the final year students may be involving less in social networking because of their final year project (research study) which they undertake. The result of the analysis also indicated that there exists a significant difference in the attitude of undergraduate students towards the integration of social networking into teaching and learning based on Level (year) of study. The 200 Level students were significantly more disposed in their attitude towards integration of social network into teaching and learning than other students at 300 and 400 Levels. This may be explained by the fact that 200 Level students have more time left to complete their programs and are more disposed to innovations within the time frame left. The 300 and 400 Level students may already be focused on completing their programs and graduating.

### **Conclusion**

AI-sexting is considered to be a dangerous behavior that may put young individuals at risk or to become vulnerable to masturbation addiction. The negative consequences of developing an addiction to AI-sexting may become problematic if it disrupts daily life and results in persistent unpleasant emotions like shame, remorse, regret, anxiety, and embarrassment. The conclusion was supported by the work of Amali et al., (2024) and Umoh et al., (2016). Young adults who receive guidance and counseling on safe sex practices will be better able to safeguard their sexual intimacy from internet companions. When talking to young adults about safer sex, parents, teachers, student counselors, and medical professionals should

bring up the subject of AI-sexting. This will help them understand the repercussions of AI-sexting, which can lead to many repercussions.

### **Recommendations**

This study revealed that institutions of learning have a lot to do for making the lives of their students more effective and well disciplined. The authorities of universities, polytechnics, mono-technics, colleges of education, and secondary school awarding institutions should take preventive measures that can minimize the rampant use of AI-sexting bots for the students. Many risks are associated with the use of AI sexting bots such as time-consuming economic loss, physiological, psychological, or behavioral effects, among others. Government and non-governmental organizations, teachers, law enforcement, traditional rulers, public members, and parents must realize that cyberspace is boundary-less, which makes it highly difficult to control the threat, and therefore, preventive measures should be taken to protect the future life of any prospective students. The following measures are recommended to lessen the resurgence of AI-sexting:

- i. Establishment of AI-monitoring and evaluation centers need to be mandated to checkmate the usage of all AI bots across the country.
- ii. Relevant laws should be formed to regulate the use of social media, apps, and bots, among others.
- iii. The government should set up a special team consists of forensic professionals, experts in ICT; encrypted software, and applications need to be used by government entities to monitor and control the use of unregistered foreign software and applications.
- iv. Computer and mobile phone usage policies should be enforced consistently.
- v. Sensitization programs should be encouraged to educate the communities about the adverse risk associated with the use of AI sexting bots.

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Article

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### BRICS AND THE DE-DOLLARIZATION AGENDA: HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY, STRATEGIC CHALLENGES, AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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#### Abstract

This article analyzes the historical evolution of the BRICS bloc an acronym formed from inter governmental Organization consisting of Brazil Russia India China South Africa with emphasis on de-dollarization policies, Using recent empirical evidence particularly from India, China, and Russia. The paper presents data on trade settlement in local currencies, shifts in global reserves composition, and institutional developments. The study examines benefits and risks of dedollarization for BRICS members, and proposes a roadmap. Findings show substantial momentum in bilateral trade settlement in national currencies, growing pressure to reduce exposure to the US dollar, but with significant challenges remain due to institutional inertia, currency risk, and geopolitical constraints.

**Keywords:** BRICS; De-dollarization; Trade Settlement; Reserve Currency.

#### Introduction

In recent years, the global financial architecture has witnessed increasing momentum toward diversification away from the U.S. dollar as the dominant medium of international trade and reserve currency. Central to this development is the role of the BRICS nations - Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa - that have amplified their calls for a more multipolar financial order (Ocampo, 2022). The process, commonly referred to as de-dollarization, encompasses efforts to conduct trade settlements in local currencies, establish alternative reserve mechanisms, and reduce dependency on Western-led financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the U.S. Federal Reserve system (Subacchi, 2020). India, China, and Russia, in particular, have taken concrete steps toward implementing bilateral and multilateral trade settlements using local currencies,

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including the Chinese yuan and Russian ruble. These efforts have gained further traction in the wake of geopolitical tensions economic sanctions, and shifts in global trade patterns (Korhonen & Lahtinen, 2023). The potential benefits of de-dollarization for BRICS countries include enhanced monetary sovereignty, reduced exposure to external financial shocks, and improved regional trade integration. However, the path toward this transformation is fraught with significant challenges, including currency volatility, lack of trust in alternative monetary instruments, limited financial infrastructure, and geopolitical resistance (Zhang, 2021). This paper explores the growing trend of de-dollarization within the BRICS framework, with a specific focus on trade settlement mechanisms and the prospects for an alternative reserve currency. It examines the roles of India, China, and Russia as leading actors in this transition, evaluates the strategic benefits and systemic risks, and offers policy recommendations for navigating this evolving financial landscape.

### **Origins and Milestones of BRICS**

The concept of BRICS emerged from a term coined in 2001 by Chief Economist Goldman Sachs economist Jim O'Neill, who identified Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC) as rapidly growing economies with the potential to reshape global economic power dynamics (O'Neill, 2001). Initially, the BRICS nations engaged informally through a series of diplomatic and economic discussions during the mid-2000s, focusing on common interests such as trade facilitation, investment cooperation, and development strategies. These early dialogues laid the groundwork for more structured collaboration. In 2009, the first formal BRIC Summit was held, marking a significant milestone in the bloc's institutionalization. By the mid-2020s, BRICS had embarked on a more ambitious trajectory, marked by efforts to expand its membership and redefine its role in the global financial architecture. Several countries have expressed interest in joining the bloc, attracted by its growing political influence and its strategic pivot toward de-dollarization. This includes increasing the use of national currencies in trade settlements, exploring alternatives to Western-dominated payment systems such as SWIFT, and promoting the issuance of bonds in non-USD denominations (Tshikovhi et al., 2025). These developments reflect BRICS' intention to reduce dependency on the U.S. dollar and create a more multipolar economic order that reflects the interests and aspirations of emerging economies.

### **Conceptualizing De-Dollarization**

De-dollarization refers to the strategic process of reducing reliance on the United States dollar in international trade, finance, and monetary systems. For BRICS nations, this involves a multidimensional shift encompassing several key components. First, it includes moving away from using the U.S. dollar in trade invoicing and settlement, opting instead for national or regional currencies such as the Chinese yuan, Indian rupee, or Russian ruble. Second, it entails diversifying foreign exchange reserves by reducing the proportion of dollar-denominated assets and increasing holdings in alternative currencies and gold. Third, de-dollarization encompasses the use of non-Western financial infrastructure - such as payment and messaging systems outside of SWIFT - including China's Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS) and Russia's System for Transfer of Financial Messages (SPFS) (Dey, 2023). Lastly, it involves the issuance of sovereign and multilateral debt instruments in local or non-dollar currencies to deepen financial autonomy and build alternative capital markets (Tshikovhi et al., 2025).

The motivations behind de-dollarization among BRICS countries are both economic and geopolitical. One major driver is the growing vulnerability to U.S.-centric sanctions and

financial restrictions, particularly evident in the aftermath of Russia's exclusion from SWIFT and other Western financial channels during the Ukraine conflict. This has intensified efforts to create more sovereign and resilient monetary systems (Fabbrini & Pianta, 2023). Moreover, BRICS nations seek to reclaim monetary sovereignty and reduce the macroeconomic risks associated with dollar-denominated trade, such as exchange rate volatility and the cost of currency conversion. The initiative also aims to deepen intra-BRICS economic integration by encouraging local currency trade and coordinated financial development. Additionally, broader global disruptions - including inflation surges, energy crises, and supply chain realignments - have exposed the fragility of a dollar-dominated global system, further motivating emerging powers to explore alternative frameworks (Armijo & Roberts, 2014). Together, these factors frame de-dollarization not merely as a financial adjustment, but as a systemic reorientation aimed at fostering a more multipolar and resilient global economic order.

### **Empirical Evidence: Case Studies on India, China, and Russia**

The pursuit of de-dollarization across BRICS countries has taken on different forms depending on national economic priorities, exposure to external pressures, and institutional capacity. Among the BRICS bloc, India, China, and Russia have emerged as leading actors advancing local currency use in trade, reshaping their foreign exchange reserve structures, and experimenting with alternative financial infrastructure.

#### **Russia: Accelerated De-Dollarization under Sanctions**

Russia's de-dollarization strategy has intensified since 2014, following Western sanctions imposed after its annexation of Crimea, and was drastically accelerated after its 2022 invasion of Ukraine. The country has made significant progress in shifting bilateral trade settlements with key partners, particularly India and China, away from the U.S. dollar. By 2023, over 95% of Russia trade with India and China was conducted in local currencies - primarily in rubles, yuan, and rupees (Sputnik India, 2024). Moreover, Russia has expanded the use of its domestic financial messaging system (SPFS), which is increasingly interoperable with China's CIPS, thereby reducing reliance on SWIFT (Global Times, 2024). Moscow has also significantly reduced its holdings of U.S. Treasury securities and diversified its reserves into gold and Chinese yuan (Fabbrini & Pianta, 2023). In parallel, Russian exporters are increasingly pricing commodities in non-dollar currencies, particularly energy exports to China and India, which collectively account for a growing share of its trade. These developments highlight how geopolitical isolation and sanctions can serve as a catalyst for rapid institutional and financial reconfiguration.

#### **China: Strategic Currency Internationalization**

China's approach to de-dollarization is closely aligned with its broader goal of internationalizing the renminbi (RMB) while simultaneously insulating its financial system from Western pressure. Although still cautious in fully liberalizing capital flows, Beijing has made steady progress in promoting the use of the RMB in trade, finance, and global reserves. By 2024, over 95% of China's trade with Russia was settled in local currencies, driven largely by energy imports and large-scale commodity deals (Reuters, 2025). The People's Bank of China has established bilateral currency swap agreements with more than 40 countries, and the use of the CIPS network has steadily grown, processing over RMB 90 trillion worth of cross-border payments in 2023 (CGTN, 2024). The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has further encouraged RMB-denominated lending, particularly in infrastructure projects across Asia

and Africa. Moreover, China has been issuing sovereign bonds and green bonds in RMB through offshore hubs like Hong Kong and London, expanding RMB's profile as a global funding currency. These efforts are complemented by Beijing's push for BRICS financial mechanisms to adopt local currency-based operations, including calls for a common BRICS payment system (Tshikovhi et al., 2025). However, full de-dollarization remains constrained by China's capital account restrictions and limited global liquidity of the RMB compared to the U.S. dollar.

### **India: Pragmatic and Cautious Engagement**

India's engagement with de-dollarization has been more cautious and pragmatic, reflecting its concerns over currency volatility, capital flight, and the need to preserve investor confidence. Nonetheless, India has made notable progress in bilateral trade settlements in rupees, particularly with Russia. By mid-2024, around 90% of India–Russia trade was conducted in local currencies (Financial Express, 2024), driven largely by India's imports of Russian oil and fertilizers. However, this has created imbalances, as India exports far less to Russia, leading to rupee accumulation on the Russian side. To address this, India has been exploring settlement mechanisms involving third currencies like the UAE dirham or Chinese yuan, as well as promoting the use of its domestic payment infrastructure (Reserve Bank of India [RBI], 2024). India has also initiated pilot programs for international trade settlement in rupees with smaller trading partners in Asia and Africa, and has allowed export-import invoicing in rupees under a special Vostro account mechanism (RBI, 2023). Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank of India has advocated for gradual reserve diversification, although the U.S. dollar still constitutes the bulk of India's reserves. India's measured approach reflects the tension between its desire to reduce external vulnerabilities and its commitment to maintaining financial stability and global market access.

### **Economic Benefits of De-Dollarization**

Economically, de-dollarization allows BRICS nations to assert greater control over their domestic monetary policies by reducing the influence of external factors tied to the fluctuations of the U.S. dollar. For countries with significant trade dependencies, conducting transactions in national currencies helps stabilize import and export pricing, minimize currency conversion costs, and shield domestic markets from volatility in dollar exchange rates (Rey, 2021). For instance, India's shift to rupee-ruble settlements with Russia following the imposition of sanctions on Moscow reduced its exposure to dollar-related transaction barriers and protected key imports such as crude oil and fertilizers from price shocks (Financial Express, 2024). In Russia's case, using yuan and rubles in trade with China and India ensured the continuity of export revenues and avoided disruptions caused by exclusion from Western financial systems—economies borrow in foreign currencies—by promoting the issuance of sovereign and corporate bonds in local or partner-country currencies. This limits debt-servicing risks and enhances fiscal autonomy. It also contributes to the development of domestic capital markets, as the demand for non-dollar financial instruments such as yuan-denominated bonds or rupee settlement accounts expands. By reducing over-reliance on dollar liquidity, central banks in BRICS countries can better manage inflation and interest rate policy without being overly responsive to U.S. Federal Reserve decisions (Tshikovhi et al., 2025). Furthermore, the use of national currencies enhances intra-BRICS trade and regional economic integration, paving the way for more balanced and equitable growth among emerging economies.

### **Geopolitical and Strategic Benefits**

Geopolitically, de-dollarization serves as a counterbalance to the structural dominance of the United States in global finance. Since the dollar's centrality enables Washington to impose sanctions and exert control over international payment systems like SWIFT, reducing dependence on it empowers BRICS countries to protect their national sovereignty and strategic autonomy. Russia's experience after its exclusion from key Western financial systems has shown the vulnerability of dollar-based interdependence, leading to accelerated moves toward alternatives such as SPFS (Russia) and CIPS (China) (Fabbrini & Pianta, 2023). These systems are increasingly interoperable and form the nucleus of a parallel global financial infrastructure—one that can accommodate other Global South countries aligned with BRICS ambitions. In addition, de-dollarization supports BRICS's broader objective of fostering a multipolar world order, where financial power is more evenly distributed. The collective issuance of non-dollar financial instruments and use of local currency in multilateral institutions like the New Development Bank (NDB) signals a shift away from Western-dominated frameworks such as the IMF and World Bank (Cooper, 2016). The long-term strategic benefit lies in shaping global governance norms to reflect emerging economies' interests. Furthermore, this transformation allows BRICS to attract new partners—like Iran, Argentina, and Egypt—who are drawn to the bloc's alternative economic vision, particularly as geopolitical polarization continues to affect trade flows and capital markets (Tshikovhi et al., 2025). Overall, de-dollarization is not merely a financial adjustment, but a strategic instrument of global influence.

### **Challenges of De-Dollarization**

While the movement toward de-dollarization offers strategic and economic benefits, it also presents a series of structural, political, and institutional challenges for BRICS nations. One of the foremost issues is the lack of full convertibility and liquidity in several BRICS currencies, particularly the Chinese yuan and Indian rupee, which hampers their usability in global trade and investment. Despite growing bilateral agreements, these currencies still do not match the U.S. dollar in terms of depth, global acceptance, or transactional efficiency (Rey, 2021). For example, while China has expanded its use of the RMB in cross-border settlements, capital controls and tight regulatory oversight still limit its widespread adoption. Similarly, India's rupees-based trade agreements have resulted in trade imbalances, especially with Russia, where rupees accumulated in Indian banks remain underutilized due to limited convertibility and a lack of reciprocal Indian imports (RBI, 2024). A second major challenge lies in technical and infrastructure dependencies. While initiatives like CIPS and SPFS provide alternatives to SWIFT, they remain in nascent stages relative to the scale, speed, and interoperability of Western systems. As of 2025, CIPS processes a fraction of SWIFT's global transactions, and it remains largely centered on Chinese financial institutions (Tanaakk, 2025).

The absence of a unified, BRICS-wide payment and settlement framework impedes the bloc's ambition to function as a coherent financial alternative. Moreover, the lack of harmonized standards, regulatory coordination, and digital infrastructure across BRICS members limits scalability. Geopolitical divergence within BRICS further complicates the bloc's de-dollarization agenda. Although united by their desire to rebalance global power structures, BRICS members maintain divergent foreign policy interests, macroeconomic priorities, and institutional capacities. India's close economic ties with Western economies and ongoing border disputes with China create friction in multilateral financial coordination.

Similarly, Brazil and South Africa have shown limited interest in challenging dollar hegemony compared to Russia and China (Armijo & Roberts, 2014). This heterogeneity undermines efforts to develop a shared reserve asset or a unified currency framework. Trust and credibility issues also limit the acceptance of BRICS currencies on a global scale. Unlike the U.S. dollar - which is backed by deep capital markets, a long-standing track record of stability, and a perceived “safe haven” status - many BRICS currencies face skepticism due to inflation volatility, policy unpredictability, or governance concerns. The yuan’s potential as a reserve currency, for instance, is constrained by political opacity and concerns about Chinese state influence over monetary policy (Fabbrini & Pianta, 2023).

Finally, entrenched global dollar networks make de-dollarization inherently slow and politically sensitive. Most global trade commodities, especially oil and gas, are still priced and settled in dollars. Financial institutions, multinational corporations, and even central banks remain heavily invested in dollar-denominated assets. Efforts to move away from this system are met with resistance from global market participants, and the network effects of dollar usage are difficult to replicate. In sum, while BRICS-led de-dollarization offers long-term promise, it faces a range of internal and external barriers that slow progress and demand careful, coordinated policy responses.

### **The Way Forward: Policy Recommendations for Strategic De-Dollarization**

To make de-dollarization a viable and sustainable strategy, BRICS nations must transition from reactive, bilateral workarounds to proactive, multilateral, and coordinated policy design. The current fragmentation in approaches - driven by differing macroeconomic structures and political priorities - undermines the credibility and scalability of alternatives to dollar dominance. The following policy recommendations offer a strategic roadmap for BRICS to consolidate their de-dollarization efforts and enhance global monetary sovereignty. First, BRICS should formalize a multilateral settlement framework to mitigate trade imbalances arising from asymmetric currency usage. A BRICS Clearing House Mechanism - inspired by the eurozone’s TARGET2 system - could facilitate smoother multilateral netting of payments in local currencies, reducing the need for full bilateral convertibility. This system would be especially useful in resolving issues such as India’s rupee surplus with Russia (RBI, 2024). The creation of a synthetic reference unit or a basket currency akin to the IMF’s SDR (Special Drawing Rights) may also serve as a temporary intermediary unit for intra-BRICS trade and bond issuance (Armijo & Roberts, 2014).

### **Conclusion**

The evolution of BRICS from a Goldman Sachs acronym into a geopolitical and economic coalition reflects the growing assertiveness of emerging powers to reshape global financial governance. One of the clearest manifestations of this ambition is the bloc’s drive toward de-dollarization - a complex, multifaceted process aimed at reducing reliance on the U.S. dollar in trade, finance, and reserve management. As this paper has demonstrated, BRICS nations have made notable strides in developing alternative institutions, including the New Development Bank, local currency bond markets, and payment systems like CIPS and SPFS. Moreover, empirical trends - such as the increasing use of the renminbi in trade settlements and the issuance of rand- and rupee-denominated bonds - illustrate a tangible shift away from dollar hegemony. However, the road to de-dollarization is neither linear nor uniformly smooth. Significant structural challenges persist, including limited currency convertibility, underdeveloped financial infrastructure, geopolitical divergence among BRICS members, and the entrenched dominance of the dollar-based global financial system. These constraints

highlight the need for a more coordinated and strategic approach. Policy responses should prioritize clearing mechanisms, capital account reforms, interoperability of payment systems, and the development of credible financial institutions. Equally important is the need to frame de-dollarization not as a confrontational move against the West, but as part of a broader rebalancing effort toward a more inclusive and multipolar financial order. In sum, while full de-dollarization may remain a long-term goal, incremental advances by BRICS are already shaping the contours of an alternative global financial architecture. If pursued with pragmatism and institutional depth, BRICS' de-dollarization agenda could redefine not just currency usage, but the very principles that govern global economic interdependence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Second, central banks within BRICS should coordinate regulatory frameworks and capital account policies to gradually increase the usability and convertibility of their currencies. While full liberalization may not be feasible in the short term, controlled capital account openness, especially for trade and investment-related flows, would boost the credibility of BRICS currencies. China, for instance, could expand its Qualified Foreign Institutional Investor (QFII) program and simplify offshore RMB investment rules to build investor trust (Fabbrini & Pianta, 2023). Third, BRICS should scale up and integrate their alternative payment systems such as CIPS (China), SPFS (Russia), and India's domestic RTGS infrastructure. A BRICS Interoperability Protocol would allow cross-connection of domestic systems, reducing dependence on SWIFT. Additionally, the development of blockchain-based settlement systems could offer a trust-minimized alternative that enhances transparency and speeds up cross-border transfers, particularly for underbanked regions in Africa and South Asia (Dey, 2023). Fourth, BRICS multilateral institutions such as the New Development Bank (NDB) should issue more local-currency bonds and denominated instruments across members. This not only supports local capital markets but also reduces currency mismatch risk for borrowers. Building secondary markets and incentivizing central banks and sovereign wealth funds to hold these instruments would enhance their liquidity and attractiveness. As shown in Table 3, recent NDB bond issuances in rand and yuan demonstrate the feasibility of this approach. Fifth, BRICS must invest in financial market deepening, including credit rating agencies, clearing platforms, and standardized financial instruments. Many Global South countries face constraints in issuing non-dollar debt due to reliance on Western rating systems that may not fully reflect regional contexts. A BRICS-backed alternative credit rating agency could support fairer evaluation and unlock access to non-dollar capital. Finally, the success of de-dollarization depends not only on technical design but also on strategic diplomacy and institutional trust-building. BRICS must present a coherent narrative around monetary multipolarity - not as an anti-Western posture, but as an effort to democratize global finance. Partnering with other Global South economies (e.g., ASEAN, African Union, Latin America) and encouraging their participation in BRICS-led systems could expand the user base and legitimacy of alternative financial architectures.

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Article

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### A HERMENEUTICS ON THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF CHUKWUEMEKA ODUMEGWU OJUKWU IN RELATION TO CORRUPT PRACTICES IN NIGERIA

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#### Abstract

In an age where political power often felt divorced from moral responsibility, Nigeria's struggle with systemic corruption calls for a return to foundational values that once inspired resistance, sacrifice, and public accountability. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, though best known as the Biafran wartime leader, carried a political philosophy rooted in honour, ethical leadership, and duty to nation. Yet, in the decades since his passing, his name has been widely celebrated but superficially understood. This raises a critical question: how can Ojukwu's political thought be meaningfully interpreted and applied to confront the enduring crisis of corruption in Nigeria? Adopting a hermeneutical method, the findings indicates that the core values embedded in Ojukwu's thought - particularly the notions of public sacrifice, truth-telling, and principled resistance - are not relics of the past, but urgent tools for evaluating and reforming present-day governance. However, his legacy is increasingly misappropriated, reduced to symbolic gestures devoid of substance, while the ethical challenges he once confronted have deepened. The study concludes that Nigeria's crisis is not merely one of political structure, but of moral vision. It recommended a critical re-engagement with Ojukwu's political philosophy, particularly in civic education, leadership development, and institutional accountability. Only by restoring integrity as the centrepiece of public life can Nigeria begin to escape the cycle of corruption and betrayal that continues to undermine its democratic future.

**Keywords:** Hermeneutics, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, Politics, Corruption Practices, and Public Service.

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## **Introduction**

The Nigerian political landscape has, for decades, been riddled with the entrenchment of corrupt practices that undermine national development, weaken state institutions that erode public trust in leadership. From post-independence instability to contemporary democratic challenges, the scourge of corruption has not only persisted but evolved, adapting itself to different political regimes and socio-economic climates. In the midst of this complex history, certain political figures have emerged whose ideologies and rhetoric sought to confront, redefine, or resist the prevailing norms of mis-governance. One such figure is Dim Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu—a man whose life was marked by intellectual vigour, political conviction, and a deep sense of moral duty to the Nigerian people. Ojukwu's political thought, often viewed through the prism of the Biafran struggle, extends beyond secessionist agitation or military exploits. His speeches, writings, and public engagements reflect a sustained critique of the Nigerian state's moral decay and the systematic betrayal of national ideals by those entrusted with power. He believed in justice, meritocracy, accountability, and the supremacy of the people's will—values that stand in stark contrast to the culture of impunity and corruption that has plagued Nigerian politics. A hermeneutical study of Ojukwu's thought allows for a nuanced interpretation that moves beyond literal accounts or ideological dogma. Instead, it demands that we situate his political expressions within their historical, cultural, and existential contexts, and interpret them as responses to the deep structural malaise within the Nigerian state. Hermeneutics, in this context, is not merely a method of textual interpretation but a philosophical engagement with meaning—an attempt to understand how Ojukwu saw the nation, its wounds, and its possibilities for healing.

This article argues that Ojukwu's political ideas—though often overshadowed by the politics of war and ethnicity—contain profound insights into the ethical failures of Nigeria's political class. By interrogating his views on leadership, federalism, nationalism, and justice, one begins to uncover a political philosophy that is both radically Nigerian and persistently anti-corruption. His critique was not just about bad leadership; it was about the moral deficit that permits corruption to flourish at every level of governance. The relevance of Ojukwu's political thought is more urgent than ever in today's Nigeria, where successive administrations continue to grapple with the same challenges of embezzlement, nepotism, and electoral manipulation. In revisiting his thought, we are invited not only to remember a controversial and often misunderstood statesman but to reflect on how philosophical clarity and moral courage can inspire a more ethical political culture. This inquiry does not claim that Ojukwu had all the answers; rather, it seeks to illuminate how his convictions, when viewed, applying hermeneutical method, through a philosophical lens, offers a framework for rethinking the relationship between politics and corruption in Nigeria.

## **The Concept of Hermeneutics and Hermeneutical Method**

Hermeneutical method is an interpretive method that recognises the dynamic interplay between text, context, and the lived experience of both the author and the reader. Hermeneutics, traditionally associated with the interpretation of sacred or classical texts, has evolved into a powerful philosophical tool for unearthing meaning from historical and political narratives. It is not merely about retrieving the intentions of the speaker or writer; rather, it is about engaging with their words in such a way that they continue to speak meaningfully into the present. In the case of Ojukwu, his speeches, interviews, memoirs, and actions must be read not as frozen historical relics but as living commentaries on the

challenges that continue to define Nigerian society today. Hermeneutics begins with a recognition of the gap between the past and the present. Yet, rather than viewing this gap as a barrier, it becomes a bridge—a space where dialogue can occur. Hans-Georg Gadamer, a central figure in philosophical hermeneutics, emphasized the concept of the “fusion of horizons,” where the interpreter’s current reality meets the historical reality of the text. This approach allows us to bring Ojukwu’s political vision into conversation with today’s Nigeria, a country still mired in the same structural dysfunctions he denounced decades ago. What emerges from such a dialogue is not mere nostalgia but a renewed awareness of the enduring relevance of his critiques.

### **Interpreting Political Legacy of Ojukwu in Contemporary Era**

Applying philosophical method of hermeneutics to the political legacy of Ojukwu, also involves acknowledging that meaning is not static. The significance of Ojukwu’s political thought may not lie solely in what he said at a given time but in how his ideas resonate differently under contemporary conditions. For instance, his consistent advocacy for merit-based leadership and federal equity takes on new urgency in today’s Nigeria, where debates about restructuring, decentralisation, and anti-corruption continue to dominate national discourse. The question then remains, how might Ojukwu’s vision challenge the complacency of current political actors? In what ways can his belief in moral leadership serve as a counter-narrative to the politics of expediency and self-enrichment? Moreover, hermeneutic interpretation demands attentiveness to silence and subtext. Not every critique is loud, and not every truth is found in slogans. Ojukwu’s reflections on governance were often laced with philosophical undertones (encapsulated in branches of philosophy such as ethics and critical thinking/logic)<sup>1</sup>—subtle meditations on justice, human dignity, and the moral obligations of the state. Reading these expressions hermeneutically requires sensitivity to both what is said and what is implied. It compels us to look beyond the spectacle of war and ethnicity that has often clouded his legacy, and instead see a thinker deeply troubled by the ethical collapse of the Nigerian state. By employing hermeneutics as a method, this article does not aim to idolise Ojukwu or offer a one-dimensional portrayal of his political journey. Rather, it seeks to recover the moral and intellectual resources within his thought that can illuminate present challenges. In doing so, it opens up a space for critical reflection on how political legacies are understood—not as static monuments to the past but as evolving dialogues that must be reinterpreted in the light of contemporary struggles. Through this lens, Ojukwu becomes more than a historical figure; he becomes a philosophical interlocutor in the ongoing conversation about justice, leadership, and the moral purpose of politics in Nigeria.

### **Ojukwu’s Vision of Leadership as Honour, Sacrifice, and National Duty**

At the heart of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu’s political thought lies a profound and unwavering vision of leadership—one rooted in honour, sacrifice, and an uncompromising sense of national duty. Unlike many of his contemporaries who treated political power as a means for personal gain or ethnic dominance, Ojukwu approached leadership as a sacred responsibility. His conception of leadership was not transactional but transformative; not self-serving, but self-emptying.<sup>2</sup> In his words and actions, there was always a moral undertone—a constant appeal to conscience, history, and collective dignity. Ojukwu’s understanding of honour was deeply embedded in the traditional Igbo worldview where the reputation of the individual was intrinsically tied to their integrity and service to the community. Honour, for him, was not a superficial title or a military badge. It was the

outcome of living truthfully, defending the weak, and being courageous in the face of moral decay. As a leader, Ojukwu held himself to high standards, often refusing to bend to political convenience. Even when misunderstood or vilified, he chose the harder path if it aligned with what he believed to be right. His decision to lead Biafra, though heavily debated, was, in his own interpretation, an act of honour-to protect a people he believed were under existential threat.

Closely tied to this notion of honour was the concept of sacrifice. Ojukwu did not romanticise war or suffering, but he did believe that true leadership sometimes required personal loss for the greater good. He gave up wealth, comfort, and global opportunities in order to stand with a marginalised people. His life after Biafra-marked by exile, public suspicion, and political isolation-was evidence of a man who bore the costs of leadership long after the applause had faded. In an era where many Nigerian leaders cling to power for material gain, Ojukwu's model invites reflection: What are leaders willing to give up? Who bears the burden of their ambition? Finally, Ojukwu consistently framed leadership as a national duty. He saw the Nigerian project not as a fixed identity but as a task-an unfinished moral assignment that required ethical stewardship, not tribal dominance. His criticisms of successive Nigerian governments were often grounded in their failure to act as custodians of a just and equitable society. For Ojukwu, the measure of leadership was not in how loudly one spoke about unity, but in how responsibly one managed the diversity of the Nigerian experience. His call for federal equity, regional development, and sincere dialogue was a call for leaders to rise above ethnic loyalties and act as guardians of a collective destiny. In many ways, Ojukwu's vision of leadership stands in tension with the prevailing political ethos in Nigeria, where impunity, corruption, and the manipulation of public office have become deeply institutionalized. Yet, it is precisely this contrast that makes his thought valuable. His life and ideals remind us that leadership is not just a matter of occupying office; it is a moral vocation. As Nigeria continues to grapple with crises of governance and national identity, revisiting Ojukwu's vision offers more than historical insight-It challenges us to redefine what it truly means to lead.

### **The Ethical Core of Resistance: Ojukwu's Stance on Integrity and Public Service**

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu's political philosophy was anchored in a deep sense of ethical responsibility, particularly in relation to integrity and public service. According to Nweke and Nwoye, public service in Nigeria is an apology of what it should be.<sup>3</sup> His resistance to injustice and bad governance was not simply a reaction to political events but a principled stand rooted in a moral vision of leadership. For Ojukwu, politics was not a career to be exploited but a duty to serve. He consistently spoke out against corruption, nepotism, and the betrayal of national values, viewing them as symptoms of a deeper moral crisis within the Nigerian political system. Ojukwu believed that leadership required a strong ethical compass. He often stressed that a leader's first obligation was to the truth, and that public office must be driven by service, not personal gain. This idea of Ojukwu resonates in the thoughts of Nweke and Nwoye, when proffering the right higher institutions' educational ethos, argue that such educational import should be: "to socialize the Nigerian students to cultivate acceptable behaviours, attitudes, patriotism, nationalism and value the status of the constitution as well as create the awareness in students about the roles and obligations of Government at all levels."<sup>4</sup>

This ethical stance became most visible during the Nigerian Civil War, where his decisions, though controversial, were framed by a belief in protecting the dignity and rights

of the people he led. He was not blind to the costs of his choices, but he believed that silence in the face of injustice was a greater sin.<sup>5</sup> His critique of the Nigerian state was always underlined by a concern for the erosion of public morality. He lamented the way political office had become synonymous with personal enrichment, and how loyalty to the nation had been replaced by loyalty to self-interest. For Ojukwu, the antidote to corruption was not just better laws but a renewal of ethical leadership-leaders who saw themselves as stewards of the people's trust. In today's Nigeria, where many continue to see public office as an avenue for accumulation rather than service, Ojukwu's ethical vision remains strikingly relevant. His emphasis on integrity and moral courage offers a compelling contrast to the prevailing culture of impunity. By returning to the ethical foundations of his thought, we are reminded that genuine resistance to corruption begins not with slogans, but with a personal and collective commitment to public good.

### **Lessons on Governance, Dignity and Accountability from Biafra to Nigeria**

The trajectory of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu's political journey-from his leadership of Biafra to his reintegration into Nigerian national politics-offers a unique lens through which to examine enduring questions about governance, human dignity, and accountability. While the Biafran struggle is often viewed solely in military or secessionist terms, it also carried with it a deeper political statement: a protest against the collapse of justice, fairness, and inclusive governance within the Nigerian federation. According to Ojukwu, Biafra was not just about ethnic identity; it was a moral argument against a state that had failed to protect its citizens. "Those dominated for too long now are tired of it and are ready to give whatever it takes in order to be free of the dominations."<sup>6</sup> Ojukwu's post-war reflections, particularly after his return from exile, revealed a man who was not only deeply invested in the Nigerian project, but one who demanded that it be built on justice and mutual respect.<sup>7</sup> He believed that the lessons of the war had to be used to correct the failures of the past, not to perpetuate bitterness. His later political engagements called for a restructured Nigeria-one where power was decentralised, institutions were strengthened, and the dignity of all citizens was respected regardless of their ethnic or regional background.

One of the most striking lessons from Ojukwu's thought is his insistence on accountability as the foundation of good governance. He often reminded Nigerians that leaders must be answerable not only to the law but to the moral expectations of the people. He saw the manipulation of power and the lack of consequences for corrupt behaviour as central obstacles to national unity and development.<sup>8</sup> In this sense, Ojukwu's message was not limited to the South-East or to former Biafrans, it was a national call for leaders to be held to higher standards. His experience also highlighted the importance of dignity in political life. The Biafran episode, tragic as it was, revealed how central the need for respect, equity, and recognition is to the human condition. Ojukwu warned against the politics of humiliation-where groups feel neglected or reduced to second-class status. For him, no true federation could thrive where dignity was systematically denied. As Nigeria continues to grapple with regional tensions, poor leadership, and institutional decay, Ojukwu's legacy serves as both a warning and a guide. The lesson is clear (from Biafra to Nigeria) a nation cannot endure on the strength of its laws or military might alone; it must be grounded in fairness, accountable leadership, and a shared sense of belonging.<sup>9</sup> These were the ideals Ojukwu fought for, and they remain vital in the ongoing struggle to realise the full promise of the Nigerian state.

### **Political Decay in Post-Ojukwu Nigeria: A Crisis of Values**

Since the passing of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, Nigeria has continued to face mounting political challenges that reveal not just institutional weaknesses but a deeper, more troubling crisis of values. The erosion of public trust, the normalisation of corruption, and the growing disconnect between leadership and the governed point to a country caught in a state of political decay. While systems of governance have become more elaborate, their moral foundations have weakened. Ojukwu's vision of leadership-anchored in honour, integrity, and national duty-has been increasingly replaced by a culture of impunity and expedience. In the years following Ojukwu's death, the rhetoric of reform and anti-corruption has grown louder, but the substance of leadership has become increasingly hollow.<sup>10</sup> Elections are routinely marred by manipulation and voter apathy, while public institutions are weakened by patronage and lack of accountability. The very ideals that Ojukwu espoused-merit, equity, and service-are now often treated as abstract aspirations, rarely embodied in political practice. This is not merely a failure of individual leaders but a reflection of a broader ethical collapse within the political class.

The disconnect between state and society has widened. Citizens are increasingly disillusioned, not because they lack hope, but because they no longer see themselves in the actions or priorities of those in power. Ojukwu warned of this disillusionment decades ago. He understood that when leadership loses its moral authority, governance becomes a performance-lacking substance, accountability, and soul.<sup>11</sup> This decay is not irreversible, but it demands more than technocratic fixes. It requires a return to values-those that guided Ojukwu's public life. His emphasis on moral clarity, national responsibility, and principled resistance to injustice remain critical standards by which to measure leadership today. The Nigerian state must begin to cultivate a political culture where service, not self-interest, defines public life. Without this moral grounding, no amount of reform will restore what has been lost. In reflecting on post-Ojukwu Nigeria, one cannot help but sense the widening gap between the political ideals of the past and the realities of the present. Yet, Ojukwu's legacy challenges us not to surrender to cynicism. Instead, it urges a return to the core values of truth, justice, and responsibility-values that must once again shape the soul of Nigerian politics.

### **Interpreting Modern Nigerian Leadership through Ojukwu's Thought**

To interpret corruption in modern Nigerian leadership through the lens of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu's political thought is to confront it not just as a failure of governance, but as a profound betrayal of public trust and national purpose. Ojukwu understood leadership as a moral enterprise, rooted in duty to the people and to the nation's future. In his worldview, corruption was not simply an economic or legal issue-it was a betrayal of the very essence of leadership. It signified a collapse of honour, a desecration of responsibility, and an abandonment of the principles that ought to bind leaders to those they serve. Ojukwu repeatedly cautioned against the kind of leadership that placed personal enrichment above public service. He was deeply troubled by the culture of entitlement that had crept into Nigerian politics, where public office became an instrument of accumulation rather than sacrifice. According to Ojukwu, leadership required integrity and accountability, because the soul of a nation depended on the character of those who governed it.<sup>12</sup> He viewed corruption as more than just stealing from public coffers-it was a systematic distortion of values, where truth, merit, and justice were replaced by deceit, mediocrity, and impunity.

This betrayal became even more painful when seen against the background of Nigeria's unrealised potential. Ojukwu, though a product of privilege, chose a life of struggle and advocacy because he believed Nigeria could be better-fairer, stronger, and more principled. When leaders embezzle funds, manipulate institutions, or ignore the plight of citizens, they do not just break laws; they trample on the hopes of a generation. Ojukwu believed that to rule without conscience was to wound the nation in ways that policies alone could not repair.

Modern Nigerian leadership, when placed against Ojukwu's moral yardstick, reveals an unsettling divergence. The very behaviours he warned against have become widespread: unaccountable governance, ethnic politics, disregard for justice, and public silence in the face of wrongdoing. Yet, Ojukwu's voice still echoes-a reminder that political authority must be earned through service and guarded by conscience. To view corruption through Ojukwu's political thought is to recognise it as an ethical emergency, not just a governance flaw. It is a call to restore moral seriousness to public life. Until Nigerian leadership realigns with values of honesty, sacrifice, and national duty, the country's development will remain stunted, and the trust between the government and its people will continue to erode. This idea dovetails with Nweke and Nwoye when they question the depraved nature of the supposed leaders who are to instil discipline and moral values on the led.<sup>13</sup> Ojukwu's legacy invites today's leaders to choose a different path-not one of self-interest and betrayal, but of honour and service. That invitation remains open, though increasingly ignored. The question is whether there are still those willing to answer it.

### **Misinterpretations and Misappropriations as the Danger of Empty Heroism**

In the years since his death, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu's legacy has often been celebrated in ways that are both selective and politically convenient. His image appears on posters, speeches reference his bravery, and public figures invoke his name when it suits their narratives. Yet, behind this public admiration lies a troubling trend-the misinterpretation and misappropriation of his ideals, often stripped of their moral depth and reduced to shallow symbolism. This kind of empty heroism, where a historical figure is glorified without a genuine commitment to the values he stood for, poses a serious threat to national memory and political responsibility. Ojukwu was not a flawless man, nor did he seek to be idolised. What he offered was a vision-complex, principled, and sometimes controversial-rooted in justice, accountability, and a profound sense of duty to his people. To remember him only as a military leader or ethnic icon is to flatten his thought and ignore the broader ethical framework that guided his political choices. When contemporary politicians invoke Ojukwu's name while embodying the very corruption and irresponsibility he denounced, they do more harm than good. They turn legacy into spectacle and memory into manipulation.

The danger in this kind of misappropriation is that it creates the illusion of continuity while masking profound departures from the original ideals. Heroism becomes performative, used to legitimize actions and policies that stand in direct contrast to the very principles the hero championed. Ojukwu's calls for moral leadership, inclusive governance, and national reform are often ignored by those who claim to follow in his footsteps. In doing so, they reduce his legacy to an empty shell-useful for applause, but hollow in meaning. This pattern of empty heroism reflects a deeper cultural discomfort with moral consistency. It is easier to celebrate a name than to live by its ideals. This kind of historical amnesia does a disservice to the present, because it robs citizens of authentic role models and replaces them with sanitised myths. Ojukwu's life, in all its complexity, offers far more than symbolic capital-it

offers ethical challenges that are still urgently relevant today. To honour Ojukwu truly is to wrestle with his convictions, to apply his critiques to present realities, and to embody the courage he demanded of those in power. This courage echoes the contents of communistic culture as espoused by Nwoye *et al.*<sup>14</sup> Anything less reduces him to a myth without substance—a hero praised, but not followed. And in a nation still seeking direction, that kind of heroism is not just inadequate; it is dangerous.

### **Conclusion**

The political thought of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu offers a compelling moral framework that examines the failures and possibilities of leadership in Nigeria. Far beyond the image of a war-time leader, Ojukwu emerges as a thinker whose convictions about honour, sacrifice, and national responsibility continue to resonate in the face of Nigeria's ongoing political decay. His life was shaped not only by struggle, but by a deep-seated belief that leadership must be rooted in service, truth, and an unflinching commitment to justice. In a nation where corruption has become normalised and public office often stripped of ethical seriousness, Ojukwu's legacy challenges both leaders and citizens to reclaim a politics of conscience. His ideas remind us that effective governance requires more than legal structures or economic plans—it requires character, moral clarity, and a willingness to put the collective good above personal gain. The repeated misappropriation of his image without fidelity to his values reflects a broader tendency in Nigerian politics, a situation that could be seen as a praise of heroes while ignoring their teachings. To interpret Ojukwu's political thought applying the hermeneutic is not merely to reflect on history, it is to confront the present with the weight of what leadership ought to be. Besides, Ojukwu's political thought provides not only a critique of what has gone wrong but a vision of what can still be made right. If Nigeria is to overcome its crisis of values, it must not only remember Ojukwu, but engage with the ethical substance of his life and thought—seriously, critically, and with the urgency that the times demand.

### **Recommendations**

The insights drawn from a hermeneutical reflection on the political thought of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu point toward urgent ethical reforms in leadership and governance in Nigeria. To restore integrity, accountability, and moral vision to public life, a number of recommendations are made:

- i. First, ethical education in political leadership training should be embedded so as to accommodate national framework for training political aspirants, elected officials, and public servants in ethics, civic responsibility, and moral leadership, using figures like Ojukwu as case studies. This would help reorient leadership from opportunism to service.
- ii. Secondly, the Use of National Symbols and Historical Legacies should also be revised to enable Government institutions and political actors refrain from misappropriating the image and legacy of national figures like Ojukwu for performative or self-serving ends. Instead, honest engagement with their ideas should be encouraged in educational curricula, public discourse, and policy reflection.
- iii. Thirdly, institutional accountability mechanisms should be strengthened by empowering and shielding anti-corruption agencies from political interference. Leadership inspired by Ojukwu's model requires mechanisms that ensure office holders answerable to the people in practice, not just in rhetoric.

- iv. Fourthly, inclusive and value-based political dialogue should be promoted, by so doing it is believed that National dialogue initiatives should prioritise justice, equity, and dignity for all ethnic groups, echoing Ojukwu's advocacy for fairness in federalism. This could foster unity without erasing the diversity of the Nigerian experience.
- v. Finally, historical honesty in National narratives should also be encouraged to enable the story of Nigeria's past, particularly the Biafran experience, to be told in full-without shame, bias, or silence. Engaging honestly with the complexities of Ojukwu's life can help foster a more mature, reconciled, and morally grounded society.

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Article

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### A PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE ON THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

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#### Abstract

Historically, discourse on moral virtue can be traced to the ancient times of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. This notwithstanding, its discussion is yet to wane. Some authors like Kashish Khandelwal have alluded that the current Ukraine-Russia war (if mishandled, may snowball into the third world war) erupted as a result of the inability of both sides to adhere to virtue ethics stipulated in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. There are a lot of virtues, but this research restricts itself to the four cardinal virtues of prudence or wisdom, temperance, fortitude or courage, and justice. This work, although didactic in nature, employs the philosophical method of analysis in its attempt to analyse the aforementioned cardinal virtues. It began with a brief discourse on virtue in general, the meaning of cardinal virtues – as those virtues upon which all the other moral virtues hinge, before narrowing down to the four cardinal virtues. This paper concluded that one is not virtuous if one lacks any of the four cardinal virtues because they are interwoven: whoever would perform an act of virtue must judge rightly about it (prudence); he must have regard for law and render everyone his due (justice); he must endure difficulties and not give way to discouragement (fortitude); and lastly, he must observe moderation and self-control (temperance).

**Keywords:** Virtue, Cardinal Virtues, Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, Justice.

#### Introduction: Virtues in General

Virtue hails from the Latin words: *vir* and *virtus* which respectively translates as "man" and "manliness" in English. It can be defined as a habit that gives both the inclination and the power to do readily what is morally good. In other words, virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do good; a readiness to do good. It facilitates and makes it easy for a man to

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do good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. “The virtuous person tends towards the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions.” Hence, it is not enough to be inclined towards the moral value and to love it, one must also possess the dominion over one’s spiritual and sensual drives and passions – in order to be readily able to do the good which one esteems and loves. Consequently, virtues are said to be qualities which benefit the person and increase his capabilities. Virtue is different from virtuous act. “A man can do transient acts in his performance of virtuous acts. If he truly possesses virtue, he will be steady in doing good.” Example: a violent man can perform *an act* of gentleness towards a poor man, without possessing the *habit* of this virtue (Composta, 2013, p. 53; Pazhayampallil, 2004, no. 208; Peschke, 2001, vol. 1, p. 343; CCC, nos. 1803-1804).

Furthermore, according to their source (human activity or God), virtues are divided into *natural* and *supernatural*. The former are those virtues which are acquired by human activity, while the latter are those infused by God. Again, according to their object, virtues are divided into *theological* and *moral*. The theological virtues have God as their direct and immediate object – they are supernatural virtues – which include; faith, hope and charity. Contrarily, the moral virtues do not have God as their immediate object. Examples: “giving another his due (justice), moderation in eating and drinking (temperance).” That is to say, while the virtue of justice immediately affects relationship with the neighbour and the world, the virtue of temperance immediately affects the relationship with oneself. This work is inclined not to the supernatural and theological virtues, but to the natural and moral virtues – which are acquired and strengthened at least subjectively by repeated good acts.

*Moral virtues*, according to Fagothey (2000), enable us not merely to know what to do and how to do it, but they actually assist us in the doing of it. This is because “doing a thing well is opposed to overdoing and to underdoing it, and consists in hitting the mean between excess and defect” (pp. 229-230). This implicates the *Golden Mean* of Aristotle. Hence, in agreement with Aristotle, Fagothey (2000) writes:

Virtue is a habit of choosing the mean between the extremes of excess and defect in action, and this mean is determined by reason guided by the intellectual virtue of prudence. As too much or too little food, sleep, or exercise hurts the body but just the right amount promotes its health, so excess or defect in habit of the soul hurts its health and ‘virtue stands in the middle’ (p. 230).

For instance, courage is the mean between cowardice and rashness, temperance between overindulgence and insensibility, generosity between stinginess and prodigality, friendliness between surliness and flattery, justice between leniency and severity, truthfulness between exaggeration and understatement (pp. 230-231). Of these moral virtues, there are four on which all other virtues in some way hinge, namely: prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice. They are known as the *cardinal virtues* (Pazhayampallil, 2004, no. 209). The integral (elements), subjective (kinds) and potential (aspects) parts of these cardinal virtues are equally identified. “The integral parts of a cardinal virtue are those things which must come together if the cardinal virtue is to function properly. The subjective parts are the virtues which comprise the different species of a cardinal virtue. The potential parts are the virtues which have something in common with the cardinal virtue, but differ in some respect” (Gratsch, 1985, p. 167).

## **The Cardinal Virtues**

The four virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance, as earlier stated are called cardinal virtues (by St. Ambrose) because of the pivotal role they play. *Cardo* in Latin means hinge. “Just as a door depends on the activity of its hinges, so the moral life of man depends on the exercise of these virtues” (Composta, 2013, p. 55; Pazhayampallil, 2004, no. 483; Peschke, 2001, vol. 1, p. 347; Fagothey, 2000, p.231). Therefore, “Cardinal virtues are those fundamental virtues upon which all the other moral virtues in some way hinge and to which they may be reduced.” They may be considered requisites and conditions for the practice of any virtue. Thus, “whoever would perform an act of virtue must judge rightly about it (prudence); he must have regard for law and render everyone his due (justice); he must endure difficulties and not give way to discouragement (fortitude); he must observe moderation and self-control (temperance)” (Pazhayampallil, 2004, no. 483). In summary, Fagothey (2000) writes: “Four virtues have been traditionally picked out as the most important in the ethical order. They are called *cardinal* virtues, from the Latin *cardo*, a hinge, because they are the four hinges on which the other virtues swing” (p. 231). It is appropriate to look at these four cardinal virtues (together with their parts) individually.

## **Prudence**

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* as captured by Pazhayampallil (2004) posits that “prudence is the virtue that disposes *practical reason* to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it; the prudent man considers his steps. Prudence is ‘right reason in action’ writes St. Thomas Aquinas. It is not to be confused with timidity or fear, nor with duplicity or dissimulation. It is called *auriga virtutum* [the charioteer of the virtues]; it guides the other virtues by setting rule and measure.” With the help of this virtue of prudence, one applies moral principles to *particular cases* without error and overcome doubts about the good to achieve and the evil to avoid. Prudence helps one to choose the right means to achieve the right end (CCC, no. 1806; Pazhayampallil, 2004, no. 484). Composta (2013) therefore affirms that “*Prudence is precisely the executive precept of reason, after the examination of the situation*” (p. 57). Similarly, Peschke (2001, vol. 1) asserted that it is imperative in the practice of virtue to rightly apply the demands of moral value to the concrete situation. This, for him, is the task of prudence. In his words:

Prudence disposes a man to discern correctly what measures he must take to realize the exigencies of a virtue as well as possible in the concrete circumstances. Prudence is concerned with the means proportionate to the end, as St. Thomas says. Again, this is a question of right insight into the demands of the moral values.... Because of this general importance of prudence for the practice and perfection of virtue, prudence is not to be regarded as one virtue besides many others, but as an integral element in the structure of every virtue (p. 348).

It is crucial to underscore that *the seat of prudence is the intellect*. Hence, *prudence is regarded as an intellectual virtue*. However, “one who knows only the general principles of acting well is not said to be prudent.” But “the one who knows what is to be done or what is to be avoided *according to right reason in a concrete case* is said to be prudent.” Example; it is a moral principle to be charitable to those in need. But prudence “tells how much, where, when and how to do charity in order that the act of charity may be according to right reason. *Prudence is rightly said to be the virtue that moderates all other virtues* (Pazhayampallil,

2004, no. 484). In addition, Composta (2013) clearly affirmed that “prudence can do without wisdom and science, but not intellect” (p. 58). Again;

The prudent person tries to foresee the future from knowledge of the present and past, and this is the work of reason; hence, prudence resides in the intellect. The work of prudence is to direct our actions to an end; hence it resides in the *practical intellect*. The prudent person knows not only the universal principles of reason, but also the contingencies of life. For example, a prudent person knows that he or she may not endanger human life without sufficient reason (a universal principle), and he or she also knows that driving an auto while under the influence of alcohol endangers human life without sufficient reason (a particular situation) (Gratsch, 1985, p. 168).

Fagothey (2000) adds that:

Prudence is an intellectual virtue by essence, but it enters into the field of the moral virtues by pointing out the golden mean and suggesting ways of securing it. Without prudence fortitude becomes boldness, temperance becomes moroseness, justice becomes harshness. Prudence chooses the right means toward worthy ends; the choice of good means towards bad ends is mere cleverness or shrewdness, but not true prudence. As it is impossible to have the moral virtues without prudence, so it is impossible to have prudence without the moral virtues .... The importance of prudence in the ethical life cannot be overestimated (pp. 231-232).

The virtue of prudence, Pazhayampallil pointed out, implies the following acts: *Wise Consultation*: Here, the intellect investigates the means to be used in order to act rightly in a particular situation. *Right Judgement*: It is an act of the intellect by which it decides to use a particular means. *Command*: The intellect asks the will to follow its judgement. Command is said to be the most important of these acts. Pazhayampallil (2004) further lists eight essential requirements for the virtue of prudence. These include: (i) Memory – a recalling of the general principle and of the experience of the past. (ii) Understanding or Intuition – a grasping of the real situation. (iii) Docility – a readiness to learn. (iv) Shrewdness – to find exactly and without delay the reason why something is to be done or omitted. (v) Reason – promptitude in deducing and distinguishing the different aspects in the case concerned. (vi) Foresight – a consideration of future events likely to result from the act. (vii) Circumspection – a consideration of all the necessary circumstances. (viii) Caution – the care to avoid evil and other obstacles (Aquinas, as cited in Pazhayampallil, 2004, no. 485). In the words of Gratsch (1985):

St. Thomas distinguishes eight integral parts of prudence which must come together if one is to act prudently. To act prudently, one must remember the past, have a right understanding of the principles at stake, be prepared to learn from others, be capable of making comparison, be an apt reasoner, have foresight, take account of circumstances, and exercise caution (p. 169).

Nonetheless, as already mentioned, the above requirements can equally be placed in the service of evil goals. Hence, “endowment with the good qualities of prudence alone by itself is not yet the certain mark of a virtuous personality” (Peschke, 2001, p. 349). A prudent person, therefore, “is not always able at casuistry, just as, on the contrary, it is possible to find able casuistic men who are most imprudent” (Composta, 2013, p.59). Lastly, negligence,

precipitation, inconsideration, recklessness, and the like indicate a defect of prudence. While, “craftiness, deceit, timidity, pusillanimity may result from an excess of prudence not balanced by other virtues” (Fagothey, 2000, p. 232). Apart from the integral parts mentioned above, there are three subjective parts or species of prudence: personal, domestic and political. “One can exercise prudence in seeking one’s own good (personal prudence) or the good of one’s family (domestic prudence) or the good of the community and state (political prudence). St. Thomas also mentions a fourth: military prudence, which seeks to repel the attack of an enemy” (Gratsch, 1985, p. 169). *Eubulia*, *synesis* and *gnome* are the potential parts of prudence: “There are three potential parts of prudence – virtues in their own right: *eubulia* by which a person is led to take counsel; *synesis* by which a person exercises good judgement in practical matters; and *gnome* by which one judges according to the higher principles of human conduct especially in extraordinary affairs” (Gratsch, 1985, p. 169).

### **Temperance**

The virtue of temperance regulates the desire and use of food, drink, and venereal (or sexual) pleasure, according to right reason. It rules for instance, that one should not eat or drink more than what is necessary for the proper health of mind and body. Temperance equally rules that one should not eat or drink less than what is necessary to fulfil one’s duties. Pazhayampallil (2004) posits thus:

A temperate man is one who is master of himself; one in whom passions do not prevail over reason, will and heart.... We may even say that it is not possible to be a really prudent man, or an authentically just man, or a truly strong [or courageous] man, unless one possesses the virtue of temperance. Temperance is the common denominator of all other virtues (no. 497).

On a similar note, Fagothey (2000) maintains that “Temperance regulates the appetite in the use of sensible pleasure. It moderates our two main drives, towards *self-preservation* and *race-preservation*, and thus acts as a curb on excessive indulgence in food and drink and in the use of sex” (p. 232). Gluttony and lust are variously taken to be the opposing vices of the virtue of temperance. However, abstinence and sobriety, chastity and continence are subordinate virtues of temperance. Conversely, “lack of temperance appears in gluttony, drunkenness, lust, pride, cruelty, vanity.” Whereas, “too much restraint may produce insensibility, stolidity, sullenness, moroseness, fanatical austerity” (p. 233). The integral parts must concur if one is to act temperately. They include: shamefacedness and honesty/decency. The subjective parts of temperance are its species which are differentiated according to the difference of matter or object. They include: abstinence (food), sobriety (drink) and chastity (sex). On another note, Gratsch (1985) identified the following potential parts of temperance: continence, modesty, meekness and clemency (pp. 196-204).

### **Fortitude**

As temperance is a bridle, fortitude is a spur. “Fortitude or courage inclines one to face danger and toil without flinching.” It helps one to face difficulties with equanimity, and to overcome them *according to the dictates of right reason*; for a truly courageous man acts from a rational motive. Death (by instinct) is the most dreadful of all dangers. But fortitude enables one to overcome the abhorrence for death – when it is reasonable to do so. “It frees us from slavery to fear, though it need not take away fear itself. The brave man may act with

fear, but in spite of it faces the danger.” In other words, fortitude suppresses excessive fear and controls recklessness. It implies patience, perseverance and constancy;

It does not consist in one brave act, but is a habit of self-mastery. To rush into peril out of anger, ignorance, or stupidity is no sign of fortitude; the truly courageous man acts from a rational motive, whereby he appreciates the danger while counting it the lesser evil (Fagothey, 2000, p. 233).

Furthermore, while *timidity* is a vice that is opposed to fortitude by defect, *rashness* and *temerity* are vices opposed to the virtue of fortitude by excess (Pazhayampallil, 2004, no. 492). In the words of Fagothey (2000); “Lack of fortitude is shown in cowardice, weakness, timidity, impatience, irresoluteness.” While “boldness, presumption, stubbornness, quarrelsomeness, ruthlessness, are faults of the overbrave” (p. 234). According to Gratsch (1985), since fortitude is a special virtue, it does not have subjective parts; but it does have quasi-integral parts which are required, if one is to act courageously. They are: magnanimity, magnificence, patience and perseverance. The potential parts coincide with the quasi-integral parts. The potential parts of fortitude which include: magnanimity, magnificence, patience and perseverance are virtues in their own right, but they are concerned with lesser hardship than the dangers of death (pp. 193-195).

## **Justice**

Justice, according to McBrien (1994), is derived from the Latin word *ius*, which means “right” (p. 943). Thomas Aquinas understood it as “the firm and constant will to give to each one his due.” In other words, “the notion of justice is based on the fundamental equality of all men. Since all men are fundamentally equal, they should be treated as equals. To treat them unequally is injustice” (Omogbe, 1993, p. 112). Pazhayampallil quoting Aquinas referred to justice as: “a cardinal virtue which inclines one to give another his due.” O’Callaghan in his *The Meaning of Justice*, gave justice a moral outlook and defines it “as a moral virtue which inclines one to respect man’s personality and to grant him what is due to him as individual charged with the responsibility of his own destiny” (O’Callaghan, 1966, as cited in Pazhayampallil, 2004, no. 512). Strengthening the definition given by Aquinas, Pazhayampallil (2004) imbued justice with a social colouration thus: “Justice is the fundamental principle of the existence and the coexistence of man, as well as of human communities, societies and peoples” (no. 512). This implicates the *vindictory* form of justice as we shall see below. Gratsch (1985) adds his voice: for Aquinas, “justice means giving each one what is his or hers by right. It is a social norm in that it guides the actions of people in their dealings with one another. It is in this sense that the (Catholic) Church has used the term justice to enunciate its teaching on *social justice*” (p. 171).

This research agrees with Peschke (2001, vol. 2) that scholars are not of one mind as to the concept of justice and sometimes differ widely. Nevertheless, he defined justice as “rendering to each man or human community their own and due by right” (pp. 228 & 232). According to him, two basic forms of justice are differentiated in this definition. Firstly, *attributive justice* which leaves to every man what is his own by right and attributes to him what he really is.” Examples include: right to one’s person, to the property which one has acquired, to one’s honour and merited reputation, to one’s discoveries, to impartial acknowledgement of one’s qualifications. The second form is *proportional justice* which “renders to every man what is his due by right, that is, what he does not yet own but what he is entitled to receive as a remuneration, compensation or benefit, or what he is also obliged to accept as a burden in the service of the community.” Again, Peschke continues:

“Since the proportion of goods or burdens due to a person is usually rendered according to the principles of equality in *exchange, distribution* and *contribution*, this second form of justice can be termed proportional justice” (p. 232). Moreover, proportional justice (according to Peschke) is subdivided into four subspecies of: commutative, distributive, contributive (legal) and social justice. Different classification or division of justice by scholars notwithstanding, this work only considers the above four together with *vindictive* justice. But before that, it is necessary to state the parts of the virtue of justice in the light of St. Thomas Aquinas:

Thomas treats the virtue of justice and its parts at greater length than any other virtue. The subjective or essential parts of justice are the virtues of distributive and commutative justice. The quasi-integral parts of justice are to do good and refrain from evil. The potential parts of justice include the virtues of religion, piety or filial respect, observance, gratitude, vengeance or vindication, truthfulness, friendliness and liberality (Gratsch, 1985, p. 172).

### **Commutative Justice**

Justice is called commutative, “because in general it is expressed in ‘commuting’ – that is, in giving and receiving” (Composta, 2013, p. 66). It is justice in strictest sense because it exists between equals – “between man and man, or between two independent states, or between man and the state considered apart from any political relation between them. Commutative justice is the basis of contracts” (Fagothey, 2000, p. 234). Pazhayampallil (2004) clarifies thus:

Commutative justice is a virtue which inclines one to give another (physical or juridical person) what is his due as a person distinct and independent from oneself. It is concerned with the exchange of goods and services according to strict equality of values.... Injustice in the strict sense of the word is committed when commutative justice is violated. For example, injustice(sic) in the strict sense is violated when an employer does not pay the employee his wages.... Since rights and claims of commutative justice are mainly based on contracts, it can be called also *contractual justice* (no. 515; Peschke, 2001, vol 2, p. 233).

This is because commutative justice is the aspect of justice that “demands respect for the rights of others and the exchange of things of equal value.” Consequently, cheating, fraud, theft, destruction of other people’s properties, etc., are violations of commutative justice (Omogbe, 1993, p. 113). “Commutative justice, when violated, carries with it the obligation of restitution. Justice remains outraged until proper compensation has been made to reestablish the balance.” Hence, “one who has injured another by depriving him of something rightfully his is obliged in justice to restore it to him” (Fagothey, 2000, p. 234).

### **Distributive Justice**

This involves the relation of the community to its members. In other words, this aspect of justice regulates the relations of a community with its members. “It demands that benefits and burdens be distributed in the community according to proportional equality.” Distributive justice chiefly applies to the state, though it also, in some way, guides smaller organizations. It is important to note that this kind of justice exists between a superior and his subordinate, and not between equals as that of commutative justice. It is the particular obligation of public officials. A good example is the gradation of direct taxes according to income. But disproportion in the distribution of burdens and partiality in the award of

favours (i.e., favouritism) contravenes distributive justice. Distributive justice, says Fagothey (2000), is not justice in as strict a sense as commutative justice. This is because; “before distribution, the goods do not yet belong to the individuals.” However, to withhold them is morally wrong – “but it is not depriving the individuals something that is actually theirs but only of something they hope to get.” This implies that “distributive justice does not strictly oblige to restitution, unless commutative justice is also involved” (pp. 2234-235). Aquinas’ distinction between commutative and distributive justice is captured by Gratsch (1985) thus:

There are two species of justice, commutative and distributive. Commutative justice is concerned with mutual dealings between two individuals, particularly in matters of buying and selling. Distributive justice has to do with the distribution of rewards, honors and burdens among the members of a community. The equality demanded by commutative justice is absolute and arithmetical; for example, if I owe someone five dollars, commutative justice is satisfied when I repay five dollars, no more, no less. On the other hand, the equality demanded by distributive justice is proportional or geometrical, in the sense that rewards are granted to, and burdens are imposed upon, individuals in accordance with their position, prominence and capability in the community; for example, a just legislature will impose higher taxes upon those who have more resources (p. 174).

### **Legal or Contributive Justice**

Whereas distributive justice is concerned with individual members of a community, legal or contributive justice is concerned with the general good of the community. Little wonder, some regard this form of justice as general justice. It is therefore, a reverse of distributive justice – which is the relation of the community to its members. Whereas legal justice is a relation of the members to the community. It requires each individual to contribute his *proper* share towards the common good. Fagothey (2000) opines:

It is justice in even a less strict sense than distributive, because a man contributes toward the common good by the practice of all the social virtues, and so legal justice begins to shade out into a condition of general social uprightness. Like distributive justice, it does not of itself oblige to restitution, because what the state demands does not actually belong to the state until the state gets possession of it. It is probably called *legal* justice because it shows itself chiefly in law-abiding conduct, but it goes beyond the bare requirements of the written law.... Some have suggested that it be called *contributive* justice, thus pairing it off with distributive justice (p. 235).

In other words, legal justice “demands the observance of all laws aimed at the common good. Since the common good takes precedence over private interest, legal justice demands that the common good should not be sacrificed for the private interest of the individual or for his convenience” (Omoregbe, 1993, p. 113). Thus, the violation of any law directed towards the common good is a violation of legal or contributive justice. It must be observed that the cardinal virtue of justice as understood by Fagothey (2000), “comprises commutative and distributive justice, which taken together are often called particular justice.” Legal justice, also referred to as general justice, “is not part of the cardinal virtue because it is too general and implies in its scope all the other virtues that have any social bearing” (p.235). Of course, Fagothey observed that the above fact does not make legal

justice less important. Again, in its very broadest sense, *justice* is sometimes taken to be synonymous with all virtue.

### **Social Justice**

Carl Peter (2006) rightly avers:

In the latter part of the nineteenth century(,) dissatisfaction with the term *legal* grew widespread. It had all too widely been interpreted to mean that justice was enshrined in legal codes. The term no longer conveyed the idea of a general virtue ordering relationships in society towards the common good. Hence a new name was sought ... Worked out from the social nature of the person and the common good, the concept of *social justice* has established itself as at least a replacement for legal (general) justice (p. 551).

However, scholars are not in harmony as regards the nature, ambit and function of social justice. For some, it is nothing else but merely another expression for legal justice. Authors like Aubert (1975) even equated the two. Others say that it comprises and/or signifies all that legal and distributive justice mean. And others again distinguish social justice from legal, distributive and commutative justice (B. Haring, as cited in Pazhayampallil, 2004, no. 512; Peschke, 2001, vol. 2, p. 234). Both distributive and contributive/legal justice, Fagothey (2000) writes, “are implied in the modern term *social justice*, which some writers consider a separate type of justice, others identify with legal justice, and still others make into a combination of distributive and legal justice, whereby each one both contributes to and receives back from society his proper share” (pp. 234-235). In another twist, Composta (2013) opines:

It is called *legal justice*, if it is supported by the positive juridical order – that is, by civil law. It is instead called *social justice* if the foundation is natural right.... For example, in England in the nineteenth century the daily workday lasted ten or twelve hours and it was a particular regulation of time and space. It was legal justice to require it; but, social justice requires reduction, and not only for England of the nineteenth century, but for every legislation of work in absolute (p.67).

The term *social justice* is a recent concept popularized by Pope Pius XI’s *Quadragesimo Anno*. It refers to the economic welfare of social groups. And as such, “it demands a proportionate share for the social partners in the fruits of their economic cooperation.” When this is applied to the relations between the worker and the employer, it demands “that the worker should have a share in the profits, that he should be paid as a member of a family, that his wage is to be determined, with an eye to the good of the industry, the general economy and the social order.” In fact, social justice aims at establishing the right social order. In other words, it aims at creating economic, political, moral and intellectual conditions which allow the citizens to live a fully human life, i.e., every citizen (within his own field) is bound to contribute to the common welfare. For instance, the wealthy man must use his wealth to further the common good – hoarding up of goods and amassing of property without utilizing them for common good violates social justice. Furthermore, social justice demands a proportionate and equitable distribution of the wealth of a nation among the different groups and regions of a society. Therefore, the concentration of a nation’s wealth and land-ownership in the hands of a few extremely rich families and individuals, while the majority of citizens live in poverty, offends social justice.

Again, those nations favoured by nature are obliged to come to the aid of the less fortunate ones. Such aids are not mere “alms,” but demands of the social order and of peace in the world. It is pertinent to add that every talent and all possessions are bestowed (by God) for the good, not only of individuals, but of the whole of mankind (B. Haring, as cited in Pazhayampallil, 2004, no 512). In the words of Peschke (2001, vol. 2); “... social justice also imposes obligations upon nations in their mutual relations. It binds the economically advanced countries to assist nations in poverty and misery, so that they can live in a manner worthy of human beings” (p. 235). More so, social justice “is a virtue by which men as members of the human society ... give to their fellow men, especially the needy, those things necessary for the maintenance of their live and dignity.” Pope John Paul II adds: “social justice is true only if it is based on the right of the individual ....” Pope John XXIII in his encyclical “*Mater et Magistra*,” clarifies further:

We are all equally responsible for the undernourished peoples. Hence, it is necessary to educate one’s conscience to the sense of responsibility which weighs upon each and every one, especially upon those who are more blessed with the world’s good... ‘How does God’s love abide in any one who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?’ ... Justice and humanity demand that those countries which produce consumer goods, especially farm products, in excess of their own needs should come to the assistance of those other countries where large sections of the population are suffering from wants and hunger. It is nothing less than an outrage of justice and humanity to destroy or to squander goods that other people need for their very lives (Pope John XXIII, as cited in Pazhayampallil, 2004, no. 517).

Lastly, Pope John Paul II affirms: “overcoming the rigid limitations of commutative justice (i.e., justice in the strict sense), social justice therefore, seeks to subordinate things to man, individual goods to the common good, the right to property to the right to life, eliminating every condition of existence and of work that is unworthy of the human person” (Pope John Paul II, as cited in Pazhayampallil, 2004, no. 517). This is because right social order demands, above all, that one should check excessive ambition, greed, laziness, envy, lust, intemperance and so on. Gratsch (1985) chronologically summarized the Church’s contribution to social justice:

The Church has had much to say about social justice, especially in the twentieth century. In *Rerum Novarum* (1891), Pope Leo XIII stressed the dignity of workers as human beings and their right to a just wage and decent working conditions. He also defended their right to organize labour unions to protect themselves. In *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), Pius XI reaffirmed the dignity of workers and the responsibility of the state to promote the welfare of every member of society. In his *Mater et Magistra* (1961) John XXIII emphasized the global aspect of justice, the right of all to share the fruits of society, and the need to correct economic imbalances. In *Pacem in Terris* (1963), the same Pope listed the right and duties flowing from the dignity of personhood. In *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), the Second Vatican Council spoke of the Church’s unique contribution to the establishment of justice, but it also recognized the contribution of other agencies to this enterprise. Two years later, Paul VI’s *Populorum Progressio* (1967) called upon advanced

nations to assist developing nations not only by economic aid, but also by establishing a more just economic order. His *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971) spoke of many new problems in which justice is a factor: urbanization, youth, the role of women, the victims of change and discrimination, the environment, and unemployment. In the same year, the Synod of Bishops in their document, *Justice in the World* (1971) said that actions on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world are a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel. Finally, John Paul II, in his encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis* (1979), explained the social implications of the incarnation and redemption (pp. 171-172).

### **Vindicative Justice**

Apart from attributive and proportional justice mentioned above, Peschke (2001, vol. 2) equally made case for the third form of justice, *retributive or vindicatory justice*:

... since the demands of justice are basic requirements for social coexistence and human development, their violation cannot be tolerated but calls for reparation of the injury inflicted. This leads to a last form of justice, retributive or vindicatory justice. It demands indemnification of the injured person and active punishment of the offender (pp. 232-233).

Similarly, Pazhayampallil (2004) understands vindicative justice as “a virtue by which one avenges injuries in a reasonable manner. It is also a virtue which inclines the legitimate authority to inflict suitable punishment on those who transgress the law” (no. 521). Omoregbe (1993) buttresses further: “*Vindicative justice* is that aspect of justice which demands appropriate punishment for an offence, not out of the spirit of vengeance but in the interest of the community or for the correction of the offender, and it should not be more than is deserved by the offence” (p. 113).

### **Conclusion**

It is observed from the foregoing that the four cardinal virtues: prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice, are very much interwoven: “Whoever would perform an act of virtue must judge rightly about it (prudence); he must have regard for law and render everyone his due (justice); he must endure difficulties and not give way to discouragement (fortitude); he must observe moderation and self-control (temperance)” (Jone, 1955, p. 60, as cited in Pazhayampallil, 2004, no. 483). Again, as prudence is regarded not as one virtue besides many others, but as an integral element in the structure of every virtue, justice in its broadest sense is sometimes made synonymous with all virtue. Also, as temperance which cuts across every virtue and thus, seen as the common denominator of all other virtues bridles, fortitude spurs. One is not virtuous if one lacks any of the four cardinal virtues.

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Article

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### THE DEBACLE OF FOLLOWERSHIP AND DEMOCRATIC SURVIVAL IN NIGERIA

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#### Abstract

There is a growing concern about the deteriorating state of followership and its negative impact on the stability and growth of Nigeria's democracy. In recent years, challenges such as political apathy, corruption, ethnic bias, vote buying, and misinformation have weakened citizens' participation and accountability in governance. This study examined the crisis of followership and its implications for democratic survival in contemporary Nigeria. The objective was to analyse the relationship between responsible citizenship and democratic sustainability, while identifying the key factors undermining effective followership in the country. Using historical, expository, and evaluative methods, the study found that the quality of followership significantly shapes the direction of Nigeria's democracy, determining whether it thrives or falters. The findings revealed that the weakening of followership manifested in political complacency, blind loyalty, and complicity in corruption which contributed to poor governance, weakened institutions, and declining public trust. The study also observed that poverty, insecurity, and disillusionment among the youth have further eroded active civic participation and democratic vigilance. This research contributes to current debates on democratic consolidation in Nigeria by emphasizing that leadership failure is inseparable from followership failure. It underscores the urgent need for civic reorientation, ethical rebirth, and the strengthening of democratic institutions to rebuild public trust. The study suggested policies that can promote political education, transparency, and active citizen involvement, especially among young Nigerians, to counter the growing sense of hopelessness and political detachment. The study stressed that the survival of Nigeria's democracy depends not only on visionary leadership but also on enlightened and responsible followership. For democratic governance to succeed, citizens must go beyond mere participation to actively demand accountability, fairness, and justice in public life.

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Strengthening followership, therefore, remains central to achieving transparency, unity, and sustainable democratic progress in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Democratic Survival, Followership, Leadership, Weak Institutions.

### **Introduction**

The concept of followership is central to the functioning of any democracy, as it defines how citizens relate to their leaders and institutions. In Nigeria, the quality of followership has become a pressing concern due to its direct impact on democratic stability and governance. A healthy democracy depends not only on good leadership but also on responsible, informed, and active citizens who hold leaders accountable. Unfortunately, Nigerian followership often reflects deep-seated issues such as apathy, blind loyalty, and complicity in corruption, which have eroded democratic values. The result is a system where citizens either disengage from political participation or support leaders based on ethnic or personal gains rather than competence and integrity. Nigeria's political culture, shaped by years of military dictatorship, corruption, and weak institutions, has made it difficult to cultivate effective followership. Many citizens have lost faith in the electoral process due to rigging, vote buying, and manipulation by political elites. This has created a vicious cycle where poor leadership thrives because of a passive or misguided citizenry. The lack of civic education and economic hardship further worsen the situation, as poverty makes people susceptible to political exploitation. Instead of serving as a check on leadership, followers often become instruments of political manipulation, enabling the same systemic failures they suffer from.

Current developments in Nigeria reflect how the failure of followership continues to threaten democratic survival. Electoral violence, youth disengagement, and the spread of misinformation on social media have all weakened democratic participation. Citizens frequently express frustration over poor governance, yet accountability remains minimal due to ethnic favouritism and a lack of unity among the populace. Movements like the *End SARS* showed glimpses of civic awakening, but their suppression by authorities revealed how fragile citizen-led democratic efforts still are. Moreover, insecurity, inflation, and corruption have fuelled public despair, creating an environment where populist and authoritarian tendencies can easily resurface. Addressing the crisis of followership in Nigeria requires a reawakening of civic responsibility and political consciousness. Citizens must move beyond passive compliance to become active participants in governance through informed voting, public advocacy, and community engagement. Civic education, youth empowerment, and transparency in governance should be prioritized to rebuild trust between the government and the governed. Only when followers demand accountability and model ethical behaviour can Nigeria's democracy mature and thrive. Strengthening followership is therefore not just about citizens obeying leaders but about nurturing a politically responsible populace capable of defending and sustaining democratic ideals.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

In keeping with the logical positivist tradition of philosophical reflection, there is a compelling need to offer a contemporary clarification of socio-political concepts in this age of globalization. This thinking is founded on the Socratic belief that the knowledge of operational concepts in any dialogue or debate is key to mutual comprehension and appreciation of the terms under study. Socrates is famously quoted to have said, "If you want us to talk, clarify your terms" (Agundu 2019, p. xvi). Without underrating other cardinal concerns of philosophy as an intellectual enterprise, it is worth noting that conceptual

clarification is one of the essential preoccupations of Philosophers. This task has been performed dutifully by philosophers through the ages, but the obvious facts which has endured in every age is the dynamism of meanings of words and concepts as contexts of usage and application vary. In as much as certain concepts always carry the same meaning and connotations, ambiguity and equivocality also always persist as inherent attributes of certain concepts; hence, the need to always clarify concepts for easy understanding and communication.

### **What then is Leadership?**

Leadership is a complex and dynamic concept that carries different meanings depending on context and perspective. Although it has been defined in various ways across cultures and situations, all interpretations share a common understanding of leadership as the act of guiding and directing the affairs of a group, organization, or state. Essentially, it involves the ability to influence others toward achieving a shared goal. As Agundu (2019, p. 330) explained leadership is “the process of social influence in which one can enlist the hand and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.” Similarly, Alan (1991, p. 67) emphasized that true leadership goes beyond authority. It is “ultimately about creating a way for a people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen.” According to McSwain (1998, p. 90), leadership is fundamentally about capacity the ability of leaders to listen, observe, and engage others in meaningful dialogue across all levels of decision-making. It involves using one’s expertise not as a tool of dominance but as a foundation for collaboration, transparency, and value-driven guidance. True leadership, therefore, is not about imposing personal visions but clearly articulating them while fostering collective participation. As McSwain explained, leadership means setting agendas rather than merely reacting to them, identifying problems, and initiating transformative changes that lead to genuine and lasting improvement rather than simply managing existing conditions. Kretnr (1995, p. 469) defined leadership as a social influence process through which leaders seek the voluntary participation of subordinates to achieve organizational goals. Similarly, Vain (2000, p. 49) viewed leadership as a dynamic interaction within a group, where one individual, in a given context and time, motivates others to willingly commit themselves to accomplishing shared objectives. Both definitions emphasize influence, voluntary commitment, and collective goal attainment as the core of effective leadership.

### **Followership**

The leader–follower relationship is as old as human society and has been acknowledged throughout history (Maroosis, 2008). Modern followership studies trace their roots to Mary Parker Follett, who emphasized respect for human dignity over status or gender distinctions (Barclay, 2005). This perspective reinforces the growing recognition that followership is just as vital as leadership, if not more so. As Aristotle noted, “he who cannot be a good follower cannot be a leader” (Maroosis, 2008), highlighting that society depends equally on both roles. Leadership emerges naturally from group existence, as human cooperation requires coordination and direction (Arowolo, 2015). Indeed, as Sharma, Sadana, and Kaur (2012, p. 718) assert, political leadership is inevitable wherever people live in groups, for followers provide the foundation upon which leadership stands—without followers, leaders cannot exist.

Followership is understood as the reciprocal social process of leadership, representing the ability of individuals or groups to accept and cooperate under the authority of a leader. In recent times, it has gained global recognition as an essential component of

leadership studies. Kellerman (2008) noted that the traits of followers significantly influence both the leader and overall performance. Essentially, followership entails the capacity, willingness, and discipline to follow effectively. The Civil Air Patrol's Professional Development (CAPPD, n.d.) defines it as achieving goals while upholding respect for authority, integrity, and a positive attitude. Similarly, Kelley (1992) describes followers as individuals who act with intelligence, independence, courage, and strong ethics. As Bennis (2010) and Suda (2013) observed followers often have a clearer understanding of everyday organizational realities and at times, following can be even more challenging than leading.

The concept of followership has often been misunderstood and unfairly viewed in a negative light. As Ricketts (2000, p. 758) observed the term "follower" is frequently associated with inferiority, as many people believe that following is less important or prestigious than leading. This perception implies that followers are less intelligent, capable, or successful than leaders. Challenging this culturally biased view, Kristina Ricketts argues that regardless of the title used, followers are equally essential to the leadership equation, serving a different yet complementary role that is vital to achieving collective goals. Asogwa sees followership as the descriptive expression of being a follower one who supports a person in authority, whether religious, traditional, or political. It arises from the idea that others should follow the leader vested with legitimate authority (Agundu, 2019, p. 336). Rost (2008) further defined followership as a form of collaborative leadership, an influence relationship between leaders and collaborators pursuing meaningful, shared goals.

### **Democratic Survival**

Democratic survival refers to the ability of a democratic political system to endure and maintain its basic principles and institutions over time. According to scholars like Larry Diamond (2017), the survival of a democracy requires more than just holding regular elections, but also requires the protection of civil liberties and political rights, the rule of law, and the institutionalization of democratic norms and values. However, democratic survival is not always guaranteed, as many democracies throughout history have faced challenges and crises that have threatened their continued existence. As Linz and Stepan (1996) argued, democracies can suffer from a variety of problems such as corruption, polarization, and authoritarian encroachment that can erode public trust in democratic institutions and procedures. Additionally, external forces such as foreign intervention, economic shocks, and military coups can also pose significant threats to democratic survival. In light of these challenges, it is important for democracies to constantly strive to strengthen their democratic institutions and procedures to enhance their ability to withstand crises and ensure their long-term survival. This can involve measures such as reducing corruption, promoting social and political inclusiveness, and ensuring the independence of the judiciary and media, as well as maintaining a vibrant civil society. By taking these steps, democracies can ensure that they remain robust and resilient in the face of adversity, thus securing their democratic survival.

### **Weak Institutions**

Refer to governance structures such as legal systems, bureaucratic agencies, and norms of accountability that lack sufficient authority, capacity, or legitimacy to effectuate rules, deliver public services, or maintain order (Brinks, Levitsky, & Murillo, 2019; Fiveable, n.d.). In such contexts the formal "rules of the game" may exist on paper but are either not enforced, fail to shape behaviour, or change so frequently that their effectiveness is undermined (Brinks et al., 2019). The result is a governance environment prone to corruption, policy

failure, and social instability because citizens cannot reliably depend on public institutions to uphold rights or provide collective goods (Al-Jundi, Shuhaiber, & Al-Emara, 2022; Fiveable, n.d.).

### **Relationship between Leadership and Followership**

A critical look at the concepts of leadership and followership from the prism that there can't be no leader without at least a follower reveals that they exist on form dialectical relationship between the concepts. In some quarters, this relationship is viewed as a master/servant relationship, a one up/one down relationship among others but that argument in the thoughts of Landino (1990, p.764) "is a misconception". He alluded to the fact that the "assumption that the leader's interpretation must dominate is detrimental to both player in the leader follower relationship". Landino (1990, p.765) redefined the relationship between leadership and followership when he intimated that, "to think of leaders without followers is like thinking of teachers without students. Both are impossible, they are two sides of the same process, two parts of a whole". Quoting Frisina, Ryan contended that, "because leadership and followership are relational, a thoughtful researcher cannot understand one without the other. If one were to plot out characteristics that both leaders and followers share, what he or she would discover is that both leaders and followers go hand in hand". Deducible from the dialectical relationship that exists between leaders and followers is the fact that leaders who want to create true followers in any socio-political arrangement or configuration must understand that the relationship that exist between them and the followers is on the basis of social contract, hence leadership should be seen as an opportunity to serve the people along contractual lines and with the intent of providing and insuring that the common goods of human flourishing are deliver to the people.

### **Qualities of Good Followership**

The qualities of good followership outlined by Irikana and Orisa (2007, as cited in Thom-Otuya, 2012) resonate strongly with Kwasi Wiredu's philosophy of consensual democracy, which emphasizes collective responsibility, truthfulness, and moral commitment in governance. According to this view, democratic stability depends not only on just leadership but also on followers who uphold discipline, loyalty, self-reliance, and constructive participation. By avoiding sycophancy, telling the truth to power, and engaging in cooperative nation-building, followers embody Wiredu's call for communal harmony and participatory governance essential for Africa's democratic renewal.

### **Leadership, Followership Debacle and Democratic Turn Down in Nigeria**

The theoretical constructs adopted by this study postulate leadership followership congruence, suggestive of symbiotic relationship between leadership and followership, such that the dispositions of leaders are also reflected in the followers' behaviours. This is particularly true in Nigeria as there have been established facts bordering on the reckless behaviour of leaders that have led to distrust and apathy on the part of followers, thereby leading to debacle between the two important partners in the democratic development (EU 2007). The right of citizens to effectively and meaningfully participate in the affairs of their country through established democratic means is the foundation of sustainable democratic survival in good governance. Such a right cannot be taken from them because it is guaranteed by the Constitution. In Nigeria, the franchise grants citizens aged 18 and above the right to vote and be voted for. Yet, as the nation approaches the next general elections,

this democratic right remains undermined by persistent electoral malpractice. Historically, Nigerian elections have often resembled organized crime, where political actors manipulate processes to subvert the people's will (NHRC, 2015). The National Human Rights Commission's report identifies such actions as unlawful, criminal, and unconstitutional, violating citizens' fundamental right to freely choose their leaders. With recurring cases of electoral fraud and violence still threatening political participation, the forthcoming elections (2027) will once again test Nigeria's commitment to genuine democracy and transparent governance.

Considerably, this study contends that one of the biggest problems evident in Nigerian leadership and followership is anchored in their erroneous worldviews, beliefs, and assumptions on the meaning and the context of leadership; worldviews that detach and distant values and servant-hood from the meaning and the context of leadership, which translate to misconduct, unethical behaviour, and leadership crisis. In other words, to lead is to serve (Locke, 1986; Sendjaya, 2015), and both leaders and followers work collaboratively to effectively accomplish the common goal of the country; a dyadic relationship that is grounded in mutual empowerment of both parties. This perspective corresponds to Kwame Nkrumah's ideology of consciencism, which stresses the importance of morally conscious and visionary leadership determined in the people's consciousness. Even after two decades of democratic practice, Nigeria's democracy remains fragile owing to the disconnection between leaders and followers. Rebuilding this relationship would require visionary leadership combined with institutional integrity that breeds trust. As Nkrumah would say, true democracy needs leaders endowed with consciousness and able to galvanize a following that is active and responsible, and this would call for reforms that provide for electoral processes defined by transparency and credibility.

Basically, in Nigeria, there are five major factors fueling leadership–followership debacle: manipulation of electoral process by the political leadership/ruling elite, electoral violence, poverty, unemployment and corruption. These factors are largely perpetrated, facilitated and sponsored by the political leadership. Electoral manipulation, defined by EU Election Observation Mission (2007) as the lack of essential transparency, procedural irregularities, significant evidence of fraud, predetermined and deliberate voter disenfranchisement at different stages of electoral process and lack of equal conditions for contestants, has pervaded the electoral process in Nigeria from the 1979 elections to the 2019 general elections. There has been a progressive degeneration of election outcomes, the 2007 elections being the worst in the history of Nigeria (EU 2007; NHRC 2015). As EU (2007, 1) put it, 'the 2007 State and Federal elections have fallen far short of basic international and regional standards for democratic elections. In the same vein, electoral violence is defined by Birch and Muchlinski (2018) as an act or threat of coercion, intimidation or physical harm perpetrated to affect an electoral process or that arises in the context of electoral competition. According to Sisk (2008), electoral violence is a sub-type of political violence in which actors employ coercion in an instrumental way to advance their interests or achieve specific political ends. In broader conceptualization, electoral violence encompasses the purpose behind violence, psychological violence and the actual violence.

### **The Debacle of Followership and Democratic Survival in Nigeria**

This perspective aligns with Kwame Nkrumah's ideology of consciencism which emphasizes the need for morally grounded and visionary leadership rooted in the people's consciousness. Despite over two decades of democratic practice, Nigeria's democracy

remains fragile due to a disconnect between leaders and followers. Strengthening this relationship requires fostering trust through visionary leadership and institutional integrity. As Nkrumah would argue, genuine democracy demands leaders who embody ethical consciousness and inspire active, responsible followership achievable through reforms that ensure transparent and credible electoral processes. Genuine democracy could be achieved by de-manualizing the electoral process through introducing electronic devices for processing and returning of results to complement the card readers which the Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC) claimed to have put in place as BVAS but refused to use during the 2023 general election. When the BVAS became operational and reliable, it would be Nigerians, not electoral manipulation and violence, that would be able to enthrone and dethrone political leaders at will. This will bring about leadership responsibility and the subordination of political leadership to the electorate.

Although one can argue that the need for active followership is both a moral obligation and a constitutional right, in the Nigerian context, perhaps, because of all the distasteful experiences that leadership-orientation has given, the reforming of leaders stands to be a lofty ideal unless underpinned by active citizens' involvement. Power can corrupt; therefore, if democracy is to survive, an active and critical citizenry needs to be maintained. The French Revolution and the Arab Spring mark epochs wherein public consciousness and participation took on an active role to challenge undemocratic regimes and promote democratic governance as in Egypt and Libya respectively. While leadership is central in creating and pursuing a strategic vision for the advancement of a nation, in a true democracy, it is the active citizenry that should guide and hold its own leadership accountable (Nwolise, 2006).

Leadership is not merely occupying an office; it is acting in the interest of that role. A leader has to identify the right path, show it, and then lead the followers along that path. A leader takes in followers, carries the followers along with him/her, and involves them in public decision-making and policy formulation. The leader should inspire followers to work voluntarily and cooperatively as opposed to coercively or in a divisive mode towards common goals. Moreover, public policies and programmes must be collectively decided to actually reflect the will of the people. Above all else, the leader must be humane; without compassion or empathy, leadership becomes a mere and meaningless function. Concomitantly, the concept of political democracy is on one hand a social contract, which gives the people the option of governing themselves by choosing their leaders, and taking responsibility therefore, constituting a court for leadership by watching, suggesting to, compelling, checkmating and even confronting; and on the other hand, gives the leadership its legitimacy by determining and agreeing that it is rightfully constituted and therefore worthy of obedience.

### **The Role of Followership for Democratic Survival in Nigeria**

Followership is very important in the democratic survival of a country like Nigeria, as it defines the viability of a leadership performance. The definition of followership in a democratic process entails the behaviour and attitudes of an individual, who follows a particular leader or subscribes to a political ideology. An active and responsible follower, who can hold the leaders accountable, is what every democratically practicing nation needs, especially Nigeria, where the leadership has always been marred by corruption, abuse of power and mismanagement of resources. Followership in Nigeria is one of the things that ensure that democracy survives since it usually acts as a check on leaders' actions (Adeyemo

2017). When followers are enlightened and involved, they can be made accountable by their leaders and make demands on transparency and accountability from those in leadership positions. Such accountability remains a strong deterrent to corruption and abuse of power, which are at the highest risk in overthrowing a democratic government. Thus, the active participation of followers in the democratic process will make the democratic system itself more resilient to challenges and sufferings from internal and external threats. Followership also determines the general quality of leadership to the Nigerian populace. The action of a follower has the potential to encourage or discourage that follower's leader. Hence, it declared that followers who favour corrupt and unethical practices in their leaders send a message to those leaders that they can engage in such activities and be sure that such will not bring about any change in behaviour. On the other hand, if followers bond for accountability and transparency, it becomes more likely that their leaders act more decently and responsibly towards upholding democracy.

Consequently, followership in Nigeria suffers from political apathy, lack of political awareness and literacy, which would otherwise facilitate accountability by the people from their leaders. The apathy and lack of political engagement have led to a situation where it would require great effort to find the courage and means with which the masses would actively participate in the democratic process. Therefore, Nigerian leaders are left alone to play at will in their corrupt and unethical practices. But this has started to change, as more Nigerians become politically aware and engaged. Using social media and other types of technology, people are becoming more informed about political issues and demanding accountability from their leaders. Such involvement contributes to the survival of democracy in Nigeria, as it means that leaders will be made to account for their actions, while a culture of transparency and accountability begins to take root. It is expedient to note that followership is a critical component of democratic survival in Nigeria, as it helps to prevent corruption, abuse of power, and mismanagement of resources. A democratic society requires active and responsible followers who can hold their leaders accountable, and this is especially important in Nigeria where the history of leadership has been characterized by these issues. As more Nigerians become politically aware and engaged, the role of followership in ensuring the survival of democracy will continue to increase.

### **Way Forward**

As a way forward, and in line with Nwolise's conceptualization of leadership, followership should equally be examined and strengthened to support the following propositions: democracy is not granted on a platter of gold, it is earned through struggle, and its sustenance requires eternal vigilance, as democratization remains an ongoing process. For leaders to perform their duties effectively, their responsibilities must be constantly demanded by the general citizenry. In a democratic society, governance should reflect the collective aspirations of the people, expressed through their active and critical participation in political processes. Leaders can only carry their followers along when citizens see participation as a civic right and duty. Exemplary leadership inspires devoted followership; however, in Nigeria, political irresponsibility among followers has led leaders to depend on social backers for class interests, rather than pursuing shared national goals. Furthermore, public policies should emerge through collective engagement, reinforcing the leadership–followership nexus and ensuring the continuous renewal of the social contract. Ultimately, leaders must be guided and held accountable to the principles of humaneness and empathy in governance.

However, in Nigeria these attributes of leadership have been inexistent. Nigeria has sunk into “fallacy of electoralism” (Mottiar, 2002, p.3) having held four successive general elections without fair representation, this is a practice described by Schedler (2002) as “elections without democracy: menu of manipulation”. While leadership in Nigeria has for sure been irresponsible, corrupt, self-serving, personalizing, and clueless. it is only critical followership that can reverse the trend. If democracy is a social contract between the governed (followers) and the leaders, then, if by any chance, any member of the state decides to be apolitical, such a person lacks the locus standi to either complain about inefficiency of government or expect that government should keep its own side of the social contract. History has it that peoples that are now brought under a single political entity called Nigeria were critically involved in their various governments before the interruptions of colonialism. In addition to the aforementioned, the executive immunity should be removed from the constitution to drastically reduce the atmosphere of impunity. This will reduce impunity in government and ensure swift punishment for constitutional infraction and non-performance by political leaders. Youth and women empowerment is desirable. This will not only reduce the level of poverty and unemployment but also mobilize the youth towards national cause and societal ideals. Finally, corruption needs to be fought more aggressively to ensure that national resources are deployed towards wealth generation, democratic survival, youth empowerment and national development.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of the study suggest that political democracy is predicated largely on the will of the people. The absence of a credible followership capital has over the years fed, and nurtured the entrenchment of clientele politics in Nigeria. The country is therefore, beset by numerous structural bottlenecks; such problems can only be put to proper ending and redress of the general citizenry-those most affected-not political opportunists whose interest is served best by the continuity of the status quo. Great investments have been made in the Nigerian project of democratization; thus, all citizens affected by government actions should see their civic duty to keep the democratic flame burning in all possible ways. In a broader sense, Nigeria could learn from Botswana, where four factors have sustained good governance: the absence of civil and political strife, the political leadership's commitment to the promotion of multiparty democracy through constant engagement with the grassroots, sound economic policies, and a fair degree of assimilation of local knowledge in national governance. The political and economic challenges facing Nigeria as a nation after sixty-five years of nationhood, of which twenty-six years have been spent on steady democracy, are enormous and hydra headed. From religious riots, we have graduated to religious bombing, and various ugly vices that stare us in the face daily. There is no gainsaying that the biggest problem facing this country today is the dearth of selfless and transparent leadership. A leadership that is accountable, responsive, transparent and responsible to Nigerians in dealing with the country, that is devoid of corruption, *saa-ilumo* self-centeredness, and nepotism. Nigeria needs leaders in the work of Chinua Achebe, that are upright and true to stabilise nation's quest for growth and development. Trust worthy leaders who have the nation's state at heart as well as the genuine concern for the well-being of Nigerians.

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