

JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

ISSN: 1595-9457 (Online); 3043-4211 (Print)



Volume 1, Number 8, December, 2025

**A Publication Domiciled in the Department of Philosophy
University of Uyo, Nigeria**

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT JPPSS

Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies (JPPSS), an international, open access, indexed and peer-reviewed scholarly journal is currently receiving submissions for its March, 2026 edition. As a peer-reviewed academic journal, JPPSS accepts original research manuscripts in various areas of philosophy, policy and strategic issues including book or paper reviews, conceptual framework, simulation, analytical models, empirical and technical works and case studies in the humanities, education, business/science management, social science and other related fields. JPPSS provides the needed platform for academics, researchers, institutions and professionals to share various ideas and insights on current issues as well as contributing to expanding the frontiers of knowledge globally.

Guidelines

Authors submitting manuscripts to JPPSS must ensure that each paper submitted adheres to the following guidelines:

1. Is original, well researched and referenced.
2. Does not exceed 7,000 words or 15 pages (inclusive of abstract, keywords, works cited or references and so on).
3. Has not been submitted to another publication house.
4. Is typed double-spaced, submitted in MS word format, using Times New Roman or Tahoma and 12 font size.
5. Uses MLA (9th edition) or APA (7th edition) documentation style; with author's surname, year and page in the in-text citations.
6. Has an abstract of not more than 250 words. The abstract should state the research problem, the main aim, research method, main finding(s) or implication(s), recommendations of the work and conclusion.

Disclaimer

Views and opinions expressed in JPPSS are not necessarily shared by the Editorial Board.

Submission

All manuscripts must be sent via email to: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com.

Publication Fees

For contributors within Nigeria, every submission must be accompanied by Five Thousand Naira (₦5,000.00) for vetting. Any paper accepted for publication will be required to pay Fifteen Thousand Naira (₦15,000.00) for Online Edition only and Twenty Thousand Naira (₦20,000.00) for Online and Print Editions.

Additional Copy - ₦8,000.00

Institution - ₦10,000.00

Bank Details

(Strictly for contributors within Nigeria)

Bank: First Bank

Account: 2046034601

Name: Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies

BUT:

For contributors outside Nigeria, every submission must be accompanied by Ten Dollars (US\$10). Any paper accepted for publication will be required to pay Forty Dollars (US\$40) for Online Edition only and Fifty Dollars (US\$50) for Online and Print Editions.

Additional Copy - US\$10

Institution - US\$20

Bank Details (Strictly for contributors outside Nigeria):

Bank: Wema Bank

Account: 0621820757

Name: Prof Elijah Okon John

For Further Information, Contact:

Prof. Elijah O. John

(Editor-in-Chief)

08028322626

Dr. Michael O. Etim

(Editor)

08029848312

Samuel E. Inyang

(Secretary/Editorial Assistant)

09073958669

Or visit our website URL: <https://jppssuniuyo.com>

Contact:

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

© All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical including photocopying, recording or any retrieval system, without permission from the Editor-in-Chief

Printed By: **Omega Books**

Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

07032878735

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-Chief: Prof. Elijah O. John

Editor: Dr. Michael O. Etim

Secretary/Editorial Assistant: Samuel E. Inyang

Business/Production Manager: Dr. Anthony R. Etuk

Associate Editors

Dr. Nwachukwu M. Anyim

Dr. Dennis E. Igwe

Dr. Ubong Essien Umoh

Dr. Obioha Uwaezuoke Precious

Dr. Happiness Uduk

Dr. Chidimma S. Ikea

Dr. Christopher Udofia

Dr. Uwem Jonah Akpan

Editorial Consultants

Prof. Godfrey O. Ozumba, University of Calabar, Nigeria.

Prof. Muyiwa Falaiye, University of Lagos, Nigeria.

Prof. Isaac Ukpokolo, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Prof. Paul Ogugua, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria.

Prof. Ashong C. Ashong, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

Prof. Mark O. Ikeke, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.

Prof. Aniekan S. Brown, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

Prof. Olu Awofeso, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife, Nigeria.

Prof. Gabriel E. Idang, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

Prof. Idorenyin F. Esikot, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

Prof. Christopher O. Akpan, University of Calabar, Nigeria.

Prof. Ntiedo Umoren, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

Prof. Basse Ettah, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

Prof. T. V. Ogan, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Rev. Fr. Prof. Columbus N. Ogbujah, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Prof. Paul Haaga, Nasarawa State University, Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Prof. Peter F. Omonzejele, University of Benin, Nigeria.

Prof. Richard Ajah, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

Rev. Fr. Prof. Jude Onuoha, Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Nigeria.

Prof. Bernard Matolino, University of Pretoria, South Africa.

Prof. Udoh Elijah Udom, Washington Adventist University, Washington DC.

Prof. Rotimi Omosulu, The University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica.

Prof. Joseph A. Ushie, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

Prof. Iniobong Daniel Umotong, Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria.

Prof. Effiong Johnson, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

Prof. Nsikak Idiong, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

Prof. Etim Frank, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

1. **Saudat Salah Abdulbaqi**, PhD is a Professor of Communication in the Department of Communication at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria.
2. **Alphonsus Onuabuchi Madu**, PhD, is a Professor of Science Education in the Department of Science Education, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, Nigeria.
3. **Oyejide Felix Omotosho**, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Political Science and International Relations and Diplomacy in the Department of Political Science, School of Arts and Sciences, University of The Gambia.
4. **Esin Eminue**, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Social and Political History in the Department of History and International Studies, University of Uyo, Nigeria.
5. **Sylvester Omorogieva Uwadaie**, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Human Resource Management and Organizational Behaviour in the University of Benin and a Senior Partner with Silmartech AR Ltd (Consultancy Services) in Warri, Nigeria.
6. **Sesan Sunday Abere**, PhD, is a Senior lecturer in the Department of Economics, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria
7. **Philip Ikhanafe Imokha**, PhD, is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science at Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Nigeria.
8. **Donatus Uzoma Okwara**, PhD, is a Lecturer in the Federal University of Science and Technology, Imo State, Nigeria.
9. **Onyema Pauline Chinwendu**, PhD, is a Lecturer in the Federal University of Science and Technology, Imo State, Nigeria.
10. **Declan Aguzie**, PhD, is a Lecturer in the Federal University of Science and Technology, Imo State, Nigeria.
11. **Chukwukere Daniel Obioma** PhD, is a Lecturer in the Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria.
12. **Emmanuel Nwosu**, PhD, is a Lecturer in the Department of History at Kingsley Ozumba Mbadiwe University, Ideato, Imo State, Nigeria.
13. **Yusuf Dambo**, PhD, is a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Kaduna State University, Nigeria.
14. **Wasilat Opeoluwa Lasisi**, PhD, is a Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, Lagos State University, Ojo, Nigeria.
15. **Abdulazeez Alao Adekola**, PhD is a Lecturer in the Centre for Peace and Security Studies, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State Nigeria.
16. **Biola Olatundun Ibitoye**, PhD, is a Lecturer at the Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.
17. **Samauel Abidemi Idowu**, PhD Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.
18. **Ime Akpan Udo**, PhD, is a Lecturer in the Department of Physics, College of Science and Technology, Nnung Ukim, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
19. **Michael Saviour Udoh**, MEd, is a Doctoral Scholar at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, Nigeria.
20. **Yusuf Olatunji. Onimago**, MA, is a Doctoral Scholar at the Centre for Peace and Security Studies, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State Nigeria.
21. **Kehinde Abimbola Ojo**, MSc, is a Lecturer in the Department of Economics, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria.

22. **Edoghogo Omoregie**, MA, is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science at Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Nigeria.
23. **Abdulraful Olayinka Balogun**, MA, is a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.
24. **Oluwaremi Elizabeth Sam-Oyegunle**, MA, is a Doctoral Scholar at the Centre for Peace and Security Studies, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State Nigeria.
25. **John Kayode Ekundayo**, MA, is a Lecturer, Institute of Part-Time Studies, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State
26. **Rasheedat Damilola Alanamu**, MA, is a Doctoral Scholar at the Centre for Peace and Security Studies, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State Nigeria.
27. **Abdulrauf Olayinka Balogun**, MA, is a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology at Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State Nigeria.
28. **Oluwatobi Enitan Modeyin**, MSc, is a Doctoral Scholar in the Department of Mass Communication at Glorious Vision University, Ogwa, Nigeria.
29. **Kelvin Inobemhe**, MSc, is an Independent Researcher, Lagos, Nigeria.
30. **Thomas Onyebuchi Igwe**, MA, is a Doctoral Scholar in the Faculty of Arts, Business, Law, Education and Theology at St. Mary's University, London, United Kingdom.
31. **Orlando Orlu Omubo-Dede**, MA, is a Doctoral Scholar in the Department of History and International Studies at the University of Uyo, Nigeria.
32. **Muhammad Muhammad**, MSc, is a Lecturer and a Doctoral Scholar in the Department of Political Science Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina, Nigeria.
33. **Garba Ibrahim Jaba**, MSc, is a Doctoral Scholar in the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina, Katsina State, Nigeria.
34. **Adebola David Ajide** is a Chief Confidential Secretary at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Artisanal Refineries in the Niger Delta and Nigeria's National Security, 1999-2009 By <i>Esin Eminue, PhD, and Orlando Orlu Omubo-Dede, MA.</i>1-14	1-14
2.	Advancing Household Prosperity through the Policy of Social Protection Interventions in The Gambia: A Multi-Faceted Approach By <i>Oyejide Felix Omotosho, PhD.</i>15-26	15-26
3.	Authoritarian Tendencies and Political Polarization within the Democratic Framework in Nigeria: The Fourth Republic in Perspective By <i>Edoghogho Omoregie, MA and Philip Ikhanafe Imokha, PhD.</i>27-36	27-36
4.	Economic Growth in Oil-Exporting African Countries: The Interplay of Exchange Rate Volatility and Institutional Quality By <i>Sesan Sunday Abere, PhD, and Kehinde Abimbola Ojo, MSc.</i>37-48	37-48
5.	Workplace Diversity Training and Employee Engagement in the Oil and Gas Industry in Nigeria By <i>Sylvester Omorogieva Uwadiae, PhD.</i>49-62	49-62
6.	The Roles of Political Party Finance of the APC and PDP on Electoral Performance of the Two Parties in the 2023 General Elections in Malumfashi Local Government Area of Katsina State, Nigeria By <i>Muhammad Muhammad, MSc, and Garba Ibrahim Jaba, NSc.</i>63-74	63-74
7.	Stephen Gardiner's Idea of Environmental Philosophy: Ethics, Justice, and the Tragedy of the Commons By <i>Donatus Uzoma Okwara, PhD, Onyema Pauline Chinwendu, PhD, Declan Aguzie, PhD, Chukwukere Daniel Obioma, MA and Emmanuel Nwosu, PhD.</i>75-84	75-84
8.	Continuity of Embodied Ecology: From John Paul II to Francis and Pope Leo XIV By <i>Thomas Onyebuchi Igwe, MA.</i>85-94	85-94
9.	The Grammar of the Good: Analysing the Logic of Moral Judgments By <i>Wasilat Opeoluwa Lasisi, PhD.</i>95-106	95-106
10.	Adoption of Communication Strategies for Communal Conflict Mediation in North Central Nigeria By <i>Oluwatobi Enitan Modeyin, MSc and Kelvin Inobemhe, MSc.</i>107-120	107-120
11.	A Study on the Factors Affecting the Prevention and Management - Seeking Behaviour of Childhood Disease in Nigeria By <i>Yusuf Dambo, PhD.</i>121-130	121-130
12.	Socio-Cultural Determinants of Girl-Child Marriage in Benue State, Nigeria By <i>Biola Olatundun Ibitoye, PhD, Samauel Abidemi Idowu, PhD, John Kayode Ekundayo, MA and Adebola David Ajide.</i>131-140	131-140
13.	The Effects of Polygyny Family Conflict on Family Cohesion in Moro LGA of Kwara State of Nigeria By <i>Rasheedat Damilola Alanamu, MA, Abdulazeez Alao Adekola, PhD, Yusuf Olatunji Onimago, MA and Abdulraful Olayinka Balogun, MA.</i>141-151	141-151
14.	The Implications of Information Proliferation for Inter-Communal Conflicts in Kwara State, Nigeria By <i>Oluwaremi Elizabeth Sam-Oyegunle, MA, Saudat Salah Abdulbaqi, PhD, John Kayode Ekundayo, MA and Balogun Abdulrauf Olayinka</i>152-165	152-165
15.	Personalised and Group-Based Mastery Learning Strategies and Students' Academic Achievement in Chemistry in Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria By <i>Michael Saviour Udoh, MEd, Alphonsus Onuabuchi Madu, PhD and Ime Akpan Udo, PhD.</i>166-176	166-176



JOURNAL OF LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT (JLD)

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF UYO, NIGERIA

ISSN: 3093-0618

CALL FOR PAPERS

Journal of Leadership and Development (JLD), an international, open access, indexed and peer-reviewed scholarly journal is currently receiving submissions for its Volume 2, Number 1, March, 2026 edition. As a peer-reviewed academic journal, JLD accepts original and well researched manuscripts in various areas of leadership and development issues including book or paper reviews, conceptual framework, simulation, analytical models, empirical and technical works and case studies in the humanities, education, business/science management, social science and other related fields. JLD provides the needed platform for academics, researchers, institutions and professionals to share various ideas and insights on current issues as well as contributing to expanding the frontiers of knowledge globally.

GUIDELINES:

Authors submitting manuscripts to JLD must ensure that each paper submitted adheres to the following guidelines:

- Is original, well researched and referenced.
- Does not exceed 7,000 words or 15 pages (inclusive of abstract, Keywords, Works Cited or References and so on).
- Has not been submitted to another publication house.
- Is typed double-spaced (2.0), submitted in MS word format, using Times New Roman or Tahoma and 12 font size.
- Uses MLA (9th edition) or APA (7th edition) documentation style; with author's surname, year and page in the in-text citations.
- Has an abstract of not more than 250 words. The abstract should state the research problem, the main aim, research method, main finding(s) or implication(s), recommendations of the work and conclusion.

SUBMISSION All manuscripts must be sent via email to: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

PUBLICATION FEES For contributors within Nigeria, every submission must be accompanied by Five Thousand Naira (₦5,000.00) for vetting. Any paper accepted for publication will be required to pay Fifteen Thousand Naira (₦15,000.00) for Online Edition only and Twenty Thousand Naira (₦20,000.00) for Online and Print Editions.

BANK DETAILS: (Strictly for contributors within Nigeria)

BANK: First Bank **ACCOUNT:** 2046034601

NAME: JPPSS (Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies)

For contributors outside Nigeria, every submission must be accompanied by Ten Dollars (US\$10).

Any paper accepted for publication will be required to pay Forty Dollars (US\$40) for Online Edition only and Fifty Dollars (US\$50) for Online and Print Editions.

BANK DETAILS (STRICTLY FOR CONTRIBUTORS OUTSIDE NIGERIA):

Bank: WEMA Bank

Account: 0621820757

Name: Prof. Elijah Okon John

For Further Information, Contact:

Prof. Elijah O. John
(Editor-in-Chief) - 08028322626

Prof. Moses Ikoh
(Editor) - 07034372361

Dr Emem Bassey Inyang
(Secretary/Editorial Assistant)- 08028769672

Or visit our website
URL: <https://jppssuniuyo.com>



JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES (JPCI)

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF UYO, NIGERIA

ISSN: 3093-060X

Call for Papers

Journal of Philosophy and Contemporary Issues (JPCI), an international, open access, indexed and peer-reviewed scholarly journal is currently receiving submissions for its Volume 2, Number 1, March, 2026 edition. As a peer-reviewed academic journal, JPCI accepts original and well researched manuscripts in various areas of philosophy and contemporary issues including book or paper reviews, conceptual framework, simulation, analytical models, empirical and technical works and case studies in the humanities, education, business/science management, social science and other related fields. JPCI provides the needed platform for academics, researchers, institutions and professionals to share various ideas and insights on current issues as well as contributing to expanding the frontiers of knowledge globally.

GUIDELINES:

Authors submitting manuscripts to JPPSS must ensure that each paper submitted adheres to the following guidelines:

- ✓ Is original, well researched and referenced.
- ✓ Does not exceed 7,000 words or 15 pages (inclusive of abstract, Keywords, Works Cited or References and so on).
- ✓ Has not been submitted to another publication house.
- ✓ Is typed double-spaced (2.0), submitted in MS word format, using Times New Roman or Tahoma and 12 font size.
- ✓ Uses MLA (9th edition) or APA (7th edition) documentation style; with author's surname, year and page in the in-text citations.
- ✓ Has an abstract of not more than 250 words. The abstract should state the research problem, the main aim, research method, main finding(s) or implication(s), recommendations of the work and conclusion.

SUBMISSION

All manuscripts must be sent via email to: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

PUBLICATION FEES

For contributors within Nigeria, every submission must be accompanied by Five Thousand Naira (₦5,000.00) for vetting. Any paper accepted for publication will be required to pay Fifteen Thousand Naira (₦15,000.00) for Online Edition only and Twenty Thousand Naira (₦20,000.00) for Online and Print Editions.

BANK DETAILS:

(Strictly for contributors within Nigeria)

BANK:
First Bank

ACCOUNT:
2046034601

NAME:

JPPSS (Journal of Philosophy,
Policy and Strategic Studies)

Contributors outside Nigeria should

note that every submission must be accompanied by Ten Dollars (US\$10). Any paper accepted for publication will be required to pay Forty Dollars (US\$40) for Online Edition only and Fifty Dollars (US\$50) for Online and Print Editions.

BANK DETAILS

(STRICTLY FOR CONTRIBUTORS OUTSIDE NIGERIA):

Bank: WEMA Bank

Account: 0621820757

Name: Prof. Elijah Okon John

For Further Information, Contact:

Prof. Elijah O. John
(Editor-in-Chief) -
08028322626

Dr. Anthony R. Etuk
(Editor)
08095033470

Samuel Eno Inyang
(Secretary/Editorial Assistant)
09073958669

Or visit our website: URL: <https://jppssuniuyo.com>



JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Volume 1, Number 8 (December, 2025)

ISSN: 1595-9457 (online); 3043-4211 (print)

Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

Received: November 11, 2025 Accepted: December 06, 2025 Published: December 31, 2025

Citation: Eminue, Esin & Omubo-Dede, Orlando O. (2025). "Artisanal Refineries in the Niger Delta and Nigeria's National Security, 1999-2009." *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1 (8): 1-14.

Article

Open Access

ARTISANAL REFINERIES IN THE NIGER DELTA AND NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY, 1999-2009

Esin Eminue¹ & Orlando Orlu Omubo-Dede²

Department of History and International Studies, University of Uyo, Nigeria^{1&2}

Corresponding Email: orlandomumbodede@uniuyo.edu.ng²

Abstract

The discovery of oil in commercial quantity in Nigeria in 1956 ushered in a period, characterized by endemic crises of oil rents management and corporate insecurity. From 1999, democratic renewal, backed by excess oil rents returns, made the popular democratic control of oil wealth critical as the region witnessed the proliferation of different militant groups. Frustrated by lack of benefits from oil production, communities began to target the operations of energy companies, demanding better public services and a greater share of government revenues. The unrest turned into worrying criminal movements, which feeds on massive thefts and the establishment of illegal production facilities of crude oil known as 'artisanal refineries.' It is observed that, the practice of artisanal crude oil refining may have appeared lucrative as it proffered solution to some of the problems of unemployment, provided some basic social amenities and proffered a solution to the problem of scarcity of crude products in the country. However, its implications on national security outweighed the assumed benefits; hence, the importance of oil to Nigeria's security, economic survival and political stability cannot be overemphasized. The study adopted a historical and content method of analysis, while both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized. The study concluded that, except drastic action is taken to address the activities of artisanal refineries in the region, the Nigerian economy will be heading for a doom and this will pose a grave consequence to Nigeria's national security and economic survival.

Keywords: Artisanal Refineries; Niger Delta; National Security, Unemployment, Oil Exploration, Nigeria.

Copyright © 2025 By JPPSS. Publishers: Omega Books

This is an open access article which permits unrestricted use provided the work is properly cited.

Introduction

Few years ago, the Niger Delta region, the hub of Nigeria's oil and gas production was almost ungovernable. Hostage-taking of foreign oil workers, sabotage of oil pipelines and other petroleum production facilities as well as other vices were the order of the day. Militants in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta began a campaign of kidnappings and pipeline bombings in the early 2000s. After a government-sponsored amnesty programme in 2009, violence dropped, while oil production increased. But oil theft and the activities of illegal artisanal refineries (a lucrative criminal industry), continued to draw many militants - new and old - back into the delta's winding creeks. While former kingpins profess to have left the oil-theft business, many former militant foot soldiers that were paid less or not at all by the amnesty, and have few job prospects, continued to pursue prosperity by tapping pipelines and illegal refining of crude oil.¹ Oil theft and illegal artisanal refining of crude oil have greatly increased - and piracy seems to be an important aspect of it. According to research, more than 300,000 barrels of oil were stolen from Nigerian pipelines daily.² Piracy, drug trafficking and arms proliferation have been reinforced by artisanal refining. According to data, illegal artisanal refining related violence has caused over 500 fatalities in the region.³ These situations invariably have affected the national security.⁴ Illegal artisanal refineries have been an economic and security problem in Nigeria since the 80s and government over the years has been putting measures in place to check it.⁵ But despite all the measures undertaken by the government, illegal artisanal refineries continued to increase in scope and dimension. Oil is the major catalyst that drives the Nigerian economy and by implication the determinant of its entire socio-political configuration. Consequently, anything that covertly or overtly affects oil production in Nigeria poses a direct threat to her national economy, political stability, territorial integrity and national security. This study examines the dynamics of artisanal crude oil refining in the Niger Delta. It traces the origin, causes and implication to national security between 1999 and 2009. The year 1999 is chosen as the originating chronology to mark the transition from military regimes to democratic rule in Nigeria; while 2009 is chosen as the terminating chronology to mark the period the Federal government instituted the amnesty programme which granted ex-militants operating in the Niger Delta region presidential pardon and reintegration into the society. It was expected that by 1999, democratic rule would bring about an end to the restiveness.

¹D. Hinshaw, "Niger Delta Amnesty Program Fails to End Militancy." *The Wall Street Journal*, Volume 4 (2012), pp. 56-67

²U. Akpan, "Indigenous Operators Express Worry as Cost of Oil Theft hits N15.66n," *National Mirror*, (2013); E. Odemwingie, J. Nda-Isaiah, "Nigeria Loses 400,000 Barrels Daily to Crude Oil Theft-Sentate." *Leadership*, (2013); R. Okere "Curtailing Oil Theft, Illegal Bunkering via Legislation," *The Guardian*, (2013); S. Nwanosike, "illegal Oil Bunkering: Matters Arising." *The Tide* (2013). Available at: www.thetide.com.

³Nigeria Watch and ACLED data, integrated on the P4P Peace Map (www.p4p-nigerdelta.org)

⁴National security deals with the security and defence of the state, including its citizens, economy, and institutions, which are regarded as a duty of the government to abate. Originally national security was conceived as protection against military attacks, but the non-military dimension such as the security from terrorism, minimization of crime, economic security, energy security, environmental security, food security, and cyber-security, have been added. In: Joseph J Romm, "Defining national security: the nonmilitary aspects." *Pew Project on America's Task in a Changed World (Pew Project Series). Council on Foreign Relations* (1993). p. 122. ISBN 978-0-87609-135-7. Retrieved 22 September 2010.

⁵S. Nwanosike, "illegal Oil Bunkering: Matters Arising." *The Tide*. (2013). Available at: www.thetide.com.

Background to Niger Delta Oil Crisis

The Niger Delta of Nigeria is situated on the Gulf of Guinea and covers an area of over 70,000 square kilometers. The area is highly diverse with over 40 ethnic groups who speak more than 100 languages and dialects, and whose traditional livelihood involves mainly farming and fishing. The region comprises 185 out of the 774 local government areas and covers nine out of the 36 states of Nigeria: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. It was over 30 million people, according to a 2006 population census,⁶ and an estimated population density of 265 people per square kilometer, the region accounts for more than 23 percent of Nigeria's population.⁷ The Niger Delta contains vast reserves of oil and gas, which play a significant role in the Nigerian economy. Despite these abundant natural resources, the region is marked by poverty, underdevelopment, environmental degradation, and insecurity. Historical tensions and a proliferation of armed groups (militant, criminal, and ethno-sectarian) contribute to the changing conflict and security dynamics in the region.

Historically, the Niger Delta region has been marked by violent agitation over political rights, resource control and environmental protection. The struggle for local control of oil resources and environmental remediation later evolved into armed insurgency. On February 23, 1966, a secession led by Isaac Adaka Boro declared the Niger Delta region, a republic. Between the 1980s and 1990s, many social justice movements and ethnic militias emerged to protest against the devastating impact of oil exploration and production. A notable group that emerged during that period was the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) led by Ken Saro-Wiwa, an environmental rights activist.⁸ The killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other MOSOP leaders by the military government in 1995 triggered a series of violent agitation and the emergence of several militant groups in the region. Between 1999 and 2009, several militant groups emerged, including the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).⁹ These militant groups took up arms against the government and engaged in the kidnapping of oil workers, vandalism of oil facilities and illegal oil bunkering. In 2009, the federal government instituted an amnesty programme to incentivize militants with allowances and capacity building training to end the insurgency. Some of the militants however continued to engage in illegal oil bunkering and artisanal refining because of the lucrative nature of the business, and the failure of the amnesty programme to effectively address the underlying causes and drivers of militancy in the region.

Theoretical Framework

The relative deprivation theory is the theoretical construct used in this study. Relative deprivation is a multidisciplinary theory used in investigating a social relation in a given environment. The theory is attributed to Samuel A Stouffer (1900-1960) based on his observation during World War II.¹⁰ Relative deprivation has it that someone feels deprived of something to which she/he is entitled but while others become beneficiaries. Pettigrew

⁶National Population Commission (NPC), '2006 Population Census,' Available at: <http://nationalpopulation.gov.ng/census-enumeration>

⁷ *ibid*

⁸UNEP, Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland, *United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*, 2011. Available at: https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/OEA/UNEP_OEA.pdf

⁹*ibid*.

¹⁰Philip Hauser, "Samuel Andrew Stouffer 1900-1960," *The American Statistician, Volume 14*, No. 4 (1960), p. 36.

posited that relative deprivation is a subjective state that shapes emotions, cognition, and behaviour. It also links the individual with the interpersonal and inter-group levels of analysis.¹¹ The theory of relative deprivation has been proven useful in various ways, especially in situations of frustration and discontent in an environment where people feel that they have been unjustly treated, and abused by state powers. Studies have revealed lawlessness and impunity in analyzing conflict inherent in such a system. The people of the region believed they have been deprived, and denied the benefits of petrodollar revenue by the federal government and the multinational oil and gas companies operating in the area. The inhabitants of the region feel bemoaned and deprived of these benefits from crude oil extracted from their communities and region, hence, the resultant consequence is the arbitrary setting up of illegal refining of the crude oil which has adversely impacted the socioeconomic development of the region and security of the nation.

Artisanal Refineries in the Niger Delta

Artisanal refining is the process where stolen crude oil is refined illegally by local people using local resources and crude skills (drawing on the indigenous technology used to distill locally made gin). The basic materials include rudimentary steels, which often are metal pipes and drums welded together. The crude oil is boiled and the fumes from it are collected, cooled, and condensed in tanks to be used locally for energy, or fuel. This basic refining technique was first used during the Civil War by Biafrans, and modernized by members of militant camps between 2005 and 2009, providing fuel and cash to support the Niger Delta insurgency. After the 2009 amnesty deal by President Yar'Adua was brokered; some militants went home to their villages with their knowledge of refining with them and continued their illegal refining. The inability to stop these illegal refining at the early stage and with the huge commercial rewards available, the trade grew and became more entrenched in the communities in the region. These artisanal refining scattered all over the region produce about forty to sixty drums of diesel a day.¹² There were different sites with varying sizes and different levels of production. Small-scale ones attract people with low levels of capital to start while larger-scale sites involve entrepreneurs with large capitals who own relatively large production sites. Artisanal refining damaged the environment greatly, and people's farmland and water bodies are also affected. In the refining process, there is a significant quantity of waste being dumped into rivers and streams or on land – two drums of crude oil translate into one drum of the product once refined. Open fires were used to heat up the distilleries and fed by crude oil that is tipped into pits in the ground. As a large quantity of the oil burns away, some seeps into the ground during the process of refining. The resulting oil spills from broken pipes and wastes from tens of thousands of makeshift refineries combine to produce enormous environmental pollution on land and in the creeks. A large number of accidents, fires, and explosions occur, apart from the high risk of self-harm from illegal refining.¹³

¹¹*ibid.*

¹² Charles Chukwurah Mezie-Okoye, The Political Economy of Artisanal Refining in the Niger Delta, *Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS)*, Volume 5, No. 2 (2022), pp. 7-18.

¹³UNEP, Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland, *United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*, 2011. Available at: https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/OEA/UNEP_OEA.pdf .

Causes of Artisanal Refining in the Niger Delta

The emergence of illegal refining in the Niger Delta has been discussed by several scholars. Different factors necessitated this thriving business of oil theft and illegal refining in the Niger Delta region. Brock posited that what is going on in the region came about as a result of many years of neglect, marginalization, and underdevelopment of the region by the Federal Government and the Multinational Oil Companies (MNCs) as well as rings of organized criminal gangs, called – oil bunkers. These groups operate in the creeks and along the territorial waters, they specialized in stealing, illegal refining and transporting of Nigeria’s crude oil to the international black market.¹⁴ Some of the identified underlying causes of this scourge include poverty, corruption, unemployment, ineffective law enforcement and poor governance, inordinate ambition to amass wealth, poor policing/protection of oil pipelines, inadequate community participation in the management of resources in their communities, pollution of the environment, dearth of economic activities in communities, increasing criminality and insecurity of the coastline, flourishing of the oil black market in Nigeria and high foreign demand of Nigeria crude oil.¹⁵ The above situation suggests that the discovery of oil in the region was not a blessing but a curse, and the cause of the suffering the people of the region went through. The Federal government and the Multinationals are busy making millions of dollars while the goose that lay the golden eggs is wallowing in poverty and deprivation. This is the major reason the youths felt frustrated and not successful in the illegal artisanal refining of crude oil. The illegal production of crude oil produced a lot of social vices such as corruption of all sorts which include: politicians, military personnel, police, traditional rulers, among others. The environment is degraded, and there is no quality air and water to drink and/or stream and rivers to fish in many villages.

Oil theft and illegal refining are a long practices in Niger Delta region. It started late 1970s after the civil war. It was carried out under the command of top military personnel who used it to enrich themselves and forcefully maintain political stability.¹⁶ However, the illegal activities took a new turn during the youth militancy agitation for resource control.¹⁷ Initially, the agitation by the region’s youths was primarily political with youths demanding an increase in the derivation fund (a specific percentage of oil rents accrued to the federal government), but when the government was unable to meet all their demands, many of these youths took up arms against the government and engaged in criminal activities such as kidnapping, destruction of oil facilities, oil theft, sea piracy, among others.¹⁸ Some scholars believed that it was ethnic marginalization and neglect that were the major factors

¹⁴Judith Burdin Asuni, *Blood Oil in the Niger Delta: Special Report 229. United States Institute of Peace. Washington, DC (2009).*

¹⁵Sofiri Joab-Peterside, Oil theft and artisanal refining in the Niger Delta: Dynamics and socio-economic implications. *Port Harcourt Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 5, No. 1&2(2014), pp. 247–260; H. O. Boris, The Upsurge of Oil Theft and Illegal Bunkering in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 6, No. 3(2015), pp. 235–245; Tubodenyefa Zibima, “Structure and agency: Understanding the social dynamics of the proliferation of artisanal/illegal refineries in the Niger Delta, Nigeria.”*Port Harcourt Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 5, No. 1&2(2014), pp. 147–159.

¹⁶Sofiri Joab-Peterside, ‘Oil theft and artisanal refining in the Niger Delta: Dynamics and socio-economic implications.’ *Port Harcourt Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 5, No. 1 and 2 (2014), pp. 56-67.

¹⁷*ibid.*

¹⁸*ibid.*

responsible for the spread and expansion of artisanal refining in the Niger Delta region. Be that as it may, political exclusion and inequity were also identified as a contributory factor.

Oil theft, also referred to as oil bunkering occurred in three different modes in the Niger Delta region.¹⁹ The first mode involved locally confined activities in which oil is siphoned from pipelines that are punctured or cut with a hacksaw, and the oil collected is then refined crudely and sold within the community.²⁰ In the second mode, oil thieves attached plastic hoses to wellheads or manifold points to divert the oil directly into barges, ships, or canoes,²¹ after which the oil is transported through the Niger Delta's dense network of creeks, swamps and estuaries' and offloaded into tankers often anchored at the mouths of coastal rivers. When these tankers have been filled, the oil is transferred into other large tankers of mother ships on the high seas.²² The third mode which is termed the 'white-collar branch of oil thefts' involved lifting excess crude oil by extraction license holders and falsification of bills of lading records to cover up the actual quantity of oil being shipped out of the country. Incidentally, the host communities saw illegal refining as expedient and justifiable, given the absence of gainful employment in the cities, towns, and rural communities of the region. The perpetrators of this illegal business boasted that the security operatives cannot stop them and that their products are as good as the imported or produced in the main refineries. During the course of this study, some people interviewed said that the illegally refined petroleum products like fuel, kerosene, and diesel supported local demand and contributed to the sustenance of the Nigeria economy such that if they stop operation over a period of time, there would be an energy crisis in Nigeria as some of their products were also bought and distributed nationwide by tanker drivers and registered marketers.²³

Decline in Performance of Existing Government Refineries: A Structural Factor

The decline in the performance of the refineries started in the early 1990s, after the military Government ordered NNPC to close its accounts in commercial banks and transfer them to the Central Bank. NNPC lost its autonomy. It became increasingly subjected to interference and directives by politicians. It could no longer ensure prompt maintenance of the refineries. Most importantly, decision on when to carry out turnaround maintenance and which contractor to execute it came under the influence of the Government rather than by the professional within the operation. Things very quickly went downhill thereafter as a result. The decline in production capacity led to establishment of artisanal refineries as the volume of oil products could not sustain the growing needs of the people.²⁴

¹⁹Thisday Newspaper, 'Illegal Refinery Activities, Gas Flaring and Danger Posed on Rivers Residents,' *Thisday Newspaper*, January 31, 2022. Available at: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/01/31/illegal-refinery-activities-gas-flaring-and-danger-posed-on-rivers-residents/>

²⁰Judith Burdin Asuni, Blood Oil in the Niger Delta, *Special Report, United States Institute of Peace* (2009). <https://www.usip.org/publications/2009/08/blood-oil-niger-delta>.

²¹Augustine Ikelegbe, The Economy of Conflict in the Oil Rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, *African and Asian Studies*, Volume 5, No. 1 (2005), pp. 23-56

²²*ibid.*

²³Peter O. Barikoloma, BO Tai Youth Leader, Ogoniland, Direct Interview, 23 December, 2023.

²⁴Anthony Ogbuigwe, Refining in Nigeria: History, challenges and prospects, *Applied Petrochemical Research*, Volume 8, No. 2 (2018), pp. 34-45.

Artisanal Refineries and its Social Implications

Artisanal refiners formed part of a local economy and not accorded an unlawful license to operate by communities in much the same way as the official oil industries, resulting to oil spills from broken pipes and wastes from tens of thousands of makeshift refineries which combined to produce enormous environmental pollution on water, air land - especially in the creeks. Artisanal refining is not a community “all comers affairs,” rather, intending refiners and investors aware required to register with unions at prohibitive prices. Youths engaged in this business are often community overlords. However, rival gangs usually sprang up to challenge their structures - leading to arms proliferation.²⁵ There are also reported cases of drops in school enrolment, especially students of both colleges and tertiary institution, as most youths are engaged as refiners, security guards, product marketers or transporters, among others. The vast extent of fire damage around the camps, storage facilities in the communities as well as the use of poorly refined kerosene are evidence of how highly explosive the practice is.²⁶ The quality of products obtained varied widely. To address shortages in preferred products like diesel, refiners sometimes purified diesel by mixing it with kerosene to reach a large refining standard and these practices, in the long run, affected consumers who spent huge resources in fixing vehicles and machinery as a result of using products from artisanal refineries.²⁷ Other societal ills passed by illegal artisanal refining are prostitution, especially in communities where bush refineries exist. Those who engaged in artisanal refineries could not go as far to major cities, so social sex workers prefer to reside in these communities and tap from the fruit of this business. There is also an increase in arm robbery and sea piracy on the waterways,²⁸ causing serious threat to life and property. Illegal oil refining also carrying significant health risks. The handling and heating of the crude oil pollute the air. The camps have toxic feel and the health impacts on those working there are enormous. Communities are constantly exposed to inhalation of poisonous gases, causing cough and breathing problems.²⁹ These symptoms are actually self-reinforcing. For instance, environmental damage, create an economic wasteland which rendered both aquatic life and land uninhabitable.³⁰

Artisanal Refineries and its Economic Implications

The economic impact of artisanal refining on the oil industry is said to be variable. Some oil industry participants at a round table discussion on oil theft in the Niger Delta,³¹ argued that artisanal refining had a very limited economic impact on their operations. They primarily emphasized the negative environmental impact, health and safety issues and downplayed

²⁵T. Attah, Oil theft and artisanal (illegal) refining in Nigeria – scale, impacts and the need for a multi-dimensional response Chatham House – *Gulf of Guinea Security Conference, London*. December 6, 2012.

²⁶*ibid.*

²⁷*ibid.*

²⁸ SDN, *Illegal Oil Refining in the Niger Delta*, (2013) Available at: www.stakeholderdemocracy.org

²⁹ UNEP, Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland, *United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*, 2011. Available at: https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/OEA/UNEP_OEA.pdf

³⁰ A. E. Ite, and K. T. Semple, “Biodegradation of petroleum hydrocarbons in contaminated soils,” R. Arora (ed.), *Microbial Biotechnology: Energy and Environment* (Wallingford, Oxfordshire: CAB International, 2012), pp. 250-278.

³¹T. Attah, Oil theft and artisanal (illegal) refining in Nigeria – scale, impacts and the need for a multi-dimensional response Chatham House...

the economic aspect of it. The present study observes significant economic cost of both artisanal refining and highly organized oil theft in Nigeria. The link is the forced pipeline shutdowns created by small-scale tapping also formed a vicious circle, that facilitated large scale oil theft.

Artisanal Refineries and National Security, 1999 – 2009

The post-independence phase of struggle in the Niger Delta began with the declaration of an Independent Niger Delta Republic by Isaac Adaka Boro³² during president Ironsi's administration. Later, local communities began to demand social and environmental justice from the federal government, with Ken-Saro Wiwa and the Ogoni tribe as lead figures for this phase of the struggle. Cohesive oil protests became most pronounced in 1990 with the publication of the Ogoni Bill of Rights. In this instance, the people protested against the lack of economic development, such as: schools, good roads, hospitals, among others. They also complained about environmental pollution and destruction of their land and rivers by foreign oil companies. Ken Saro Wiwa and nine other oil activists from Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) were arrested and killed under Sani Abacha in 1995.³³ When long-held concerns about loss of control over resources to the oil companies were voiced by the Ijaw people in the Kaiama Declaration in 1998, the Nigerian government sent troops to occupy the Bayelsa and Delta states. Nigeria soldiers opened fire with rifles, machine guns, and tear gas, killing few protesters and arrested about twenty-five.³⁴ From then, local indigenous activity against commercial oil refineries and pipelines in the region began to increase in frequency and militancy. Foreign employees of Shell, the primary corporation operating in the region, were taken hostage by local people. Other activities were that of the vandalism of oil facilities, oil theft crisis and proliferation of illegal artisanal crude oil facilities. Such activities resulted in greater governmental intervention in the area and the mobilization of the Nigerian Army and State Security Service into the region, resulting in more violence and human rights abuses.

In April 2006, a bomb exploded near an oil refinery in the Niger Delta region, a warning against Chinese expansion in the region. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) stated: "We wish to warn the Chinese government and its oil companies to steer well clear of the Niger Delta. The Chinese government, by investing in stolen crude, places its citizens in our line of fire."³⁵ In September 2008, MEND released a statement proclaiming that their militants had launched an "oil war" throughout the Niger Delta against both, pipelines and oil-production facilities, and the Nigerian soldiers that protected them. Both MEND and the Nigerian Government claimed to have inflicted heavy casualties on one another.³⁶ In August 2009, the Nigerian government granted amnesty to the militants; many militants subsequently surrendered their weapons in exchange for a presidential pardon, rehabilitation programme, and education.

³²Laine Strutton, *The New Mobilization from Below: Women's Oil Protests in the Niger Delta, Nigeria ProQuest*, Volume 1 (2014)

³³*ibid.*

³⁴"State of Emergency Declared in the Niger Delta." *Human Rights Watch*, December 30, 1998.

³⁵Ian Taylor, "China's environmental footprint in Africa," *China Dialogue*, Archived 2007-02-23, *Wayback Machine*, 2 February 2007.

³⁶"Nigeria militants warn of oil war," *BBC News*, Archived 2008-09-15, *Wayback Machine*, 14 September 2008.

Between 1999 and 2009, the conflict between the federal government and the Niger Delta agitators gave room to proliferation of militant groups, the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), the Ijaw National Congress (INC), the Egbesu Boys of Africa Council (EBA), the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), the Ijaw National Rights Protection Organization (INRPO), and the Ogoni Patriotic Union (OPU), among others, who found pleasure in establishing in crude oil theft and establishment artisanal refineries. The artisanal refineries were used to sustain their activities, such as the purchase of arms and ammunition which were used to fight government forces. The trade in small arms and light weapons also fueled violent clashes in the region.

As indicated, the existence of illegal artisanal refineries gave room for more militant groups who sustained their trade in crude oil theft and sales with local and international syndicates. The well-organized syndicated crime gangs and militant groups, involved in the business, were able to sustain the flow of the products was to plug back a part of the proceeds from the stolen crude oil into weapon acquisition to fan the conflicts. Apart from outright insecurity that the foregoing situation posed to the Niger Delta region and the entire country, the huge profit of the illegal private business also translated into incalculable loss to the Nigerian state which owned 55% in the joint venture with Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), among others.³⁷

Artisanal crude oil refineries led to a continued proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) in the Niger Delta. It also ignited and exacerbated many inter-ethnic conflicts among the people as well as created a general sense of insecurity in the entire region. Many of the arms in circulation in the Niger Delta, including a variety of sophisticated weapons, are purchased with money derived directly or indirectly from illegal artisanal refining. Insecurity in some parts of the country resulted in part, from accessibility of oil-purchased arms with illegal artisanal refineries serving as a major contributor to Nigeria's violent crime, armed robbery and piracy, and kidnapping.³⁸

The social and security implications of all these include the destruction of the economy of communities, arms proliferation, increased attraction to crimes, higher incidence of school drop-outs, increased inflow of migrant workers to service the illegal business and the consequences of militarization of communities. All these negative impacts had long-term implications.³⁹ Similarly, Katsouris and Sayne noted that oil theft and artisanal crude oil refining has been the major cause of violent conflict in the Niger Delta.⁴⁰ Most of the artisanal crude oil refiners exchanged the products for heavy arms at the high sea, while others used the proceeds to import arms into the region, with the principal aim of using the arms to secure their illegal activities in the region. The arms are used for attacks and counter attacks from different militant groups and security agents, as every group is bound to have adequate arms and begun-battle ready to enable them remain in the business. This situation has resulted in proliferation of small and heavy arms in the region, leading to constant

³⁷*ibid.*

³⁸O. Onwueanyi, "Oil bunkering undermining Nigerian economy," *Vanguard* (2012). Available at: www.vanguardngr.com/2012/06. Retrieved on November 29, 2013.

³⁹A. Igbuku, "Crude Oil Theft and Illegal Refining in the Niger Delta." *Delta State Oil and Gas Stakeholders' Conference*, Tuesday, April 15, 2014. Available at: <http://reformeronline.com/crude-oil-theft-and-illegal-refining-in-the-niger-delta/>. Retrieved August 20, 2014.

⁴⁰C. Katsouris, and A. Sayne, *Nigeria's Criminal Crude: International Options to Combat the Export of Stolen Oil* (London: Chatham House, 2013).

attacks and counter attacks by different militant groups, and insecurity of lives and properties in the region.⁴¹ The insecurity provided the enabling ground for kidnapping activities of expatriates, oil and top government workers for financial ransom in the region. Wilson observed:

The violence and crisis occasioned by the artisanal crude oil refining activities in the Niger Delta region is spreading speedily to other parts of Nigeria and beyond. Firstly, with the heavy arms in the possession of the youths and the constant attacks on oil and non-oil facilities for economic benefits of the actors, youths from other geo-political regions see the oil theft activities as very lucrative and are recruited into artisanal crude oil refining activities as a means of economic empowerment. The same youths irrespective of geo-political region of origin are empowered with heavy arms and they use same to cause violence in different parts of the country. They are also sometimes used by the politicians to either attack political opponents or rig elections, thereby increasing the insecurity challenge of the nation. Secondly, larger part of the oil theft and local crude oil refining is carried out in the high seas and oil export terminals, thereby increasing the activities of the sea pirates in the sub-region.⁴²

The sea pirates also benefited from the oil theft, thereby resulting to the escalation of sea pirate activities in the waterways, and bridging free movement of goods and services in the sub-region. The pirates attacked oil investors and their investments, while the state security agents gave counter attack to the pirates, thereby leading to constant violence and attacks in the West African waterways. This violence perpetuated by the oil theft, artisanal crude oil refiners and sea pirates threatened the peace and security of Nigeria. Illegal Artisanal crude oil refining and crude oil theft that led to piracy and criminal activities in the Niger Delta created insecurity and breached of peace that along the line affected legitimate social and economic activities in the country. These problems also had damaging consequence that gave signal to the rest of the international community that Nigeria is not safe for economic investment. This is particularly damaging in view of the efforts being made to create the desired atmosphere to attract foreign investment.

Militant Groups and Artisanal Refineries

- i. **Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF):** The Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) was one of the largest armed groups in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and was composed primarily of members of the region's largest ethnic group - the Ijaw people. The group was founded in 2004 in an attempt to gain more control over the region's vast petroleum resources, particularly in Delta State. The NDPVF frequently demanded a greater share of the oil wealth from both the state and federal government and supported independence for the Delta region. Until 2005 the group was spearheaded by Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari, who was viewed by many Delta residents as a folk hero. This group was into serious oil theft and operation of artisanal oil

⁴¹G. Wilson, "The Nigerian State and Oil Theft in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria," *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*. Volume 16, No. 1(2014), pp. 69-81.

⁴²*ibid.*

refineries scattered within the region.⁴³ The inspiration for a militia was gotten from Isaac Boro, who in 1965, declared the Niger Delta Republic.⁴⁴

- ii. **The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND):** The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) was a decentralized militant group in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. MEND's actions include: sabotage, theft, property destruction, guerrilla warfare, and kidnapping, which were part of the broader conflict in the Niger Delta and reduced Nigeria's oil production by 33% between 2006 and 2004.⁴⁵ MEND's other goals included localizing control of Nigeria's oil and securing reparations from the federal government for pollution caused by the oil industry. In an interview with one of the group's leaders, who used the alias Major-General Godswill Tamuno, the BBC reported that MEND was fighting for "total control" of the Niger Delta's oil wealth, saying local people had not gained from the riches under the ground and the region's creeks and swamps.⁴⁶ Several illegal refineries were setup by MEND in order to carter for their logistics and acquisition of arms for their struggle.
- iii. **The Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV):** was an armed militia group in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The NDV was led by Ateke Tom. The group was composed primarily by ethnic Ijaws around Port Harcourt and their main goal was controlling the area's vast oil resources.⁴⁷ In late 2003 the NDV precipitated a conflict with their rival Ijaw ethnic militia, the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF). The two groups spent most of 2004 in an escalating conflict which was ended when the Nigerian government and military eventually intervened on the side of the NDV in the summer of 2004.⁴⁸ The government's support of the NDV eventually precipitated the Nigerian oil crisis, beginning in October 2004.
- iv. **The Niger Delta Liberation Front (NDLF):** This was a militant group in Nigeria's Niger Delta. In 1998, the Ijaw Youth Council was formed and many militants were brought up in the Youth Council. In 1999, the Odi Massacre occurred in Bayelsa State which was the spark that erupted into violence. In 2004, the Joint Revolutionary Council was formed and recruited members to rock the Nigerian petroleum industry to its core. In 2005, high-ranking member John Togo formed a splinter group against the Joint Revolutionary Council didn't deliver much damage. Togo recruited about 4,000 members and went into the Niger Delta to begin attacks. The group's leader John Togo claimed that their main goal was to secede from, and gain independence from Nigeria. The group was closely linked to the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta and fight side by

⁴³Jennifer M.Hazen and Horner Jonas, "Annexe 6: Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF)." *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective. Small Arms Survey.*(2007), pp. 127–129.

⁴⁴*ibid.*

⁴⁵Stephanie Hanson, "MEND: The Niger Delta's Umbrella Militant Group." *Council on Foreign Relations.*(2007-03-22). Archived from the original on 2009-07-20.

⁴⁶MEND's other goals include localizing control of Nigeria's oil and securing reparations from the federal government for pollution caused by the oil industry. In an interview with one of the group's leaders, who used the alias Major-General Godswill Tamuno, the BBC reported that MEND was fighting for "total control" of the Niger Delta's oil wealth, saying local people had not gained from the riches under the ground and the region's creeks and swamps

⁴⁷ "Understanding the Armed Groups of the Niger Delta" (Report). *Council on Foreign Relations.* Archived from the original (PDF) on August 31, 2023. Retrieved December 20, 2019.

⁴⁸*ibid.*

side against the Nigerian Army,⁴⁹ and they were into oil theft and illegal refining of crude oil.

Conclusion

The practice of artisanal crude oil refining may look lucrative as it proffered solution to some of the problems of unemployment in the Niger Delta region. It also proffered a solution to the problem of scarcity of crude products in the country and contributed to the growth of the host communities in terms of providing some basic social amenities. However, the implications to national security, associated with the activities of artisanal refineries in the region, outweighed the assumed benefits. The importance of oil to Nigeria's security, economic survival and political stability cannot be overemphasized as the nation depends majorly on oil revenue for her economic survival. The rate at which militant groups grew in number between 1999 and 2009 was so alarming that it led to oil theft, illegal oil refining, ethnic conflict and proliferation of small and light weapons in Nigeria linked to the theory of relative deprivation. This study notes that the increase in artisanal refineries, piracy and other forms of criminality in the Niger Delta suggest that the fragile peace established by the amnesty programme is at risk because the government did not address most of the major concerns of the people, hence the slide-back into instability of the region. The increase of crude oil theft and illegal artisanal refineries in the Niger Delta is a threat to economic viability of Nigeria and a challenge that is critical to the wellbeing of the industry that drives the Nigerian economy. Except drastic action is taken to address the Niger Delta crisis and put an end to the activities of artisanal refineries in the region, the Nigerian economy will be heading for a doom and this will pose a grave consequence to Nigeria's national security and economic survival. Also, this can be achieved if the government owned refineries are fully activated for refining operations.

Bibliography

- Akpan, U. "Indigenous Operators Express Worry as Cost of Oil Theft hits N15.66n," *National Mirror*, (2013).
- Asuni, J. B., Blood Oil in the Niger Delta, *Special Report, United States Institute of Peace* (2009). <https://www.usip.org/publications/2009/08/blood-oil-niger-delta>.
- Attah, T. Oil theft and artisanal (illegal) refining in Nigeria – scale, impacts and the need for a multi-dimensional response Chatham House – *Gulf of Guinea Security Conference, London*. December 6, 2012.
- Barikoloma, P. O. BO Tai Youth Leader, Ogoniland, Direct Interview, 23 December, 2023.
- BBC News, "Nigeria militants warn of oil war," *BBC News*, Archived 2008-09-15 at the Wayback Machine, 14 September 2008.
- Boris, H. O. The Upsurge of Oil Theft and Illegal Bunkering in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 6, No. 3 (2015).
- Council on Foreign Relations. "Understanding the Armed Groups of the Niger Delta" (Report). *Council on Foreign Relations*. Archived from the original (PDF) on August 31, 2023. Retrieved December 20, 2019.
- Hanson, S., "MEND: The Niger Delta's Umbrella Militant Group." *Council on Foreign Relations*. (2007-03-22). Archived from the original on 2009-07-20.
- Hauser, P. "Samuel Andrew Stouffer 1900-1960," *The American Statistician Volume 14*, No. 4 (1960), p. :36.

⁴⁹*ibid.*

- Hazen, J. M., Jonas, H., "Annexe 6: Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF)." *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective. Small Arms Survey.* (2007).
- Hinshaw, D. "Niger Delta Amnesty Program Fails to End Militancy." *The Wall Street Journal*, Volume 4 (2012).
- Human Rights Watch, "State of Emergency Declared in the Niger Delta." December 30, 1998. Archived from the original on 2012-08-05. Retrieved 2018-01-19.
- Igbuku, A. "Crude Oil Theft and Illegal Refining in the Niger Delta." *Delta State Oil and Gas Stakeholders' Conference*, Tuesday, April 15, 2014. Available at: <http://reformeronline.com/crude-oil-theft-and-illegal-refining-in-the-niger-delta/>. Retrieved August 20, 2014.
- Ikelegbe, A., The Economy of Conflict in the Oil Rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, *African and Asian Studies*, Volume 5, No. 1 (2005).
- Ite, A. E. and Semple, K. T. "Biodegradation of petroleum hydrocarbons in contaminated soils," R. Arora (ed.), *Microbial Biotechnology: Energy and Environment* (Wallingford, Oxfordshire: CAB International, 2012), pp. 250-278.
- Joab-Peterside, S., Oil theft and artisanal refining in the Niger Delta: Dynamics and socio-economic implications. *Port Harcourt Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 5, No. 1&2 (2014).
- Katsouris, C., and Sayne, A., *Nigeria's Criminal Crude: International Options to Combat the Export of Stolen Oil.* (London: Chatham House, 2013).
- Mezie-Okoye, C. C., The Political Economy of Artisanal Refining in the Niger Delta, *Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS)*, Volume 5, No. 2 (2022).
- National Population Commission (NPC), '2006 Population Census,' Available at: <http://nationalpopulation.gov.ng/census-enumeration> (2006)
- Nigeria Watch and ACLED data, integrated on the P4P Peace Map (www.p4p-nigerdelta.org)
- Nwanosike, S., "illegal Oil Bunkering: Matters Arising." *The Tide.* (2013). Available online: www.thetide.com.
- Odemwingie, E., Nda-Isaiah, J. "Nigeria Loses 400,000 Barrels Daily to Crude Oil Theft-Sentate." *Leadership*, Volume 4 (2013).
- Ogbuigwe, A., Refining in Nigeria: History, challenges and prospects, *Applied Petrochemical Research* Volume 8, No. 2 (2018).
- Okere, R. "Curtailling Oil Theft, Illegal Bunkering via Legislation," *The Guardian*, (2013); S. Nwanosike, "illegal Oil Bunkering: Matters Arising." *The Tide.* (2013). Available online: www.thetide.com.
- Onwuemenyi, O. "Oil bunkering undermining Nigerian economy." *Vanguard* (2012). from Available at: www.vanguardngr.com/2012/06. Retrieved on November 29, 2013.
- Romm, J. J., "Defining national security: the nonmilitary aspects." *Pew Project on America's Task in a Changed World (Pew Project Series). Council on Foreign Relations* (1993). p. 122. Retrieved 22 September 2010.
- SDN, Illegal Oil Refining in the Niger Delta, (2013) Available at: www.stakeholderdemocracy.org
- Strutton, L. The New Mobilization from Below: Women's Oil Protests in the Niger Delta, *Nigeria ProQuest*, Volume 1 (2014).
- Taylor, I. "China's environmental footprint in Africa," *China Dialogue*, Archived 2007-02-23 at the Wayback Machine, 2 February 2007.

- Thisday Newspaper, 'Illegal Refinery Activities, Gas Flaring and Danger Posed on Rivers Residents,' *Thisday Newspaper*, January 31, 2022. Available at: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/01/31/illegal-refinery-activities-gas-flaring-and-danger-posed-on-rivers-residents/>
- UNEP, Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland, *United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*, 2011. Available at: https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/OEA/UNEP_OEA.pdf
- UNEP, Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland, *United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*, 2011. Available at: https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/OEA/UNEP_OEA.pdf
- UNEP, Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland, *United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*, 2011. Available at: https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/OEA/UNEP_OEA.pdf
- Wilson, G. "The Nigerian State and Oil Theft in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria," *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*. Volume 16, No. 1 (2014).
- Zibima, T. "Structure and agency: Understanding the social dynamics of the proliferation of artisanal/illegal refineries in the Niger Delta, Nigeria." *Port Harcourt Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 5, No. 1&2 (2014).



JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Volume 1, Number 8 (December, 2025)

ISSN: 1595-9457 (online); 3043-4211 (print)

Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

Received: November 04, 2025 Accepted: December 19, 2025 Published: December 31, 2025

Citation: Omotosho, Oyejide F. (2025). "Advancing Household Prosperity Through the Policy of Social Protection Interventions in the Gambia: A Multi-Faceted Approach." *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1 (8): 15-26.

Article

Open Access

ADVANCING HOUSEHOLD PROSPERITY THROUGH THE POLICY OF SOCIAL PROTECTION INTERVENTIONS IN THE GAMBIA: A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH

Oyejide Felix Omotosho

Department of Political Science, University of The Gambia

Email: ofomotosho@utg.edu.gm

Abstract

With poverty and its devastating consequences remaining a pressing global issue particularly in developing economies like The Gambia, a development presumed to have worsened household prosperity ensued. The development necessitated a unifying approach with 'social protection' as a resilience against shocks that directly affect the wellbeing of the extreme poor in the country. This resulted into multi-faceted intervention strategies by the government of The Gambia, its collaborating institutions and partner agencies like the intergovernmental agencies and others. This accounted for a collective action in the spirit of the 'United Nations Universal Objective' against worldwide poverty. This research examined the effectiveness of the strategy interventions and their effects meant to advance household prosperity. While empirical evidence elsewhere like Malawi and Tanzania confirmed the effects of various social protection interventions in advancing household prosperity, an institutional theoretical framework explained the existing gap created by the limited research on The Gambia. The discovered gap was the focus of this study. The research adopted a mixed-methods approach, which combined both the quantitative and qualitative data collection analysis. Findings showed that a significant relationship exists between social protection intervention strategies of The Gambian government and its household prosperity project. The result indicated a moderate positive impact on household poverty reduction and people empowerment. Among the indicators of this moderate significant change were; (i) access to education and healthcare services by the poor households, (ii) food security programme of the government, (iii) the government job creation programme for job availability for the working class particularly for the youth. Other indicators are (iv) pension schemes for the elderly (v) social assistance for the vulnerable and (vi) social insurance

Copyright © 2025 By JPPSS. Publishers: Omega Books

This is an open access article which permits unrestricted use provided the work is properly cited.

schemes. Study recommended its need for policy reviews, institutional strengthening, better coordination strategies and improved governance structures as imperatives for sustainable household prosperity advancement and wealth creation in The Gambia.

Keywords: Social Protection (SP), Social Protection Interventions (SPI), Household prosperity, Poverty reduction, and Governance structures.

Introduction

In recent years, the pivotal role of social protection interventions in reducing poverty and enhancing household prosperity, especially in developing nations like The Gambia, has garnered increasing recognition. Poverty persists as a global challenge of paramount concern, prompting concerted efforts from international organisations and national governments alike. Social protection emerged as an anchor in the global development agenda, which aims to tackle poverty and its multifaceted dimensions at the grassroots level. The pervasive nature of poverty underscores the necessity for holistic strategies to alleviate its impacts and foster prosperity (Thomas, 2001; Pease, 2010). Governments worldwide have recognised the imperative of addressing poverty proactively to forestall its worsening effects by mitigating such. The United Nations has been pivotal in advocating for a development-oriented approach to poverty alleviation by making obvious the importance of globally standardised social protection mechanisms (ILO Strategy Document, 2012; UN Report, 2018).

In Africa, where poverty remains endemic, states have adopted the urgency of deploying social protection interventions to combating increasing household-level poverty. These efforts by Africa and its various governments to address poverty, which align with global imperatives have emphasised the need for context-specific comprehensive strategies namely social assistance, social insurance, cash transfers and food subsidies including but not limited to educational access, healthcare services and liberal market policies. These are components of sustainable development goals, which are essential for poverty eradication and wealth creation (Thomas, 2001; Abate & Tilahun, 2012). To genuinely combat poverty therefore, African governments have formulated national social protection policies and frameworks in their respective countries to provide targeted assistance to vulnerable populations. These interventions encompass a catalogue of initiatives just as mentioned earlier, like cash transfers, social pensions, and the provisions of essential services (AfDB, 2020; UNICEF, 2020). Upon these inundating progress in implementing social protection interventions, challenges endure, including resource constraints and institutional capacity gaps. Moreover, ensuring inclusivity and gender responsiveness remains paramount to cater to the unique needs of women and girls in particular (UN Women, 2020).

In The Gambia, initiatives to address poverty through social protection interventions have gained momentum, with endeavours focused on establishing comprehensive social registries and bolstering implementation capabilities. However, obstacles persist in achieving widespread coverage and effectively reaching vulnerable beneficiaries (Personal Communication, NSPS officials, 4th April 2024). These aroused the collaboration that came between the Gambian government and the partner institutions, including the international organisations and donor agencies, who became instrumental in fortifying social protection strategies. The collaborative efforts seek to mitigate the risks of extreme household poverty by way of ensuring equitable support distribution to vulnerable segments of the populace (Proxy Test, 2023).

Gap in Study and Problem Statement

In The Gambia, while social protection intervention's significance in boosting household prosperity remains a top agenda and national goal, studies confirmed that research on this important phenomenon has been inadequate or not specific. Aside existing global study lacks focus on how these interventions affect poverty at the household level, including factors like skill acquisition, health, and education (Alvarez-Martinez & Gasparini, 2018; World Bank, 2019). It is this limited research on the effects of social protection interventions particularly on specific demographics like women, children, and the elderly that have called for the multidimensional analysis of social protection and how they have impacted household or could impact household prosperity in The Gambia (Sabates-Wheeler & Devereux, 2010; World Bank, 2019).

While study confirmed that the effectiveness of these social protection interventions in The Gambia are being seriously undermined just as previous studies also primarily examined the isolated aspects of social protection programme, it has left behind a comprehensive survey of the impact of social protection interventions. These gaps assess the intervention strategies to achieve a comprehensive understanding of their multidimensional influences on household prosperity. These particularly focus on the Supplementary Feeding Programme (SFP) and the Social Safety Net Project (SSNP) for the improvement of household prosperity. The SFP targets nutritional improvement among vulnerable groups and the SSNP provides cash transfers to impoverished households respectively (Bah et al., 2017; World Bank, 2019; Faye & Obah-Akpowoghaha, 2023). The study also examined the different methods used in social protection interventions in advancing household prosperity in The Gambia, assessed their effects on household prosperity, and identified implementation challenges in advancing household prosperity in the country. In doing so, the research enhanced comprehension of the role of social protection interventions in promoting household prosperity in The Gambia.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for this study: H01: Social protection interventions have no significant effect on household prosperity in The Gambia. H02: Implementation challenges of social protection interventions have no significant relationship with advancing household prosperity in The Gambia.

Scope of Study

The study focused on examining social protection interventions in The Gambia, particularly in the Lower River Region (LRR) and the Upper River Region (URR), known for disproportionate poverty and it aimed at comprehending how these interventions impact household prosperity by analysing the socio-economic and institutional context of these regions. By targeting key governmental bodies such as the Directorate of Social Welfare, the National Secretariat of Social Protection, and the National Nutrition Agency, the investigation aims to gather insights from 2014 to 2023, aligning with the initial phase of government implementation outlined in the national policy blueprint.

Literature Review

Clarifications:

- i. **Social Protection:** Social protection (SP) encompasses policies, and programmes developed to prevent or ameliorate poverty and vulnerability

by providing support to individuals and households in communities. (UNICEF, 2020; UN Report, 2018).

- i. **Social Protection Interventions:** These are specific policies and actionable programmes designed to achieve social protection goals and implemented within the latter's framework. They take different shapes, among them cash transfer programmes, food aid initiatives, and social insurance schemes, channelled to address poverty and vulnerability directly (AfDB, 2020; Sabates-Wheeler & Devereux, 2010; Abate & Tilahun, 2012; UNICEF, 2020).
- ii. **Household prosperity:** Household prosperity, mirroring the economic well-being and overall quality of life within a household. These interventions strive to enhance living standards, improve economic security, and facilitate sustainable development, thereby contributing to household prosperity (Faye & Obah-Akpowoghaha, 2023; UN Report, 2018).
- iii. **Poverty Reduction:** Poverty reduction efforts are those aimed at placating and eliminating poverty by addressing its core causes and providing economic empowerment opportunities and social inclusion, align closely with social protection interventions. These interventions enhance access to education, healthcare, employment, and social services, which contribute immensely to poverty reduction (Bah et al., 2017; World Bank, 2019).
- iv. **Governance Structures:** Governance structures refer to the institutional arrangements, policies, and mechanisms through which social protection interventions are planned, implemented, coordinated and monitored. Effective governance structures are climactic in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of social protection interventions. These structures guarantee the efficient and equitable delivery of social protection programmes, promote transparency, and accountability, and promote participation in decision-making processes (ILO Strategy Document, 2012; Proxy Test, 2023). In essence, the intersection of social protection, social protection interventions, household prosperity, poverty reduction, and governance structures highlights the interconnectedness and importance of these elements in advancing sustainable development, poverty eradication, and inclusive growth. These result in household prosperity in the country Gambia.

Empirical Evidence

The Gambia has long been devoted to tackling poverty and vulnerability through social protection efforts, dating back to its post-independence period. Initially concentrating on schemes like pension programmes for civil servants (World Bank, 2011), the government has since prioritised social protection, extending coverage to include vulnerable groups and adjusting to changing socio-economic conditions. Initiatives such as conditional cash transfers and health insurance seek to enhance access to essential services for vulnerable households (Government of The Gambia, 2015). The country is moving towards a broad social protection system outlined in the National Social Protection Policy and Strategy (2015-2025), which emphasizes targeting, efficiency, and social inclusion (Government of The Gambia, 2015), aligning with international frameworks like the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Alderman, Yemtsov, and Pape (2017) highlighted the role of safety nets in stimulating economic growth by promoting human capital investment, consumption smoothing, social cohesion, and entrepreneurship. Baird, McIntosh, and Özler (2011) revealed the positive impacts of unconditional cash transfers in

Malawi on health, education, and poverty reduction. Paes-Sousa, Santos, and Miazaki (2011) underline the positive impacts of Brazil's Bolsa Família programme on child nutrition. Evans, Holtemeyer, Kosec, and Ngatia (2017) indicate the positive effects of Tanzania's conditional cash transfer programme (TASAF) on child health indicators. Bastagli et al. (2016) review cash transfer programmes globally, citing their positive influences on poverty reduction and income. The Government of The Gambia (2015) admits challenges in implementing social protection interventions, including accurate targeting, institutional capacity, monitoring and evaluation, resource constraints, socio-cultural factors, and stakeholder coordination.

Theoretical Framework

The Institutional theory is the theoretical framework of this study. This Theory, developed by eminent scholars like DiMaggio & Powell (1983) and Meyer & Rowan (1977), examines how formal and informal rules within institutions shape behaviour and effects. Applied to social protection interventions, it underlines how institutional dynamics impact the design, implementation, and effectiveness of these intervention strategies in advancing household prosperity in The Gambia (Hall & Taylor, 1996; Powell, 1991). Institutions, including governments and civil society, establish rules guiding programmes delivery. Factors like coordination mechanisms and resource availability impact intervention success. This framework helps to examine how formal rules and informal norms affect implementation and the effectiveness. It identifies impediments and facilitators to advancing household prosperity, informing strategies to support institutions, and improving intervention effectiveness (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Powell, 1991).

Methodology

The research adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis with qualitative data collection methods. The study encompassed a population of 10,366 individuals, including 19 senior and middle management staff from the National Social Protection Secretariat (NSPS) and 14 senior and middle management staff from the National Nutrition Agency (NaNA), along with all 964 staff members of the Directorate of Social Welfare. Additionally, the population covered 2,298 household members in the Lower River Region and 7,071 household members in the Upper River Region of The Gambia. Out of the total population of ten thousand, three hundred and sixty-six (10,366), three hundred and eighty-three (383) were sampled using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula. The study adopted a stratified sampling technique, dividing the population into distinctive groups: the National Social Protection Secretariat, the National Nutrition Agency, the Directorate of Social Welfare, and household members in the Lower River and Upper River Regions. Proportionate-to-size sampling determined the number of respondents in each distinct group. Questionnaires were then distributed to respondents using purposeful sampling technique.

There are two variables in this study. Social protection intervention is the independent variable while household prosperity is the dependent variable. In social protection interventions, the independent variable indicators are: (i) Social insurance schemes, (ii) Food security, and nutrition programmes, (iii) Cash transfer programmes (iv) Employment and labour market interventions (v) Healthcare access initiatives and (vi) education and training initiatives. While household prosperity indicators were access to basic services (e.g., healthcare, education), household income levels, nutritional status of household members, employment opportunities and stability, household savings and financial security, and asset ownership and wealth accumulation are necessary indicators for

a sustainable good life. Household prosperity are the indicators of control/intervening variables socio-economic status like (education level, employment status, income sources), demographic characteristics such as (age, gender, household size), household composition (presence of children, elderly members), geographic location like (urban or rural residence, regional disparities), access to infrastructure and resources (access to clean water, electricity). Others included external factors like (inflation rate, economic growth rate), and time variables (year of data collection, duration of participation in social protection programs). The data collected were analysed based on the stated objectives and hypotheses. Hypotheses one (objective two) and two (objective three) were analysed using multiple regression and correlation analysis respectively while objective one was analysed using several statistical techniques, including the computation of simple percentages, construction of frequency distribution tables, and calculation of means.

Results

Social Protection Interventions Methods Used in Advancing Household Prosperity in The Gambia: A large proportion of 111 respondents (31.6%) strongly agreed that cash transfers to eligible households are used for social protection interventions in The Gambia. Furthermore, 102 (29%) agreed, with only 29 (8.3%) remaining undecided. Disagreements were limited, with 76 (21.7%) disagreeing and 33 (9.4%) strongly disagreeing. The mean value of 4.26 indicates a very positive view of this strategy. For public work programmes, 155 (44.2%) strongly agreed, whereas 91 (25.9%) agreed. Only 9 (2.6%) remained undecided, while 49 (13.9%) disagreed and 47 (13.4%) strongly disagreed. The average rating is 4.73, signifying strong acceptance. Concerning social insurance schemes, 74 respondents (21.1%) strongly agreed, 155 (44.2%) agreed, 12 (3.4%) were undecided, 71 (20.2%) disagreed, and 39 (11.1%) strongly disagreed. The mean score is 4.38, indicating a positive overall outlook. On social pensions, 140 respondents (39.9%) strongly agreed, 44 (12.5%) agreed, 9 (2.6%) were undecided, 78 (22.2%) disagreed, and 80 (22.8%) strongly disagreed. The mean value is 3.96, denoting a fairly positive perception. In terms of food security programmes, 155 respondents (44.2%) strongly agreed and 110 (31.3%) agreed. Only 4 (1.1%) remained undecided, with 52 (14.8%) disagreeing and 30 (8.6%) strongly disagreeing. The mean score of 4.33 shows excellent acceptance. In terms of healthcare access initiatives, 125 respondents (35.6%) strongly agreed, 98 (27.9%) agreed, 10 (2.8%) were undecided, 50 (14.3%) disagreed, and 68 (19.4%) strongly disagreed. The average score is 3.62, indicating a moderately good view. In the context of education support programmes, 125 respondents (35.6%) strongly agreed, 86 (24.5%) agreed, 40 (11.4%) were undecided, 60 (17.1%) disagreed, and 40 (11.4%) strongly disagreed. The average score of 3.73 shows a favourable perspective. Overall, the grand mean score of 3.5 indicates that perceptions vary but are typically good across all methods.

Methods Used	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	Mean
Cash transfers to eligible households is a method employed for Social Protection interventions in The Gambia	111 (31.6)	102 (29)	29 (8.3)	76 (21.7)	33 (9.4)	351 (100)	4.26
Public work programmes involving temporary employment opportunities to vulnerable individuals and household	155 (44.2)	91 (25.9)	9 (2.6)	49 (13.9)	47 (13.4)	351 (100)	4.73
Social insurance programmes that establish	74	155	12	71	39	351	4.38

mandatory contribution-based schemes against specific risks, such as unemployment, disability etc	(21.1)	(44.2)	(3.4)	(20.2)	(11.1)	(100)	
Social pensions that provide regular cash payments to older adults or elderly individuals who have reached a certain age, often aimed at reducing poverty among the elderly population	140 (39.9)	44 (12.5)	9 (2.6)	78 (22.2)	80 (22.8)	351 (100)	3.96
Food Security programmes that facilitate access to small loans, savings, and financial services for low-income farmers to promote agricultural activities.	155 (44.2)	110 (31.3)	4 (1.1)	52 (14.8)	30 (8.6)	351 (100)	4.33
Healthcare Access Initiatives that facilitate access to affordable Healthcare services for low-income households.	125 (35.6)	98 (27.9)	10 (2.8)	50 (14.3)	68 (19.4)	351 (100)	3.62
Education support programmes that focus on improving access to quality education for disadvantaged children, to enhance educational opportunities and break the cycle of poverty.	125 (35.6)	86 (24.5)	40 (11.4)	60 (17.1)	40 (11.4)	328 (100)	3.73
Grand Mean							3.5

Source: Fieldwork (May, 2024)

Hypothesis One

The effect of social protection initiatives on household prosperity in The Gambia was examined using multiple regression analysis. The study investigates programmes such as social insurance, food security, cash transfers, employment initiatives, healthcare access, and education. This research is based on data from 351 of 383 survey respondents and takes into account control variables such as socioeconomic status, demography, and geographic location. The findings will help policymakers improve the efficiency of social protection programs in The Gambia, hence improving economic growth and quality of life. H01: Social protection interventions have no significant effect on household prosperity in The Gambia.

Table 1: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	522.983	6	87.164	750.738	.000 ^b
	Residual	39.940	344	.116		
	Total	562.923	350			

a. Dependent Variable: Household Prosperity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Education and Training Initiatives, Social Insurance Schemes, Food Security, Cash Transfer Programs, Healthcare Access Initiatives, Employment and Labour Market Interventions

Source: Author's Computation, (May, 2024).

The ANOVA table sheds light on the overall significance of the multiple regression model that predicts household prosperity based on many factors. The Regression Sum of Squares (SSR) is 522.983, which represents the variation explained by the predictors. In contrast, the Residual Sum of Squares (SSE) is 39.940, indicating that the model cannot explain the fluctuation. Furthermore, the overall Sum of Squares (SST) is 562.923, which represents the overall variation. In terms of degrees of freedom (DF), the regression DF is 6, the residual DF is 344, and the total DF is 350. As a result, the mean squares for regression and residual are 87.164 and 0.116, respectively. As a result, the F-statistic is 750.738, indicating that the

overall model is significant. Furthermore, the significance level (Sig.) is 0.000, indicating that the predictors have a statistically significant impact on household prosperity. Thus, the low p-value (0.000) and high F-statistic (750.738) demonstrate the model's statistical significance and good fit. The high SSR relative to SSE indicates that the model explains the variation in household prosperity. Therefore, this analysis confirms that the selected predictors effectively explain variations in household prosperity, and the model is statistically robust.

Table 2: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.259	.059		4.419	.000
	Social Insurance Schemes	.259	.049	.264	5.340	.000
	Food Security	.497	.078	.510	6.351	.000
	Cash Transfer Programs	.252	.056	.291	4.533	.000
	Employment and Labour Market Interventions	-.119	.089	-.121	-1.342	.180
	Healthcare Access Initiatives	-.309	.077	-.324	-4.003	.000
	Education and Training Initiatives	.348	.085	.368	4.099	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Household Prosperity

Source: Author’s Computation, (May, 2024).

The analysis identifies predictors of household prosperity. Social insurance schemes (B = 0.259), food security (B = 0.497), cash transfer programs (B = 0.252), and education initiatives (B = 0.348) significantly improve household prosperity. Conversely, healthcare access initiatives (B = -0.309) negatively impact household prosperity, indicating inefficiencies. Employment interventions (B = -0.119) have no significant effect. Policy recommendations concentrate on enhancing social insurance, food security, cash transfers, and education initiatives while reassessing healthcare initiatives and employment interventions to mitigate their negative impacts.

Hypothesis Two

H02: Implementation challenges of social protection interventions have no significant relationship with advancing household prosperity in The Gambia.

Table 3: Correlations

Control Variables			Inadequate Financial Resources	Deficient Social Registry	Lack of Institutional Capacity	Limited Access to Reliable and Accurate Data	Inadequate Monitoring and Evaluation Systems	Insufficient Awareness
Household Prosperity	Inadequate Financial Resources	Correlation	1.000	.773	.600	.761	.805	.523
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
		Df	0	348	348	348	348	348
Deficient Social Registry		Correlation	.773	1.000	.779	.702	.674	.516
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
		Df	348	0	348	348	348	348
Lack of		Correlation	.600	.779	1.000	.550	.518	.482

Institutional Capacity	Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
	Df	348	348	0	348	348	348
Limited Access to Reliable and Accurate Data	Correlation	.761	.702	.550	1.000	.743	.485
	Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
	Df	348	348	348	0	348	348
Inadequate Monitoring and Evaluation Systems	Correlation	.805	.674	.518	.743	1.000	.524
	Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
	Df	348	348	348	348	0	348
Insufficient Awareness	Correlation	.523	.516	.482	.485	.524	1.000
	Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
	Df	348	348	348	348	348	0

Source: Author’s Computation, (May, 2024).

The correlation table shows how various factors influence household prosperity and interact with one another. Inadequate financial resources have a high correlation with all categories, particularly inadequate monitoring and evaluation methods (0.805) and a deficient social register (0.773), showing strong links to other problems. Deficient social registry has substantial associations with a lack of institutional capability (0.779) and limited access to data (0.702), indicating a direct relationship between institutional and data access issues. Lack of institutional capacity also shows considerable connections with a weak social register (0.779) and other characteristics, suggesting its critical importance. Limited access to trustworthy and accurate data is strongly connected with a lack of financial resources (0.761) and monitoring systems (0.743), demonstrating the importance of these factors. Inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems highlight the significance of comprehensive monitoring due to their high link with insufficient financial resources (0.805). Insufficient awareness has moderate connections with all categories, with the strongest association being with poor monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (0.524), indicating less pronounced but still prevalent awareness difficulties.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the influences of several social protection strategies on household prosperity in The Gambia, including methods used to enhance household prosperity. It examined the relationship between the challenges associated with implementing these interventions and household prosperity, resulting in a thorough understanding of its nexus. Firstly, on the methods used in advancing household prosperity in The Gambia, the study indicated a significant understanding of the effectiveness of various social protection interventions used. Cash transfers to eligible households and public work programs received the highest approval, with mean values of 4.26 and 4.73, respectively. These findings highlight the positive perception and influence of these methods in improving household prosperity. Similarly, social insurance programs and food security initiatives were well-regarded, with mean values of 4.38 and 4.33, echoing their substantial contributions. Conversely, healthcare access initiatives and education support programs demonstrated moderate approval, with mean values of 3.62 and 3.73, signifying room for advancement. These findings align with earlier research by Alderman, Yemtsov, and Pape (2017), who underscore the significance of comprehensive social protection measures.

Additionally, concerning social protection interventions' effect on household prosperity in The Gambia, the multiple regression analysis identified key predictors of household prosperity. Social insurance schemes ($B = 0.259$), food security ($B = 0.497$), cash transfer programs ($B = 0.252$), and education initiatives ($B = 0.348$) positively and significantly enhance household prosperity. These findings underscore the importance of boosting these areas to enhance living standards. However, healthcare access initiatives ($B = -0.309$) negatively influence prosperity, showing potential inefficiencies that need to be addressed. Employment interventions ($B = -0.119$) were found to have no significant effect, implying these programs may need re-evaluation or redesign to be effective. These findings resonate with Baird, McIntosh, and Özler (2011), whose study highlighted the effectiveness of cash transfers, similar to the positive perception found in this study. Furthermore, Paes-Sousa, Santos, and Miazaki (2011) and Holtemeyer, Kosec, and Ngatia (2017) reinforce the vital role of food security and social insurance in improving household prosperity.

Furthermore, on the relationship between implementation challenges of social protection interventions with advancing household prosperity in The Gambia, the correlation analysis provided an added understanding of the interplay between various factors affecting household prosperity. Inadequate financial resources revealed high correlations with inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems (0.805) and a deficient social registry (0.773), demonstrating these are critical areas to address. Deficient social registry also had substantial correlations with institutional capacity (0.779) and data access (0.702), stressing the interconnectedness of these issues. Lack of institutional capacity demonstrated strong associations with various deficiencies, particularly the social registry, highlighting its pivotal role. Limited access to reliable data was highly correlated with financial resources (0.761) and monitoring systems (0.743), underlining the importance of these factors in improving social protection interventions. Lastly, inadequate monitoring, evaluation systems, and insufficient awareness, though moderately correlated, suggest that enhancing monitoring and awareness can contribute positively to household prosperity. Bastagli et al. (2016) stress the need for robust monitoring and evaluation systems, echoed by the significant correlation found in this study. Lastly, Faye and Obah-Akpowoghaha (2023) and Bah et al. (2017) discuss the complexities and interconnectedness of social protection challenges, reinforcing the study's findings on the need for a holistic approach to policy interventions.

Policy Recommendations

Based on these findings, policy recommendations should be concentrated on boosting social insurance, food security, cash transfer programmes, and education initiatives since they have a large positive influence on household prosperity. Furthermore, there is a need to review and improve healthcare access policies to offset their negative consequences. Addressing and redesigning employment initiatives has the potential to increase their effectiveness. Furthermore, boosting financial resources, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, institutional ability, and access to reliable data are critical to achieving long-term household prosperity.

Conclusion

The study provides a practical understanding of the effectiveness of social protection measures in enhancing household prosperity in The Gambia. It demonstrates that cash transfers, public work programmes, social insurance, and food security initiatives significantly influence household prosperity. However, healthcare access initiatives indicated

a negative impact, and employment interventions had no significant effect, indicating areas needing improvement. Similarly, the study underscores the critical role of addressing implementation challenges, such as inadequate financial resources, deficient social registries, and insufficient monitoring systems. Strengthening these areas, alongside enhancing awareness and institutional capacity, is essential for effective social protection policies. These findings underline the need for a holistic and integrated approach to policy interventions in order to improve living standards and advance prosperity in The Gambia.

References

- Abate, T., & Tilahun, M. (2012). Social protection in Sub-Saharan Africa: Current status and challenges. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(7), 22–29.
- African Development Bank (AfDB). (2020). *Social protection in Africa: A synthesis of assessments and policy options*. <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/social-protection-africa-synthesis-assessments-and-policy-options-106021>
- Alderman, H., Yemtsov, R., & Pape, U. (2017). How can safety nets contribute to economic growth? *The World Bank Research Observer*, 32(2), 141–167. <https://doi.org/10.1093/wbro/lkx001>
- Alvarez-Martinez, M., & Gasparini, L. (2018). Assessing the impact of public policies in developing countries. In A. B. Atkinson & F. Bourguignon (Eds.), *Handbook of income distribution* (Vol. 2, pp. 2169–2246). Elsevier.
- Bah, M. O., Jobarteh, M. L., Jatta, B., Sanyang, S., & Sanyang, S. (2017). Evaluation of the food aid program in the North Bank Region of The Gambia. *Food Science & Nutrition*, 5(1), 14–23. <https://doi.org/10.1002/fsn3.367>
- Baird, S., McIntosh, C., & Özler, B. (2011). Cash or condition? Evidence from a cash transfer experiment. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 126(4), 1709–1753. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjr032>
- Bastagli, F., Hagen-Zanker, J., Harman, L., Barca, V., Sturge, G., Schmidt, T., & Pellerano, L. (2016). *Cash transfers: What does the evidence say? A rigorous review of programme impact and the role of design and implementation features*. Overseas Development Institute (ODI).
- Government of The Gambia. (2015). *National social protection policy and strategy (2015–2025)*. Government of The Gambia.
- Evans, D. K., Holtemeyer, B., Kosec, K., & Ngatia, I. W. (2017). Cash transfers and health: Evidence from Tanzania. *Journal of Political Economy*, 125(6), 1834–1891. <https://doi.org/10.1086/694098>
- Faye, O., & Obah-Akpowoghaha, N. (2023). Examining the impacts of social safety net programs on the standard of living in The Gambia. *Journal of Poverty Alleviation and International Development*, 14(2), 31–48.
- International Labour Organization (ILO). (2012). *Social protection floors: A transformative policy towards decent work in Africa*. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---africa/---ro-addis_ababa/documents/publication/wcms_171667.pdf
- Paes-Sousa, R., Santos, L. M. P., & Miazaki, É. S. (2011). Effects of a conditional cash transfer programme on child nutrition in Brazil. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 89, 496–503. <https://doi.org/10.2471/BLT.10.084202>
- Pease, A. (2010). *Theories of international relations: Contending approaches to world politics* (3rd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.

- Proxy Test. (2023). *Report on social protection interventions and household poverty reduction in Africa* [Unpublished manuscript].
- Sabates-Wheeler, R., & Devereux, S. (2010). Cash transfers and high food prices: Explaining outcomes on Ethiopia's productive safety net programme. *Food Policy*, 35(4), 274–285. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2010.01.001>
- Thomas, C. (2001). Global governance, development, and human security: Exploring the links. *Global Governance*, 7(4), 431–450.
- United Nations (UN). (2018). *Global sustainable development report 2019: The future is now—Science for achieving sustainable development*. United Nations. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/globalsdreport/2019>
- UN Women. (2020). *Building forward better: Women's rights to social protection in the informal economy*. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/building-forward-better-womens-rights-to-social-protection-in-the-informal-economy>
- UNICEF. (2020). *Social protection in Eastern and Southern Africa: Regional overview*. <https://www.unicef.org/esaro/what-we-do/social-protection>
- World Bank. (2011). *Social protection and labor strategy 2012–2022: Towards inclusive and sustainable growth for all*. World Bank.
- World Bank. (2019). *The Gambia country economic memorandum: Broadening the horizons of growth*. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/32684>



JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Volume 1, Number 8 (December, 2025)

ISSN: 1595-9457 (online); 3043-4211 (print)

Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

Received: November 26, 2025 Accepted: December 19, 2025 Published: December 31, 2025

Citation: Omoregie, Edoghogho & Imokhai, P. I. (2025). "Authoritarian Tendencies and Political Polarization within the Democratic Framework in Nigeria; the Fourth Republic in Perspective." *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1 (8): 27-36.

Article

Open Access

AUTHORITARIAN TENDENCIES AND POLITICAL POLARIZATION WITHIN THE DEMOCRATIC FRAMEWORK IN NIGERIA; THE FOURTH REPUBLIC IN PERSPECTIVE

Edoghogho Omoregie¹ & P. I. Imokhai²

Department of Political Science, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria^{1&2}

Corresponding Email: omoregieedos@aauekpoma.edu.ng¹

Abstract

This study investigated authoritarian tendencies and political polarization within Nigeria's democratic framework during the fourth Republic (1999–present), using a qualitative approach based on secondary data from scholarly articles, government reports, and electoral records. Guided by the competitive authoritarianism theory, which explains regimes blending democratic institutions with authoritarian practices, the research critically examines the persistence of autocratic behaviours alongside Nigeria's formal democracy. Findings revealed that, despite constitutional provisions for democracy, authoritarian tendencies persist through executive dominance, media restrictions, and selective law enforcement, undermining institutional checks and balances. Political polarization has deepened, manipulated along ethnic, regional, and party lines by elites aiming to entrench power and marginalize opposition forces. This polarization not only heightens voter disenfranchisement but also threatens the country's fragile national unity. Furthermore, weakened institutions and limited judicial independence create an enabling environment for democratic backsliding, where electoral processes are often ceremonial rather than genuinely competitive. Based on these findings, the study recommended strengthening the autonomy of institutions such as the judiciary and electoral commissions to resist political interference effectively. Promoting inclusive political dialogue across ethnic and party divides as essential to reducing polarization and enhance national cohesion. Additionally, fostering media independence alongside comprehensive civic education can empower citizens to hold leaders accountable and engage meaningfully in democratic governance.

Copyright © 2025 By JPPSS. Publishers: Omega Books

This is an open access article which permits unrestricted use provided the work is properly cited.

Keywords: Authoritarian tendencies, Political polarization, Democratic framework, Media independence, Fourth republic Nigeria

Introduction

Authoritarian tendencies and political polarization represent significant challenges to democratic consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, which began with the transition from military rule in 1999. Despite the restoration of democratic governance, the persistence of authoritarian practices within elected civilian governments has been widely documented. These tendencies manifest in political "sit-tight" mentalities, manipulation of electoral processes, and the dominance of oligarchic elites who subvert democratic norms to continuing in power (Egbefor, 2015; Adenuga, 2023). This has undermined the quality of democracy, breeding a hybrid system where democratic institutions exist alongside authoritarian practices. The authoritarian legacy from military rule remains influential, curtailing civil liberties and shrinking democratic space, despite formal democratic structures, (Odion-Akhaine, 2002; Manuwa, 2023). This environment constrains popular participation and weakens the rule of law in Nigeria's nascent democracy. Parallel to authoritarian tendencies, political polarization in Nigeria further complicates democratic governance. Nigeria's socio-political landscape is highly fragmented along ethnic, religious, and regional lines, causing intense polarization especially during elections and governance transitions, which threatens national cohesion (Yusufu, & Abdulsalam, 2025). Political polarization is exacerbated by media influence and the entrenchment of identity politics, leading to fragmented public discourse and a divided electorate resistant to compromise (Okoro, 2024). The rivalry between major political parties such as the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) exemplifies elite polarization that trickles down to mass politics, often at the expense of national development (Lawal & Oluwatoyin, 2011). The combination of authoritarian impulses and deep polarization not only hampers democratic consolidation but also stymies effective governance and socioeconomic progress in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

The significance of studying authoritarian tendencies and political polarization within Nigeria's democratic framework is threefold. First, it enables a deeper understanding of the structural and institutional weaknesses inhibiting democratic culture and the rule of law, thereby informing policy reforms. Second, it sheds light on the socio-political dynamics that fuel division and insecurity, crucial for designing interventions to promote national unity and social cohesion. Third, this study contributes to democratic theory by exploring the paradox of electoral democracy coexisting with autocratic practices and societal fracturing in a post-military context. Accordingly, the study's objectives are: (1) to examine the manifestations of authoritarian tendencies in Nigeria's Fourth Republic; (2) to analyze the causes and consequences of political polarization in the democratic process; and (3) to assess how these phenomena impact democratic consolidation and governance outcomes. Corresponding research questions include: How do authoritarian tendencies manifest in Nigeria's democratic institutions? What are the key drivers of political polarization in Nigeria's Fourth Republic? How do authoritarianism and polarization affect democratic consolidation and national development in Nigeria? These insights will guide strategies to strengthen Nigeria's democratic trajectory.

Conceptual Review

Conceptualizing Authoritarian Tendencies: Authoritarian tendencies refer to political behaviors and systems where power is concentrated in a single authority or a small group

that demands strict obedience from the populace, often at the expense of political pluralism and individual freedoms. Core characteristics include highly centralized government control, repression of dissent, manipulation of civil liberties, and the use of coercive means to maintain stability and suppress opposition (Madueke, & Enyiazu, 2025). Authoritarianism is marked by indefinite political tenure, exclusion of opposition through mass organizations or armed force, and institutional manipulation, such as subjugating the judiciary and electoral bodies. Psychological perspectives, like the authoritarian personality theory by (Adorno 1950s cited in Odion-Akhaine, 2002), suggest that certain personality traits predispose individuals to favor strict hierarchical authority and conformity, especially under conditions of social instability (Odion-Akhaine, 2002). In contemporary political analysis, authoritarianism is often observed not only in explicit autocracies but also within nominally democratic states exhibiting authoritarian practices, such as undermining independent institutions, media repression, and electoral manipulations. For example, African political parties have sometimes developed authoritarian one-party democracies by controlling electoral commissions, judiciary, and fracturing opposition parties, using ethnic-religious divisions strategically to entrench power. Such regimes maintain dominance through informal networks of power and clientelism, affecting governance quality and social justice (Adenuga, & Akingbulu, 2024). The psychological underpinning of authoritarianism also links to stress responses where citizens and leaders may support strongman rule out of perceived insecurity and anxiety, complicating democratization efforts even in states with formal democratic structures (Schnelle, Baler, Had jar, & Klaus, 2021).

In the Nigerian context, authoritarian tendencies have been evident in the country's political trajectory. Despite transitioning to civilian rule in 1999, Nigeria has experienced recurring challenges such as executive overreach, judicial compromises, and limitations on press freedom, which reflect authoritarian resilience. Under President Muhammadu Buhari's administration, notable regressions towards authoritarianism include intimidation of the judiciary and opposition, security service abuses, and restriction of civil society activities, reminiscent of his earlier military rule in the 1980s (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). Political parties like the PDP have been accused of manipulating electoral bodies like INEC and undermining democratic institutions to maintain dominance. This persistence of authoritarian practices intertwines with Nigeria's "culture of authoritarianism," where democratic institutions coexist with authoritarian governance styles, weakening democratic consolidation and citizen trust (Odion-Akhaine, 2002; Council on Foreign Relations 2020).

Conceptualization of Political Polarization

Political polarization is broadly defined as the growing ideological divide and opposition between political groups, where individuals and factions increasingly adhere to extreme positions over moderate or centrist viewpoints. This phenomenon is often characterized by a strong "us versus them" mentality, resulting in mutual distrust, hostile attitudes, and a breakdown of cooperative political discourse. Several scholars have noted that polarization is driven by dynamics such as political leaders exploiting grievances or fears to mobilize support, media amplification of divisive rhetoric, and psychological biases like motivated reasoning, where individuals interpret information in ways that reinforce their partisan identities (McCoy, 2022; Arthur, 2025). Polarization can manifest in both elite-level conflicts between political leaders and popular-level divisions among the electorate, each compounding the other and making political compromise more difficult or seemingly impossible.

The causes of political polarization are multifaceted, including political activism that pushes parties toward ideological extremes, electoral systems and distracting practices that favoured polarized candidates, and media ecosystems especially social media that create echo chambers where users consume information that primarily confirms their preexisting beliefs (Arthur, 2025). This environment rewards radical positions and undermines centrists or moderates, weakening democratic deliberation and promoting political gridlock or even social conflict. Psychological factors reinforce this divide as well; emotional investments in group loyalty cause individuals to reject opposing viewpoints and factual challenges, leading to hardened attitudes and persistent divisions. Pernicious polarization, as conceptualized in political science, occurs when a single cleavage such as partisan identity or ethnic division becomes so dominant that it crowds out other social bonds and creates entrenched mutual hostility that spreads beyond politics into societal relations (Arthur, 2025) In the Nigerian context, political polarization is deeply intertwined with ethnic, regional, and religious cleavages that sustain a high level of contestation and hostility in the electoral and governance arena. Nigeria's multiparty democracy is often marked by intense competition among ethnic blocs and religious affiliations, which political actors exploit to consolidate their support bases, reinforcing an "us versus them" framework. This dynamic exacerbates tensions and sometimes undermines national integration efforts, as political discourse frequently aligns with sectarian and regional identities rather than issue-based politics or policy considerations. Moreover, clientelism and regional patronage further deepen divisions, where political loyalty is often traded for material benefits, increasing mistrust across groups (Adejumobi & Agbaje, 2023). The Nigerian experience demonstrates how political polarization, reinforced by historical grievances and socioeconomic disparities, challenges democratic consolidation and complicates efforts to build inclusive governance structures.

Conceptualizing Democratic Framework

Democratic frameworks are foundational structures that guide the organization, processes, and principles of democratic governance. Fundamentally, democracy embodies the notion that government authorities derived from the consent of the governed, emphasizing the participation of citizens in decision-making processes. Characteristics of democratic frameworks include majority rule tempered by minority rights, protection of individual freedoms, and mechanisms to ensure accountability and transparency in government actions (Manuwa, 2023; Inter Parliamentary Union, 1998). The rule of law is central, ensuring that laws apply equally to all citizens, and institutions such as the judiciary, police, and military operate impartially without partisan bias. Moreover, a multiparty system enriches political competition, offering citizens genuine choice and preventing the concentration of power that characterizes authoritarian regimes (Inter Parliamentary Union, 1998; Jonathan, 2024). A democratic framework establishes norms and institutions that sustain political equality, social justice, human rights, and responsive governance. It recognizes the plurality of views within a society and requires the existence of representative institutions at all levels national, regional, and local that reflect the will of the people. Democracy also thrives on peaceful competition for power through free, fair, and transparent elections, enabling the peaceful alternation of leadership. Moreover, democratic governance involves a balance between individual rights and collective social cohesion, fostering dialogue and compromise among diverse groups to maintain social stability and national solidarity (Inter Parliamentary Union, 1998). Civil society engagement and citizen

participation beyond voting, such as public debates and peaceful protests, are pillars that sustain and deepen democratic culture (Jonathan, 2024).

Viewing democratic frameworks through the Nigerian context reveals both the aspirations and challenges of democratic consolidation. Nigeria's democracy, which began since 1999, incorporates multiparty elections, rule of law, and constitutional guarantees of fundamental rights. However, the Nigerian democratic framework grapples with systemic issues such as electoral malpractices, political patronage, weak institutional independence, and ethnic-religious cleavages that complicate governance and social cohesion (Ojo, 2024). While democratic principles assert political equality and citizen participation, practical realities in Nigeria show disparities in access to power and influence, often influenced by money politics and clientelism. Nonetheless, Nigeria's democratic journey continues to evolve, with efforts toward electoral reforms, judicial strengthening, and civic education aimed at deepening democratic norms and rule of law to enhance political accountability and social inclusion (Adejumobi, 2025).

Theoretical Framework

The Competitive Authoritarianism Theory: Competitive authoritarianism is a political regime type defined by the coexistence of democratic institutions and authoritarian practices, where elections and legislatures operate but incumbents manipulate these frameworks to maintain significant advantages over opponents. According to Levitsky and Way (2010), competitive authoritarian regimes hold regular elections, allowing opposition parties to participate, but the playing field is uneven due to frequent abuses such as media censorship, judicial manipulation, and state resource misuse. Unlike full democracies which meet minimum standards of free, fair elections, political rights, and governmental authority, competitive authoritarian regimes violate these standards systematically, creating a hybrid form where authoritarian tendencies thrive within a nominal democratic framework. This theory is instrumental for understanding how ostensibly democratic systems, such as Nigeria's Fourth Republic, exhibit authoritarian features that undermine genuine political competition (Levitsky & Way, 2010; Levitsky & Way, 2002). Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way pioneered the theory of competitive authoritarianism to explain contemporary political regimes that cannot be classified purely as democratic or authoritarian. Their work highlights how these regimes may emerge from transitions that fall short of full democratization due to weak opposition, organizational limitations, or incumbent strategies to retain power while maintaining a facade of democratic legitimacy. Key proponents argue that this regime type is relevant in many post-Cold War states, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where economic crises and international pressures shaped incomplete democratic transitions. Competitive authoritarianism elucidates the mechanisms through which rulers sustain political dominance, such as manipulating electoral laws, controlling media, and employing legal or extralegal tactics to weaken rivals, thereby deepening political polarization and authoritarian tendencies within democratic institutions (Levitsky & Way, 2010; Chacon, 2009).

In the context of Nigeria's Fourth Republic, competitive authoritarianism is relevant for analyzing how authoritarian tendencies coexist and reinforce political polarization within the democratic framework. Nigeria exhibits recurring political conflicts characterized by the dominance of incumbents who use institutional control and coercion to weaken opposition parties, eroding democratic norms and exacerbating societal divisions. The theory helps explain why democratic institutions are often undermined by election irregularities, party manipulations, and executive aggrandizement, all of which fuel intense political polarization.

This scholarly lens allows researchers to critically assess Nigeria's democratic trajectory, where the persistence of authoritarian practices amid formal democratic processes challenges democratic consolidation and reinforces elite-driven polarization (Levitsky & Way 2010; Madueke, & Enyiazu, 2025).

Gap / Contribution to Knowledge

The identification of authoritarian tendencies in Nigeria's Fourth Republic has received limited scholarly attention. This gap in the literature restricts a comprehensive understanding of the subtle manifestations and evolution of authoritarianism within Nigeria's democratic framework. By focusing on this aspect, the study advances knowledge by systematically uncovering and analyzing these tendencies, thereby enriching discourse on Nigeria's democratic development. Political polarization's causes and consequences within Nigeria's democratic processes remain under explored. Existing research often overlooks the dynamics fueling deep divisions and their effects on governance and political stability. This study addresses the gap by thoroughly investigating the origins, mechanisms, and impacts of polarization, offering new insights that contribute meaningfully to political science literature relevant to emerging democracies. The dual impact of authoritarianism and political polarization on democratic consolidation and governance outcomes has not been sufficiently examined in Nigeria. By exploring how these factors interact and influence Nigeria's democratic trajectory, this study provides a critical contribution. It enhances understanding of obstacles to democratic stability and practical governance challenges, thereby broadening the existing body of knowledge on democratic consolidation in complex political environments.

Findings/ Discussion

Identifying the Manifestation of Authoritarian Tendencies in Nigeria Fourth Republic: The manifestations of authoritarian tendencies in Nigeria's Fourth Republic are vividly evident through a range of political and institutional behaviours that undermine democratic principles. One salient manifestation is the deployment of state resources and security apparatus to suppress opposition, creating a de facto one-party dominance particularly under the People's Democratic Party (PDP) during its early years in power. The security agencies, including the police, were often employed to intimidate, arrest arbitrarily, and violently disrupt opposition activities, contravening both constitutional freedoms and international norms on freedom of assembly and expression. This pattern of state-orchestrated violence and intimidation aimed to entrench the ruling party's dominance, eroding the basic tenets of equality and political freedom, which is fundamental to democracy (Adenuga, & Akingbulu, 2024). Another clear indicator of authoritarianism in Nigeria's Fourth Republic is the manipulation and erosion of institutional independence, notably of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the judiciary. The ruling party's control over appointments and funding severely compromised INEC's neutrality, making it susceptible to political manipulation that distorted the electoral process. These interference's undermined the credibility of elections and subverted the people's right to fair representation. Similarly, the judiciary's vulnerability to political pressures weakened its role as a check on executive overreach, further entrenching authoritarian governance. This institutional erosion allowed ruling elites to maintain power through constitutional amendments attempts, electoral malpractices, and selective enforcement of anti-corruption agencies against opposition (Adenuga, & Akingbulu, 2024; Bashir, 2019). Moreover, the Fourth Republic exhibited authoritarian traits through the persistence of elitism, political

“godfatherism,” and the “sit-tight” mentality, where incumbents actively sought to perpetuate themselves in power by manipulating democratic processes. This oligarchic tendency, blending former military rulers, politicians, businessmen, and bureaucrats, undermined egalitarian democratic ideals and promoted exclusionary political practices. Coupled with flawed constitutional provisions and electoral processes, these factors created a hybrid regime characterized by authoritarian features embedded within a nominally democratic framework. The Fourth Republic's democratic dispensation, though officially civilian, continuously faced challenges from these authoritarian tendencies, which negatively impacted human rights protections and democratic consolidation in Nigeria (Egbefor, 2015; Adenuga, 2023).

The Causes and Consequences of Political Polarization in Nigeria Democratic Process

Political polarization in Nigeria's democratic process stems from a complex interweaving of eth-no-religious identities, economic inequalities, and the influence of media dynamics. One core cause is the deep-rooted ethnic and religious diversity that shapes political allegiances, where ethnic and religious identities are often politicized during elections, reinforcing an "us versus them" mentality among voters and political elites (Madueke, & Enyiaz, 2025). This divide is further exacerbated by economic disparities that fuel resentment and competition for resources, which politicians exploit by rallying supporters along ethnic or class lines. Additionally, the emergence of partisan and social media platforms creates echo chambers that reinforce existing biases by limiting exposure to alternative viewpoints. Social media algorithms intensify this effect, enabling the rapid spread of disinformation and further entrenching divisions (Arisekola 2024). The consequences of such political polarization are far-reaching and detrimental to Nigeria's democratic stability. One significant effect is the erosion of trust in democratic institutions and processes, where polarized groups view election outcomes as illegitimate when they do not favor their partisan affiliations. This erosion undermines democratic norms and often leads to institutional gridlock, weakening governance effectiveness (Arisekola 2024). Moreover, the polarization has fueled an increase in political violence and radicalization. The normalization of extreme rhetoric in online echo chambers translates into real-world confrontations, contributing to incidents of violence during electoral periods (Arisekola 2024). The growing disconnect between political factions hampers cross-partisan dialogue and compromises, stalling efforts at national unity and democratic consolidation.

Furthermore, political polarization in Nigeria aggravates ethnic-religious conflicts and hampers democratic consolidation by deepening social fragmentation. Ethnic power struggles and political communication strategies heavily reliant on ethnic narratives have been shown to shape voter behavior and polarize the electorate, especially during significant elections like the 2023 presidential poll (Yusufu, & Abdulsalam, 2025). These ethnicized political communications, amplified by social media, foster misinformation and heightened distrust in electoral integrity. The result is a fragile democratic environment where polarization not only threatens electoral credibility but also national cohesion, making it imperative for reforms that promote inclusive dialogue, greater media responsibility, and socioeconomic equity to strengthen Nigerian democracy (Madueke, & Enyiaz, 2025).

Authoritarian and Political Polarization Impacts on Democratic Consolidation and Governance Outcome in Nigeria

Authoritarianism has deeply impacted Nigeria's democratic consolidation by undermining institutional frameworks and limiting political freedoms necessary for a stable democracy.

Following decades of military rule, Nigeria's transition to civilian governance was expected to enhance democratic values: However, authoritarian tendencies have persisted under ostensibly civilian administrations (Adeakin, 2012). These tendencies manifest through restrictions on dissent, judiciary interference, media suppression, and the use of security agencies to quell opposition voices, which cumulatively weaken democratic norms and public trust in institutions (Egwufor, 2015). Such authoritarian legacies complicate the entrenchment of democratic consolidation by sustaining oligarchic rule structures and marginalizing broad political participation, ultimately destabilizing governance outcomes and eroding democratic quality (Adeakin, 2012). Political polarization exacerbates challenges to Nigeria's democratic consolidation and governance by deepening ethnic-religious divides and socio-political fragmentation. The competition between the country's major political parties often translates into intense polarization along ethnic and religious lines, undermining national unity and creating confrontational politics (Madueke, & Enyiazu, 2025). This divide influences electoral processes and governance decisions, where political allegiance frequently surpasses national interest, causing instability and weakening democratic institutions (Ameh-Ogigo, 2025). Additionally, the media and social media platforms amplify this polarization, sometimes promoting disinformation and echo chamber effects that fragment the public sphere, obstructing cohesion and cooperative governance (Madueke, & Enyiazu, 2025; Yusufu, & Abdulsalam, 2025). The youth, facing political alienation amid these divisions, become less engaged in democratic processes, further weakening democratic sustainability (Madueke, & Enyiazu, 2025).

The combined impact of authoritarianism and political polarization significantly obstructs democratic consolidation and governance quality in Nigeria. Authoritarian practices, often justified by security concerns amid ethnic-religious conflicts and economic inequalities, normalize exclusionary politics and suppress opposition, which weakens democratic accountability and the rule of law (Adeakin, 2012). Political polarization, meanwhile, fuels societal divisions and hinders the development of inclusive political institutions necessary for democratic resilience (Ameh-Ogigo, 2025). These dynamics also impair governance outcomes by fostering elite manipulation, eroding public trust, and undermining policy continuity (Olusegun, 2022). To advance Nigeria's democratic consolidation, addressing authoritarian legacies and mitigating polarizing politics through institutional strengthening, inclusive governance, and civic education is essential (Adeakin, 2012; Olusegun, 2022).

Conclusion

The Fourth Republic in Nigeria, while hailed as the country's longest period of democratic rule since independence, has simultaneously witnessed persistent authoritarian tendencies and deep political polarization that challenge the democratic framework. Despite successful transitions of power through elections, the democracy remains heavily influenced by military legacies, with a militarized approach to governance evident in the disproportionate allocation of resources to security and recurrent military involvement in civilian affairs. This militarization of the state undermines democratic practices by fostering an environment where the rule of force often supersedes dialogue, weakening institutions and eroding civil liberties. Political competition under the Fourth Republic has been marked by the dominance of incumbent parties, especially the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and recently the All Progressive Party (APC). They leveraged on state resources, media control, and security apparatuses to suppress opposition and skew electoral processes, thereby

entrenching political patronage and vote-buying. Such dynamics deepen political polarization, as governance becomes characterized by zero-sum rivalries and exclusionary practices rather than inclusive governance and consensus-building. The resulting democratic fragility is compounded by weak institutional checks and balances, recurrent election irregularities, and a political culture where authoritarian legacies persist beneath ostensibly democratic institutions. Hence, Nigeria's Fourth Republic exemplifies a complex hybrid regime where democratic forms coexist with authoritarian practices, highlighting the urgent need for stronger democratic consolidation measures that can address militarization, electoral integrity, and political inclusive within Nigeria's evolving democratic landscape.

Recommendations

- i. **Strengthen Democratic Institutions:** Enhance the independence and capacity of democratic institutions such as the judiciary, legislature, and electoral bodies (e.g., INEC) to resist undue influence by authoritarian actors and political godfathers, ensuring fair and transparent electoral and governance processes.
- ii. **Promote Political Inclusion and Ethnic Cohesion:** Implement policies that reduce ethnic and sectional politics, promoting inclusive governance and national integration to reduce polarization exploited by political elites for personal gain.
- iii. **Enforce Term Limits and Anti-Entrenchment Measures:** Establish and enforce strict legal frameworks to prevent incumbents and political elites from manipulating transitions or using state resources to perpetuate their hold on power, addressing the sit-tight tendencies noted in Nigeria's democratic governance.
- iv. **Enhance Civic Education and Media Freedom:** Invest in civic education initiatives to raise public awareness of democratic rights and responsibilities while protecting press freedom to foster informed citizen participation and accountability, thereby countering authoritarian repression tactics.

References

- Adeakin, I. (2012). Military prerogatives, authoritarianism and the prospects for democratic consolidation in Nigeria. University of Waikato. <https://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2012/Adeakin.pdf>
- Adejumobi, S. (2025). Democratic governance and electoral reforms in Nigeria: Progress and challenges. *Journal of African Political Studies*, 12(1), 45-62.
- Adejumobi, S., & Agbaje, A. (2023). Ethnic politics, clientelism, and democratic governance in Nigeria. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 17(4), 123-139.
- Adenuga, G. (2023). Autocratic democracy and the challenge of national development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. *African Review*. <https://psssj.eu/index.php/ojsdata/article/view/134>.
- Adenuga, G., & Akingbulu, O. (2024). Autocratic democracy and the challenge of national development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. *Politeia*, 43(1), Article 14650. <https://unisa.press.journals.co.za/index.php/Politeia/article/view/14650> [4]
- Ameh-Ogigo, J. A. (2025). Electoral violence and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. *KJPRI*. <https://journals.fukashere.edu.ng/index.php/kjpir/article/view/400>
- Arisekola, I. S. (2024). Political polarisation in the digital age: Causes and consequences. *Coeasu Erudite Journal*, 6(1), 60-66.
- Arthur, P. (2025). Countering the wave of democratic backsliding and the crisis of democracy in West Africa. *India Quarterly*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09750878241312188>

- Bashir, M. (2019). Authoritarian nature of the People's Democratic Party on Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria. *Journal of Business and Social Science*, 5(1), 99-106. <https://ideas.repec.org/a/src/jbsree/v5y2019i1p99-106.html>
- Chacon, M. (2009). A theory of competitive authoritarian institutions on democratic transition. Department of Political Science, Yale University.
- Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). (2020, January 14). Nigeria's slide toward authoritarianism. <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/nigerias-slide-toward-authoritarianism>
- Egbefor, A. (2015). Authoritarianism and democratic hybridities in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. *LAÜ Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, XIV(II).
- Egbefor, A. (2015). The elite oligarchs and democratic challenges in Nigeria. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/3865478>
- Egwufor, C. (2015). The quality of '20-year-old' democracy in Nigeria. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/3865478>
- Inter Parliamentary Union. (1998). Democracy: Its principles and achievement. Inter-Parliamentary Union. Retrieved October 2025, from http://archive.ipu.org/pdf/publications/democracy_pr_e.pdf
- Jonathan, D. (2024, July 9). 14 Principles of democracy. *Liberties.eu*. <https://www.liberties.eu/en/stories/principles-of-democracy/44151>
- Lawal, T., & Oluwatoyin, S. (2011). Political polarization and national development in Nigeria: The role of the press. *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*.
- Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2002). Election without democracy: The use of competitive authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2).
- Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2010). *Competitive authoritarianism: Hybrid regimes after the Cold War*. Cambridge University
- Madueke, K., & Enyiazu, C. (2025). Federated autocracy and the illusion of multiparty democracy in Nigeria. *Journal of Elections, Public Participation and Policy*, advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2025.2582746>
- Manuwa, T. (2023). Democratic backsliding in Nigeria political space: Implications for democratic development under President Muhammadu Buhari's administration. *Sapientia Foundation Journal of Education, Sciences and Gender Studies*, 5(4), 317–331. [2]
- McCoy J. (2022, April 6). Polarization harms democracy and society. <https://www.icip.cat/perlapau/en/article/polarization-harms-democracy-and-society>
- Odion-Akhaine, S. (2002). Authoritarianism in the context of history. *Africa Media Review*. https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/AJA15955753_354
- Olusegun, A. (2022). Role of political parties in democratic consolidation in Nigeria (Master's thesis). Linnaeus University. <https://lnu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1933175/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Okoro, N. (2024). Electoral authoritarianism and democratization in Nigeria: A paradoxical analysis. *Oasis International Journal*. <http://www.oasisinternationaljournal.org/journals/2014/Articles%202014/Electoral%20Authoritarianism%20and%20Democratization%20in%20Nigeria%20a%20Paradoxical%20Analysis.pdf>
- Ojo, E. (2024). The dynamics of democracy in Nigeria: Ethno-religious challenges and institutional reforms. *Nigerian Journal of Governance*, 8(3), 89-105.
- Schnelle, C. Baler, D. Hadjar, A. & Klaus, B. (2021). Authoritarianism beyond disposition: A literature review. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.676093/full>
- Yusufu, A. A., & Abdulsalam, M. R. (2025). Democratic backsliding in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Trends in civilian governance and emerging authoritarian drift. *FUW Centre for Research Journal of Management & Social Sciences*, 2(1), 1–12. <https://fowcrp.org/rjmss>



JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Volume 1, Number 8 (December, 2025)

ISSN: 1595-9457 (online); 3043-4211 (print)

Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

Received: November 15, 2025 Accepted: December 21, 2025 Published: December 31, 2025

Citation: Abere, Sesan S. & Ojo, Kehinde A. (2025). "Economic Growth in Oil-Exporting African Countries: The Interplay of Exchange Rate Volatility and Institutional Quality." *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1 (8): 37-48.

Article

Open Access

ECONOMIC GROWTH IN OIL-EXPORTING AFRICAN COUNTRIES: THE INTERPLAY OF EXCHANGE RATE VOLATILITY AND INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY

Sesan Sunday Abere¹ & Kehinde Abimbola Ojo²

Department of Economics, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria^{1&2}

Corresponding Email: ojokehinde924@gmail.com²

Abstract

The paper examined impact of exchange rate volatility on economic growth of oil-exporting African countries (OEACs) and moderating impact by institutional quality. It seeks to improve on the knowledge gap in the literature about governance moderating volatility-growth relationship in resource-dependent African economies where literature has hitherto focused on developed or emerging economies. Using Ex-post facto survey to enrich data source, the study discovered that exchange rate volatility affects growth negatively in the short-run but positively in the long-run because of increased competitiveness in exports. Institutional quality negatively directly affects growth, but positively moderates growth in the long run by lessening the negative effects and by means of increase in the effect of volatility due to increased policy implementation and stability. The article concludes that volatile institutions transform volatility into growth opportunities. The policy makers should accord priority to reform of governance, diversification of the economy, as well as selective exchange rate interventions, to ensure long-term stability.

Keywords: Economic growth, Oil Exporting African Countries, Exchange rate.

JEL Classification Codes: E44, O43, Q37.

Introduction

The fluctuating nature of currency rate is a major problem in the economic outlook of the oil-exporting African nations – OEAC. This partly due to volatile global oil prices, which constitute sources of foreign cash and government revenue. Countries like Nigeria, Angola, and Algeria are highly dependent on oil for foreign cash and government revenue. Such dependencies make them vulnerable to external shocks (Lal et al., 2023), Fluctuations in foreign exchange rates disturb trade balances, result in irregular fiscal policies, complicate

Copyright © 2025 By JPPSS. Publishers: Omega Books

This is an open access article which permits unrestricted use provided the work is properly cited.

monetary policies that hinder economic growth. It is very important for an OEAC to know the cause of exchange rate fluctuation, countries that rely on oil and gas suffer direct impact from changes in oil prices, as exports yield foreign currency receipts, which change the supply of foreign currency. In 2023, when oil prices fell temporarily due to the global shifting of supply chains (Hakim, 2024), a sharp depreciation in the rate of the currency was often seen. As a result, inflationary pressure increased, and the purchasing power of consumers dropped. As the enterprises incur higher costs of imported items, this puts into question the repatriation of profits. It likely disrupts budgeting in the public sector and investments in the private sector, however, not all OEACs have the same type of instability.

The current expectation is that strong institutional frameworks will make countries with better governance systems, such as Ghana, more resilient to economic shocks than countries with worse governance systems, such as South Sudan (Agyemang et al., 2023). The difference in outcomes highlights how institutions like central banks, fiscal agencies, and regulators affect economic performance, especially during periods of exchange rate volatility (Munzhelele, 2024). Institutions signify the underlying or fundamental capacity of a nation to survive and respond to external shocks. Top institutions set up frameworks that are transparent and accountable to keep the negative effects of exchange rate volatility to a minimum. In response to the falling oil price, central banks can use monetary policies as a means to stabilize the currency. They can reduce or maintain interest rates or interfere in the FX market (Hakim, 2024). The IMF Report of 2022 showed that the central bank of Angola cut the exchange rate volatility by 15 percent through interventions during the oil price crash in 2020, this instilled confidence in the economy (Odhiambo et al., 2023). Similarly, by allocating oil revenues to sovereign wealth funds and spreading spending, fiscal institutions may alleviate volatility. The implementation in OEACs shows a large variation because of the institutional capabilities. Investors' trust is created by efficient institutions and they create smokescreens to draw in foreign direct investment (FDI) even in difficult situations (Boubacar et al., 2024). Fragile institutions, conversely, worsen destabilizing effects of exchange rate fluctuations. In countries with poor governance, like South Sudan, unstable exchange rates cause capital flight, inflation and constrain growth potential. Bashir and Ibrahim (2024) noted that the GDP of South Sudan dropped by 3.2% in 2023. Experts have attributed the drop in GDP to rampant currency devaluation and ineffective monetary regime. Other Oil-Exporting African Countries with weak institutional set-ups is indicated by indeed this trend as shown in South Sudan, Angola, Nigeria and Republic of Congo. Their economy impacted negatively due to fluctuations in the foreign exchange rate and poor quality of institutions. The Nigerian currency is falling which is going to throw inflationary challenges as it will with the poor budgetary discipline as well as the poor transparency in the foreign exchange allocations. The economy of Angola is also heavily dependent on oil proceeds with poorly developed financial institutions that make it expose to outside shocks and exchange rate fluctuations.

In these cases, institutional quality is lacking. Weakened monetary and fiscal policies effectively construed the possibility of policies to work. It also has high chances of speculative attacks. The rise and fall of foreign exchange shows the imbalances and to some extent excess institutional weaknesses that prevent real change. OEACs aim to establish solid institutional setups that will help them address exchange rate fluctuations and mitigate the adverse economic impacts that arise from the fluctuations in currency exchange rates. Corruption, rule of law and bad quality regulatory frameworks make the economy vulnerable so that it becomes incapable of implementing and stabilizing policies. The

efficiency of institutions is thus not only a bulwark of the long-term resilience of OEACs. The World Bank in 2023 noted that the institutional weaknesses of OEACs may account for as much as 40% of the growth losses from the commodity price shocks (Munzhelele 2024). Thus, understanding how institutions affect the volatility-growth relation is vital for policies that address structural weaknesses. The structural problems which are responsible for the underdevelopment and resource reliance persist. Fluctuations in exchange rates are interconnected and can significantly influence institutional quality. Research has been done on exchange rate volatility and economic growth. But there are reasons to believe that not much is known about how institutional quality mediates this relationship in oil-exporting African countries. While the current literature examines the interaction between inflation, trade and exchange rate volatility, the effect of governance and institutional strength on economic stability has been overlooked. Most studies emphasize only developed and emerging economies. Thus, there is a lack of understanding on how OEACs and the like manage currency volatility and economic resilience. For the purposes of this study, we want to prove whether institutional quality mediates the connection between exchange rate volatility and economic growth within these economies.

Literature Review

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between volatility of exchange rate, institutional quality and economic growth in Oil-Exporting African Countries (OEACs) using different key economic theories. The endogenous growth theory indicates that long-term economic growth will be driven by internal factors like human capital, innovation and institutions. Romer (1986) and Lucas (1988) suggested that the growth process is sustained by policy tools, technological progress and institutional structures. The oil exporting economies that face external shocks need a strong institutional set up that will convert the resource wealth into long term development. In other words, the quality of the institutions is what makes investment efficient and enforcement of policies effective. It brings better performance economic. The Exchange Rate Uncertainty and Investment Theory states that variations in the exchange rate have negative effects on investments and trade. The unpredictable changes in the exchange rate increase the risk associated with trading on foreign markets. It raises the cost of foreign direct investment and misleads macroeconomic planning. The international oil price and foreign exchange earnings are very closely related to the national revenue of oil-exporting economies. Exchange rate fluctuations of oil-exporting economies can thus make their national revenues erratic which further creates inflation and lack of confidence amongst the investors.

According to Donald North's Institutional Theory (1990), both formal institutions (legal systems and monetary authority) and informal institutions (norms and methods of governance) influence economic outcomes. Institutions affect how resources are distributed, how policies are implemented, and how economic agents make choices based on incentives. In the case of OEACs, the lack of appropriate institutional frameworks may amplify the negative effects of external shocks, such as exchange rate changes, due to the inability of the government to act. On the other hand, the major institutions can help reduce this effect through transparency, legitimacy of policies, and more stable policy resistance. These theories show that institutions need to be of good quality for the exchange rate stability to have an effect on economic growth. The institutions and effectiveness of OEACs are very important for them to cope with external shocks and achieve sustainable growth.

Empirical Review

Ullah et al. (2024) studied the moderating effect of regulatory quality on financial development and economic growth and economic volatility in developed and developing countries. The impactful finding revealed how high-quality regulations can foster banking growth and volatility reduction in developed economies while having a ringing effect over developing nations through the Panel Corrected Standard Errors and GMM. In developing economies, regulatory frameworks should be made stronger by making incremental improvements. According to Chowdhury et al. (2024), between 2002 and 2020, they examined 133 nations utilizing dynamic GMM, as well as panel threshold regression, to determine the threshold impact of institutional quality linking sovereign debt and macroeconomic stability. They discovered that debt hindered macroeconomic stability, whereas high-quality institutions mitigated that impact and facilitated improved debt management. In short, institutional improvements increase the effectiveness of managing the government debt. Tran and Nguyen (2021) used quantitative regression analysis to assess institutional quality and economic growth in 48 Asian countries between the years 2005 and 2018. Researchers discovered that the quality of institutions significantly increased growth, particularly in low income countries but noted a non-linear relationship as there was a threshold after which further enhancements in the quality of institutions did diminishes growth. The study suggested equality-related institutional change. Omotayo and et al (2023) investigated the influence of institutional quality on exchange rate volatility in Nigeria for the period 1981 to 2020, using the ARDL method. The varying sources of income and the associated political risk led to an increase in long-term exchange rate variability while there was a major role of contract-intensive money in the shorter term. Recommendations were given for economic diversification along with political change.

Ramoni-Perazzi and Romero (2022) also studied how exchange rate fluctuation affects economic development. Their study used GARCH based volatility and System and Difference GMM across 194 economies from 1995 to 2019. The study found that volatility has a negative effect on growth though in countries with a developed financial sector the effect is modest. The findings revealed that the harmful effects of volatility can be reduced by improving financial institutions. Fraj, Hamdaoui and Maktouf (2018) analyzed the relationship and implication of governance, exchange rate regime and growth for 50 countries during 1996-2012 with GMM. Governance wasn't too important while freedom in exchange rates was important because that boosted strong countries' growth and destabilised emerging countries. They concluded that lenient governments must match the quality of governance. Mujahid et al. (2022) investigated the effect of economic uncertainty and institutional quality on government size. The sample contains 182 countries from 1996 to 2016 with the help of World Bank panel data. According to them, volatility greatly affected government expenditure on health and education. They concluded that macroeconomic stabilization could enhance institutional effectiveness and resource utilization in the public sector. Abere and Akinbobola (2020) examined how external shocks and institutional quality influenced Nigeria's macroeconomic performance using an SVAR model. According to their findings, the primary causes of stability were external shocks, including terms of trade and aid, with the quality of institutions being the secondary cause. In order to limit shocks, they suggested improving the resilience of the institutions.

Boateng (2020). examined how the quality of institutions affects the relationship between the volatility of aid and growth in 45 Sub-Saharan African countries from 1980 to 2017 using a panel data technique. The study found that aid commitments do not help

growing countries; instead, they become worse off. The negative effect does not get tempered through institutional quality. The study suggested improved institutional frameworks to stabilize the aid flow. Also, Epo and Nochi (2020) studied the mediating effect of institutional quality on the natural resource-economic growth nexus in 44 African countries from 1996 to 2016, using IV regressions, dynamic panel GMM, and panel smooth transition, the impact of natural resources on growth depended on institutional capacity and the degree of resource measurement. They decided that strong institutions are necessary to transform resources into growth. Yakubu (2020) explored the impact of institutional quality on foreign direct investment in Ghana from 1985 to 2016 using ARDL techniques. The study's findings showed that the quality of institutions has a large positive impact on FDI in the short and long run. While inflation mattered a lot, GDP per capita and trade didn't matter much over time. He suggested improving institutions to effectively attract sustainable foreign direct investment.

Methodology

Specification of the Model: This study aims to analyze the interactive effect of exchange rate volatility and institutional quality on economic growth in OEACs by incorporating an interactive term into the estimated model, as articulated in Equation (1), which is reformulated as follows:

$$GDP_{it} = (EXCVO_{it}, INQ_{it}, EXP_{it}, INF_{it}, MS_{it}, INT_{it}, EXCVO_{it} * INQ_{it}) \quad (1)$$

Representing $(EXCVO_{it} * INQ_{it})$ by $EXVNO_{it}$, and re-specifying the resultant equation explicitly in semi-log form, Equation (1) becomes:

$$LNGDP_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EXCVO_{it} + \beta_2 INQ_{it} + \beta_3 LNEXP_{it} + \beta_4 LNINF_{it} + \beta_5 LN(MS_{it}) + \beta_6 LN(INT_{it}) + \beta_7 EXVNO_{it} + \mu_{it} \quad (2)$$

Where $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5, \beta_6$ and β_7 are the coefficients of the independent variables and μ represents Error term or the residual.

Estimation Methodologies

To fulfill the study's purpose of analyzing the mediating role of institutional quality in the relationship between exchange rate volatility and economic growth in the OEACs, the Pooled Mean Group (PMG) method is utilized. The findings indicate specific effects of different variables in both the long-term and short-term equations.

Measurement of the Variables

This research employed panel data from specific oil-exporting African nations like Algeria, Angola, Chad, Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Nigeria, Sudan, and Gabon, with all variables obtained from the World Bank's World Development Indicators (WDI). The variables were quantified as detailed below:

Gross Domestic Product (GDP): Utilized as an indicator of economic growth,

Exchange Rate Volatility (EXCVO): Assessed with real exchange rate data.

Institutional Quality (INQ) is assessed by six governance indicators: Regulatory Quality (RQ), Rule of Law (ROL), Control of Corruption (COC), Voice and Accountability (VA), Government Effectiveness (GOVE), and Political Stability and Absence of Violence (POAV).

Exports (EXP): Defined as the aggregate value of products and services dispatched abroad.

Inflation (INF): Assessed by the yearly percentage variation in consumer prices.

Money Supply (MS): Denoted by broad money as a proportion of GDP.

Interest Rate (INT): Assessed by the loan interest rate.

Hypothesis of the Study

H₁: Exchange rate volatility significantly affects economic growth in OEACs.

H₂: Institutional quality significantly influences economic growth in OEACs.

H₃: Institutional quality significantly moderates the exchange rate volatility–growth relationship in OEACs.

Result and Analysis

Pre-Estimation Assessment

Cross-Sectional Dependence Test: Table 1 shows the outcome of various cross-sectional dependence tests relating to these variables where LGDP is the dependent variables and the EXCVO INQ LINF LINT LEXP MS are the independent variables. These tests show whether shocks or change in one country affect other panel countries or not. In the case of LGDP (GDP per capita) and EXCVO (Exchange Rate Volatility), all t-statistics are highly significant (p-value = 0.0000). This shows a high level of interdependence among countries possibly due to economic integration or a common economic shock. A strong reliance on INQ (Institutional Quality) exists, however, dependence on PCD was not significant (p = 0.1616) which implies a weaker or uneven reliance. The relationship between LINF and LINT across the cross-country linear is strong for all assessments. This is because the pairs tend to react to the law in the same manner or are influenced by the same region. Export (LEXP) is dependent on all tests including PCD; however, the size of the test statistic is small. MS (Money Supply) shows the strongest correlation as all tests produce highly significant results.

Table 1: Cross Section Dependence

	BP-LM	PS-LM	BCS-LM	PCD	Remark
LGDP	1196.916*** (0.0000)	121.4226*** (0.0000)	121.3036*** (0.0000)	24.39316*** (0.0000)	Cross Section dependence
EXCVO	270.4863*** (0.0000)	22.71425*** (0.0000)	22.59520*** (0.0000)	4.832832*** (0.0000)	Cross Section dependence
INQ	1367.339*** (0.0000)	139.3868*** (0.0000)	139.2677*** (0.0000)	1.39961* (0.1616)	Cross Section dependence
LINF	193.9271*** (0.0000)	15.69829*** (0.0000)	15.57924*** (0.0000)	8.511306*** (0.0000)	Cross Section dependence
LINT	1038.682*** (0.0000)	104.7433*** (0.0000)	104.6243*** (0.0000)	19.10052*** (0.0000)	Cross Section dependence
LEXP	746.1929*** (0.0000)	73.91222*** (0.0000)	73.79317*** (0.0000)	0.308487*** (0.0000)	Cross Section dependence
MS	1363.669*** (0.0000)	139*** (0.0000)	138.8809*** (0.0000)	36.30405*** (0.0000)	Cross Section dependence

Source: Authors’ Computation (2025)

4.2 Panel Unit Root Result

The results of the unit root test indicate that the variable under investigation is stationary. This means that, over time, panels have constant mean and variance, as a result, they are needed in panel data to make econometric inferences. The panel uses the Levin, Lin & Chu

(LLC) test, Fisher-ADF test and Fisher-PP test to test for unit roots under two different model specifications. The first is with individual effects while the other is with individual effects plus individual linear trends. The summary of unit root tests on GDP, exchange rate volatility (EXCVO), institutional quality (INQ), inflation (INF), interest rate (INT), exports (EXP) and money supply (MS) is presented in Table 2 with varying types of integration. Inflation (INF) is found to be level stationary, integrated of order zero, I(0), which means it is stationary without differencing and/or transformation. On the other hand, the other variables (GDP, EXCVO, INQ, INT, EXP, and MS) which were nonstationary at the levels become stationary after first differencing thus they are integrated of one order I(1).

Table 2: Panel Unit Root Result

PANEL UNIT ROOT TEST												
Individual Effects			Individual Effects, Individual Linear Trends									
VARIABLE	LLC P<0.05	HADRI P>0.05	IPS P<0.05	ADF P<0.05	PP P<0.05	LLC P<0.05	HADRI P>0.05	IPS P<0.05	ADF P<0.05	PP P<0.05	BS P<0.05	REMARK
GDP	-	12.226	1.943	8.941	15.671	1.943	6.043*	0.876	19.151	29.339	-	I(1)
	1.262	*** (0.000)	(0.974)	(0.984)	(0.737)	(0.974)	** (0.000)	(0.801 0)	(0.512)	(0.081)	0.042 (0.483)	
ΔGDP	(0.104)	1.854*	7.747**	102.769	146.270	-	5.036**	1.9430	74.646	362.506	-	I(1)
	-	(0.032)	*(0.000)	*** (0.000)	*** (0.000)	(0.000)	* (0.000)	(0.974)	5.950* ** (0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	
EXCVO	1.935	1.990*	-	83.687*	125.212	4.384	3.959*	-	59.891	107.00	4.214	I(1)
	(0.974)	*(0.023)	4.923** *(0.000)	** (0.000)	*** (0.000)	(1.000)	** (0.000)	3.082* *(0.001)	*** (0.000)	4*** (0.000)	(1.000)	
ΔEXCVO	-	0.461	-	229.575	259.331	3.297**	0.267	-	212.18	1136.2	4.270	I(1)
	5.786	*(0.322)	-	*** (0.000)	*** (0.000)	*(0.001)	(0.395)	-	0*** (0.000)	6*** (0.000)	(1.000)	
INQ	-	12.944	0.290	18.554	17.565	-0.356	7.584*	-	38.333	46.572	0.645	I(1)
	2.377	*** (0.000)	(0.614)	(0.551)	(0.616)	(0.361)	** (0.000)	2.718* (0.003)	* (0.008)	*** (0.000)	(0.741)	
ΔINQ	(0.009)	1.927*	10.64**	145.899	283.571	-	5.385**	-0.166	115.27	345.43	-	I(1)
	-	*(0.027)	*(0.000)	*** (0.000)	*** (0.000)	*(0.000)	(0.566)	-	7*** (0.000)	3*** (0.000)	6.683 (0.000)	
INF	-	7.599*	-	82.623*	84.376*	-	4.333*	-	66.127	63.452	-	I(0)
	4.502	** (0.000)	5.778** *(0.000)	** (0.000)	** (0.000)	4.398** *(0.000)	** (0.000)	4.617* (0.000)	*** (0.000)	*** (0.000)	4.61* ** (0.000)	
ΔINF	(0.000)	-7.062	-	243.024	313.066	-	1.554	-	216.23	999.27	0	I(0)
	-	(0.000)	16.77** *(0.000)	*** (0.000)	*** (0.000)	12.08** *(0.000)	(0.060)	-	8*** (0.000)	*** (0.000)	8.89* ** (0.000)	

INT	2.52 4 (0.99 4)	12.191 *** (0.000)	3.144 (0.999)	12.468 (0.899)	13.749 (0.843)	0.509 (0.695)	4.701* ** (0.000)	0.281 (0.611)	19.235 (0.507)	29.873 (0.072)	1.106 (0.86 6)	I(1)
ΔINT	- 11.9 3*** (0.00 0)	-0.223 (0.588)	11.94** * (0.000)	166.809 *** (0.000)	230.040 *** (0.000)	- 11.43** * (0.000)	1.776 (0.037 8)	- 10.99* ** (0.000)	140.03 0***	459.73 ***	- 7.380 *** (0.00 0)	
EXP	- 0.78 9 (0.21 50)	9.465* ** (0.000)	1.119 (0.869)	13.320 (0.863)	9.027 (0.983)	-1.838 (0.033)	4.517* ** (0.000)	-1.522 (0.064)	30.373 (0.064)	25.464 (0.184)	- 4.96* ** (0.00 0)	I(1)
ΔEXP	- 10.7 3*** (0.00 0)	-1.139 (0.873)	11.98** * (0.000)	167.419 ***	204.393 ***	- 9.416** * (0.000)	1.019 (0.154 0)	- 10.53* ** (0.000)	132.85 7***	432.55 4***	- 1.096 (0.13 7)	
MS	8.58 9 (1.00 0)	12.165 *** (0.000)	10.216 (1.0000)	7.863 (0.993)	28.208 (0.1045)	5.072 (1.000)	10.080 *** (0.000)	7.315 (1.000)	8.801 (0.985)	35.677 (0.017)	6.431 (1.00 0)	I(1)
ΔMS	0.68 0 (0.75 2)	9.843* ** (0.000)	2.887** (0.0019)	55.766* ** (0.000)	118.692 *** (0.000)	-1.398 (0.081)	8.662* ** (0.000)	- 4.340* ** (0.000)	65.839 ***	126.71 3***	1.438 (0.92 5)	

Source: Authors' Calculation (2025)

Analysis of Pooled Mean Group (PMG) Results

Table 3 assesses the mediating role of institutional quality (INQ) in the relationship between exchange rate volatility (EXCVO) and economic growth (LGDP) in oil-exporting African countries (OEACs) which include Algeria, Angola, Chad, Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Nigeria, Sudan, and Gabon with 43 each years of data. According to the research, Pooled Mean Group (PMG) is utilized in the analysis of short- and long-run dynamics such that the dependent variable is change in economic growth which is D(LGDP). The AIC suggests the variables that will be “EXCVO”, “INQ”, “LEXP”, “LINT”, “LINF”, “LMS” and “EXVNQ” each four lags respectively. The long-run results indicate that exchange rate volatility (EXCVO) exerts a positive and statistically significant effect on economic growth in oil-exporting African countries ($\beta = 0.511, p < 0.01$). This suggests that, over time, OEACs are able to adjust to currency fluctuations and exploit exchange rate movements to enhance export competitiveness, especially in oil and non-oil tradable sectors. Volatile exchange rates may encourage resource reallocation toward export-oriented production and improve balance-of-payments dynamics in the long run. However, the short-run estimates reveal a contrasting outcome. The contemporaneous change in exchange rate volatility (D(EXCVO)) is negative and significant ($\beta = -0.055, p < 0.01$), indicating that sudden exchange rate fluctuations hinder economic growth in the short term. This negative short-run effect reflects heightened uncertainty, increased transaction costs, disrupted investment planning, and reduced investor confidence. Therefore, exchange rate volatility has an asymmetric effect on growth, constraining economic performance in the short run but fostering growth in the long run once economic agents adapt.

The long-run coefficient of institutional quality (INQ) is statistically significant ($\beta = -0.148, p < 0.01$), confirming that institutional structures play a crucial role in shaping economic growth in OEACs. This result highlights the importance of governance quality,

including regulatory effectiveness, rule of law, control of corruption, and political stability, in determining long-term economic performance. Strong institutions enhance policy credibility, improve resource allocation, and create an enabling environment for investment and productivity growth. In contrast, the short-run coefficients of institutional quality and its lags are statistically insignificant, indicating that institutional reforms do not generate immediate growth effects. Instead, their influence accumulates gradually through improved policy implementation, macroeconomic stability, and investor confidence. This finding underscores that institutional quality is fundamentally a long-term growth determinant rather than a short-term stabilizing mechanism in oil-exporting African economies. The interaction term between exchange rate volatility and institutional quality (EXVNO) is positive and highly significant in the long run ($\beta = 0.095$, $p < 0.01$), providing strong evidence that institutional quality moderates the impact of exchange rate volatility on economic growth. This implies that in OEACs with stronger institutions, the adverse effects of exchange rate volatility are reduced and can even be transformed into growth-enhancing opportunities. Effective institutions facilitate prudent monetary and fiscal responses, limit speculative behavior, and enhance economic resilience during periods of currency instability. However, in the short run, the interaction term and its lags are statistically insignificant, indicating that the moderating role of institutions does not operate immediately. Instead, institutional quality strengthens the economy's capacity to absorb and manage exchange rate shocks over time, reinforcing the conclusion that institutional effectiveness is essential for converting exchange rate volatility into sustained economic growth.

The impact of the current interest rate (D(LINT)) on the dependent variable is positive, but not significant ($\beta = 0.115$, $t = 1.009$, $\rho = 0.316$). In other words, variations in the interest rate do not meaningfully impact the dependent variable in the short term. Also, D(LINT(-1)) ($\beta = 0.017$, $t = 0.263$, $\rho = 0.793$) and D(LINT(-2)) ($\beta = -0.045$, $t = -0.729$, $\rho = 0.468$) and D(LINT(-3)) ($\beta = 0.031$, $t = 0.665$, $\rho = 0.506$) do not show any significance either. Inflation shows a statistically demonstrably significant relationship with the dependent variable. The current change in inflation (D(LINF)) exhibits a positive and significant coefficient ($\beta = 0.088$, $t = 2.175$, $\rho = 0.032$), signifying that inflation rises promote short-term increases in the dependent variable. The second lag of inflation (D(LINF(-2))) has a statistical significance that is indicated in these tests ($\beta = 0.070$, $t = 2.026$, $\rho = 0.046$) whereas the first (D(LINF(-1)); $\beta = 0.020$, $t = 0.421$, $\rho = 0.675$) and third (D(LINF(-3)); $\beta = 0.027$, $t = 1.051$, $\rho = 0.296$) delays are not significant. In the short run, the money supply and its lags are not statistically significant. The money supply found now is negative but not significant ($\beta = -13.837$, $t = -1.104$, $\rho = 0.273$). Just like above, we see that D(LMS(-1)) ($\beta = 6.793$, $t = 1.426$, $\rho = 0.157$) , D(LMS(-2)) ($\beta = -15.446$, $t = -0.726$, $\rho = 0.470$) , and D(LMS(-3)) ($\beta = -4.789$, $t = -0.410$, $\rho = 0.682$) exert weak influence on the dependent variable, and are statistically insignificant.

Discussion of Findings

The panel form of the ARDL model prefaced by the Pooled Mean Group indicates that exchange rate volatility leads to a significant impact on the economic growth of Oil-Exporting African Countries (OEACs). This evidence indicates exchange rate volatility has positive long run effect on economic growth. This effect may seem paradoxical. When a currency's value decreases, demand increases because exports are cheaper than imports. This enhances their competitiveness. Short-term uncertainty for the investors and the firms creates economic instability in the country. OEACs policy makers should use foreign exchange reserves and manipulation of foreign exchange markets to stabilize exchange rates. To reap the long term

benefit, it is required to work on economic adjustment policies. In addition, the capacity of only OEACs for determining economic growth is deficient in their short-term quality. OEACs' economic growth is damaged due to the absence of a strong institutional framework. Corruption is a poor governance phenomenon, which happens to obstruct sustained economic growth other poor regulatory development processes. For equality in economic activity institutions like access to legal framework and regulatory environment must be empowered. A powerful institution is also a good thing apart from aiding economic growth. It also helps to reduce the negative impacts of currency fluctuations exchanges. The study indicates that with a better institutional quality, the negative impacts of exchange rate volatility on growth increases.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study explores the impact of the exchange rate instability on economic growth in Oil Exporting African Countries (OEAC) and whether institutional quality can offset such effect. The findings reveal that If countries can handle volatility for a longer time, then growth opportunities can multiply. To address the risks posed by the exchange rate fluctuation and enjoy the benefits, policymakers should strengthen the institutions and diversify the economy. Also, they need to administer these policies to get good results. Flexibility and strategic implementation in OEACs will allow them to manage fluctuating currency leading to economic stability and resilience. It will make them successful in an increasingly unpredictable world market. Governments of African oil-exporting countries must strengthen their governance frameworks, improve the effectiveness of regulations and fight against corruption to alleviate negative effects and optimize long-term benefits. In the same way, using foreign exchange intervention and reserve buffers in a timely manner is also important to reduce excess volatility and uncertainty. Governments in the OEACs must have good inflation-targeting systems to reduce inflationary pressures and dependence on imports and enhance capacities and capabilities of their domestic industries. To keep the economy healthy government may increase interest rates to attract foreign investors. However, local businesses and consumers should have affordable interest rates, to grow the economy.

References

- Abere, S. S., & Akinbobola, T. O. (2020). External shocks, institutional quality, and macroeconomic performance in Nigeria. *Sage Open*, 10(2), 2158244020919518.
- Agyemang, J., Azure, J., Kimani, D., and Arun, T. (2023). Governmental fiscal resilience during pandemics: the West African context. *Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting & Financial Management*, 35(3), 385-414.
- Bashir, M. S., and Ibrahim, A. A. A. 2024. Modeling the Export-led Growth Hypothesis: Empirical Evidence from Sudan.
- Boateng, E. (2020). *An Empirical Investigation of the Impact of Foreign Aid and Institutional Quality on Savings, Investment and Economic Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Newcastle).
- Boubacar, S., Sarpong, F. A., and Nyantakyi, G. 2024. Analyzing the influence of foreign direct investment on CO2 emissions within Africa's growth trajectory. *Environment, Development, and Sustainability*, pages 1-34.
- Epo, B. N., & Nochi Faha, D. R. (2020). Natural resources, institutional quality, and economic growth: An African tale. *The European Journal of Development Research*, 32(1), 99-128.

- Fraj, S. H., Hamdaoui, M., & Maktouf, S. (2018). Governance and economic growth: The role of the exchange rate regime. *International economics*, 156, 326-364.
- Guzman, M., Ocampo, J. A., and Stiglitz, J. E. 2018. Policies regarding the real exchange rate for economic advancement. *World Development*, 110, 51-62.
- Hakim, A. 2024. Volatility of exchange rates and its impact on export performance: the instance of Malaysia. *International Journal of Economics*, Volume 9, Issue 2, Pages 1-12.
- Heinzel, M., Weaver, C., and Jorgensen, S. 2025. Bureaucratic representation and gender mainstreaming inside international organizations: Evidence from the World Bank. *American Political Science Review*, Volume 119, Issue 1, Pages 332-348.
- Lal, M., Kumar, S., Pandey, D. K., Rai, V. K., and Lim, W. M. 2023. Fluctuations in exchange rates and global commerce. *Journal of Business Research*, Volume 167, Article 114156.
- Mehtiyev, J., Magda, R., & Vasa, L. 2021. The influence of exchange rates on international trade. *Economic Annals-XXI/Economic Journal-XXI*, 190.
- Munzhelele, T. 2024. The Interconnection of Corruption, Inflation, Political Instability, and Exchange Rate Volatility in South Africa. *International Journal of Economics and Business Administration (IJEBA)*, Volume 12, Issue 4, Pages 72-86.
- Odhiambo, N. M., Owusu, E. L., and Asongu, S. A. (Editors). 2023. *Financial strategies for sustainable development in Africa: Progress, effects, and policy ramifications*. Taylor and Francis.
- Omotayo, L. W., Na-Allah, A., Iyoboyi, M., & Kyarem, R. (2023). Impact of Institutional Quality on Exchange Rate Volatility in Nigeria. *Journal of Arid Zone Economy*, 1(1), 1-14.
- Ramoni-Perazzi, J., & Romero, H. (2022). Exchange rate volatility, corruption, and economic growth. *Heliyon*, 8(12).
- Tran, O. K. T., Le, H. D., & Nguyen, A. H. V. (2021). Role of institutional quality in economic development: A case study of Asian countries. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 19(2), 357-369.
- Wang, K. 2024. Exchange Rates and Economic Stability: The Federal Reserve's Monetary Policy. *Advances in Economics, Management, and Political Sciences*, 142, 45-51.
- Yakubu, I. N. (2020). Institutional quality and foreign direct investment in Ghana: A bounds-testing cointegration approach. *Review of International Business and Strategy*, 30(1), 109-122.

Appendix

Table 3: Aggregated Mean Group (PMG) Outcomes

Dependent Variable: D(LGDP)				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.*
Long Run Equation				
EXCVO	0.511	0.050	10.232	0.000
INQ	-0.148	0.013	-11.052	0.000
LEXP	-0.321	0.093	-3.443	0.001
LINT	0.081	0.064	1.251	0.214
LINF	-1.136	0.112	-10.180	0.000
LMS	0.041	0.298	0.137	0.891
EXVNQ	0.095	0.007	13.692	0.000
Short Run Equation				
COINTEQ01	-0.056	0.025	-2.237	0.028
D(LGDP(-1))	0.140	0.132	1.065	0.290
D(LGDP(-2))	-0.044	0.279	-0.157	0.876
D(LGDP(-3))	0.270	0.205	1.315	0.192

D(EXCVO)	-0.055	0.017	-3.293	0.001
D(EXCVO(-1))	-0.039	0.040	-0.974	0.333
D(EXCVO(-2))	-0.021	0.060	-0.351	0.726
D(EXCVO(-3))	-0.032	0.060	-0.539	0.592
D(INQ)	0.010	0.007	1.425	0.158
D(INQ(-1))	0.009	0.011	0.860	0.392
D(INQ(-2))	-0.007	0.005	-1.269	0.208
D(INQ(-3))	-0.007	0.005	-1.513	0.134
D(LEXP)	0.119	0.065	1.833	0.070
D(LEXP(-1))	0.185	0.104	1.773	0.080
D(LEXP(-2))	0.043	0.084	0.506	0.614
D(LEXP(-3))	-0.031	0.090	-0.344	0.732
D(LINT)	0.115	0.114	1.009	0.316
D(LINT(-1))	0.017	0.065	0.263	0.793
D(LINT(-2))	-0.045	0.062	-0.729	0.468
D(LINT(-3))	0.031	0.046	0.667	0.506
D(LINF)	0.088	0.041	2.175	0.032
D(LINF(-1))	0.020	0.046	0.421	0.675
D(LINF(-2))	0.070	0.034	2.026	0.046
D(LINF(-3))	0.027	0.026	1.051	0.296
D(LMS)	-13.837	12.537	-1.104	0.273
D(LMS(-1))	6.793	4.762	1.426	0.157
D(LMS(-2))	-15.446	21.279	-0.726	0.470
D(LMS(-3))	-4.789	11.669	-0.410	0.682
D(EXVNQ)	-0.006	0.008	-0.734	0.465
D(EXVNQ(-1))	0.001	0.011	0.099	0.922
D(EXVNQ(-2))	-0.009	0.016	-0.568	0.571
D(EXVNQ(-3))	0.009	0.015	0.637	0.525
C	0.838	0.368	2.278	0.025

Source: Authors computations (2025)



JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Volume 1, Number 8 (December, 2025)

ISSN: 1595-9457 (online); 3043-4211 (print)

Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

Received: November 15, 2025 Accepted: December 21, 2025 Published: December 31, 2025

Citation: Uwadiae, Sylvester O. (2025). "Workplace Diversity Training and Employee Engagement in the Oil and Gas Industry in Nigeria." *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1 (8): 49-62.

Article

Open Access

WORKPLACE DIVERSITY TRAINING AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA

Sylvester Omorogieva Uwadiae

Silmartech AR Ltd (Consultancy Services), Warri, Nigeria

Email: nekpensly@gmail.com

Abstract

The study examined the relationship between workplace diversity training and employee engagement. The objectives of the study were to determine the relationship between diversity training, targeted internship and inclusive mentorship programmes and employee engagement. This study adopted a survey research instrument through the administration of questionnaires to 318 staff of Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), now known as Renaissance Africa Energy Company, in their Swamp locations in Delta and Bayelsa States of South-South Nigeria. The data for the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression technique. The outcome of the study showed that diversity training has a significant negative relationship with employee engagement at p-value < 0.05 level of significance, targeted internship programme has a significant positive relationship with employee engagement at p-value < 0.05 level of significance, and inclusive mentorship programme has no significant positive relationship with employee engagement at p-value > 0.05. The study recommended that management of Renaissance Africa Energy Company should adopt diversity training as element of employee development because of the influence it has on employee engagement and also targeted internship programme as a vital workplace diversity training parameter that would strongly improve on employee engagement.

Keywords: Diversity Training, Employee Engagement, Inclusive Mentorship Programme, Targeted Internship Programme, Workplace Diversity.

Introduction

Globalization has made it morally and legally necessary for managers of organizations to imbibe and incorporate a culture of diversity and inclusion in their various work settings. This is only achievable through deliberate effort in training workforce to understand the value of collaboration in achieving organizational goals and objectives (Seliverstova & Pierog,

Copyright © 2025 By JPPSS. Publishers: Omega Books

This is an open access article which permits unrestricted use provided the work is properly cited.

2021). Unless employees are trained in achieving workplace synergy despite diversity, organisations may be unnecessarily exposed to crisis prone work environment and become incapable of competing favorably in its local and foreign market. Similarly, multinational organizations who fail to demonstrate effective diversity management may head for a very challenging business adventures (Deari, et al, 2008). Across the world, there is increasing number of racial and minority migrants. The Office Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) alone recorded over 1,270,000 immigrants between 2022 and 2024 (IRCC, 2024). This trend cuts across many other Western nations. With growing consciousness of human rights, and as these migrants occupy major and sensitive positions among the workforce across many nations; managing diversity through training becomes a critical aspect of corporate management philosophy globally. However, getting people from different background to work in harmony with common purpose is a herculean task, but can also present opportunities for competitive advantage through rich availability of different skills, methods and strategies of doing things (Cletus, et al., 2018).

Training provides opportunity for learning, and this becomes a very important organisational requirement, particularly due to demographic changes in the global workforce and different interests of expanding stakeholders of a growing organisation. The advancement of any economy is directly related to increase in collective corporate performance and effectiveness through efficient and effective workforce which can be achieved by workplace diversity training. Training and awareness campaign, proper understanding of diversity can be achieved to create a work environment where diversity does not constitute any hindrance to work process (Nyakuma et al, 2016). When an organisation effectively manages the issues that could impact negatively on employee productivity and create a positive and ebullient work environment, it increases its chances of competitive advantage, growth and stability (Emma, 2018). The key to this is effective workplace diversity and employee engagement because the significant growth and development of nearly all the developed countries of the world have showed that people are the driving force and the most important factor in both corporate and national growth and development. Besides, where diversity issues are not properly managed, it could generate frictions within an organisation and produce a work situation that lacks synergy (Alnuami, 2022). Goel (2018) studied different issues relating to workplace diversity and employee engagement and drew a general conclusion across organisations concerning the benefits and challenges but this study seeks to narrow the scope to a particular industry – oil and gas, in the sense that the peculiarity of work environment could differently influence the impact of workplace diversity. Training is therefore vital to bridging the gap between workplace diversity and employee engagement. Having noted that oil and gas business characteristically attract a complex network of employees, some studies (Yakoob, et al, 2018; Azila-Gbettor, et al, 2022 and Ali & Swart, 2023) did not clearly establish the strategic impact of internship in managing workplace diversity, hence this study attempts to close the gap by the introduction of targeted internship and inclusive mentorship programme. However, the overall rationale behind this study is to investigate the relationship between workplace diversity training and employee engagement.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Concept and Importance of Employee Engagement: Managers have a responsibility to build productive workforce and productivity and effectiveness of any organisation largely depend on workplace synergy and collaboration. In the same vein, engaged employees are more

effective in team work and team bonding. Awan and Aslam (2019) defined employee engagement as a consistent positive, fulfilling connection a worker has with his job that is demonstrated by commitment, organizational citizenship, and unrelenting resolve to deliver at his best. Wesley and Krishnan (2013) connected employee engagement with retention of competent workers and elimination of labour turnover in that engaged employees hardly leave their job because they see it as part of their source of happiness. When organisation has high capacity to retain competent employees with work enthusiasm, organisational sustainability is enhanced, efficiency is improved and sustained to position the organisation for market leadership in the industry it operates even at odd times (Ojo, et al., 2021). It is in consideration of the importance of employee engagement that modern management philosophy places emphasis on human resource factors in achieving targets and maintaining market share. But it is doubtful if employee engagement is achievable in a diverse workforce that is not properly managed, considering the enormity of diversity and its implication in the Nigerian oil and gas sector and by extension, other business settings in the Nigerian economy. It is this line of thought that makes (Kumar, 2021) to state that employee engagement is a performance construct and behaviour in the sense that behaviour in relation to other is an integral aspect of achieving work synergy amidst diversity at workplace.

Many organisations recognise the fact that employees are tangible assets and determine both the growth and survival of business; and emerging global business sustainability strategies include strengthening and enhancing employee engagement to establish competitive advantage besides other benefits (Aboramadan, Albashiti, Alharazin, & Dahleez, 2020). Employee engagement has been identified to affect retention, commitment and productivity of employees, including corporate image and overall value of organisation's stakeholders and modern managers take this into consideration and make frantic effort to create enabling environment for achieving effective organisational performance through employee engagement (Gouda & Tiwari, 2022). It is important for organisations to prioritise employee engagement because it is a sure path to increased productivity, sustained customer satisfaction, high employee retention rate, promotion of better brand building and development, boosting of bottom line, attraction of good talent to the organisation, decreasing absenteeism and improving overall profitability and growth of business (Aboramadan et al, 2020). Leading a team of workers who are committed and connected to their work is the dream of every manager. That is, managers want a team of engaged employees and when this is achieved, teams grow from being good to being great, challenges are converted to opportunities and remarkable achievements are made because people give it their all in driving organisational goals and objectives (Abdulrahman & Taqi 2020; Olatunji & Ibrahim, 2019). Employee engagement has a comprehensive influence on the future growth, stability and sustainability of any organisation, considering the following importance of this vital factor in the running of an organisation:

- i. Effective team performance is not only individual employees that benefit from employee engagement, it also benefits the team because engaged employees rate higher in performance and when they work together as a team, the results are outstanding. Besides, morale at workplace is contagious which makes a team member surrounded by engaged peers to push for better performance. In essence, individual engagement can propel team engagement and individual performance also can generate improved team performance (Gouda & Tiwari 2022).

- ii. Greater employee productivity suggests that engaged employees are more efficient and committed to quality work because they have a sense of personal investment in their job. It also matters to them how the outcome would be. They align with business goals and objectives and feel accountable for their individual contribution and this leads to better productivity and returns to business (Putra, Sapta & Suardhika, 2021)
- iii. Actualisation of team objectives is achieved when it comes to meeting or achieving tasks and targets. Employee engagement plays a vital role in a team's success and effectiveness. A manager who focuses on the goal of his team without paying attention to employee engagement side of it may not achieve its aim. Engaged employees are more motivated to work towards the actualisation of common objectives and team members that are aligned with goals and objectives feel more engaged (Jnaneswar & Ranjit, 2023).
- iv. Reduces stress at workplace – both engaged and disengaged staff are prone to workplace stress but the difference lies on how this is perceived by the individual employee. For an engaged employee, workplace stress is easier to manage and can be converted to source of motivation. Managing stress at work is not a challenge for an engaged employee because they can easily access support and have better self awareness to detect when their stress level passes healthy threshold (Knotts & Houghton, 2021).
- v. Prevention of risk of burnout – often times, many employees face the risk of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion because of the absence or little of work systems that engender employee engagement but this negative work condition can be prevented when managers consciously create work environment that promotes employee engagement. When employees are collectively engaged, work nearly almost becomes pleasure and opportunity for exciting experience. Burnout is an unpleasant experience for any employee and the role of engagement in preventing it needs emphasis (Sepahvand & Khodashahri, 2021).
- vi. Lower employee absenteeism – absenteeism is a common unethical feature in Nigeria public service because of job dissatisfaction, economic stress and other factors that make the work environment psychologically straining and when workloads are becoming overwhelming, it impacts negatively on work-life balance. However, managers can improve on employee engagement by fostering a motivating environment that prioritises employee well-being and in the process generate employees who have enthusiasm and excitement to show for work. It is very unlikely and practically not workable to match engagement with absenteeism (Madu & Abbo, 2023).
- vii. Higher employee retention and lower turnover rates – for some employees, interest is more important than financial rewards. Engaged worker is one who is interested in his job. Building a high performing team requires getting employees to have a sense of organisational citizenship through engagement; and long standing employees are assets to an organisation that can increase efficiency and productivity through knowledge, experience and training. For an organisation to sustain retention of such employees, engagement is a critical factor (Riyanto & Novita, 2021).

Diversity Training and Employee Engagement

Managing diversity is a critical aspect of corporate management philosophy. This is because getting people from different background to work in harmony with common purpose is a herculean task. It can also present opportunities for competitive advantage through rich

availability of different skills, methods and strategies of doing things. Training does not only provide relevant information, but also creates the basis for readjustment of views and development of better ideas (Fredette & Bernstein, 2019). Effective workplace diversity training programme is a critical concern for the survival of the 21st century business. The concept of diversity brings to limelight the need to respect and accept the different attributes, values and world view. Competency training is the ability of employees as well as their employers to participate actively, effectively and ethically in professional and personal intercultural environment (Bans-Akutey, et al., 2022). A trained employee in cross-culture understands employee values and also the implication of showing regard and respect for the cultural values of others. Thus, there is a link between training and employee engagement because a trained employee is better equipped for effective workplace interpersonal relationship, good communication style which enhances productive collaboration and achievement of organisational goals and objectives (Dale-Olsen & Finseraas, 2020). Manukaji, et al. (2019) used ex post-facto research design to assess the effect of human-resources development on performance in Nigeria measured by return on asset (ROA) covering the period of 2014 to 2018. The descriptive-statistics, correlation test and ordinary least-square estimation technique was used to analyse the data. The training and development cost exhibit a significant effect on performance. Based on the review of literature, the study hypothesis is proposed as: There is a significant relationship between diversity training and employee engagement in the Oil Gas industry in Nigeria

Targeted Internship Programme and Employee Engagement

Many organisations are aware of the internship programmes and it is important that managers key into this timely in the process of building a team that would provide the desired results of the organisation in which they are hired. Internship provides valuable employees and skillful job applicants to prospective organisations. In managing workplace diversity, it is important for managers to target internship programmes that equip employees with training during their course programmes and therefore save their companies training and development costs by providing already trained targeted employees. This is why it is important to give appropriate attention to internship programme to meet the needs of ever increasing competitive job market in a globalised world (Mor-Barak, Luria & Brimhall, 2021). In coping with the challenges of work environment, interns have been adjudged to do better and grow faster in job performance (Cao, Lee & Waung, 2023). Internship provides the platform for potential employees to acquire skills that are not obtainable in the classroom environment and gives employers the opportunity to recruit at low cost and possibly pay less for labour (Ali & Swart, 2023). Interns acquire interpersonal skills, professionalism, team-working experience and other on the job training (OJT) experiences that speed up productivity and efficiency. Interns are better prepared to cope with the challenges of workplace diversity when they are targeted for such training as a part of the total package of their job demand.

Learning by doing which internship entails helps to build self-confidence, capacity and resourceful experience (Chong & Yazdani, 2020). Trained contributors (interns) are best to recognize opportunities in the organisation and industry, thereby willingly picking area of interest where they can function effectively and be engaged (Teekens, et al., 2021). When an organisation is deliberate in this approach to target internship for a well-defined purpose, employee engagement can be achieved. Yaakob, et al. (2018) carried a survey on the effect of internship on job performance by assessing students' perception, using primary data of

526 samples of students that have completed the internship course at Politeknik Ungku Omar (PUO). The result of the analysis indicated that knowledge and experience obtained during internship has positive effects on graduates on their job performance. Ali and Swart (2023) studied the dynamics of individual's commitment in internship context. Data was collected through structured interviews from 20 interns in the UK in three professional service firms. Findings revealed that the decision of an individual intern to maintain commitment is influenced by long term employment goals. Based on the review of literature, the study hypothesis is proposed as: There is a significant relationship between targeted internship programme and employee engagement in the Oil Gas industry in Nigeria.

Inclusive Mentorship Programme and Employee Engagement

In character formation, most human beings are essentially a product of nurturing through various forms of education, both formal and informal. Mentorship creates room for character formation for a particular purpose and this can become a very useful tool in achieving diversity and inclusiveness in the workplace. One key way to sustain efficiency and effectiveness in an organisation is mentorship. People in organisation must be groomed to be good ambassadors of the firm, and when it comes to workplace diversity and employee engagement, mentorship provides learning, unlearning and relearning process to bring out the best in people (Khelifa & Mahdjoub, 2022). Initiating a mentoring plan within an organisation gives mentees a clear direction of career through internal recruitment, and prevents attrition of talented employees in an organisation. Inclusive mentoring gives employees a sense of organisational citizenship, career direction and prospects which can lead to employee engagement (Mor-Barak, et al., 2021). Inclusive mentorship programme builds confidence, professional, technical and management skills. It provides a platform for aligning employee's career prospects with organisational goals, when this is achieved, employee engagement becomes a natural outcome (Delgado-Piña, et al., 2020). Thus, inclusive mentorship must continue to be in the planning, thinking and discussion of modern managers in order to achieve employee engagement in workplace diversity (Roberson, 2020). Graham, et al. (2023) conducted a study on inclusive talent management philosophy, talent management practices and employees' outcomes. The study used structural equation modelling to analyse data collected through questionnaire-based survey from 373 employees and 65 managers. Their findings established that inclusive philosophy and practices have positive relationship with employee's job satisfaction and performance which can lead to reduced employee turnover.

Molla and Shawlin (2023) examined the role of leaders in integrating diversity and inclusion within an organisation. Applying qualitative research design, data were collected from leaders in various organisations in Sweden using thematic analysis to explore the perceptions, experiences and practices of leaders in integrating diversity and inclusion in their organisations. Findings suggest that leaders, through mentorship and other practices play critical role in shaping organisational culture and practices that are connected to diversity and inclusion. Onyia, et al. (2019) studied the nexus between mentoring dimensions and organisational commitment of academic staff in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria. Using the data collected from 315 respondents including interviews of senior academic staff, the data analysis with multiple correlations and regression revealed that mentoring has a significant positive effect on employee's organisational commitment and engagement. Based on the review of literature, the study hypothesis is proposed as:

There is a significant relationship between inclusive mentorship programme and employee engagement in the Oil Gas industry in Nigeria.

Theoretical Review

Social Exchange Theory: Homans (1961), Emerson (1962, '72) and Blau (1964) were the earliest writers about the social exchange theory. The philosophical inspiration for their writings was drawn from the orientations they derived from utilitarianism which approves of any action that is in favour of majority regardless of the implications to the minority. For Homans (1961), his emphasis was the dominant behaviour of actors within group interaction, and to understand the processes of social behaviour from bottom to top. Homans described social exchange as the exchange of activity, whether tangible or intangible which is rewarding more or less between two or more persons. Cost is therefore the main element of social actors, in which case, behaviour is a function of the expected reward, whether the reward is coming from human or nonhuman environment or other people. Emerson (1972) ultimately developed a psychological basis for exchange which was on the principle of reinforcement. Homans established a relationship between social organization and the nature of social interaction showing how X's behaviour reinforced Y's behaviour and vice versa. Values are therefore determined by an actor's history of reinforcement. Homans focus was the social behaviour that results from social processes of reinforcement. Therefore, where there is no reinforcement, social relations can terminate. The work of Homans was mainly about dyadic exchange in social relation which was based on rewards and punishment.

Managers are therefore obliged to create a social system of reinforcement of rewardable behaviour in managing workplace diversity. In training to manage workplace diversity it is expedient also to package the curriculum to emphasize the importance of good interpersonal relationship which creates mutual benefit both in skill development, competence and capacity. In managing workplace diversity with application of this theory, it is expected of managers to propose behaviour patterns that attract reward in order to prevent the possible negative vices that emanate from workplace diversity and this can be achieved through training for appropriate workplace behaviour by mentorship or otherwise. This approach matches what Homans described as the stimulus proposition – the proposition that a behaviour that was rewarded will be repeated in similar situation. The second proposition is that the more valuable the reward of a behaviour to an actor, the more chances that the action will be repeatedly performed and placed in high premium. The third proposition which is the deprivation-satiation proposition implies that the more often a person has recently received a certain compensation for a behaviour or action, the less valuable an additional unit of that compensation. And also that an individual or individuals will respond emotionally to different reward situations. These propositions were aimed at predetermining the behaviour of individuals in different situations and circumstances. In managing workplace diversity, managers and organizations are able to create social and rewards designs to be able to predict individual behaviour and applicable management system.

Methodology

Research Design: The Survey Research Design was used for this study, whereby information were collected from Shell Petroleum Development Company (Renaissance Africa Energy

Company), West Asset, through the conduct of interview and administration of questionnaire to staff and collection of some classified information. SPDC (Renaissance) operations cut across Nigeria’s Niger-Delta area and some parts of East and West. However, the entire intermediate and junior staff of the organization, Northern and Southern Swamps/offshore locations which are about 1540 workers (Personnel on board (POB) data records, 2023) formed the population of this study. This workforce consists of direct and contractor staff of the company, both local and expatriates, and they are made up of highly qualified and trained individuals with vast array of experiences that cut across the various functional lines of oil and gas production, which include operations (flow station and well head), instrumentation, mechanical, electrical and logistics. These employees, particularly the population of study, are grouped into two categories of intermediate staff (60%), junior staff (40%) in each location, and spread into production/operations, maintenance, logistics and security for the purpose of this study. However, the descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation matrix and multiple regressions were used in the analysis of the data collated for this study.

Table 3.1: Population and Sample Size distribution of SPDC employees of each location

S/N	Name of Location	Population Size	Administered	State of Location
1	Otumara Flow Station and Gas Plant	217	45	Delta
2	Forcados Terminal and Crude Loading Platform	350	72	Delta
3	Escravos Flow Station and Natural Gas Plant	95	20	Delta
4	North and South Bank Flow Station	135	28	Delta
5	Opukushi Flow Station	150	31	Bayelsa
6	Benesede Flow Station	103	21	Bayelsa
7	Ogbotobo Flow Staton	95	21	Bayelsa
8	Tunu Flow Station and Gas Plant	315	65	Bayelsa
9	Yokri Flow Station	80	17	Bayelsa
Total population and sample size		1540	320	

Source: Locations personnel on board (POB) data records (2025).

The sample size for this study was based on Yamane’s formula (1967). The Yamane’s formula is stated, thus:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)} \dots\dots\dots (3.1)$$

Where: n = sample size; N = Population size; e = Level of significance desired

$$n = \frac{1540}{1 + 1540(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \underline{318}$$

In view of the above formula, the minimum sample size for this study was approximately 318. Respondents were proportionally selected from different locations based on the population of each location using the formula as described below:

$$R = n/N \times n2 \dots\dots\dots (3.1)$$

Where:

R = number of respondents from each location

n = sample size

N = total population

n_2 = population of each location

Model Specification

The study employed a Multiple Regression Model (MRM) to test the formulated hypotheses. A MRM is one that seeks to elucidate change in the value of one variable called the dependent variable on the basis of changes in other variables known as the independent or explanatory variables. The model is broken down in equation 3.2 to 3.3 as represented below:

The functional model is re-written as:

$$EEG = f(DTR, TIP, IMP) \dots\dots\dots (3.2)$$

The econometric model with an error term was represented in equation 3.3 below;

$$EEG = \beta_0 + \beta_1 DTR + \beta_2 TIP + \beta_3 IMP + e_t \dots\dots\dots (3.3)$$

Where;

EEG = Employee engagement

DTR= Diversity training

TIP = Targeted internship programme

IMP = Inclusive mentorship programme

β_0 = Constant

$\beta_1 - \beta_3$ = are the regression coefficients to be determined

e_t = The error term

The hypothetical signs of the variables as specified are:

$$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3 > 0.$$

Research Instrument

This work sampled staff of Renaissance, West, Swamp I and II locations, who are well trained professionals and considered appropriate to elicit reliable information from them through the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of items made up of multiple choice responses using likert-type questions which are very suitable for measuring attitude towards objects or for obtaining respondents evaluation of a phenomenon. The sample size was 318 staff working in Renaissance Africa Energy Company. The questionnaire was adapted from the work of Ohiorenoya and Uwadiae (2016). It contains 9 questions for measuring the independent variable and its disaggregated elements and 4 measuring the dependent variable. The five point likert-scale questions (5= strongly agree to 1= strongly disagree) were used and are believed to be very suitable for measuring attitude and evaluation of a phenomenon. Reliability is explained as the quality of the evaluation process in establishing the consistency of the construct items. The reliability of the research instrument in this study was established for every objective in order to know if each of them will produce consistent results. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient value exceeding 0.70 was achieved and thus considered to be reliable and measures the desired values between the construct items.

Data Presentation and Analyses of Results

The presentation and analysis of the data in this study was guided by the research objectives. Out of 320 copies of the questionnaire administered, 288 were retrieved. The 288 copies of the questionnaire were found usable and accounted for 90.6% of the questionnaire administered. Firstly, the demographic characteristics of the respondents which include gender, age, marital status, qualification, and years of experience, department, position and flow station were presented and discussed. This is followed by the description of dependent

variable (employee engagement) and the independent variables (diversity training, targeted internship and inclusive mentorship programme).

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics result was presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Result

PARAMETER	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EEG	288	1.00	5.00	3.8299	.85539
DTR	283	1.00	5.00	3.5059	.75635
TIP	288	1.33	5.00	4.0382	.79420
IMP	288	1.00	5.00	4.0833	.81697
Valid N (listwise)	283				

Source: SPSS 21.0 Output (2025).

The result in Table 1 above showed that employee engagement (EEG) has a mean value of 3.8299 with a corresponding standard deviation value of 0.8554. Diversity training (DTR) has a mean value of 3.5059 with a corresponding standard deviation value of 0.7563. Targeted internship programme (TIP) has a mean value of 4.0382 with a corresponding standard deviation value of 0.7942 and inclusive mentorship programme (IMP) has a mean value of 4.0833 with a corresponding standard deviation value of 0.8169.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation result is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix Result

	EEG	DTR	TIP	IMP
EEG	1.000			
DTR	-0.180**	1.000		
TIP	0.284**	-0.063	1.000	
IMP	0.237**	-0.025	0.645**	1.000

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

Source: SPSS 21.0 Output (2025).

Table 2 above indicates that diversity training (DTR) has a value of -0.180. This indicates that cross-cultural diversity training is negatively and moderately correlated with employee engagement (EEG) whereas Targeted internship programme (TIP) has a value of 0.284. This implies that targeted internship programme is positively but moderately correlated with employee engagement (EEG). Inclusive mentorship programme (IMP) has a value of 0.237. This implies that inclusive mentorship programme is positively and moderately correlated with employee engagement (EEG). A careful examination of the correlation coefficients, none of independent variable was perfectly correlated. This implies that there is absence of multicollinearity in the variables.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Results

Variable	Coefficient	t-test	P-value
C	3.168	8.681	.000
DTR	-0.187	-2.915	.004
TIP	0.228	2.879	.004
IMP	0.098	1.270	.205
R-squared	0.110		
Adjusted R-squared	0.101		
F-statistic	11.52		
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000		

Durbin-Watson	1.843
---------------	-------

Source: SPSS 21.0 Output (2025)

It is observed from Table 3 above that R^2 value of 0.110 implies that 11% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the independence variables. This is supported by the adjusted R^2 of 0.101. The F-statistic value of 11.52 with probability value (0.000) < 0.05 showed that the multiple regression fitted is valid, reliable, appropriate and acceptable for examining the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. In order to check for the presence of autocorrelation in the model, Durbin-Watson statistics is employed. Durbin-Watson statistics value of 1.843 in shows that the variables in the model are not auto-correlated. However, this is ignored in this study due to the nature of data employed. Specifically, diversity training (DTT) has a negative coefficient value of -0.187, t-value of -2.915 and p-value of 0.004 which is statistically significant at 1% level of significance. This implies that diversity training has a significant negative relationship with employee engagement (EEG). It therefore implies that diversity training has adversely influence employee engagement. Targeted internship programme (TIP) has a positive coefficient value of 0.228, t-value of 2.879 and p-value of 0.004 which is statistically significant at 1% level of significance. This indicates that targeted internship programme has a significant positive relationship with employee engagement (EEG). This means that targeted internship programme would strongly influence employee engagement. Inclusive mentorship programme (IMP) has a positive coefficient value of 0.098, t-value of 1.270 and p-value of 0.205 which is statistically not significant as p-value > 0.05 level of significance. This implies that inclusive mentorship programme has no significant effect on employee engagement (EEG) at p-value > 0.05. Inclusive mentorship programme would improve employee engagement.

Discussion of Findings

The results show that diversity training has a significant negative relationship with employee engagement. The result is in agreement with the finding of Manukaji, et al. (2019) that training and development cost exhibit a significant effect on performance. Targeted internship programme has a significant positive relationship with employee engagement. The result is in agreement with the finding of Yaakob, et al. (2018) that internship has positive effects on graduates on their job performance. Inclusive mentorship programme has no significant relationship with employee engagement. The result is in disagreement with the finding of Graham, et al. (2023) that inclusive philosophy and practices have positive relationship with employee's job satisfaction and performance. The finding of Onyia, et al. (2019) disagreed with the result that mentoring has significant positive effects on employee's organisational commitment and engagement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study investigated the relationship between workplace diversity training and employee engagement. Employee engagement suggests a positive, fulfilling connection a worker has with his job that is characterised by commitment, vigour, dedication, and unrelenting enthusiasm; and diversity as a key element in business success are so obvious because a complex and diverse workforce and business environment require a corresponding diverse technical skill and expertise in an attempt to fulfill business obligations and achieve goals and objectives. The outcome of the study showed that diversity training has a significant negative relationship with employee engagement at p-value < 0.05 level of significance,

targeted internship programme has a significant positive relationship with employee engagement at p-value < 0.05 level of significance, and inclusive mentorship programme has no significant relationship with employee engagement at p-value > 0.05.

Policy Recommendations and Implication

From the empirical findings, we therefore recommend that:

- i. Management of Shell Petroleum Development Company should consider diversity training as integral part of employee development because of the influence it has on employee engagement.
- ii. Strategic and policy makers of Shell Petroleum Development Company should strongly embrace targeted internship programme as a variable of workplace diversity training that positively influences employee engagement.
- iii. Since inclusive mentorship programme is positive, management of Shell Petroleum Development Company should consider the programme a laudable one for the purpose of enhancing employee engagement in the future.

References

- Aboramadan, M., Albashiti, B., Alharazin, H. and Dahleez, K.A. (2020), Human resources management practices and organizational commitment in higher education: the mediating role of work engagement, *International Journal of Educational Management*, 34(1), 154-174.
- Ali, N., & Swart, J. (2023). Who is worthy of my commitment now? The dynamic nature of interns' workplace commitment. *Personnel Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-06-2022-0456>.
- Alnuaimi, Y.M.A (2022). Impacts of workplace factors on employee engagement in public sector. *European Journal of Marketing economics*, 8(1), 59-72.
- Awa, F. I. & Aslam, S., M. (2019). Determinants of employee engagement: A case study of telecom sector of Lahore. *Journal of Natural and Applied Sciences Pakistan*, 1(2), 154-161.
- Azila-Gbettor, E.M., Atsu, E., & Quarshie, A.N.K (2023). *Job stress and job involvement among tertiary interns: the buffering role of perceived co-worker support* (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).
- Bans-Akutey, A., Abdullahi, A.M. & Afriyie, E.O. (2022). Effects of recruitment and selection practices on organisational strategic goals. *Journal of Annals of Management Organisational Research*,3(1), 35-51
- Blau, P.M (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. New York: Wiley.
- Cao, Y., Lee, J., & Waung, M. (2023). Cultivating organisational attraction: A resource view of on psychological contracts of career development among interns. *Personel Review*, 52(1), 58-73.
- Chong, S. M., & Yazdani, K., (2020). Factors affecting the affective organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job acceptance intention of interns: A conceptual framework. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 10(2), 68-72.
- Cletus, H. E., Mahmood, N.A., Umah, A., & Ibrahim, A.D. (2018). Prospects and challenges of workplace diversity in modern day organizations: a critical review. *Associate Holistic Research Academic*, 9(2), 35-52.
- Delgado-Piña, M.I., Rodríguez-Ruiz, Ó., Rodríguez-Duarte, A. & Sastre-Castillo, M.Á. (2020). Gender diversity in Spanish Banks: Trickle-down and productivity effects. *Sustainability*, 12(5), 2113.
- Deari, H., V., Kimmel, & P. Lopez. (2008). *Effects of cultural differences in international business and price negotiation*.
- Dale-Olsen, H. and Finseraas, H. (2020). Linguistic diversity and workplace productivity'. *Labor Economics*, 64(10).
- Emma, L. (2018) *Advantages and disadvantages of diversity in workplace*. <https://bit.ly/1jdaWY0>.
- Fiedler, F.E., & Chemers, M.M. (1974). *Leadership and effective management*. Scott, Foresman, Glenview.
- Emerson, R. (1972). Power-dependence relations. *American Sociological Review*, 27, 31-41.

- Fredette, C. & Bernstein, R. S. (2019). Ethno-racial diversity on nonprofit boards: A critical mass perspective. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 48(5), 931-952
- Goel, S. (2018). The impact of workplace diversity – benefits and challenges. *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, 5(2), 2207-2209.
- Gouda, G.K. and Tiwari, B. (2022), Talent agility, innovation adoption, and sustainable business performance: empirical evidence from the Indian automobile industry, *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 71(6), 2582-2604, doi: 10.1108/IJPPM-02-2021-0071.
- Graham, B.E., Zaharie, M., & Osoian, C. (2023). Inclusive talent management philosophy, talent management practices and employees' outcomes. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 2046-9012.
- Homans, G.C (1961). *Social behaviour: Its elementary forms*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, <https://ca.indeed.com/>
- Jnaneswar, K., & Ranjit, G. (2023). Unravelling the role of organizational commitment and work engagement in the relationship between self-leadership and employee creativity. *Evidence-Based HRM*, 11(2), 158–176. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBHRM-08-2021-0164>.
- Jovanovic, J. & Lugonjic, M. (2022). Sustaining employees' engagement and well-being in the "New Normal" times. *Journal of Human Resource Management Research*, 202-220.
- Knotts, K. G., & Houghton, J. D. (2021). You can't make me! The role of self-leadership in enhancing organizational commitment and work engagement. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 42(5), 748–762. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-10-2020-0436>.
- Khelifa, R., & Mahdjoub, H. (2022). An intersectionality lens is needed to establish a global view of equity, diversity and inclusion. *Ecology letters*. doi:10.1111/ele.13976
- Kumar, P. (2021). 5 model of employee engagement during COVID-19 and post lockdown research article. *Vision: The Journal of Business Perspective*, 1-4.
- Madu, A.Y. & Abbo, U. (2023). Work ethics, attitude and performance in the Nigerian public service: issues, challenges and the way forward. Researchgate: <https://www.researchgate.net/publications/3748389>
- Manukaji, I.J., Osioma B.C. & Okoye P.V.C. (2019). Effect of human resources development on the performance of quoted companies. *Journal of Accounting and Financial Management*, 5(3), 55-64.
- Miles, M. (2022).It depends. Understanding the contingency theory of leadership. *Journal of Leadership and Management*, 5(4), 654-723.
- Molla, A.A., & Shawlin, J.N. (2023). The role of leaders in integrating diversity and inclusion within an organisation. *Journal of UMEA School of Business, Economics and Statistics*, 39(8), 901-929.
- Mor-Barak, M. E., Luria, G., & Brimhall, K. C. (2021). What leaders say versus what they do: Inclusive leadership, policy-practice decoupling, and the anomaly of climate for inclusion. *Group and Organization Management*. doi:10.1177/10596011211005916.
- Nyakuma, D. D., A.J.K. Shittu, H. Ojobo, T.J. & Ivase, P. (2016). Challenges of adopting information and communications technology. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Engineering Science and Technology*, 3(1), 3766-3776.
- Ohiorenoya, J., & Uwadaie, O. S. (2016). Contract staffing and employee engagement in oil and gas industry in Nigeria: *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 7(10), 196-206.
- Olatunji, A & Ibrahim, J. (2019). Significance of employee engagement and individual wellbeing on organisational performance in Nigeria. *International Journal of Science and Management studies*, 2(5), 35-45.
- Ojo, A.O., Fawehinmi, O., & Yusliza, M.Y. (2021). Examining the predictors of resilience and work engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Sustainability*, 13, 3-18.
- Onyia, V.A., Asikhia, O.U., Makinde, G.O. & Egbuta, O.U. (2019). The nexus between mentoring dimensions and organisational commitment of academic staff in selected private universities in

- South-West Nigeria. *Global Journal of Management, Business Research and Administration*, 19(4), 2249-4588.
- Otike, F.W, Messah, O.B. & Mwalekwa, F.K. (2020). Effects of workplace diversity management on organizational effectiveness. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 11(6), 190-222.
- Putra, I. G. M. O. D., Sapta, I. K. S., & Suardhika, I. N. (2021). Influence of climate and justice on organizational commitment with job satisfaction as intervening variable at Regional Revenue Agency, Denpasar City. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management and Education (APJME)*, 4(3), 103-114.
- Riyanto, S., Endri, E., & Novita, H. (2021). Effect of work motivation and job satisfaction on employee performance: Mediating role of employee engagement. *Problems and perspectives in management*, 19(3), 162-174.
- Roberson, Q. M. (2020). Access to justice as a human right, organizational entitlement and precursor to diversity and inclusion. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion an International Journal*, 39(7), 787-791.
- Seliverstova, Y. & Pierog, A. (2021). A theoretical study on global workforce diversity management, its benefits and challenges. *Cross Cultural Management Journal*, 1, 117-124.
- Sepahvand, R. and Khodashahri, R.B. (2021), Strategic human resource management practices and employee retention: a study of the moderating role of job engagement, *Iranian Journal of Management Studies*, 14 (2), 437-468.
- Shala, B., Prebreza, A. & Ramosaj, B. (2021). The practice of the contingency theory in the company, Avrios Blerona. *Open Access Journal*, 8(1), Berim Romosaj, University of Prestina, Kosovo.
- Teekens, T., Giardini, F., Zuidersma, J. & Wittek, R. (2021). Shaping resilience: how work team characteristics affect occupational commitment in health care interns during a pandemic. *European Societies*, 23(1), 513-529.
- Wesley, J., & Krishnan, G. (2013). Correlates employee engagement with turnover intention. *International Journal of Human Resources Research Review*, 3(9), 53-62.
- Yakoob, H., Ail, K.M, & Radzi, N.F. (2018). The effect of internship on job performance: an assessment of students' perception. *International Journal of Science and Engineering Research*, 9(7), 2229-5518.



JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Volume 1, Number 8 (December, 2025)

ISSN: 1595-9457 (online); 3043-4211 (print)

Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

Received: November 04, 2025 Accepted: December 22, 2025 Published: December 31, 2025

Citation: Muhammad, Muhammad & Jaba, Garba I.(2025). "The Roles of Political Party Finance of the APC and PDP on Electoral Performance of the Two Parties in the 2023 General Elections in Malumfashi Local Government Area of Katsina State-Nigeria." *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1 (8): 63-74.

Article

Open Access

THE ROLES OF POLITICAL PARTY FINANCE OF THE APC AND PDP ON ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE OF THE TWO PARTIES IN THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN MALUMFASHI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KATSINA STATE-NIGERIA.

Muhammad Muhammad¹ & Garba Ibrahim Jaba²

Department of Political Science, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina, Nigeria^{1&2}

Corresponding Email: muhammadmuhammadmono@gmail.com¹

Abstract

The study examined the sources and roles of political party finance of the APC and PDP on the electoral performance during the 2023 general elections in Malumfashi Local Government Area of Katsina state of Nigeria. The study employed a mixed research method, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. The study found that both APC and PDP sourced funds through membership dues, grants, donations, levies, and fundraising campaigns. However, APC had greater access to resources due to its position as the ruling party, benefiting from contributions by elected officials, contractors, and wealthy supporters. PDP relied more on individual donations and had limited access to institutional or government-linked funding during the 2023 general elections. The APC's financial resources enabled them to mobilize voters effectively across all polling units, outperforming the PDP in terms of media airtime and material support. Their financial strength allowed them to distribute resources, such as food and materials, to garner voter support, thus contributing significantly to their electoral success. In contrast, the PDP struggled to match APC's financial capacity, which hindered their ability to mobilize voters and compete effectively. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that to ensure credible elections, political party financing should be transparent and regulated, with parties required to disclose their sources and expenditures to prevent undue influence. Additionally, equal access to campaign resources, such as media airtime and voter mobilization tools, should be promoted to level the playing field, ensuring that all parties can compete fairly regardless of their financial strength.

Keywords: Political Party Finance, Electoral Performance, 2023 General Election.

Copyright © 2025 By JPPSS. Publishers: Omega Books

This is an open access article which permits unrestricted use provided the work is properly cited.

Introduction

Political parties are one of the major institutions and critical components of liberal democracy and the democratization process globally. Like other essential actors in a democracy, political parties are expected to be responsive, accountable, and to play an intermediary role between the electorate and the government. Political parties also play a crucial role in the formation of governments, to the extent that it is impossible to speak of democratic government without political parties. They contribute to the stability and coherence of governments, especially when most members come from the same party and are bound by shared allegiances. They are essential for the organization of modern democratic polity and are fundamental in expressing political pluralism. At their core, political parties perform a variety of functions, each of which is central to the proper functioning of liberal democracy. Indeed, as Corduener (2019) explained, political parties serve as a channel for integrating individuals and groups into the political system, mobilizing and socializing the public, particularly during elections. They are core vehicles for the articulation and aggregation of social interests. Political parties also play an essential role in recruiting political elites, nominating candidates, and selecting individuals for public offices. The primary goal of these organizations is the pursuit, conquest, and retention of political power as long as possible, with individuals united by policy, opinion, and a shared platform (Etzioni, 2021). However, the ability of political parties to fulfil these functions is highly dependent on financial resources. Political parties require funds for various activities, such as campaigns, candidate nominations, staff salaries, media airtime, and publicity for disseminating their ideas. Additionally, logistics and other administrative expenses are necessary for effective participation in the political process. Political parties mobilize people and organizations that share their beliefs, and these supporters contribute financially to sustain the party's operations. Political party financing, sometimes referred to as "political finance," involves the use of money and other resources for activities such as electioneering, member mobilization, secretariat maintenance, and organizing political meetings (Gallego & Wantchekon, 2017; Helmky & Levitsky, 2021).

Yet, political parties often face pressure to use illicit or ill-gotten money to finance their operations, both in developed and developing democracies. This pressure stems from a lack of legitimate funding sources and the need to fund anti-democratic activities such as vote-buying. In both types of systems (developed and developing democracies), electorates frequently develop the expectation that their vote will be bought. Etzioni (2021) identified two major links between corruption and political party finance. The first is the electorate's demand for payment for their votes in terms of public or private goods. The second link concerns campaign finance corruption, in which government actors divert state resources for their campaigns or sell political influence for private interests (Burgis, 2015). A notable example of such corruption is the Sambo Dasuki Arms deal, where an estimated \$2.1 billion was allegedly diverted to fund the People's Democratic Party (PDP) 2015 presidential campaign (Davies, 2016). However, the financial resources available to a political party directly impact its ability to mobilize voters, organize campaigns, and maintain internal democracy. As Mendilow (2018) observed, many countries have introduced regulations on campaign funding to protect democracy from the influence of money and to ensure that elections remain fair and transparent. These laws aim to prevent the misuse of public funds for political purposes, regulate donations from questionable sources, and prevent funds from being used to sway voters or election outcomes (Donovan & Karp, 2017). Despite these regulations, challenges remain in ensuring that political finance practices remain transparent

and free from corruption. Understanding how these parties secure and manage their funds not only helps explain their electoral strategies but also highlights the broader implications for democratic processes. Campaign finance laws and regulations are designed to ensure that elections remain fair and that the public's voice isn't drowned out by the influence of money. However, despite these safeguards, political parties often find themselves under pressure to resort to illicit or unethical means of fundraising, such as vote-buying or misuse of state resources, which ultimately undermines the democratic system.

Examining the financial underpinnings of the APC and PDP within Malumfashi in the 2023 elections allows for a closer look at how party finance impacts their electoral outcomes and internal governance. How these parties raise, manage, and spend their funds could reveal much about the health of democracy at the local level. Moreover, it offers insights into the challenges political parties face in balancing the need for financial resources with the responsibility to adhere to ethical practices. This exploration is vital for understanding the role of money in local elections, shedding light on potential gaps in the existing regulatory framework, and suggesting ways to improve transparency and accountability in future electoral cycles. Candidates backed by powerful sponsors often have greater chances of securing party tickets and winning elections, contributing to unequal political competition and undermining internal democracy. Despite existing campaign finance laws, the influence of money remains unchecked, and studies such as those by Corduwener (2019) and Aiyede (2022) have not fully explored this issue at the grassroots level. Against this background, the study explores how the sources and role of political party finance impacted the performance of the APC and PDP during the 2023 general elections in Malumfashi, shedding light on the financial factors shaping local political outcomes. In line with foregoing, the paper seeks to address the following questions; What were the key sources of political party finance of the APC and PDP in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections? And what role did political party finance play in determining the electoral performance of the APC and PDP in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections?

The Literature Review

Indeed, political parties are vital to liberal democracies, serving as intermediaries between the electorate and the government, mobilizing voters, and influencing policy through the recruitment of political elites. However, their effectiveness largely depends on access to financial resources, which are essential for running campaigns, organizing party structures, and maintaining visibility (Corduwener, 2019; Etzioni, 2021). In Nigeria, especially since independence, politics has often been dominated by wealthy political entrepreneurs and former military figures that fund parties and candidates in exchange for political favours, turning political party financing into a transactional affair (Baidoo, Dankwa & Eshun, 2018). This trend is particularly evident at the local government level, including Malumfashi in Katsina State, where access to campaign funds plays a significant role in determining electoral outcomes. More so, political parties in liberal democracies simplify electoral choices and facilitating participation and governance. Scholars like Corduwener (2019), Aiyede (2022), and Mendilow (2018) emphasized the fundamental roles political parties play in modern democracies, making them indispensable for the effective functioning of democratic systems. Political party finance is defined by Etzioni (2021) as the funding needed not only for election campaigns but also for maintaining party infrastructure, conducting policy research, and engaging in political education. Political party finance, or "political finance," includes all resources used by parties and candidates in both electoral

and non-electoral periods, covering a wide range of activities essential for their operation (Cassas-Zamora, 2008). Adequate financing is crucial for political parties to remain relevant and active in both developed and developing democracies. For instance, countries like Spain and Portugal traditionally favouring public funding (Biezen, 2000). The increasing importance of political party finance, as noted by Sule (2017), calls for transparency and accountability to prevent corruption and ensure a fair democratic process, as the integrity of political party funding directly impacts the health of democratic systems.

Finance is a fundamental pillar for the establishment, growth, and consolidation of democracy, as most democratic processes require financial resources to function effectively. In Nigeria, however, political party financing is often opaque and marred by corruption, with funds frequently sourced through illicit means. Sule and Kwarah (2018) described it as one of the most scandalous aspects of electoral politics, where money is exchanged for political favours, contracts, and influence, deeply affecting the relationship between parties, politicians, party members, and the electorates. Political party finance in Nigeria is not only used to support party activities but also manifests in practices like vote buying and god-fatherism, which distort the democratic process. This includes the involvement of wealthy sponsors, security manipulation, and the misuse of state power to influence outcomes. From 1999 to 2023, vote buying has been a recurring feature of Nigeria's elections, thus eroding public trust in the system (Nkechi & Innocent, 2014; Omilusi, 2016; Sule & Mohammed, 2021). The failure of institutions like Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to enforce campaign finance laws has allowed illegal financing to flourish, reinforcing a system where political corruption thrives. As noted by Kura (2014) and Olarinmoye (2018), the lack of transparency in party financing has made it difficult to trace the origins and use of campaign funds. Sule (2018) argued that money politics not only undermines democracy and good governance but also weakens representation, increases corruption, and distorts the electoral process. The growing influence of money in Nigerian politics has made financial power, rather than merit or public service, the key determinant of political success.

The formation and functioning of democratic governments and their institutions require substantial financial resources, and political parties, as key actors in democratic systems, are no exception. Their wide range of activities including candidate selection, campaigns, media outreach, logistics, political education, and voter mobilization demands consistent and significant funding. The All Progressives Congress (APC), like many political parties, outlines various lawful sources of funding in its 2022 Constitution (as amended), including membership dues, subscriptions, levies, investments, donations, fundraisers, gifts, grants, and approved borrowings (APC, 2022, Art. 22, Section A, i–vii). Furthermore, the party mandates that its National Working Committee determine the annual distribution formula for these funds across different party levels, subject to the approval of the National Executive Committee (APC, 2022, Art. 22, Section B), ensuring a structured financial management system to support its operations. Political party finance plays a crucial role in determining electoral performance by enabling parties to effectively carry out essential activities such as candidate selection, campaigning, media outreach, logistics, and voter mobilization—all of which are vital for gaining public support and winning elections (APC, 2022). Without adequate funding, political parties struggle to compete, especially in dysfunctional democracies like Nigeria's where money politics is deeply entrenched. As Sule and Kwarah (2018) note, the excessive and often illicit use of funds influences not only party operations but also relationships between politicians, members, and voters, often through mechanisms like vote buying and god-fatherism. These practices distort electoral

competition, giving an unfair advantage to better-funded candidates regardless of merit or public interest. Moreover, the lack of transparency in political finance and poor enforcement by oversight bodies like INEC has allowed corruption to flourish which further weakened voter confidence and skewing electoral outcomes (Sule & Mohammed, 2021; Kura, 2014; Olarinmoye, 2018). Thus, the availability, management, and source of political party finance significantly impact the credibility and outcome of elections.

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed research method, combining both quantitative and qualitative sources of data collection. The target population consisted of 351 APC officials and 222 PDP officials, five (5) elected and appointed public officials from the APC, three (3) PDP candidates who contested during the elections, and two (2) staff members from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). For the quantitative aspect, a disproportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed, selecting a total of thirty-nine (39) officials from both the APC and PDP. In contrast, a census sampling technique was applied to include all five (5) elected and appointed APC public officials, all three (3) PDP candidates during the elections, and the two (2) INEC staff members. Data collection instruments included a closed-ended questionnaire and an interview schedule, both of which were validated by subject matter experts, statisticians, and language professionals. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a result of 0.798. For the interview schedule, reliability was ensured through an audit inquiry using the dependability procedure. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including simple frequency tables and percentages, while the qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis.

Findings

Key Sources of Political Party Finance of the APC and PDP in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 General Elections: Understanding how the two major political parties APC and PDP sourced funds during the 2023 general elections is crucial in addressing the core issue under investigation. While both quantitative and qualitative findings on party financing will be presented and analysed under this sub-theme, it is important to highlight that respondents from the two methods offered differing perspectives on the nature and sources of political finance. The quantitative data provides one angle of insight, which will first be discussed, followed by complementary insights drawn from the qualitative findings, offering a fuller picture of the political party financing landscape in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the elections.

Table 1: Respondents’ opinion on the statement: All members of my party in Malumfashi Local Government Area pay for their membership dues annually.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	11	14.1	14.1
Disagree	18	23.1	23.1
Undecided	16	20.5	20.5
Agree	26	33.3	33.3
Strongly agree	7	9.0	9.0
Total	78	100.0	100.0

(Field Survey, 2024).

Table 1 presents data on whether members of the respondents' political parties in the study area pay their annual membership dues. The results show that 9% (7 respondents) strongly agreed, 33.3% (26 respondents) agreed, 20.5% (16 respondents) were undecided, while 23.1% (18 respondents) disagreed, and 14.1% (11 respondents) strongly disagreed. From this data, it is clear that not all party members, across APC and PDP, consistently pay their dues annually. This raises deeper questions about why compliance with this financial obligation is low. Membership dues are a significant source of party funding and, ideally, reflect party strength especially in mass-based parties where more members should translate to higher revenue (Etzioni, 2021). However, qualitative insights from key informants provide further clarity. Informant B1 noted that party leaders often prioritize expanding membership numbers for electoral advantage rather than enforcing dues payment. In many cases, wealthy party members or candidates cover the dues for others without their knowledge. Similarly, Informant A3 added that people often join parties based on personal interests or due to persuasion by influential figures, not ideology. As a result, they lack commitment and may leave at any time, making dues collection ineffective. Wealthy members, therefore, frequently pay dues or sponsor entire registration drives, such as when Alhaji Atiku Abubakar reportedly financed membership registration upon joining the APC in 2013. These findings highlight a key difference between the survey responses and interview insights pointing to a party culture shaped more by elite sponsorship and catch-all strategies than grassroots financial accountability.

Table 2: Respondents' opinions on the statement: During the conduct of the 2023 general elections in Malumfashi Local Government my party received grants from its friends, supporters and other well-wishers.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	1	1.3	1.3
Disagree	7	9.0	9.0
Undecided	2	2.6	2.6
Agree	33	42.3	42.3
Strongly agree	35	44.9	44.9
Total	78	100.0	100.0

(Field Survey, 2024)

Table 2 presents data on whether the respondents' political parties received grants from friends, supporters, and other well-wishers during the 2023 general elections in the study area. The results show that 44.9% (35 respondents) strongly agreed, 42.3% (33 respondents) agreed, 2.6% (2 respondents) were undecided, 9% (7 respondents) disagreed, and 1.3% (1 respondent) strongly disagreed. These findings suggest that a significant majority of party officials acknowledged receiving grants as a key source of funding during the elections. This aligns with the general understanding that political parties rely heavily on financial support from well-wishers to fund their electoral activities. The small number of respondents who disagreed or were uncertain may reflect the centralized nature of party financing, where such grants are often managed at the local government or state level, making it less visible to grassroots members. Hence, the overall result is valid and credible within the context of party funding practices in the area.

Table 3: Respondents' opinions on the statement: During the conduct of the 2023 general elections in Malumfashi Local Government my party received financial donations from supporters and other well-wishers.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Disagree	1	1.3	1.3
Agree	36	46.2	46.2
Strongly agree	41	52.6	52.6
Total	78	100.0	100.0

(Field Survey, 2024)

Table 3 presents data on respondents' opinions regarding whether their political parties received financial donations from supporters and other well-wishers during the 2023 general elections in the study area. The results show that 52.6% (41 respondents) strongly agreed, 46.2% (36 respondents) agreed, and 1.3% (1 respondent) disagreed with the statement. These findings suggest that a substantial majority of respondents believe that both the APC and PDP in the study area relied on financial donations from supporters and well-wishers to fund their electoral activities. This highlights the importance of external financial support in enabling political parties to carry out their campaigns and other related activities during the elections in Malumfashi Local Government Area.

Table 4: Respondents' opinion on the statement: My party organized a well-planned fund-raising campaign in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the conduct of the 2023 general elections in order to get more funds from friends and supporters of the party to fund its electoral activities in the 12 wards of the Local Government Area.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	1	1.3	1.3
Disagree	3	3.8	3.8
Undecided	1	1.3	1.3
Agree	30	38.5	38.5
Strongly agree	43	55.1	55.1
Total	78	100.0	100.0

(Field Survey, 2024)

Table 4 presents data on respondents' opinions regarding whether their political parties organized well-planned fund-raising campaigns during the 2023 general elections in Malumfashi Local Government Area to secure additional funding from friends and supporters across its twelve wards. The findings reveal that 55.1% (43 respondents) strongly agreed, 38.1% (30 respondents) agreed, 1.3% (1 respondent) was undecided, 3.8% (3 respondents) disagreed, and 1.3% (1 respondent) strongly disagreed. These results clearly indicate that both APC and PDP were able to organize structured fund-raising campaigns to support their electoral activities. This is consistent with common political financing practices, where parties use fund-raising events to generate resources for campaigns. As Katsina (2022) observed, fund-raising dinners and similar events have become a significant source of political financing in both developed and developing democracies, making these findings both valid and relevant within the broader context of election funding strategies.

Table 5: Respondents’ opinions on the statement: My party was able to initiate a well-organized campaign to generate considerable amount of money as levies during the conduct of the 2023 general elections in Malumfashi Local Government Area.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	3	3.8	3.8
Disagree	4	5.1	5.1
Undecided	4	5.1	5.1
Agree	43	55.1	55.1
Strongly agree	24	30.8	30.8
Total	78	100.0	100.0

(Field Survey, 2024)

Table 5 presents data on respondents' opinions regarding whether their political parties initiated a well-organized campaign to generate substantial funds through levies during the 2023 general elections in the study area. According to the findings, 30.8% (24 respondents) strongly agreed, 55.1% (43 respondents) agreed, 5.1% (4 respondents) were undecided, 5.1% (4 respondents) disagreed, and 3.8% (3 respondents) strongly disagreed. These results indicate that a significant majority believe that both the APC and PDP successfully launched levy-based fundraising campaigns during the election period. The few dissenting or uncertain responses may reflect limited awareness at the grassroots level, as such initiatives are often coordinated by party leadership at the local government or state level. Overall, the data supports the assertion that levy collection was a notable part of the political financing strategy used by the parties in Malumfashi during the 2023 elections. The analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data highlights the critical role that various forms of political party financing played during the 2023 general elections in Malumfashi Local Government Area. Quantitative findings revealed that the two major parties, APC and PDP, received significant financial support through grants, donations, levies, fundraising campaigns, and non-monetary contributions such as campaign materials from friends, supporters, and well-wishers. However, deeper insight from qualitative interviews provides a more nuanced understanding. Informants explained that APC, being the ruling party, had broader access to resources by leveraging the financial contributions of its elected and appointed officials, as well as support from contractors and wealthy allies. In contrast, the PDP had comparatively limited access to such funding avenues. Informants also emphasized that party finances were drawn from traditional sources like membership dues, donor grants, and contributions from affluent members, which were crucial for campaign mobilization, advertisements, office rentals, and political messaging. Overall, it was clear that the financial strength and access to diverse funding sources significantly influenced each party's electoral performance, with APC having the upper hand due to its broader resource base and access to incumbency advantages.

Roles of Political Party Finance in the Electoral Performance of the APC and PDP in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 General Elections

Table 6: Respondents’ opinions on the statement: APC raised and spent more money than PDP in buying media airtime in order to communicate and mobilized electorates in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the conduct of the 2023 general elections.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	3	3.8	3.8

Disagree	13	16.7	16.7
Undecided	5	6.4	6.4
Agree	30	38.5	38.5
Strongly agree	27	34.6	34.6
Total	78	100.0	100.0

(Field Survey, 2024)

The findings from both quantitative and qualitative data clearly demonstrate that political party finance played a significant role in determining the electoral performance of the APC and PDP in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections. A majority of respondents (73.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that the APC raised and spent more money than the PDP in buying media airtime to communicate and mobilize electorates.

This was further validated by key informants who emphasized that the APC, as the ruling party, had access to more financial resources which were strategically used for radio campaigns, voter mobilization, and broader outreach efforts. These financial advantages allowed APC to have a more visible and persuasive presence in the media space, which significantly contributed to its superior performance in the election compared to PDP (Key Informant Interviews with Informants A3 and B2).

Table 7: Respondents’ opinions on the statement: APC performed better than PDP in terms of electoral mobilization in reaching widely in all the 12 wards of Malumfashi Local Government Area during the conduct of the 2023 general elections.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	1	1.3	1.3
Disagree	4	5.1	5.1
Undecided	3	3.8	3.8
Agree	30	38.5	38.5
Strongly agree	40	51.3	51.3
Total	78	100.0	100.0

(Field Survey, 2024)

Table 7 presents data on respondents' opinions regarding the APC's performance compared to the PDP in electoral mobilization across the 12 wards of Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections. The majority of respondents (89.8%) either strongly agreed (51.3%) or agreed (38.5%) that the APC performed better than the PDP in reaching widely in all the wards. To deepen the understanding of these results, qualitative data revealed that APC, being the ruling party, had superior resources, including greater security support and logistical advantages, which allowed them to campaign extensively across all wards. Informant A4 emphasized that the APC’s mobilization efforts were unparalleled, pointing out their ability to reach every ward, which the PDP could not match due to fewer resources and less security support (Key Informant Interview with Informant A4, conducted on 27th June, 2024). Furthermore, Informant A1 highlighted how APC’s success was bolstered by an effective reconciliation committee that resolved internal conflicts, contrasting it with the PDP, where unresolved internal disputes led to factionalism that hindered their mobilization (Key Informant Interview with Informant A1, conducted on 25th June, 2024). Both the quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that the APC outperformed the PDP in electoral mobilization during the 2023 elections in Malumfashi Local Government Area.

Table 8: Respondents' opinions on the statement: APC was able to use its resources, human and materials in reaching all the Polling Units through its Wards and Polling Units Voters mobilization Committee while PDP did not.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	3	3.8	3.8
Disagree	6	7.7	7.7
Undecided	5	6.4	6.4
Agree	41	52.6	52.6
Strongly agree	23	29.5	29.5
Total	78	100.0	100.0

(Field Survey, 2024)

Table 8 presents data on respondents' opinions regarding whether the APC was able to use its resources, human, and material support to reach all polling units across the study area through its Wards and Polling Units Voter Mobilization Committee, while the People's Democratic Party (PDP) did not. The data shows that the majority of respondents (82.1%) either strongly agreed (29.5%) or agreed (52.6%) with the statement that the APC effectively used its resources to reach every polling unit, while the PDP did not. To gain further insight into this, qualitative data was gathered, revealing that the APC's extensive mobilization efforts were facilitated by both material resources (such as rice, spaghetti, and textiles) and human resources. Informant B2 explained that APC's use of resources to reach voters was visible across the local government, with items such as rice and textiles distributed to electorates, even though they were framed as palliatives rather than direct vote-buying (Key Informant Interview with Informant B2, conducted on 26th June, 2024). Additionally, documents from the APC local government secretariat corroborate this, indicating that the APC spent ₦130,000 and distributed items such as five 50kg bags of locally processed rice and forty pieces of textiles (Rapa) across polling units during the 2023 Presidential and National Assembly elections. These findings support the conclusion that the APC, through effective mobilization and resource allocation, was able to secure a more widespread electoral presence compared to the PDP.

Conclusion

The study can be concluded by emphasizing that the sources of party finance and their role in electoral performance were crucial in determining the outcomes of the 2023 general elections in Malumfashi Local Government Area. The APC, with its superior financial resources from grants, donations, and contributions from wealthy members, effectively utilized these funds for extensive voter mobilization, media campaigns, and material distribution across polling units, which played a significant role in their electoral success. In contrast, the PDP, with limited financial backing, struggled to match the APC's campaign efforts, which ultimately affected its performance. This highlights the critical role that financial resources play in enabling political parties to execute successful electoral strategies.

Recommendations

The study offered the following recommendations:

- i. **Enhancing Transparency and Regulation of Party Financing:** To ensure credible elections, there should be stronger oversight and regulation of party financing. This includes enforcing transparency in the sources and spending of campaign funds by all political parties. Political parties should be mandated to publicly disclose their sources of

funds, and an independent electoral body should monitor the use of these funds to prevent undue influence and ensure fairness in the electoral process. This would prevent a situation where wealthier parties gain an unfair advantage over others, as was observed in the case of APC's greater financial resources in Malumfashi.

- ii. **Promoting Equal Access to Campaign Resources for All Parties:** To level the playing field and ensure credible elections, efforts should be made to provide equitable access to campaign resources, including media airtime and voter mobilization tools. The government and independent electoral bodies should facilitate equal access for all political parties, regardless of their financial capabilities, through public funding or subsidies for election-related activities. This would help to mitigate the influence of wealth on election outcomes, allowing all parties to compete more fairly and effectively.

References

- Aiyede, E. R. (2022). The Role of INEC, ICPC, and EFCC in Combating Political Corruption. International Foundation for Electoral System, Abuja-Nigeria.
- All Progressive Congress. (2013). Constitution of the All Progressive Congress (amended). Abuja, Nigeria.
- All Progressive Congress. (2022). Constitution of the All Progressive Congress (amended). Abuja, Nigeria.
- Baidoo, F.L., Dankwa, S., & Eshun, I. (2018). Culture of Vote-buying and its Implications: range of incentives and conditions politicians offer to electorates. *International Journal of Developing and Emerging Economies*, 6(2): 1-20.
- Bakare, M. (2023). APC NEC Confirms Ganduje as national chairman, Bashiru as Secretary. Premium Time, 3rd August, 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.premimumtimes.ng.com/news/613958-just-in-apc-nec-confirms-ganduje-as-national-chairman-bashiru-as-secretary.html?tztc=1>, (Accessed on 4th July, 2024).
- Bello A. M. & Sule, B. (2021). Party politics and the fall of the Second Republic in Nigeria: A Reappraisal. *International Journal of Humanities, Art and Social Studies (IJHAS)*, Vol. 6, No.2.
- Burgis, T. (2015). The Looting Machine: Warlords, Oligarchs, Corporations, Smugglers, and the Theft of Africa's Wealth. Published by USA Public Affairs: New York.
- Corduwener, P. (2019). *Democracy and the entanglement of political parties and the state: Party state relations in 20th-century France, Italy and Germany*. Comparative Political Studies, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Davies, A. (2016). Money Politics in Nigerian Electoral process. *Journal of Social Economic Research*, 2(3): 231-248.
- Donovan, T. & Karp, J. (2017). Electoral rules, corruption, inequality and evaluations of democracy. *European Journal of Political Research*, 56(3): 469–486.
- Etzioni, H. (2021). Exchange Material Benefits for Political Support: A Comparative Analysis. *Global Journal of Political Science and Administration*, 2(3), 34-35.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999). Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Promulgation) 1999 No. 24. Abuja: Government Printers
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2022). Electoral Act. Retrieved from <https://www.nass.gov.ng/document/bills> (accessed on 12th November, 2023)
- Gallego, J. & Wantchekon, L. (2017). Experiment on Clientalism and Vote-Buying. *Journal of Research in Environmental Economics*, 12(3), 77-95.

- Helmky, G. & Levitsky, M. (2021). *Information Institutions and Democracy: Lessons from Latin America*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Kura, S.Y. B. (2011) Political Parties and Democracy in Nigeria: Candidate Selection, Campaign and Party Financing in People's Democratic Party. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa, Vol. 13, (6)*.
- Manning, C. & Smith, I. O. (2019). Political Party Formation by Former Armed Opposition Groups after Civil War. *Democratization, 23(6): 972–989*. Retrieved from www.sciedu.ca/wje (Accessed on 12th July, 2023).
- Mendilow, J. (2018). Introduction: The party funding paradox and attempts at solutions. In J. Mendilow and E. Phélippeau (eds), *Handbook of political party funding*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/si.pov.gini> (accessed on 27th May, 2023).
- People's Democratic Party. (2009). *Constitution of the People's Democratic Party (amended)*. Abuja, Nigeria.
- People's Democratic Party. (2012). *Constitution of the People's Democratic Party (amended)*. Abuja, Nigeria.
- Sulaiman, I. (2017). The role of women towards political participation in Nigeria. *American Economic & Social Review*. Published by, Centre on Islamic Banking & Finance and Business. Vol. 1, No.1; 2017.



JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Volume 1, Number 8 (December, 2025)

ISSN: 1595-9457 (online); 3043-4211 (print)

Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

Received: November 04, 2025 Accepted: December 23, 2025 Published: December 31, 2025

Citation: Okwara, Donatus U.; Chinwendu, Onyema P., Aguzie, Declan., Obioma, Chukwukere D. & Nwosu, Emmanuel.(2025). "Stephen Gardiner's Idea of Environmental Philosophy: Ethics, Justice, and the Tragedy of the Commons." *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1 (8): 75-84.

Article

Open Access

STEPHEN GARDINER'S IDEA OF ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY: ETHICS, JUSTICE, AND THE TRAGEDY OF THE COMMONS

Donatus Uzoma Okwara¹, Onyema Pauline Chinwendu², Declan Aguzie³
Chukwukere Daniel Obioma⁴ & Emmanuel Nwosu⁵

Federal University of Science and Technology, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria^{1, 2, 3 & 4}

Department of History, Kingsley Ozuomba Mbadiwe University, Ideato, Imo State, Nigeria⁵

Corresponding Email: danielchukwukere2@gmail.com⁴

Abstract

Stephen M. Gardiner's environmental philosophy represents one of the most rigorous moral examinations of the contemporary ecological crisis. His thought transcends the boundaries of scientific and policy-oriented approaches, situating environmental degradation within a deeply moral and philosophical framework. Central to Gardiner's philosophy is his notion of the "perfect moral storm," which captures the convergence of global, intergenerational, and theoretical challenges that together render climate change an unparalleled ethical dilemma. The global dimension exposes inequalities between developed and developing nations; the intergenerational dimension highlights our moral obligations to future generations; and the theoretical dimension reveals the inadequacy of prevailing moral theories in addressing such complex issues. For Gardiner, these overlapping crises expose a form of moral corruption a collective tendency toward denial, rationalization, and self-interest that undermines genuine ethical response. His approach therefore insists on expanding the moral imagination to include duties to distant others, future persons, and non-human life forms. Gardiner also argues for institutional reform and the cultivation of virtue-oriented ethics as necessary complements to policy measures. Environmental responsibility, in his view, must be grounded in moral integrity, civic virtue, and global justice rather than mere economic or technological solutions. This paper explores Gardiner's philosophical contributions, focusing on the moral and institutional implications of his work for environmental ethics, climate justice, and governance. It argues that Gardiner's environmental philosophy challenges humanity to confront the ethical dimensions of ecological neglect and to reclaim moral responsibility as the foundation of sustainable coexistence with the natural world.

Copyright © 2025 By JPPSS. Publishers: Omega Books

This is an open access article which permits unrestricted use provided the work is properly cited.

Keywords: Stephen Gardiner, Environmental Philosophy, Moral Storm, Climate Ethics, Moral Corruption, Intergenerational Justice, Global Responsibility.

Introduction

The growing awareness of climate change and environmental degradation has transformed the twenty-first century into what many scholars describe as a moral and existential crisis for humanity. Beyond the scientific evidence and political debates, the ecological problem poses profound philosophical questions about human responsibility, justice, and the ethical relationship between humans and the natural world. Within this intellectual landscape, Stephen M. Gardiner has emerged as one of the most influential voices in contemporary environmental philosophy. His work, especially *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change*, offers a rigorous ethical analysis of the environmental crisis, framing it as a complex moral challenge that exposes the limitations of our current moral and political frameworks. Gardiner argues that climate change constitutes a perfect moral storm, a convergence of global, intergenerational, and theoretical dimensions that together create a situation where traditional moral reasoning falters. The global dimension reveals the inequalities between developed and developing nations in both the causes and consequences of environmental damage, while the intergenerational dimension raises the issue of justice toward future generations who will bear the heaviest burdens of present actions (Gardiner, 2003). The theoretical dimension, in turn, highlights the inadequacy of existing moral and political theories to account for ecological complexities and temporal asymmetries (Gardiner, 2006). Through this tripartite framework, Gardiner exposes the moral failures and institutional deficiencies that allow ecological degradation to persist despite global awareness.

Environmental philosophy, therefore, must not only address theoretical questions of value but also confront the moral structures that perpetuate ecological irresponsibility. As Attfield observes, environmental ethics involves expanding the scope of moral concern to include the biosphere and future generations, demanding a re-evaluation of human purposes and priorities. Gardiner deepens this view by integrating moral theory with institutional critique, arguing that the ecological crisis cannot be solved without cultivating moral integrity, virtue ethics, and institutional reform (Attfield 2014). His perspective underscores that environmental problems are not merely technical or economic but fundamentally ethical rooted in how humanity conceives of itself in relation to the Earth. Consequently, this paper examines Gardiner's idea of environmental philosophy as a call to moral renewal and global justice. It explores how his conception of the "perfect moral storm" redefines ethical responsibility in the Anthropocene era, challenging both individuals and institutions to confront the moral dimensions of climate change. By situating environmental degradation within a framework of virtue, justice, and moral accountability, Gardiner offers a philosophical foundation for rethinking humanity's role as steward and participant within the broader ecological community.

Theoretical Background: Environmental Philosophy and Moral Foundations

Environmental philosophy has evolved as a distinct field of inquiry concerned with the ethical, metaphysical, and epistemological dimensions of the human–nature relationship. It emerged in response to the increasing realization that the ecological crisis cannot be adequately addressed by empirical science or policy alone but requires a deeper moral and philosophical reflection on humanity's place within the natural world (Attfield, 2014). The theoretical background of Stephen Gardiner's environmental philosophy is rooted in this

broad intellectual tradition, drawing insights from moral philosophy, political theory, and environmental ethics to construct a framework that interprets climate change as a fundamentally ethical issue. At its core, environmental philosophy seeks to answer questions concerning value, responsibility, and justice in relation to the environment. Philosophers such as Aldo Leopold, Arne Naess, and Holmes Rolston III initiated this discourse by challenging anthropocentrism the idea that only human interests matter morally. They advanced ecocentric perspectives that recognize intrinsic value in nature, advocating for a holistic understanding of ecological interdependence. Gardiner extends this tradition by integrating environmental ethics with the principles of global justice and intergenerational responsibility, thereby situating ecological problems within the broader landscape of moral and political philosophy. For him, environmental degradation is not simply an external problem but a symptom of humanity's moral failure to act justly toward both the planet and future generations (Gardiner, 2011).

The Moral Dimension of Environmental Philosophy

The moral foundations of environmental philosophy derive from classical ethical theories, including deontology, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics, each offering a distinctive lens for interpreting human obligations toward nature. Deontological ethics, influenced by Immanuel Kant, emphasizes duty and moral law grounded in reason. Within this framework, moral agents are bound to respect all beings capable of rationality and, by extension, the moral order governing the natural world (O'Neill, 1993). Gardiner's position resonates partly with deontological reasoning, particularly in his insistence that moral agents have duties to future generations independent of utilitarian cost benefit calculations. These duties, he argues, arise from respect for the inherent dignity of persons whether present or future and from the moral imperative to preserve conditions for human and ecological flourishing (Gardiner, 2003). Utilitarian approaches, by contrast, assess moral action based on its consequences for overall well-being. Classical utilitarians such as John Stuart Mill extended moral concern to sentient creatures, promoting the greatest happiness principle as a guide for environmental policy (Mill, 1861/1998). However, Gardiner critiques this framework for its temporal bias it discounts the interests of future persons whose suffering results from present inaction. Moreover, utilitarianism often fails to address the structural injustices that underlie global ecological inequality (Gardiner, 2011). Thus, while consequentialist reasoning contributes to environmental policymaking, it remains insufficient for capturing the moral complexity of climate change, which involves long-term uncertainty, intergenerational asymmetry, and collective responsibility. Virtue ethics provides a complementary foundation for Gardiner's environmental philosophy. Rooted in the Aristotelian tradition, virtue ethics emphasizes the cultivation of character traits such as prudence, temperance, humility, and justice that enable moral agents to live harmoniously within the community of life (Hursthouse, 2007). Gardiner's moral framework draws heavily on this virtue-based approach, asserting that the environmental crisis reflects not merely policy failure but a crisis of moral character. The virtues required for ecological stewardship restraint, foresight, and moral courage are precisely those eroded by modern consumerism and short-termism. Hence, environmental ethics, in Gardiner's view, must aim at cultivating moral integrity and collective virtue to counter the temptations of self-deception and procrastination in the face of climate threats.

Justice, Responsibility, and the Extension of Moral Consideration

A central tenet of Gardiner's environmental philosophy is the extension of moral consideration beyond immediate communities to include distant others, future generations,

and non-human beings. This moral expansion echoes the Rawlsian idea of justice as fairness but extends it temporally and globally (Rawls, 1971). In *The Pure Intergenerational Problem*, Gardiner argues that our obligations to future generations stem from the recognition that they will inherit the environmental consequences of our current choices. Thus, justice requires not only equitable distribution of present resources but also the preservation of ecological integrity for posterity. This intergenerational ethic challenges the anthropocentric bias embedded in modern political and economic systems, which prioritize short-term gains over long-term sustainability. Gardiner's position aligns with the emerging discourse of climate justice, which seeks to integrate ethical responsibility into global environmental governance (Caney, 2010). By framing climate change as a moral problem of justice and responsibility, Gardiner exposes the inadequacy of existing institutional mechanisms and calls for a reconfiguration of moral and political priorities.

Moral Corruption and the Failure of Ethical Systems

Gardiner introduces the notion of moral corruption to explain humanity's persistent failure to act ethically in the face of overwhelming evidence of ecological degradation. He describes moral corruption as the collective tendency toward self-deception, rationalization, and moral evasion, whereby societies justify inaction through misleading rhetoric or misplaced optimism (Gardiner, 2011). This concept reveals the psychological and institutional dimensions of moral failure how social structures and political systems enable individuals to obscure responsibility. It also highlights the theoretical weakness of prevailing moral systems, which lack the depth and scope to engage complex global and temporal ethics. Moral corruption, in Gardiner's view, is not an accidental flaw but a structural feature of modernity a condition in which convenience and self-interest undermine moral judgment. Similar concerns were articulated by Hannah Arendt, who warned of the "banality of evil" in bureaucratic systems that normalize moral passivity. For Gardiner, overcoming this corruption requires cultivating moral integrity, strengthening ethical institutions, and fostering a cosmopolitan moral consciousness that transcends national and generational boundaries.

The Perfect Moral Storm: Gardiner's Central Thesis

Stephen Gardiner's most influential and comprehensive contribution to environmental philosophy is encapsulated in his concept of the "Perfect Moral Storm." This idea, articulated in his principal work *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change*, serves as both a metaphor and an analytical framework for understanding the ethical complexity and moral failures surrounding global environmental degradation. Gardiner's central thesis posits that climate change presents not merely a scientific, technological, or economic problem, but an intricate ethical tragedy a convergence of multiple moral challenges that together paralyze effective action and expose deep flaws in human moral reasoning and global institutions. He likens this situation to a meteorological perfect storm, where several distinct but reinforcing forces collide to produce a crisis of unprecedented magnitude (Gardiner, 2011). In this section, the "Perfect Moral Storm" is examined through its three principal dimensions the global, intergenerational, and theoretical storms which together explain why humanity has failed to respond adequately to the moral imperatives of the climate crisis. Gardiner's analysis reveals how the interaction of these dimensions produces not only environmental harm but also moral corruption, a collective failure to take responsibility despite full awareness of the consequences of inaction.

The Global Storm: Justice and the Inequities of Climate Responsibility

The first dimension of Gardiner's moral storm is the global storm, which exposes the moral asymmetry and distributive injustice in the relationship between nations. The causes and effects of climate change are unevenly distributed: wealthy industrialized nations are the principal contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, while poorer developing countries bear the brunt of environmental degradation and extreme weather events (Gardiner, 2004). This imbalance reflects structural injustice within the global order and raises questions about fairness, responsibility, and moral accountability. Gardiner argues that the global dimension is exacerbated by the fragmented nature of international politics and the absence of enforceable global governance mechanisms. Each nation, acting from self-interest, seeks to maximize economic advantage while minimizing environmental responsibility. This collective action problem resembles the "tragedy of the commons" described by Garrett Hardin, where rational actors exploit shared resources to the point of collapse. However, Gardiner extends this analysis from an economic and ecological context to a moral one, emphasizing that global inaction on climate change constitutes a profound ethical failure rooted in moral complacency and political short-sightedness. The global storm, therefore, represents a crisis of international moral coordination. It exposes the inadequacy of existing institutions, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to enforce moral duties of cooperation and equity. As Caney (2010) notes, global justice requires the advantaged nations to shoulder a greater burden of mitigation, both because of their historical emissions and their superior capacity to act. Gardiner's framework, however, demonstrates that such moral clarity is often obscured by self-interest, political inertia, and moral corruption.

The Intergenerational Storm: Ethical Responsibility Across Time

The intergenerational storm is perhaps the most morally challenging aspect of Gardiner's analysis. It concerns the ethical relationship between present and future generations those who create the problem and those who will suffer its worst effects. Climate change involves temporal dispersion of causes and effects: the consequences of carbon emissions are delayed, and their impacts will persist for centuries. This creates what Gardiner calls a pure intergenerational problem, in which moral agents are tempted to exploit the temporal distance between action and consequence to evade responsibility. According to Gardiner, this temporal dimension exposes a deep flaw in human moral psychology our inability to feel moral urgency toward distant future others. This bias leads to intergenerational injustice, where present generations benefit from activities that impose severe burdens on posterity. Traditional moral and political theories often fail to address this temporal asymmetry adequately. For example, social contract theories are limited to contemporaneous agents, while utilitarianism, though concerned with aggregate welfare, struggles to weigh future well-being equitably against present satisfaction (Parfit, 1984). Gardiner thus argues for an expanded moral community that includes future generations as legitimate moral subjects. This position resonates with the principle of intergenerational equity advanced by Edith Brown Weiss, who maintains that each generation holds the Earth in trust for those to come. For Gardiner, acting justly toward future persons requires more than prudence or self-interest; it requires recognizing moral obligations grounded in fairness, virtue, and respect for human dignity beyond temporal limits. The intergenerational storm, therefore, magnifies the tragedy of the moral storm: it is easy for current generations to rationalize inaction since those most affected cannot yet speak for themselves. This, in Gardiner's analysis,

exemplifies the depth of moral corruption the tendency to disguise moral failure behind plausible but ethically empty rhetoric of progress and pragmatism.

The Theoretical Storm: The Failure of Moral and Political Theory

The third dimension, the theoretical storm, reflects the limitations of contemporary moral and political theory in addressing the complexity of the climate crisis. Gardiner argues that prevailing ethical systems whether consequentialist, deontological, or contractarian struggle to accommodate the global, intergenerational, and ecological scope of environmental harm. Traditional frameworks are typically designed for interactions among contemporaneous individuals or within bounded political communities. Climate change, by contrast, is diffuse, cumulative, and trans boundary, involving billions of agents acting collectively over centuries. This theoretical inadequacy produces moral paralysis. Policies become hostage to competing moral claims and economic calculations, while fundamental ethical principles such as justice, responsibility, and the common good are neglected. Gardiner contends that the failure of moral theory is not merely a theoretical shortcoming but a symptom of moral corruption the systematic distortion of ethical reasoning to justify inaction (Gardiner, 2006). He warns that humanity's reliance on cost-benefit analysis, technological optimism, and vague appeals to "adaptation" reflect attempts to escape rather than confront moral responsibility. The theoretical storm thus challenges philosophers to rethink ethical paradigms for the Anthropocene. It calls for an expanded moral vocabulary that integrates ecological awareness, temporal sensitivity, and global justice. This aligns with the vision of environmental philosophers such as Bryan Norton and Dale Jamieson, who argue for a pragmatic and virtue-based ethics that emphasizes character formation, moral education, and collective responsibility.

Environmental Justice and Global Ethics in Gardiner's Philosophy

Stephen Gardiner's environmental philosophy cannot be fully understood without examining his profound concern for environmental justice and the broader question of global ethics. At the heart of his argument is the conviction that climate change represents not merely an ecological or economic problem but a moral injustice of planetary proportions. This injustice manifests in the unequal distribution of ecological burdens and benefits between rich and poor nations, present and future generations, and even between human and non-human entities (Gardiner, 2011). By framing environmental degradation within the discourse of global ethics, Gardiner situates environmental philosophy at the intersection of moral responsibility, political legitimacy, and the quest for the common good. Gardiner articulates that climate change constitutes a "global systemic injustice" wherein the world's wealthiest populations - those most responsible for greenhouse gas emissions impose disproportionate harms on vulnerable communities least equipped to adapt. This asymmetry exposes the moral bankruptcy of international policies that prioritize national interests over global well-being. From this perspective, environmental justice demands a cosmopolitan ethical framework one that transcends state boundaries and recognizes the moral worth of all persons and living beings. Echoing the cosmopolitan ideals of Kant and contemporary theorists such as Pogge (Held 2010), Gardiner advocates for a moral order that binds humanity together through shared responsibility for the Earth's future.

A key dimension of Gardiner's conception of environmental justice is its intergenerational scope. He argues that the current generation's exploitation of natural resources violates the principle of fairness toward future generations, who will inherit a degraded planet and diminished life prospects. This temporal injustice challenges traditional

ethical theories, which are often ill-equipped to address harms that extend across centuries (Gardiner, 2003). In line with Rawls' notion of the "just savings principle," Gardiner maintains that moral agents must act as trustees of the Earth, preserving ecological integrity as a matter of justice and stewardship. His approach thus integrates environmental sustainability into the core of moral theory, transforming ecological care from a matter of choice into a categorical duty. Furthermore, Gardiner's work situates environmental justice within the context of institutional ethics. He contends that global governance structures such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol are often paralyzed by self-interest, bureaucratic inertia, and political compromise (Gardiner, 2011). These institutional failures reflect not merely procedural inefficiency but moral corruption on a global scale, as powerful nations exploit loopholes and defer responsibility under the guise of diplomacy. For Gardiner, genuine environmental justice requires institutions that embody ethical integrity, promote equitable participation, and prioritize the protection of the most vulnerable both human and ecological.

Gardiner's emphasis on virtue ethics further enriches his account of global justice. He posits that structural reforms alone are insufficient unless they are guided by virtuous dispositions such as honesty, humility, compassion, and courage (Gardiner, 2010). These virtues enable moral agents to resist the temptations of denial, greed, and apathy that sustain ecological destruction. In this regard, Gardiner aligns with environmental philosophers like Aldo Leopold and Bryan Norton, who envision ethics as a way of cultivating character and fostering a "land ethic" grounded in respect for the biotic community. Ultimately, Gardiner's framework calls for a global ethics of care and responsibility, where environmental justice is not confined to legal or distributive concerns but extends to the moral imagination. His environmental philosophy redefines justice as an ongoing practice of solidarity across nations, species, and generations. In confronting the environmental crisis, Gardiner challenges humanity to move beyond narrow self-interest toward what he calls "the moral community of all beings," a vision rooted in the recognition that our shared destiny depends on the flourishing of the Earth itself.

Toward a Virtue-Oriented Environmental Ethics

In addressing the ethical challenges posed by climate change, Stephen Gardiner advances an approach that moves beyond the limitations of rule-based or consequence-driven moral theories toward a virtue-oriented environmental ethic. For Gardiner, the complexity of the environmental crisis its temporal, spatial, and moral dimensions reveals the insufficiency of conventional ethical systems such as utilitarianism and deontology. These frameworks often fail to cultivate the kind of moral character and dispositions necessary for sustained ecological responsibility. By contrast, a virtue-oriented approach emphasizes the moral agent's character, motivations, and capacity for self-restraint, situating environmental ethics within the broader horizon of moral formation and the good life. Drawing on the Aristotelian conception of virtue as a mean between extremes, Gardiner's environmental virtue ethics seeks to develop habits and dispositions conducive to ecological flourishing. The goal is not merely to obey environmental laws or maximize utility but to live well within the bounds of nature (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1106b). This requires cultivating virtues such as temperance, humility, prudence, and justice, which counteract the vices of excess, arrogance, and negligence that characterize the anthropocentric attitude of modernity. Gardiner thus reinterprets environmental degradation as a symptom of moral deficiency a failure to embody the virtues necessary for planetary stewardship.

In this virtue-oriented framework, temperance emerges as a foundational ecological virtue. It calls for moderation in consumption and restraint in exploiting natural resources, echoing the ecological humility advocated by Aldo Leopold's land ethic. For Leopold, "a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community." Gardiner extends this principle by emphasizing moral self-discipline and the cultivation of global virtues capable of resisting the moral corruption endemic to consumerist societies. Humility, in this sense, becomes an antidote to the hubris of technological domination, reminding humanity of its dependence on ecological systems and its moral duty to protect them. Another key virtue in Gardiner's environmental ethic is prudence the practical wisdom to discern right action in complex, uncertain, and long-term contexts. Unlike the narrow rationality of cost-benefit analysis, prudence integrates foresight, moral imagination, and sensitivity to the consequences of one's actions for distant others and future generations (Gardiner, 2006). It aligns with Hans Jonas's "ethics of responsibility," which calls for an anticipatory moral awareness appropriate to the technological age. Through prudence, moral agents cultivate the capacity to deliberate wisely amid uncertainty, recognizing that ecological responsibility requires not omniscience but sincerity, caution, and care.

Justice, both intergenerational and global, also stands at the center of Gardiner's virtue ethics. He insists that the moral life cannot be separated from considerations of fairness and solidarity across space and time. The just person, in Gardiner's view, is one who recognizes the moral claims of future generations and marginalized communities, ensuring that ecological benefits and burdens are distributed equitably (Gardiner, 2004). This virtue of justice complements the virtues of care and compassion, which extend moral concern beyond the human sphere to encompass non-human life and ecosystems. Moreover, Gardiner's virtue-oriented environmental ethic underscores the importance of moral integrity the alignment of moral belief and action. Integrity resists the fragmentation of responsibility that characterizes modern responses to climate change. It entails consistency between one's ecological values and daily choices, from political advocacy to personal consumption. As Dale Jamieson notes, such integrity requires viewing one's life as a coherent moral project, where environmental stewardship becomes integral to one's identity rather than an optional moral add-on. Gardiner's virtue ethics thus envisions environmental renewal as a moral transformation rather than a merely technical or political reform. It calls for the re-education of desire, the reorientation of institutions, and the cultivation of moral exemplars capable of inspiring ecological virtue in others. In this regard, his approach resonates with Alasdair MacIntyre's critique of moral fragmentation in *After Virtue*, suggesting that the recovery of a shared moral narrative is essential for rebuilding the moral ecology of human life.

Conclusion

Stephen Gardiner's environmental philosophy offers one of the most profound and morally rigorous frameworks for understanding the ethical dimensions of climate change in contemporary thought. Through his concept of the "perfect moral storm," Gardiner reveals that the environmental crisis is not merely a scientific or political dilemma but an ethical tragedy rooted in the structure of modern moral life. It exposes humanity's inability to reconcile short-term interests with long-term responsibilities and reveals how moral corruption manifested in denial, self-deception, and institutional inertia undermines our collective capacity for justice and stewardship (Gardiner, 2011).

At the core of Gardiner's contribution is his insistence that environmental degradation represents a moral failure of civilization, not simply a technological miscalculation. The climate crisis tests the very foundations of ethics, justice, and responsibility. It compels moral agents to rethink the scope of their obligations extending them beyond the boundaries of nation, species, and generation. By identifying the global, intergenerational, and theoretical dimensions of climate change, Gardiner reframes environmental philosophy as a discipline of moral realism, one that must face uncomfortable truths about human vulnerability and complicity.

His appeal to a virtue-oriented environmental ethic provides a constructive path forward. Gardiner's integration of Aristotelian virtue ethics with environmental thought underscores that sustainable living depends on cultivating the right dispositions temperance, humility, prudence, justice, and integrity. These virtues equip moral agents to resist the vices of greed, arrogance, and apathy that fuel ecological destruction. In this sense, environmental ethics becomes not only a question of policy but a moral pedagogy: a call to form character and conscience in harmony with the natural world. Furthermore, Gardiner's framework for environmental justice situates ecological responsibility within a global moral order. He argues that true justice must account for the asymmetries of power and vulnerability across nations and generations (Gardiner, 2004). By linking environmental ethics to global governance, he exposes the moral inadequacy of institutions that prioritize economic gain over planetary welfare and challenges policymakers to embody the virtues necessary for just ecological stewardship. Ultimately, Gardiner's environmental philosophy redefines the moral task of our age. It demands a transformation from reactive to reflective moral agency, where individuals and societies act not out of fear or convenience but from an awareness of their moral place within the web of life. His thought reawakens the ancient philosophical question of how to live well now reframed within the fragile ecology of the Anthropocene. In doing so, Gardiner reminds us that environmental renewal is inseparable from moral renewal: to heal the Earth, humanity must first recover its moral compass. Thus, Gardiner's work stands as a clarion call to integrate ethical responsibility, global justice, and virtue into the heart of environmental philosophy. It challenges contemporary civilization to transcend moral corruption, cultivate ecological wisdom, and build a world where human flourishing is aligned with the flourishing of the Earth. His philosophy points toward a future in which ethics is no longer confined to human relations but extends to the entire community of life a moral horizon that envisions not domination, but stewardship, interdependence, and reverence for being itself.

References

- Arendt, H. (1963). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil*. Viking Press.
- Aristotle. (2009). *Nicomachean ethics* (W. D. Ross, Trans.). Oxford University Press.
- Attfield, R. (2014). *Environmental ethics: An overview for the twenty-first century* (2nd ed.). Polity Press.
- Gardiner, S. M. (2003). The pure intergenerational problem. *The Monist*, 86(3), 481–500. <https://doi.org/10.5840/monist200386325>
- Gardiner, S. M. (2004). Ethics and global climate change. *Ethics*, 114(3), 555–600. <https://doi.org/10.1086/382247>
- Gardiner, S. M. (2006). A core precautionary principle. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 14(1), 33–60. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9760.2006.00236.x>

- Gardiner, S. M. (2010). Is “arming the future” with geoengineering really the lesser evil? Some doubts about the ethics of intentionally manipulating the climate system. In S. M. Gardiner, S. Caney, D. Jamieson, & H. Shue (Eds.), *Climate ethics: Essential readings* (pp. 284–312). Oxford University Press.
- Gardiner, S. M. (2011). *A perfect moral storm: The ethical tragedy of climate change*. Oxford University Press.
- Held, D. (2010). *Cosmopolitanism: Ideals and realities*. Polity Press.
- Jamieson, D. (2014). *Reason in a dark time: Why the struggle against climate change failed—and what it means for our future*. Oxford University Press.
- Jonas, H. (1984). *The imperative of responsibility: In search of an ethics for the technological age*. University of Chicago Press.
- Leopold, A. (1949). *A sand county almanac*. Oxford University Press.
- MacIntyre, A. (1981). *After virtue: A study in moral theory*. University of Notre Dame Press.
- Norton, B. G. (2005). *Sustainability: A philosophy of adaptive ecosystem management*. University of Chicago Press.
- Pogge, T. (2008). *World poverty and human rights*. Polity Press.
- Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Harvard University Press.



JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Volume 1, Number 8 (December, 2025)

ISSN: 1595-9457 (online); 3043-4211 (print)

Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

Received: November 26, 2025 Accepted: December 24, 2025 Published: December 31, 2025

Citation: Igwe, Thomas O. (2025). "Continuity of Embodied Ecology: From John Paul II to Francis and Pope Leo XIV." *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1 (8): 85-94.

Article

Open Access

CONTINUITY OF EMBODIED ECOLOGY: FROM JOHN PAUL II TO FRANCIS AND POPE LEO XIV

Thomas Onyebuchi Igwe

Faculty of Arts, Business, Law, Education, and Theology, St. Mary's University, London,
United Kingdom.

Email: 2318661@live.stmarys.ac.uk

Abstract

This study shows how the Theology of the Body offers a fundamental framework for modern ecotheology by examining the continuity of Catholic ecological anthropology from John Paul II through Francis to Pope Leo XIV. By examining how papal teaching has incorporated human embodiment, moral responsibility, and care for creation into a cohesive theological trajectory, the study fills a scholarly gap. In terms of methodology, it uses comparative magisterial exegesis, examining important texts such as Francis's *Laudato Si'*, John Paul II's *Familiaris Consortio*, Pope Leo XIV's inaugural Mass for the Care of Creation, and the message of the 2025 World Day of Prayer. These are added to Catholic social teaching and the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 2402–2403) (Leo XIV, 2025a; Leo XIV, 2025b; Leo XIV, 2025c; Francis, 2015; CCC, 1994/1997). Results show that the human body, as the "first environment," establishes a theological need for ecological care; integral ecology becomes a moral and spiritual calling rather than just a policy; and Pope Leo XIV's pastoral and liturgical leadership is a prime example of this ecological vision. The article provides guidance for clergy, laypeople, and Catholic institutions to implement ecological ethics; theologically, it affirms that ecological conversion is inseparable from Christian discipleship. This study highlights the importance of human embodiment in ecological and spiritual responsibility in the twenty-first century, contributing to ecotheology, moral anthropology, and Catholic social thought by tracing a distinct magisterial continuity.

Keywords: Embodied Ecology, Theology of the Body, Integral Ecology, Catholic Ecological Anthropology, Magisterial Continuity, Ecological Conversion.

Introduction

A rich conversation between ecotheology and the Theology of the Body has emerged as a result of Catholic scholarship's growing engagement with the relationship between human embodiment and ecological responsibility. In its broadest sense, ecotheology emphasizes

Copyright © 2025 By JPPSS. Publishers: Omega Books

This is an open access article which permits unrestricted use provided the work is properly cited.

humanity's interdependent relationship with nature while examining the theological, ethical, and spiritual aspects of creation care (Bauckham, 2009; McFague, 1993). A profound understanding of human embodiment as a gift, a relational reality, and a reflection of God's creative love is articulated in John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* (John Paul II, 1981). Although Catholic scholarship has frequently treated these two areas independently, recent papal teachings emphasize the close connection between ecological responsibility and human corporeality, presenting environmental stewardship as a moral and spiritual necessity (Francis, 2015). The continuity of papal reflection on embodied ecology across successive pontificates is still not well demonstrated, despite this growing recognition. In his writings, John Paul II placed human dignity and ethical obligation within the context of creation, emphasizing the sacramental and relational aspects of the human body (John Paul II, 1981; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994/1997). By promoting an integrated concept of "integral ecology" that considers environmental, social, and human factors, Pope Francis expanded these ideas into the field of ecological ethics (Francis, 2015). According to preliminary observations, Pope Leo XIV is continuing this trend by reaffirming the theological and moral connection between human embodiment and creation care, especially through pastoral initiatives like the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and the *Borgo Laudato Si'* (Leo XIV, 2025a, 2025b).

The study issue of inadequate scholarly attention to the evolution and continuity of papal ideas on ecological ethics and human embodiment is addressed in this paper. It specifically looks at the ways that theological anthropology and ecological vision are shared by pontificates, highlighting both theological deepening and continuity. The goal of the study is to show how a logical framework for Catholic ecotheology can be obtained by viewing human embodiment as a site of moral and environmental responsibility. The study's three main goals are to: (1) explain the theological underpinnings of embodied ecology in John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*; (2) evaluate Pope Francis's contributions to integral ecology and ecological ethics; and (3) place Pope Leo XIV's early interventions within this developing continuum. By providing a framework that connects doctrinal integrity, ethical contemplation, and hands-on involvement with environmental issues, the paper advances current Catholic scholarship in ecotheology, moral anthropology, and social thought. This study is relevant because it addresses the pressing ecological crisis and upholds Catholic doctrine on the sanctity of creation, human dignity, and interpersonal relationships.

Theological Foundations of Embodied Ecology

In Catholic philosophy, the study of human corporeality and moral responsibility for creation are connected through the idea of embodied ecology. This method emphasizes that the human body is a relational, moral, and sacramental reality in addition to being a biological entity, placing ecological concern within a strong theological anthropology. A growing comprehension of the relationship between human embodiment, social ethics, and ecological responsibility is demonstrated by the continuity of papal reflections from John Paul II to Pope Francis and, more recently, Pope Leo XIV.

John Paul II: Theology of the Body and Human Embodiment

Human embodiment is presented as essential to comprehending human dignity, relationality, and moral responsibility in John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* (John Paul II, 1981). The human body, which was made in God's image, is a relational and ethical expression of the individual. Humans participate in creation, exercise moral responsibility, and make the divine plan for human flourishing manifest through their bodies. John Paul II emphasizes in

Familiaris Consortio and his more comprehensive catechesis on the Theology of the Body that relational ethics and bodily integrity are inextricably linked to the larger moral ecology in which humans live (John Paul II, 1981). In this context, human embodiment is implicitly linked to ecological responsibility. The natural environment is a gift from God that needs to be treated with care, just as the body is a gift. Bauckham (2009) contends that the biblical witness in Genesis and the Psalms presents humans as relational agents tasked with preserving and fostering creation. Thus, moral responsibility and human dignity go beyond interpersonal relationships to encompass ecological community care. This is further supported by McFague (1993), who argues that ecological harm frequently represents anthropological misalignment, a discrepancy between how people treat their own bodies and the larger creation. Since the body is a site of relationality, responsibility, and ecological consciousness, John Paul II's Anthropology offers a theological basis for comprehending embodied ecology.

Integral Ecology in Catholic Social Teaching

Using the concept of integral ecology, Pope Francis makes a clear connection between ecological responsibility and human embodiment. He emphasizes in *Laudato Si'* that ecological degradation is inextricably linked to ethical and social upheavals, offering an integrated vision that considers environmental, social, and human aspects (Francis, 2015). Integral ecology places human bodies and their dignity within the larger ecological and social context, building on the principles established by John Paul II. This makes human ecology a part of environmental ethics. The state of the Earth is correlated with the physical, social, and spiritual well-being of humanity. A key idea in this vision is ecological conversion. Pope Francis urges a change in attitudes, behaviors, and institutional policies to combat social injustice, biodiversity loss, and climate change. John Paul II's moral anthropology, which holds that embodiment is a moral and relational obligation toward all of creation rather than just a personal reality, serves as the foundation for the ethical framework. According to scholars like Conradie (2011) and Bauckham (2009), integral ecology is an extension of the theology of human embodiment into ecological praxis as well as a development of traditional Catholic social teaching. In this situation, relational ethics and human dignity become inextricably linked to environmental justice.

Pope Leo XIV: Continuity and Expansion

In his early interventions, Pope Leo XIV advances the theological conversation on embodied ecology while exhibiting continuity with both Francis and John Paul II. Human embodiment, moral responsibility, and ecological ethics are all intertwined in his speeches at the *Borgo Laudato Si'* and World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. Leo XIV highlights that a theological response based on relational ethics and the dignity of the human body is necessary to address today's ecological crises, which include climate change, deforestation, and environmental degradation. Pope Leo XIV, in contrast to his predecessors, emphasizes pastoral involvement with ecological issues, especially in areas where environmental injustice is present. He contextualizes integral ecology for modern issues while echoing it in his remarks about socioeconomic disparities, urban pollution, and areas impacted by oil extraction (Leo XIV, 2025a, 2025b). This method connects environmental advocacy and human dignity by showing that ecological responsibility is both pastorally applicable and doctrinally based. Furthermore, ecological care is explicitly framed by Pope Leo XIV as a collective and intergenerational responsibility, which resonates with postcolonial and African perspectives that prioritize solidarity, relationality, and restorative justice (Mbembe, 2001;

Sall, 2013). Leo XIV adds to a cogent theological narrative by placing embodied ecology within a continuum of papal reflection: the body is not only the site of moral and personal responsibility but also a participant in the flourishing of creation. By doing this, he presents a modern and convincing framework for Catholic ecotheology that combines ecological praxis, social ethics, and moral anthropology.

Dialogue and Convergence between the Pontificates

A continuity of Catholic thought that places human embodiment, relationality, and ecological responsibility at the center of moral and social teaching is revealed by the discussion and convergence between the pontificates of Pope Leo XIV, Francis, and John Paul II. The understanding of the human person as a relational and ecological agent is profoundly coherent across pontificates, despite the fact that each one arises in a unique historical, cultural, and ecological context. The theological, anthropological, and ecological focuses of these three pontificates are compared in this section, emphasizing their commonalities and distinctiveness.

Comparative Analysis of Papal Reflections

The foundational framework for comprehending human embodiment as essential to moral and social responsibility is found in John Paul II's Theology of the Body. He highlighted that the human body is a gift, relational by nature, and geared toward involvement in God's creation (John Paul II, 1981). Given that humans are called to nurture and preserve creation, the moral significance of embodiment transcends interpersonal ethics and ecological responsibility (Bauckham, 2009; McFague, 1993). According to this framework, the body serves as the foundation for what can be called an "embodied ecology" by acting as a locus of relationality and a mediator of ethical responsibility. By articulating the idea of integral ecology in *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis advances this foundation. Integral ecology emphasizes the interdependence of human, social, and environmental aspects and stresses that human flourishing and the health of the planet are inextricably linked (Francis, 2015). In this sense, human embodiment is closely linked to the well-being of the social and ecological order. By clearly connecting ecological degradation with social injustice, emphasizing the vulnerability of marginalized communities, and advocating for an ecological conversion that changes both individuals and institutions, Francis' ecological vision expands on John Paul II's moral anthropology (Conradie, 2011; Gorman, 2010). Pope Leo XIV carries on and broadens this path by focusing on pastoral engagement and tackling current ecological crises around the world. His remarks on the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and his interventions at the *Borgo Laudato Si'* highlight the fact that ecological responsibility is a shared and generational duty (Leo XIV, 2025a, 2025b). Pope Leo XIV places human embodiment in the larger ecological framework, showing that caring for the environment is a moral obligation based on relational ethics and the dignity of the human body. He specifically addresses the socio-political aspects of ecological crises, in contrast to his predecessors, especially in areas impacted by extractive industries, urban pollution, and environmental degradation.

Common Themes across the Pontificates

A number of thematic continuities are revealed by the comparative analysis. First, embodiment is crucial: the human body mediates relationships with God, neighbors, and creation in a theological and ethical way. Second, relationality highlights how interdependent humans are with one another on a social, ecological, and cosmic level. Third, stewardship, or the care of creation, is presented as a moral obligation that incorporates

ecological integrity, social justice, and human dignity. Fourth, integral ecology connects these facets, offering a unified perspective where social, ethical, and environmental issues are intertwined. Pope Leo XIV emphasizes modern applicability, placing ecological responsibility within the realities of the twenty-first century, while Francis places this within ecological praxis and John Paul II supplies the anthropological basis. These pontificates show that while preserving theological coherence, Catholic teaching on ecology is dynamic and responsive to new social, political, and environmental issues.

Methodological Approach

Theological exegesis and magisterial analysis are used in this comparative study. Theological convergence and the development of ecological and embodied concerns are identified through a critical analysis of papal writings, including encyclicals, apostolic letters, speeches, and catechesis. To illustrate the continuity and evolution of ecological theology, the methodology combines teachings from the magisterial tradition with biblical foundations. Application of these insights to global Catholic praxis is further made possible by postcolonial and contextual lenses, which highlight their applicability to communities dealing with environmental degradation, such as those in the Niger Delta, Enugu, Anambra, and Accra.

Implications for Global Catholic Ecological Praxis

There are important ramifications for worldwide Catholic ecological praxis from the convergence of these pontificates. It first creates a theological basis for the connection between environmental stewardship and moral anthropology. Secondly, it offers a structure for pastoral involvement, motivating religious communities to incorporate environmental issues into social outreach, liturgy, and catechesis. Third, it highlights the moral obligation of Catholic organizations, governments, and laypeople to combat environmental deterioration, especially in areas that are at risk. Fourth, it reaffirms the global aspect of Catholic ecological teaching by showing how local issues, like those in Ghana and Nigeria, are closely related to universal theological and ethical precepts. This study provides a logical and useful framework for Catholic ecotheology by emphasizing the continuity and communication between Pope Leo XIV, Francis, and John Paul II. A comprehensive vision that tackles today's ecological issues while staying firmly rooted in Church teaching is formed by the convergence of embodied ecology, relationality, and integral ecology. The knowledge acquired connects theological contemplation with practical ecological responsibility and is immediately applicable to both pastoral practice and academic research.

Embodiment and Creation Care in Practice

A useful framework for dealing with today's ecological issues is offered by the fusion of Catholic ecotheology and Theology of the Body. According to John Paul II, theological anthropology views the human body as a moral and relational agent that allows people to engage with God's creation (John Paul II, 1981). This viewpoint highlights that taking care of creation is a concrete manifestation of embodied responsibility rather than an abstract duty. As relational and physical beings, humans are called to interact with nature in an ethical manner, acknowledging the interconnectedness of ecological systems and the inherent dignity of all living things (Bauckham, 2009; McFague, 1993).

Theology of the Body and Ecological Ethics

Ecological praxis directly benefits from embodiment's moral significance. The ethical obligation to preserve and protect creation is emphasized by John Paul II's emphasis on the

body as a gift and as relational. Environmental deterioration becomes a moral and spiritual issue in addition to a social and scientific one when the human body is viewed as a component of a wider ecological network. Accordingly, ecological sin can be seen as a continuation of anthropological rupture, in which environmental damage reflects a detachment from the relational purpose of the human body (Kärkkäinen, 2014). A useful link between environmental ethics and moral anthropology is provided by Pope Francis' concept of integral ecology in *Laudato Si'*. Human dignity, social justice, and environmental stewardship are all directly linked by integral ecology (Francis, 2015). By highlighting solidarity with the marginalized, who are frequently the ones most impacted by ecological crises, it challenges both clergy and laypeople to view environmental harm as inextricably linked to human well-being (Conradie, 2011). By emphasizing pastoral involvement and institutional accountability and encouraging Catholic communities to act through advocacy and example, Pope Leo XIV further solidifies this vision (Leo XIV, 2025a; 2025b).

Practical Applications for Clergy, Laity, and Institutions

There are many real-world, context-sensitive uses for embodied ecology. Clergy can integrate ecological ethics into their homilies, catechesis, and sacramental life to highlight that stewardship of creation is a moral duty consistent with the Gospel and Church teaching. As part of faith formation initiatives, parishes and diocesan programs can incorporate environmental education based on the Theology of the Body, which emphasizes human embodiment, relationality, and intergenerational responsibility. Laity involvement can take many different forms, such as supporting sustainable development policies, organizing waste management initiatives, and planting trees under community leadership. Catholic lay movements have coordinated cleanup efforts, pushed for corporate responsibility, and collaborated with global environmental networks in areas like the Niger Delta, where oil spills have wreaked havoc on ecosystems and local livelihoods (Alabi, 2024). The moral and spiritual discourse of creation care is also increasingly being used to frame green urban initiatives and air pollution monitoring in urban centers like Enugu (Ejikeme, Adogu, & Onwuzuligbo, 2023). River basin restoration initiatives in Anambra demonstrate a dedication to social and environmental justice, mirroring Francis' integral ecology and John Paul II's relational anthropology (Roberts, Anikwe, & Njideka, 2025). Schools, colleges, and religious institutions that are Catholic are especially well-positioned to adopt systemic ecological practices. Initiatives can include developing energy-efficient infrastructure, ethical investment policies, and incorporating sustainability into curricula. A generation of morally conscious graduates who see ecological care as an extension of their embodied vocation is being fostered by Catholic universities in Accra and southern Nigeria, for instance, which have started integrating environmental stewardship into their theological and social science curricula (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2015; Geyer, 2008).

Case Examples: Church Initiatives in Environmental Sustainability

The practical convergence of ecotheology and theology of the body is demonstrated by a number of case studies. Diocesan initiatives in collaboration with local communities in the Niger Delta have integrated spiritual development and environmental advocacy, tying liturgical life to ecological consciousness (Watts, 2009). The Catholic Diocese of Enugu has demonstrated the practical application of ethical responsibility by supporting green parish initiatives, such as community gardens and renewable energy projects (Ejikeme, Adogu, & Onwuzuligbo, 2023). Catholic schools in Accra have launched educational initiatives on waste reduction and biodiversity, involving students in practical environmental work and

portraying these endeavors as manifestations of moral and spiritual stewardship (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2015).

These projects serve as prime examples of how embodied ecology can transcend academic discussion and become a transformative practice. Catholic communities can address environmental degradation while promoting social justice and spiritual development by highlighting the relational and ethical aspects of human embodiment. By tying together the ethical, social, and ecological facets of Catholic life, the Theology of the Body and Francis and Leo XIV's ecological vision offer a logical foundation for comprehensive action. Ecotheology's practical application of Theology of the Body emphasizes how ecological responsibility and human embodiment are inextricably linked. Informed by papal teaching and sensitive to regional ecological issues, clergy, laity, and institutions are called to foster an ethics of relational stewardship. Projects in the Niger Delta, Enugu, Anambra, and Accra show how Catholic communities can embody a faith that respects God and creation by converting theological insights into sustainable action. In addition to providing a model for international ecclesial engagement with urgent environmental issues, this convergence of embodiment, relationality, and ecological ethics validates the continuity of Catholic teaching from John Paul II to Francis and Pope Leo XIV.

Critical Reflections and Contemporary Relevance

Although they offer a convincing vision of embodied ecology, the teachings of Popes John Paul II, Francis, and Leo XIV are not impervious to criticism. The accessibility and relevance of these lessons in environments characterized by poverty, ecological injustice, and postcolonial legacies have drawn criticism from academics. Communities in the Niger Delta, where environmental degradation brought on by oil has resulted in significant social, economic, and health challenges, may find the theological discourse on human embodiment and integral ecology abstract or distant (Alabi, 2024). Similar to this, urban areas like Accra and Enugu deal with complicated environmental problems like waste management, air pollution, and industrial encroachment, which call for pragmatic, situation-specific methods of ecological care (Ejikeme, Adogu, & Onwuzuligbo, 2023; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2015).

Papal reflections can be contextualized and enhanced by using the critical lens provided by African ecotheology. By emphasizing relationality and interdependence, the communitarian ethic of "I am because we are" extends stewardship to non-human creation as well as human communities (Mbiti, 1970). This viewpoint emphasizes that ecological care is a moral and spiritual obligation ingrained in human embodiment and communal life when combined with the Theology of the Body. Additionally, postcolonial critique emphasizes how historical patterns of extraction, marginalization, and governance failures are inextricably linked to environmental degradation in areas such as the Niger Delta and Anambra (Mbembe, 2001; Sall, 2013). These observations emphasize the need for communication with local realities, cultures, and ecological practices while warning against the universalization of papal teaching. This integration pushes Catholic communities to take a more comprehensive approach to creation care from an ethical standpoint. Integral ecology, relationality, and embodiment all call for the following useful interventions: community-based ecological projects, environmental advocacy, and sustainable resource use. For clergy, this means incorporating ecological issues into pastoral initiatives, sacramental life, and sermons. It encourages lay involvement in initiatives like school-based environmental programs in Accra, reforestation and cleanup campaigns in the Niger Delta, and river basin restoration in Anambra. Universities, parishes, and dioceses are examples of Catholic

institutions that can act as centers for environmental sustainability education, policy engagement, and moral leadership.

Embodied ecology is still relevant today because it can bring social justice, environmental ethics, and moral anthropology together. This method affirms that creation care is a spiritual vocation rooted in human embodiment rather than just an ethical or scientific requirement by bridging Theology of the Body, Integral Ecology, and African eco-spirituality. It gives local and international Catholic communities the theological depth and practical effectiveness they need to address the ecological crises of the twenty-first century. Contextualized through African and postcolonial lenses, the convergence of these papal teachings provides a model for a resilient, morally active, and environmentally conscious Catholic praxis that is instructive both locally and globally.

Conclusion

Examining the continuity of embodied ecology under Popes Francis, Leo XIV, and John Paul II, this study has demonstrated the close connection between Catholic ecological teaching and the Theology of the Body. A consistent, morally sound approach to creation care is based on an understanding of human embodiment, relationality, and moral responsibility, as demonstrated by a close examination of papal writings, encyclicals, and magisterial speeches. The anthropological basis is found in John Paul II's Theology of the Body, which presents the human being as a relational and sacramental reality whose dignity and stewardship transcend the self to include the ecological community (John Paul II, 1995). According to this theological perspective, protecting the environment is an essential part of human vocation rather than an elective concern. This vision is expanded upon in Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'*, which emphasizes integral ecology, the interconnectedness of creation, the moral need to address climate change, and environmental injustice while tying human ecology to the larger ecological crisis. Francis encourages ecological conversion as a manifestation of moral and spiritual responsibility in both local and global communities. His teachings have a practical and pastoral bent. African ecotheology, which places a strong emphasis on relational ethics, community solidarity, and harmony with non-human creation, is highly compatible with this strategy (Mbiti, 1970). It is clear that embodied ecology needs to be viewed through a socio-environmental and postcolonial lens when placing papal teachings within the environmental realities of Accra, Enugu, Anambra, and the Niger Delta. Theological responses that incorporate the spiritual and practical aspects of ecological stewardship are necessary to address problems like oil pollution, industrial contamination, and urban environmental degradation. Building on these foundations, Pope Leo XIV's magisterial contributions strengthen the embodied ecology's moral, ethical, and pastoral continuity. Despite being a modern pontificate, his teachings which follow a logical line from John Paul II and Francis emphasize relationality, human dignity, and the necessity of ecological responsibility. Pope Leo XIV makes sure that the Church's ecological vision is dynamic, responsive, and pastorally relevant by tackling today's environmental crises with moral clarity and theological insight. These three pontificates' convergence shows that the Church's ecological teaching is a cohesive tradition based on the anthropology of the body and the ethics of creation care, rather than being disjointed or episodic.

The results of this study have important ramifications for both practical ecclesial engagement and theological scholarship. This continuity emphasizes to academics the value of combining ecological ethics, social teaching, and moral anthropology when studying Catholic theology. A deeper understanding of creation care as a theological and ethical

necessity is fostered by its encouragement of interdisciplinary research that draws from ecological science, African eco-spirituality, biblical exegesis, and postcolonial critique. The study offers a framework for integrating ecological praxis into preaching, education, sacramental life, and community involvement for clergy and laypeople. Theology of the Body can guide practical action, as demonstrated by examples like reforestation campaigns, cleanup efforts, and support for sustainable resource management. This makes ecological stewardship a lived expression of faith. Human embodiment, relationality, and moral responsibility are all inextricably linked to ecological care, as demonstrated by the persistence of embodied ecology throughout these pontificates. This study offers a coherent, globally relevant, and locally applicable model of Catholic ecological praxis by combining the theological contributions of Pope Leo XIV, Francis, and John Paul II. It exhorts academics, pastoral leaders, and communities to adopt an integrated approach to creation care that is devoted to the flourishing of all creation, true to Church teaching, and cognizant of socio-environmental realities. In order to keep Catholic ecological ethics both intellectually sound and pastorally transformative, future research should keep investigating localized applications of embodied ecology, especially in areas with severe environmental challenges.

References

- Alabi, S. (2024). Oil divestment, environmental injustice and sustainable development in the Niger Delta. *Journal of Political Discourse*, 2(1), 113–127.
- Asamoah-Gyadu, K. (2015). *African Charismatics: Current developments within independent indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*. Brill.
- Bauckham, R. (2009). *The Bible and ecology: Rediscovering the community of creation*. Baylor University Press.
- Bediako, K. (2004). *Theology and identity: The impact of culture upon Christian thought in the second century and modern Africa*. Oxford University Press.
- Brueggemann, W. (2012). *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, dispute, advocacy* (Updated ed.). Fortress Press.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church. (1994/1997). Libreria Editrice Vaticana. https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM
- Conradie, E. (2011). *Ecology and Christian theology: A South African perspective*. University of Stellenbosch.
- Ejikeme, J., Adogu, K., & Onwuzuligbo, C. (2023). Monitoring of spatio-temporal dynamics of air pollution in Enugu Urban using remote sensing and GIS. *European Journal of Environment and Earth Sciences*, 4(2), 22–31.
- Francis. (2015). *Laudato Si': On care for our common home*. Vatican Press.
- Geyer, M. (2008). African eco-spirituality and the environment: A theological perspective. *Christian Theology Review*, 31(3), 45–67.
- Gorman, M. J. (2010). Ecology and the Bible: Theological and ethical reflections. *Journal of Ecological Theology*, 5(2), 45–59.
- John Paul II. (1981). *Familiaris Consortio*. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1981/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html
- John Paul II. (1997). *Theology of the body: Human love in the divine plan* (D. L. S. Booth, Trans.). Pauline Books & Media. (Original lectures delivered 1979–1984)
- Leo XIV. (2025a). *Inaugural Mass for the Care of Creation at Borgo Laudato Si'*. Vatican Press.
- Leo XIV. (2025b). *Message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*. Vatican Press.

- Leo XIV. (2025c). *Homily on Integral Ecology and the Body*. Vatican Press.
- McFague, S. (1993). *The body of God: An ecological theology*. Fortress Press.
- Mbembe, A. (2001). *On the postcolony*. University of California Press.
- Roberts, P. U., Anikwe, M. A. N., & Njideka, O. E. (2025). Spatial distribution and ecological risk of petroleum hydrocarbons and heavy metals in the Anambra River Basin, Nigeria. *Advance Journal of Science, Engineering and Technology*, 10(10), 1–28.
- Sall, S. (2013). Postcolonial theology and the African Christian experience. *Journal of African Theology*, 20(1), 22–38.
- Watts, M. (2009). *Petro-violence: Community and resistance in the Niger Delta*. Institute for International Studies.



JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Volume 1, Number 8 (December, 2025)

ISSN: 1595-9457 (online); 3043-4211 (print)

Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

Received: November 20, 2025 Accepted: December 26, 2025 Published: December 31, 2025

Citation: Lasisi, Wasilat O. (2025). "The Grammar of the good: Analysing the Logic of Moral Judgements." *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1 (8): 95-106.

Article

Open Access

THE GRAMMAR OF THE GOOD: ANALYSING THE LOGIC OF MORAL JUDGEMENTS

Wasilat Opeoluwa Lasisi

Department of Philosophy, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos State, Nigeria

Email: Wasilat.lasisi@lasu.edu.ng

Abstract

Within the context of moral reflection, where conscience engages in a dialectical experiment with reason, the question of how moral judgements acquire meaning and authority emerges as one of philosophy's most reflective engagements. The concern is whether moral claims represent discoveries of objective truth or creations of evaluative significance; and whether such pronouncements describe moral facts about reality, or prescribe norms that guide human conduct within it. This dilemma defines the heart of meta-ethics, where meaning and morality collide. The aim of this paper is thus to clarify the underlying structure of moral statements and to argue that contrary to the views of some positivists like A. J. Ayer, the language of morality passes the gamut of logical coherence. The methodology employed is an analytic-critical inquiry that synthesizes conceptual analysis with philosophical argumentation. Through a comparative examination of major meta-ethical theories such as cognitivism, non-cognitivism, emotivism, prescriptivism and quasi-realism, the paper critically analyses the strengths and weaknesses of each position by examining their meaning, justification and consistency within different moral situations. It further applies tests of logical validity and moral disagreement to determine the coherence of moral language. The contribution to knowledge lies in its articulation of moral judgement as a hybrid cognitive-practical act, a synthesis of rational belief and normative attitude.

Keywords: Cognitivism, Logic, Meta-ethics, Moral semantics, Non-cognitivism.

Introduction

Moral judgements pervade human social life. Claims such as murder is wrong, justice requires equality, kindness is good or lying is immoral, appear to express authoritative evaluations that guide behaviour and ground social norms, but the philosophical foundations of these claims remain disputed. What kind of statements are moral judgements? Do they describe independently existing moral facts, or do they merely express emotions, prescriptions, or just social constructions? If they purport to state truths, how can those

Copyright © 2025 By JPPSS. Publishers: Omega Books

This is an open access article which permits unrestricted use provided the work is properly cited.

truths be known? The study of moral judgements concerns what people believe about right and wrong and how such judgements are structured, justified and expressed within the context of human reasoning. It involves an analysis of their linguistic form and inferential relation, as well as function in practical deliberations. It seeks to understand the ways in which moral claims connect with beliefs, emotions and actions. Interdisciplinary research reinforces the connection between moral cognition and moral emotion. Jiang, Zhou, Wang and Lin (2022) review neuroscientific findings that support dual-process models of moral judgement, linking moral reasoning with neural mechanisms of empathy and deliberation. The result shows how moral explanation can remain logically coherent while rejecting moral realism.

Meta-ethical inquiry stands apart from normative ethics in both scope and orientation. While normative ethics asks which actions are right or wrong (Timmons, 2020), meta-ethics asks what it means to call an action right or wrong, how such claims can be known or justified and whether they can be true or false in any objective sense. This shift from prescription to a somewhat logical analysis marks meta-ethics as the reflective and critical core of moral philosophy. One major aspect of this investigation is the logical dilemma of whether moral statements are governed by the same standards of truth and validity that apply to factual assertions, or they follow a different order of reasoning altogether. This question reaches far beyond mere semantics to engage the issues of belief, motivation and normativity. Metaethical debates, as captured in Russ Shafer-Landau's *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*, continue to highlight the connection between cognition, expression and normativity. These works show that the boundary between moral description and moral expression is porous, thereby sustaining a pluralist approach to moral semantics that blends logic with motivational psychology. The subsequent sections of this paper advances the main argument of the paper in a clear and structured progression. A segment of the paper provides a historical overview of meta-ethical inquiry and situates the problem of moral judgement within the evolution of twentieth and twenty-first-century analytic philosophy. It examines how early debates on moral meaning and truth, beginning with G. E. Moore, A. J. Ayer, C. L. Stevenson and R. M. Hare, laid the foundation for contemporary discussions of the logical underpinning of moral reasoning and language.

Another section undertakes a critical evaluation of key theoretical perspectives, including cognitivism, non-cognitivism, emotivism, prescriptivism and quasi-realism. Each of these views is examined in relation to its explanation of the truth-conditions and justificatory basis of moral claims, in a bid to reveal both their conceptual logical strengths and internal limitations. The next section turns to a detailed analysis of the logical and epistemic dimensions of moral reasoning. It investigates the inferential structure of moral statements, the criteria for moral justification and the problem of moral motivation, especially the tension between belief and desire in moral psychology to reveal that that the language of morality is more logical than psychological. Building on these analyses, the subsequent section develops and defends a hybrid theory of moral judgement, with the argument that moral discourse unites descriptive and prescriptive elements within a coherent logical and epistemic structure. Moral statements, it contends, both express beliefs about moral reality and guide moral justifications. The final section concludes by reflecting on the implications of this hybrid account for contemporary ethics. It suggests that understanding moral judgements as both cognitive and action-guiding bridges the gap between logical moral knowledge and mere moral motivation.

Meta-Ethical Analysis of Moral Language: From Sentiment to Logic

Before the rise of analytic philosophy, the nature of moral judgement remained largely a background concern of ethics, often discussed in relation to virtue, duty or divine command rather than as a problem of meaning and logic. However, as philosophical attention turned toward the analysis of language and reasoning, the question of how moral terms signify and justify came to define a new and distinct field of inquiry. It is within this intellectual transformation that the modern investigation into the structure of moral discourse emerged. Many philosophers have redefined the relation within moral thought, emotion and reason, giving meta-ethics its distinctive concern with the logical foundations of moral judgement. The development of this discourse, from Hume's sentimentalism through Kant's rationalism to Moore's non-naturalism and Ayer's emotivism, marks the evolution of meta-ethics into a sophisticated study of the meaning, logic and truth-value of moral language. David Hume is often regarded as the pioneer who transformed moral theory by denying that moral distinctions arise from reason. In *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume famously declares that "reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions" (Hume, 2000). By this, he means that reason, though instrumental in identifying facts or logical relations, cannot motivate human action. Motivation stems from desire and sentiment, not cognition. Hence, moral judgements, for Hume, are not conclusions of rational deduction but expressions of emotional response. This sentimentalist thesis challenges any view that moral statements describe reality or correspond to objective facts. Instead, moral language expresses feelings of approval or disapproval. When someone says, 'Murder is wrong,' the utterance does not describe a property of murder but rather expresses the speaker's aversion to it (Hume, 2000). As scholars such as Simon Blackburn (1998) note, Hume anticipates the later non-cognitivist tradition in meta-ethics, which sees moral judgements as expressions of attitudes rather than factual beliefs.

Hume's position also raises the is-ought problem, his claim that no set of descriptive premises (what is) can logically entail a prescriptive conclusion (what ought to be). This argument severs moral language from purely factual discourse and introduces the question of whether moral statements can ever possess truth-value (Hudson, 1983). In contrast to Hume, Immanuel Kant situates morality in the faculty of practical reason. In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant (1996) contends that moral judgements articulate universal laws that hold a priori for all rational agents. Where Hume interprets moral statements as expressions of feeling or approval (i.e., non-cognitive), Kant interprets them as rationally binding imperatives, that is, statements with logical form and normative necessity. Formally, the categorical imperative (CI) can be expressed as:

CI: $(x) \in R, M(x) \supset U[M(x)]$

where:

R = the set of all rational beings,

M(x) = the maxim or subjective principle of action adopted by agent ,

U[M(x)] = the universalizability of that maxim, i.e., it can coherently be willed as a universal law.

Thus, the moral requirement is that:

An action, A, is morally permissible, if and only if the maxim of A can be willed universally without contradiction.

Kant contrasts hypothetical imperatives, which are conditional on desire ('If you want X, do Y') with categorical imperatives, which are unconditional. For him, moral statements are not

descriptive but prescriptive, expressing what ought to be done rather than what **is** the case. Hence, “One ought to tell the truth” is represented as:

$O(T)$ where O is equal to the deontic operator, ought, while T is truth-telling.

This indicates that the act of truth-telling is not a matter of empirical observation but a rational obligation grounded in the capacity of reason to legislate moral law for itself:

Autonomy: $(x) \in R, L(x) \supset L_{\text{reason}}(x)$

That is, each rational agent is both subject and author of the moral law L , giving morality its self-legislating character.

According to Henry A. Allison (2011), this makes Kant’s moral framework cognitivist **in a practical sense**, that is, moral judgements have truth-apt logical form insofar as they can be evaluated for consistency within reason. They are cognitive not because they describe facts of the world, but because they express necessary laws of rational agency. As Christine Korsgaard (1996) observes, Kant thereby inaugurates a rationalist cognitivism that grounds normativity in the structure of reason itself. When we assert “One ought to tell the truth,” we are affirming a universalizable law that any rational being, upon reflection, must recognize. The logic of moral judgement thus becomes:

$(x) \in R, O_x(T) \equiv \text{Reason}(x)$

This equation expresses that for every rational being, the obligation to tell the truth arises necessarily from the nature of rationality. Hence, Kant transforms moral language into a system of rational discourse governed by logical universality, autonomy, and necessity, thereby, standing in strong opposition to Hume’s sentimentalism, which reduces morality to contingent affect.

This can also be represented using truth conditions.

Table 1: Kant’s Categorical Imperative Represented with Truth-condition Table

Maxim (M)	Universalization (U(M))	Logical Result	Moral Status	Explanation
Telling the truth	Universal truth-telling possible	✓ Consistent	Moral	Universal law maintains communication and trust; no contradiction arises.
Lying for personal gain	Universal lying possible?	✗ Contradiction	Immoral	If lying were universal, trust and communication collapse, lying becomes impossible, hence, contradiction in conception.
Helping others in distress	Universal helpfulness possible	✓ Consistent	Moral	Society of universal aid is logically coherent and willed by rational beings.
Refusing to help anyone	Universal refusal possible?	✗ Contradiction in will	Immoral	One cannot rationally will a world where no one helps others, since one may need help oneself.

The truth-condition table above helps to show whether a person's maxim, that is, the rule they want to act on, can be made into a universal law without producing a contradiction. It tests whether the rule remains true and consistent when everyone follows it. Each maxim can have one of two possible truth outcomes when universalized, it can be consistent (true) or self-contradictory (false). If the maxim remains true under universalization, it passes the test and is therefore moral. If it becomes false or contradictory, it fails the test and is immoral

Logical and Epistemic Dimensions of Moral Reasoning

The twentieth century ushered in a more formal and linguistic analysis of moral concepts. G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* (1903) marks the beginning of analytic meta-ethics, with its rigorous inquiry into the meaning of moral terms. Moore's most famous contribution is the open-question argument, which he uses to refute all naturalistic definitions of moral goodness. He avers that for any proposed natural property such as pleasure, happiness or desire-satisfaction, it remains an open question whether that property is good. This argument implies that moral properties are non-natural and irreducible to empirical ones. Moore thus defends non-naturalist moral realism, claiming that good is a simple, unanalysable quality, known through intuition rather than observation (Moore, 1903). For Moore, moral statements are cognitive because they assert facts about moral reality, even if those facts are not natural or scientifically observable. As Geoffery Warnock (1967) argues, Moore's view maintains that moral language retains truth-value as it describes aspects of the moral world, though not reducible to natural science. His rejection of the naturalistic fallacy set the stage for decades of debate about whether moral properties are objective, subjective or even meaningful. However, the notion that moral terms can refer to a distinct, non-natural reality soon invited rigorous scrutiny. Moore believes moral statements are true or false depending on how they correspond to moral reality. This means that every moral statement, like 'Honesty is good' can be either true or false, because it refers to something real in the moral world.

For example:

Table 2

Moral Statement	Refers To Moral Property?	Truth-Value Exists?	Cognitive Meaning
Kindness is good	Yes	True	Cognitive Meaning
Stealing is wrong	Yes	True	Yes

So for Moore, moral language has cognitive meaning, because it tells us something about the world, even if moral facts are not part of science. Alfred J. Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936) emerges as a deliberate challenge to Moore's moral realism, marking a decisive shift from metaphysical intuitionism to linguistic empiricism. Based on the verification principle of logical positivism, Ayer asserts that a statement is meaningful only if it is either empirically verifiable or analytically true. From this standpoint, Moore's moral truths collapse into expressions of sentiment rather than cognition. Since moral claims cannot be tested by observation nor derived by logic, they fail the criterion of factual significance. Ayer rejects Moore's claim that moral statements are truth-bearing. He argues that a statement is meaningful only if it can be:

- i. Empirically verified (tested by observation), or
- ii. Analytically true (true by definition, like 'all bachelors are unmarried').

So, Meaningful (M) \equiv Verifiable (V) \vee Analytic (A)

Now, moral statements like 'Stealing is wrong' are neither verifiable nor analytic.

So, according to Ayer:

$$(\sim V \bullet \sim A) \supset \sim M$$

Therefore, moral statements are not true or false because they are expressions of emotion:

Table 3

Moral Statement	Empirically Testable?	Analytic?	Truth-Value?	Meaning Type
Kindness is good	No	No	None	Emotional expression
Stealing is wrong	No	No	None	Emotional expression

Ayer transforms moral language from descriptive to expressive. Consequently, moral utterances, for Ayer, are linguistic reflections of approval or disapproval rather than statements with truth-value (Ayer, 1952). Thus, his logic cancels Moore’s idea of moral truth. According to Ayer, when we say Stealing is wrong, we are not describing a fact but expressing an emotion, something akin to saying Boo to stealing! (Ayer, 1952). This forms the basis of emotivism, a theory which was later developed by C. L. Stevenson (1944), who refined it to include the persuasive and social functions of moral language. For Stevenson (1944), moral utterances do more than simply express an individual’s emotions; they also seek to influence the attitudes and actions of others. In this way, Stevenson extends Ayer’s earlier view that moral statements merely express feelings, by adding a new interpersonal or persuasive dimension. According to him, when people make moral claims, they are saying how they feel and are also trying to shape how others feel and behave. Hence, moral language functions both expressively and socially, as it communicates emotion while aiming to motivate agreement or action. To capture Stevenson’s idea logically, consider a moral statement such as ‘Stealing is wrong’. This means that the speaker disapproves the act of stealing and wants others to do same. This can be analyzed as a two-part logical structure:

$$M = [E(M) \bullet P(M)]$$

E (M) = the expressive meaning that shows how the speaker feels,

P (M) = the prescriptive or persuasive meaning that urges others to adopt a similar attitude.

So, the statement ‘Stealing is wrong’ both expresses disapproval and invites others to share that disapproval. Imagine a classroom situation, where student says, “It is wrong to cheat on exams.” In Stevenson’s view, the student is doing more than expressing emotion; they are also trying to influence others, perhaps persuading classmates not to cheat or encouraging them to value honesty. The moral statement thus carries both an emotional tone and a social function, which are disapproval and persuasion respectively. In logical terms,

$$\text{Meaning} = \text{Disapproval} \bullet \text{Persuasion}$$

Stevenson therefore recognizes that moral discourse operates in social contexts where language is used to communicate feelings and to shape collective behaviour. This makes Stevenson’s theory a middle position between Ayer’s pure emotivism, which sees moral language as emotional expression only, and R. M. Hare’s prescriptivism, which views it as a kind of rational command (Hare, 1952). In Stevenson’s framework, moral statements are neither factual descriptions nor empty emotional outbursts. Moral statements are tools of moral communication, where feeling is blended with persuasion. Emotivist perspectives have found renewed empirical grounding. Casas-Mas (2024) explores emotivist mechanisms within digital political discourse, revealing how affective moral communication on platforms such as Twitter reflects the emotional–persuasive duality that Ayer and Stevenson theorized. This modern extension validates emotivism as a functional analysis of moral rhetoric in technologically mediated societies.

Hare’s *The Language of Morals* (1952) provides another dimension to moral language, where moral statements are treated as prescriptive rather than merely expressive.

He argues that to say “You ought to do X” is to issue a universalizable command and rational directive applicable to similar cases. Hare thereby synthesizes elements of Kant’s universalism and Ayer’s non-cognitivism, giving rise to universal prescriptivism. Imagine a teacher saying, “You ought to tell the truth in your exams.” According to Hare, this statement has a prescriptive force that directs students to act truthfully. But the command is not arbitrary; it is universalizable, meaning it applies to all students in similar circumstances. If it is wrong for one student to cheat, it must also be wrong for every other student in the same situation. We can illustrate Hare’s idea with a logical chain:

- i. Statement, you ought to keep promises;
- ii. Prescription, it is obligatory to keep promises;
- iii. Universalizability, you must keep promises in similar situations; and (x) y, [If x and y make promises, then $O_x(P) \bullet O_y(P)$]
- iv. Rational Consistency, if someone says they ought to keep their promises but later excuses another person for breaking theirs in the same situation, they are acting inconsistently, thereby, violating the logic of moral reasoning.

The scholars above shaped the fundamental question of meta-ethics, which investigates whether moral statements are cognitive or non-cognitive, that is, whether they express beliefs capable of truth or falsity, or they only convey attitudes and prescriptions. Hume and Ayer belong to the non-cognitivist tradition that emphasizes sentiment, emotion and expression, while Kant and Moore represent cognitivist approaches that ground moral judgement in reason and truth. However, as latter scholarship suggests (McHugh, May & Whittings 2018; Väyrynen, 2009), this dichotomy is overly rigid.

Critical Evaluation of the Logical and Epistemic Dimensions of Moral Reasoning

Cognitivists argue that moral statements can be true or false in the same way that factual statements can be. To them, when someone says ‘Stealing is wrong,’ they are making a claim about a moral fact that can, in principle, be known or justified as true or false. Non-cognitivists, however, take a different stance by maintaining that moral language primarily expresses emotions, or prescriptions rather than factual information (Ayer, 1952; Stevenson, 1944; Hare, 1952). The divide between these two views reveals both the logical and epistemic dimensions of moral reasoning, one concerned with how moral claims can form valid arguments, and the other with how such claims can have meaning or knowledge status. Non-cognitivism faces a major challenge of how moral statements can function meaningfully within logical arguments if they are not truth-claims. Logical reasoning requires propositions that can be either true or false, since validity depends on the truth-preserving relation between premises and conclusions. If moral statements lack truth-value, then their role in reasoning becomes obscure. This problem becomes clear when we consider a simple moral argument:

- i. Stealing is wrong.
- ii. If stealing is wrong, encouraging stealing is wrong.
- iii. Therefore, encouraging stealing is wrong.

This argument is valid by the rule of modus ponens:

If P (Stealing is wrong) and $P \supset Q$ (If stealing is wrong, encouraging stealing is wrong), then Q (Encouraging stealing is wrong).

The logical structure seems clear, but the non-cognitivist faces a serious difficulty. If ‘Stealing is wrong’ is merely an emotional expression, it ceases to be a proposition and cannot serve as *P* in a valid argument. Logical relations like entailment or implication make

sense only among statements that assert something that could be true or false. Thus, non-cognitivism must explain how moral reasoning appears to retain logical coherence when its premises, by its own account, are not truth-apt. As explained in one segment of this paper, the roots of non-cognitivism lie in the logical positivist movement of the early twentieth century. Ayer argued that a statement is meaningful only if it is empirically verifiable or analytically true. Since moral judgements cannot be verified by observation or reduced to logical definitions, Ayer concluded that moral statements are not factual claims. This approach shifts moral language from the epistemic domain of truth and knowledge to the psychological domain of feeling and persuasion. While the theory captures the motivational and emotional power of moral speech, it runs into epistemic and logical problems. In the epistemic sense, it undermines the possibility of knowing moral truths. Logically, it cannot explain how moral statements function in arguments, where we infer conclusions from moral premises. If moral language lacks propositional content, then reasoning such as 'If lying is wrong, deceiving is wrong' becomes an incoherent chain of emotional expressions rather than a logical inference. The challenge above is often called the embedding problem or Frege–Geach problem (Geach, 1960). It asks how moral expressions can retain meaning when embedded within complex logical structures such as negations, conditionals or hypothetical statements. To illustrate, consider again the argument:

- i. Stealing is wrong.
- ii. If stealing is wrong, encouraging stealing is wrong.
- iii. Therefore, encouraging stealing is wrong.

In the first premise, 'Stealing is wrong' is asserted independently. In the second, it appears as part of a conditional statement. If emotivism is correct, the second premise would read, 'If boo to stealing, then boo to encouraging stealing'. But emotional exclamations cannot meaningfully form conditional statements, because conditionals require propositions that can be evaluated as true or false. Hence, the argument loses logical structure and becomes a chain of attitudes. This problem shows that moral statements need to behave like propositions. In everyday reasoning, people naturally expect moral consistency, we judge that if an act is wrong in one case, it should be wrong in similar cases. This expectation reflects a logical structure in moral thought, which non-cognitivism struggles to capture.

To address these logical and epistemic difficulties, philosophers such as Simon Blackburn (1984, 1993) and Michael Ridge (2014) developed quasi-realism. This approach retains non-cognitivism's central claim that moral statements do not describe objective facts but explains why moral discourse behaves as though it does. According to quasi-realism, humans project their evaluative attitudes onto the world as if they were facts. When we say 'Stealing is wrong,' we are not describing a moral property in the world but expressing a deeply held attitude of disapproval in a way that functions like a factual statement. This projection enables moral statements to participate in logical reasoning while remaining rooted in non-cognitive attitudes (Blackburn, 1993). Thus, quasi-realism preserves the logical coherence of moral reasoning by interpreting it as a consistency test among attitudes rather than a deduction among facts. For example: When one says 'If stealing is wrong, encouraging stealing is wrong', they are asserting the rational consistency of their moral attitudes. The conclusion, 'Encouraging stealing is wrong', follows to preserve coherence in one's moral outlook. Quasi-realism therefore reconstructs moral reasoning in logical terms without reintroducing moral facts. However, as Ridge (2014) observes, the epistemic challenge remains, if moral attitudes are not truth-bearing, it becomes problematic how their logical consistency can have the same status as rational inference among true

propositions. This theoretical debate has practical significance. In moral discussions about justice, law, corruption, or human rights, people reason with moral claims as if they were factual.

For example: If killing innocent people is wrong, then ordering others to kill innocent people is wrong. Killing innocent people is wrong. Therefore, ordering others to kill innocent people is wrong. Many people see this argument as rationally persuasive. If non-cognitivism is strictly applied, the first premise becomes an emotional expression. But such expressions cannot form valid inferences. In real moral reasoning, people expect logical consistency, if lying is wrong, it should remain wrong even when it serves one's interests. This expectation points to an epistemic conviction that moral reasoning yields knowledge-like justification, and not only emotional coherence. Therefore, the Frege–Geach problem shows that moral reasoning operates simultaneously on two theoretical underpinnings:

- i. The logical underpinning, where reasoning and inference require truth-like structure.
- ii. The epistemic underpinning, where meaning and justification depend on what moral claims represent or express.

Although non-cognitivism faces logical challenges, cognitivism faces epistemic ones. Cognitivists hold that moral statements are truth-apt because they describe moral facts. However, three major criticisms weaken this view. First is the problem of moral facts. Cognitivism assumes the existence of moral facts that make moral statements true or false, but it is unclear what such facts are. We can verify that 'The sky is blue' by observation, but how do we verify 'Stealing is wrong'? There are no empirical properties corresponding to moral wrongness. As John Leslie Mackie (1977) argues, this makes moral realism metaphysically extravagant, as entities that do not fit within a scientific understanding of the world. Second, the argument from moral disagreement (Harman, 1977) raises a strong challenge to the truth-claim of cognitivism. In science, disagreements can often be resolved when people gather more evidence or verify facts through observation and experiment. But moral disagreements continue even after everyone knows all the facts. For example, two people might agree on what happened in a situation but still disagree about whether it was right or wrong. This shows that moral judgements depend more on personal or cultural values, emotions and social norms than on any objective moral fact. If moral truths were factual in the same way as scientific truths, then moral disagreements should eventually disappear once the facts are known, but they do not. This weakens the idea that moral statements describe facts that can be true or false in an objective sense.

Again, the is–ought gap, first explained by David Hume, argues that moral 'ought' statements, such as 'we ought to help the poor', cannot be logically derived from factual 'is' statements like 'many people are poor'. No matter how much factual information we have about the world, facts alone do not tell us what we should do. To move from is to ought, a value or moral principle must already be added. Cognitivism, however, treats moral judgements as if they were factual claims, just like scientific statements. This may lead to ignoring the logical gap between describing what is the case and prescribing what ought to be done (Hudson, 1983). As a result, cognitivism may confuse moral reasoning with factual reasoning and may overlook the special role of moral values, emotions and human choice in ethical thought. These objections suggest that while cognitivism preserves logical structure, it struggles epistemically and cannot justify how we know moral truths or identify what kind of facts make them true.

On the Logic of Moral Judgements

To reconcile these logical and epistemic dilemmas, philosophers like Allan Gibbard (1990) have developed hybrid expressivism, which holds that moral judgements combine belief and norm acceptance. They are partly descriptive, for they indicate what the speaker believes, and partly expressive because they reveal how the speaker commits to certain norms. This allows moral language to preserve both epistemic meaning and logical structure. However, hybrid theories face their own challenge. This is because once belief is introduced, moral statements seem truth-apt again, potentially collapsing the non-cognitivist stance. The difficulty thus remains in balancing logical validity with epistemic humility whereby rational moral reasoning is retained without overstating claims to moral knowledge. Moral reasoning reveals that moral language operates on two intertwined levels. On the one hand, moral judgements are expressive, as they reveal our feelings and prescriptions. On the other hand, they are rational and evaluative, in that they form arguments, imply consistency, guide moral decision-making and invite justification. An adequate theory of moral reasoning must therefore recognize that human moral discourse is both logical and epistemic. It is logical because it follows patterns of reasoning and coherence; it is epistemic because it aims at justified understanding of right and wrong.

As Hare (1952) argued in his theory of universal prescriptivism, moral statements can be seen as prescriptions that are also subject to logical universality. Thus, moral reasoning is not merely emotional expression nor purely factual description but a synthesis of reasoned prescription and evaluated understanding. Anyam and Gbagir (2019) apply Hare's universal prescriptivism to governance ethics in Nigeria, demonstrating how moral universality can enhance institutional accountability and normative coherence. This reinforces prescriptivism's potential to guide contemporary socio-political ethics. Moral discourse supports logical thinking in several ways. First, deductive reasoning means that if we judge one action as wrong, then any action that is similar in all relevant ways should also be wrong. For example, if lying to cheat on an exam is wrong, then lying to cheat in business should also be wrong, since both involve deception for personal gain. This shows that moral reasoning follows a logical pattern, such that if A is wrong and B is like A, then B is wrong. Moreover, moral judgements often follow logical forms such as *modus ponens* and hypothetical syllogisms. For instance:

If stealing harms others, then stealing is wrong.

This act is stealing.

Therefore, this act is wrong.

This kind of reasoning shows that moral statements can be connected logically, not just emotionally or subjectively. Similarly, moral reasoning must follow consistency constraints. A person cannot reasonably approve of cruelty when it benefits them and condemn it when it harms them. For example, it would be inconsistent for someone to support animal cruelty in entertainment but criticize it in food production, both involve unnecessary harm to animals. Consistency is what makes moral judgements rational and credible. These features show that moral language and reasoning have a propositional structure that involve claims that can be true, false, valid, or invalid, regardless of one's metaphysical stance about whether moral facts actually exist (Wedgwood, 2017). This implies that our judgements should not contradict each other when the situations are similar. If we say that cruelty is wrong (let's call this principle C), and we agree that animal fighting for entertainment involves cruelty (E), then by simple reasoning, we must also conclude that animal fighting for entertainment is wrong (W). Symbolically, this can be expressed as:

$(C \bullet E) \supset W$

If cruelty is wrong and this act is cruel, then the act is wrong.

Now, suppose we also recognize that factory farming causes similar suffering to animals (S). Logically, if the cruelty in animal fighting (A) and the cruelty in factory farming (F) are of the same kind, then we cannot consistently condemn one and approve the other. This can be shown as:

If $A \equiv S$, then $F \equiv T$ (where T = factory farming is wrong).

To act otherwise, say, condemning animal fighting but approving factory farming, would violate the rule of non-contradiction, a basic law of logic stating that something cannot be both true and false in the same sense at the same time. In simple terms, if a person condemns cruelty but then accepts one form of cruelty while rejecting another, their moral reasoning becomes inconsistent. This inconsistency weakens the moral claim because it treats similar moral facts differently without justification. Therefore, logical consistency ensures that moral reasoning remains fair, principled and rational.

Contrary to Hume's claim that moral judgements merely express feelings and cannot be derived from reason, reasons theorists argue that moral judgement actually involves a process of reasoning that moves from moral principles to moral actions (Scanlon, 1998). When we make a moral judgement, we are not just expressing emotion (I dislike lying), but reasoning from a general rule to a specific case (Lying is wrong, therefore I should not lie).

Let us define:

P: Corruption undermines justice.

Q: Any action that undermines justice is morally wrong.

R: Therefore, corruption is morally wrong.

The reasoning follows a valid argument structure:

If $P \supset Q$, and Q, then R.

Or more explicitly:

If any action that undermines justice is morally wrong (P), and this is an act of corruption (Q), then this act is morally wrong (R).

The validity of this reasoning does not depend upon subjective emotion. The statement's logical properties demonstrate cognitive content even though it remains action-guiding. This shows that moral reasoning functions like practical logic that it connects moral principles, which are universal rules, with specific actions in particular cases. This implies that moral judgement is both descriptive and directive. The former states something about the world, for example, 'Lying causes harm' or 'Stealing violates fairness', which are factual or value-laden descriptions and the latter leads to action, for example, 'Therefore, I ought not to lie or steal'. In this way, moral judgement links what is with what ought to be. It demonstrates that moral reasoning is not an irrational leap from emotion, but a structured, logical inference that guides moral action. This directly challenges Hume's claim that reason is the slave of the passions, by showing that reason can generate, guide and justify moral behaviour through sound inference.

Conclusion

From Hume's sentimentalism to Ayer's emotivism, and from Kant's rational imperatives to Moore's non-natural realism, the evolution of meta-ethical thought reveals an attempt to clarify the logic, meaning and truth of moral discourse. Each philosopher isolates a different dimension of moral language. Hume uncovers its emotional basis; Kant, its rational form;

Moore, its irreducible meaning; and Ayer, its expressive character. The problem of logical embedding reveals the tensions of how to reconcile the emotional and rational dimensions of moral language. Non-cognitivism, in denying truth-aptness to moral claims, struggles to explain how they can function in logical argumentation. Quasi-realism and hybrid expressivism provide creative solutions but have not entirely resolved the issue. At the same time, cognitivism faces the challenge of identifying and justifying moral facts. The debate between these two schools shows that moral discourse is neither purely factual nor purely emotive, rather, it is a fusion of reason, feeling and commitment. Moral reasoning, therefore, may not describe the world as science does, but it expresses the human capacity to make sense of values, consistency and justice within it.

References

- Allison, H. E. (2011). *Kant's Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals: A Commentary*. Oxford University Press.
- Ayer, A. J. (1936). *Language, Truth and Logic*. Victor Gollancz.
- Blackburn, S. (1993). *Essays in Quasi-realism*. Oxford University Press.
- Blackburn, S. (1998). *Ruling Passions: A Theory of Practical Reasoning*. Oxford University Press.
- Blackburn, S. (1984). *Spreading the Word*. Oxford University Press.
- Gibbard, A. (1990). *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings: A Theory of Normative Judgement*. Harvard University Press.
- Geach, P. T. (1960). Ascriptivism. *Philosophical Review*, 69(2), 221–225.
- Hare, R. M. (1952). *The Language of Morals*. Clarendon Press.
- Harman, G. (1977). *The Nature of Morality*. Oxford University Press.
- Hudson, W. D. (1983). *Modern Moral Philosophy*. Saint Martin's Press.
- Hume, D. (2000). *A Treatise of Human Nature* (D. F. Norton & M. J. Norton, Eds.). Oxford University Press.
- Jiang, Q., Zhou, L., Wang, Q., and Lin, W. (2022) The Neural Basis of Moral Judgement for Self and for Others: Evidence from Events-Related Potentials. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 16. Doi: 10.3389/fnhum.2022.919499
- Kant, I. (1996). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (M. Gregor, Trans.). Cambridge University Press.
- Korsgaard, C. M. (1996). *The Sources of Normativity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mackie, J. L. (1977). *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*. Penguin.
- Moore, G. E. (1903). *Principia Ethica*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ridge, M. (2014). *Impassioned belief*. Oxford University Press.
- Scanlon, T. M. (1998). *What We Owe to Each Other*. Harvard University Press.
- Shafer-Landau, R. (2025). *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*. Oxford University Press.
- Stevenson, C. L. (1944). *Ethics and Language*. Yale University Press.
- Timmons, M., (2020) Normative Ethics. *International Encyclopaedia of Ethics*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444367072.wbiee907>
- McHugh, C., Way, J., Whiting, D. (eds), (2018). *Normativity: Epistemic and Practical*. Oxford University Press.
- Väyrynen, P. (2009). Normative Appeals to the Natural. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 79(2), 279-312.
- Warnock, G. J. (1967). *Contemporary Moral Philosophy: New Studies in Ethics*. Palgrave.
- Wedgwood, R. (2017). *The Value of Rationality*. Oxford University Press.



JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Volume 1, Number 8 (December, 2025)

ISSN: 1595-9457 (online); 3043-4211 (print)

Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

Received: December 11, 2025 Accepted: December 26, 2025 Published: December 31, 2025

Citation: Modeyin, Oluwatobi E. & Inobemhe, Kelvin (2025). "Adoption of Communication Strategies for Communal Conflict Mediation in North Central Nigeria." *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1 (8): 107-120.

Article

Open Access

ADOPTION OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNAL CONFLICT MEDIATION IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

Oluwatobi Enitan Modeyin¹ & Kelvin Inobemhe²

Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University, Ogwa, Edo, Nigeria^{1&2}

Corresponding Email: oluwatobienitan@yahoo.com¹

Abstract

Nigeria is not an exception to the endemic conflicts that are common throughout the African continent. The nation has been plagued by a variety of disputes, including political, ethnic, religious, and communal ones. To promote peaceful coexistence, several advocacy groups and INGOs have worked both independently and in concert. Regarding the foregoing, the primary goal of this study was to evaluate the communication tactics used by the North Central geopolitical zone's governments with regard to regional conflict resolution. The study, which was based on the conflict transformation theory, tried to systematise concepts based on conflict mediation through government crisis communication strategies. The researchers used a survey study approach, distributing questionnaires to 600 participants. The data from the survey were subjected to analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 with the main points being the use of frequencies and percentages. The results demonstrate that the administration employed a variety of communal mediation techniques. Community relations, media relations, public relations, traditional institutions approach, peacebuilding communication, and religious organisation approach are a few of the strategies highlighted. Additionally, it reveals that a high degree of communication is used in conflict mediation and that, among other things, the application of methods has resulted in lower tensions and harmonious coexistence among the various ethnic groups in the zone. The researchers came to the conclusion that communication techniques are useful for mediating disputes and advised their ongoing application in comparable circumstances.

Keywords: Communities, Conflicts, Government, Mediation, Strategies.

Introduction

Due to people's interconnection and relationships, which frequently lead to arguments and confrontations, conflict is prevalent in human society. This shows that disputes typically

Copyright © 2025 By JPPSS. Publishers: Omega Books

This is an open access article which permits unrestricted use provided the work is properly cited.

include two or more parties who have come to a point of disagreement as a result of pursuing conflicting aims and objectives. Al-Rawashdeh and Al-Majali (2017) support the foregoing by characterising conflict as a competitive phenomenon in which two or more people have similar goals, making it challenging to satisfy one party's requests. Although it is currently prevalent in human culture and can be seen as natural, it has a negative connotation due to its tendency to lead to bloodshed and war (Doss et al., 2023). Essentially, destructive violence can result from conflict in human civilisation on various levels. According to Cuppen (2018), disputes can result from divergent ideals, interests, or expectations. They can also involve more general concerns about societal cohesiveness, institutional trust, local democracy, and protracted situations involving regional, national, or international actors. This suggests that conflicts arise when people who live together have opposing viewpoints, goals, and beliefs. Violent confrontations between and among the persons involved in conflict may result from these mismatches taking on complex and dynamic dimensions. If a dispute escalates into violence, the ensuing catastrophic effects could include property damage, economic and social system disruption, physical harm (such as fatalities), and long-term trauma for conflict victims. In some parts of the world, unresolved conflicts can also result in long-term instability. This has been explicitly demonstrated in some parts of the Middle East and various regions of Africa.

Armed non-state actors have proliferated across the African continent, and Boko Haram's violent extremism has extended from Nigeria to other nearby nations, particularly those along the Lake Chad region (Adeleke, 2023). Similar-impact conflicts have also been documented in the Central African Republic (Baleta, 2023; Guenard, 2024) and Burkina Faso (European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, 2024; Yeboah & Aikins, 2024). There are documented instances of violent conflicts in the East and Horn of Africa, including human rights violations that have led to thousands of civilian deaths in Ethiopia and Sudan, the kidnapping and murder of dozens in Kenya, and other aspects of the conflicts in South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Eritrea (Hassan, 2024; Human Rights Watch, 2025). The background of conflicts in various regions of the African continent is established by the aforementioned. One conclusion that can be drawn from the intensity of the violence and the length of period of hostilities is that there may be several variables contributing to the wars throughout the continent. For example, Nshom (2017) notes that because of the complexity of the continent and the possibility of intertwined causes of conflict, the conflicts cannot be viewed from a social psychological perspective, such as prejudice alone, but rather must be given a holistic consideration by looking at social and economic factors that may have led to a particular conflict. Matsinhe (2022) asserts that despite the complicated and multifaceted history of extreme violence in several African nations, natural resource governance continues to be a major source of conflict. The effects are catastrophic, and according to a report, violent conflicts have caused the displacement of approximately 630 million children and their mothers worldwide (Adeyanju et al., 2025). Extremism and violent conflicts are still a problem in Africa in general, and Nigeria in particular.

Some of the documented instances of conflict in Nigeria include the fanaticism of Boko Haram, the killing spree perpetuated by armed bandits, the conflicts between farmers and herders, and the pockets of violence resulting from chieftaincy struggles in different communities throughout the country. According to Tuki (2024), Nigeria was ranked as the eighth least peaceful country in the world in the 2024 Global Terrorism Index report, supporting the claim that the country still experiences violent conflicts. Given the persistent nature of the Niger Delta disturbances and the economic impact on the Nigerian nation,

conflicts resulting from resource allocation and control have always been obvious in the country. Accordingly, Tanko (2021) emphasises that Nigeria faces insecurity issues that can be linked to many conflicts. These issues can be summed up into five main threats: oil militants, separatist insurgency, banditry and kidnapping, farmer-herder clashes, and jihadism among others. Nigeria's North Central geopolitical zone is defined both geographically and politically. Kwara, Kogi, Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa, Niger, and the Federal Capital Territory make up its total of seven sub-nationals currently known by the nomenclature of states in the country. Conflicts have long existed in the region; according to Ojewale (2021), violent altercations have been documented in several parts of the zone. Ajodo-Adebanjoko and Nwofor (2024) reveal that there have been violent conflicts between farmers and herders in some areas of the North Central states of Benue, Nasarawa, Kogi, and Plateau. The main causes of these ongoing violent situations are competition for fresh water and land resources, the study demonstrate. Relatedly, Abimbola et al. (2023) show that the situation in Niger State is unusual since economic inequality also leads to violent conflicts in several regions, which cause multifaceted poverty and economic disruptions. At various times, violent clashes on various levels have also been documented in the FCT (Anyadike, 2023) and Kwara (Azeez et al., 2024).

The government and other stakeholders appear prepared to attempt mediation and reconciliation as part of steps to guarantee peaceful coexistence in society in light of the complex conflicts and their varied effects. The public complaints commission (PCC), the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the national industrial court, the federal ministry of justice's department of citizens' rights, and the Central Bank of Nigeria are the public organisations in Nigeria tasked with mediating and resolving conflicts and disputes (Mmeje, 2023). These governmental ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) are tasked with settling conflicts ranging from personal to communal as well as industrial. They do a variety of activities to guarantee that disputants/parties to conflicts have the opportunity to sit down and talk about reconciliation on a short-term and long-term basis. This suggests that communication is an essential part of the procedure since people are made to converge to talk. The government's utilisation of communication strategies is regarded as essential based on the aforementioned. Things can descend into anarchy if the fault lines are ignored and conversation is not used to mediate the situation. As a result, Abiodun (2021) points out that human contact is still a crucial means of resolving conflicts or possibly making already challenging circumstances worse, leading to unfavourable outcomes. The implication is that, depending on how it is used, communication in the context of a conflict can be either beneficial or detrimental. As a result, using communication techniques carefully is necessary, particularly when handling problems of a communal nature. These communication techniques can include, but are not limited to, encouraging mutual understanding and dialogue, fostering trust, guaranteeing succinct and clear communication, and utilising nonverbal clues while demonstrating empathy for victims. These tactics have been used in Nigerian conflict mediation initiatives at various points in time (Babatope & Olanipekun, 2017). On the grounds of the foregoing, this study evaluated the communication strategies used by the North Central Nigerian government to mediate disputes.

Statement of the Problem

The effects of conflicts on society are catastrophic. Based on this understanding, interested parties and constituted authorities typically choose various strategies to settle disputes.

Without intervention, protracted conflicts could have a number of unthinkable and unimaginable outcomes, such as hunger brought on by insecurity (Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, 2024), deaths and property destruction at the social and human level (Biekpe, 2024), and general economic, social, and political regression of the nations (Nkabane, 2022). These various aspects of the effects of conflict highlight the necessity of preventing conflicts at all costs. When disputes are unavoidable, the most important course of action must be to resolve them peacefully through discourse (communication). It becomes necessary for concerned authorities to resist the temptation to overlook any circumstance that can escalate into a full-scale conflict, given the social, economic, and political instability aspects of the disastrous effects of conflicts on nations. The aforementioned shows how important dispute resolution and mediation are to preventing problems from getting worse. The necessity of communication in conflict mediation efforts has been demonstrated by earlier research (Amiara, 2018; Ogbu, 2017). Nonetheless, no much as been revealed about state, extent, and influence of conflict mediation in Nigeria's North Central. Consequently, this study empirically evaluated the government's communication tactics towards conflict mediation the region to bridge the identified gap.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What was the state of communal conflict mediation efforts of the government towards resolving conflicts in North Central Nigeria?
- ii. What was the extent of government conflict mediation efforts toward resolving conflicts in the region?
- iii. What influence has government conflict mediation on peace building in the region?

Review of Literature

Due, in large part, to the nature of human society, where there is never a complete absence of conflicts, issues surrounding conflict have garnered attention and academic focus since the beginning of time. Some researchers are primarily interested in mediation strategies and initiatives. Nonetheless, this study adopts a methodology that takes into account the government's communication strategies in efforts to mediate communal conflicts in a region of Nigeria. Therefore, before getting into the main focus of this study, it is necessary to give a basis for literature on conflict in society and Nigeria, looking at the government's attitude to such disputes and whether or not they are successful. Ajodo-Adebanjoko and Nwofor (2024) state that there are numerous disputes throughout Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, with the most frequent and concerning ones being between farmers and herders. This shows that Nigeria is dealing with a conflict issue that has an impact on the people at the grassroots. Nnabuihe (2024) shows that the nation's minority groups' opposition has been a major factor in the numerous conflicts that have occurred in the county over the years. While some researchers attributed the conflict to socioeconomic factors like the competition between farmers and herders for land resources (Ajodo-Adebanjoko & Nwofor, 2024), poverty and inequality (Abimbola et al., 2024), and ethnic and religious factors (Okibe, 2022; Ngwoke & Ituman, 2020), others identified the centrist form of federalism that encourages the dominance of the majority ethnic groups over the others. According to a study by Usoro et al. (2014), one of the main causes of conflict in Nigeria is a sense of alienation. This suggests that a variety of factors, ranging from ethno-religious to socio-political, are responsible for the varying degrees of conflict observed throughout the nation.

Governments in different parts of Nigeria have undoubtedly worked hard to settle internal disputes. According to Familugba and Adedayo (2020), the Nigerian government has worked hard to settle disputes inside the nation using a variety of methods, including the application of traditional strategies. The establishment of panels is one of the various ways the Nigerian government has tried to resolve disputes between communities (Nwaogwugwu & Dabelema, 2019). The government recognised mediation through various channels as a crucial strategy for fostering connections and resolving disputes (Adom & Ugal, 2025). Dialogue has also been investigated as a communal conflict mediation technique in the West African region. Numerous commissions of inquiry or panels have been established in Nigeria to mediate disputes between parties at the local, state, or even federal levels. Communication between and among the parties involved in the conflicts at various levels was part of these efforts. Given that government conflict mediation techniques are known to be reactive rather than proactive, these academic viewpoints and stances show that the current state of government conflict mediation strategies is on track. Due to the nation's ongoing conflicts, panels and commissions of inquiry are typically established whenever there is a conflict and in most cases outlive their usefulness. Research has also demonstrated how often community disputes occur in the nation (Fadeyi & Adamu, 2023; Okoli & Ukwandu, 2021) and throughout the greater African continent (Yemane & Borowy, 2023). Given the numerous environmental effects and factors like the competition for scarce resources like land and water, conflict situations are still common (Olademo et al., 2021). Even though successive governments have worked incredibly hard to stop the trend and establish a calm environment for all citizens, this scenario is nevertheless unsettling. Among the strategies leveraged are communication and conflict resolution techniques.

The nation's methods for resolving conflicts have been greatly impacted by these government initiatives. Through the amnesty programme, the establishment of the Niger Delta Ministry, and other similar interventions, the Yar'Adua administration purportedly used alternative dispute settlement mechanisms to confront the insurgency in the Niger Delta (Orhero, 2020). These initiatives, which are today regarded as effective tactics, reduced tensions in the region. On the other hand, a study's results also show that, despite government initiatives, disputes continue to arise due to inadequate implementation of conflict resolution outcomes (Olademo et al., 2021). Abacha's participation in the Ife-Modakeke conflicts and Obasanjo's administration's resolution of the Arogbo Ijaw-Ugbollaji crises present another issue with Nigeria's consecutive administrations' coercive and unproductive conflict management style (Orhero, 2020). These may have had an immediate effect on the wave of violence that accompanied the conflicts, but they have a detrimental effect because of the precarious peace and the recurrent character of these conflicts in the impacted areas. Additionally, an empirical research on conflict mediation in Nigeria was carried out by Abimbola et al. (2023) based on a survey of people living in North Central Nigerian states (Benue, Nasarawa, and Plateau), highlighting that there is a correlation between higher levels of deprivations such as poverty and inequality and more conflicts. The researchers came to the conclusion that in order to reduce inter-communal strife and foster peaceful coexistence in the geopolitical zone, it is necessary to address a number of socioeconomic gaps, including equitable resource allocation, inclusive economic growth, and improved access to social services. Due to their shared geographic focus on Nigeria's North Central region, the study under evaluation and this one are comparable. The particular variables examined are what cause the variations between the studies. Poverty and

inequality are important factors for the study under consideration, which primarily focusses on government communication strategies.

In an effort to pinpoint the causes of the conflict between the Share and Tsaragi groups in the North Central state of Kwara, Olademo et al. (2021) undertook a mixed-method study. The study looked at interventions used to address the issues. Conflicts in the territories are influenced by a number of important reasons, including religious prejudice, communal conflicts resulting from land and border disputes, the failure to implement government white papers, and disputants' unwillingness to accept peace. This is also connected to the contradiction between indigenous people and settlers on the one side, and the betrayer and enemy tag on the other, which were found to be important contributing reasons to the conflict. The study's conclusions demonstrate that government interventions to settle disputes are flawed in terms of enforcement, and that failure is a major contributing reason to the nation's ongoing conflicts. The government's inability to invoke the fire brigade strategy and white paper into practice are significant obstacles. The researchers came to the conclusion that multiple layers were ineffectual because they provided diverse solutions that were unfamiliar to African culture. The specific focus is where the present study differs from the one under review. The latter focusses on a few states in North Central, whilst the former is based on Kwara communities. Another study by Abdulsalam et al. (2020) focused on the maintenance of democracy and examined the functions of traditional rules in conflict mediation in Kwara State. The results demonstrate that traditional institutions, through the rulers, play important roles in resolving conflicts in a way that promotes democratic stability through peace initiatives. The study's conclusion is that traditional leaders who are well-versed in local problems that impact people and social groupings may be able to help resolve conflicts in an efficient manner. The researchers suggest that in order to resolve community members' issues, leaders should be involved. The study under review and this one are similar in that they both concentrate on communal conflict resolution mechanisms. However, the research's particular geographic scope varies according to the populations they are focused on.

Theoretical Framework

The conflict transformation theory serves as the foundation for this study. One of the main proponents of this idea has been identified as theorist J. P. Lederach (Botes, 2001). The theory is based on Lederach's belief that resolving a conflict requires more than just rhetoric that verges on resolution and that the conflict's underlying causes must be addressed in a way that transforms it (Lederach, 1995). Additionally, the theory clarified that because conflict transformation is a multidimensional term, it might have four dimensions. Rule transformation, structural transformation, actor transformation, and issue transformation are the four dimensions that the researcher identified. These four are essential to the process of resolving conflicts. Based on its analysis, the conflict transformation theory serves as the foundation for this study, which is on the use of communication techniques to promote mediation and create cohesiveness in Nigeria.



Figure 1: Theoretical Framework: Interest-Based Relational and Conflict Transformation Theory Information in the framework in Figure 1 shows that effective government communication strategies in the North Central region of Nigeria will prioritise interest identification (based on an interest-based relational approach) and relationship building. Additionally, the framework is based on the idea that in the setting of communal conflict resolution, communication tactics that target fundamental wants and interests would have a higher impact. Furthermore, greater long-lasting peace in Nigeria's North Central region would result from conflict transformation strategies that encourage inclusive decision-making and resolve power disparities.

Methods

This study used a cross-sectional survey as its research design. The North Central zone's inhabitants make up the study's population. Agatu (Benue State), Eggon (Nasarawa), and Jos North (Plateau State) were chosen as the study's specific emphasis based on the researchers' understanding of the region. There are 1,039,200 people living in the three towns, according to data from the National Population Commission. Using the Australian Sample Size calculator, a sample of 600 people was selected from the population for the study. Confidence level (95%), population size (1, 039, 200), confidence interval (0.04), upper (0.54000), lower (0.46000), standard error (0.02041), and relative standard error (4.08) were among the calculation factors that were keyed to achieve this figure. The final sample units, which comprise respondents in the study area, were obtained using a multistage sampling procedure. In order to choose Benue, Nasarawa, and Plateau from the list of six states in the zone and Agatu, Eggon, and Jos North from the selected states, purposive sampling was used in both the first and second stages. The third involved simple random selection of households in the towns as everyone was given a chance to be selected. The questionnaire serves as the study's data collection tool. A Likert scale was used in its design. Experts from the Department of Mass Communication at Glorious University Ogori, Edo State, Nigeria, relied on face validity to assess the instrument's applicability. The results of a Cronbach's alpha reliability test show a coefficient (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.975$), which indicates that it is excellent and dependable. Informed consent was upheld in accordance with research ethics since the participants were made aware of their rights, which included the ability to withdraw from the study at any time and their voluntary participation statuses. The SPSS Version 26 was relied upon for analysis of the data upon appropriate coding using descriptive statistical techniques like percentages and frequencies.

Results

Data from the survey are presented in tables using frequencies and percentages.

Table 1: Government's Crisis Communication in North Central Nigeria

Variable/Parameter	Frequency	Valid Percent
Community relations	100	17.8
Public relations	80	10.7
Advocacy	11	2.0
Peacebuilding communication	27	4.8
Participatory communication	16	2.8
Traditional institution approach	97	17.3
Civil societies and NGOs approach	12	2.1
Dialogue approach	16	2.8
Religious organisation approach	23	4.1
Aids and donor agencies approach	4	.7
Media relations	24	4.3

Total	562	100.0
--------------	------------	--------------

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The information in Table 1 illustrates the current state of conflict mediation, demonstrating the active application of many strategies to achieve enduring peace in the region. The data show a variety of tactics, including media relations, religious and traditional institution approaches, and community engagement. However, according to 17.8% of respondents who adopted the position, community relations was the most frequently used strategy. It follows that stakeholders are aware of the community’s role in all efforts to mediate conflicts within the community.

Table 2: The Use of Communication and its Extent

Variable/Parameter	Frequency	Valid Percent
Very high	140	24.9
High	137	24.4
Can't tell	76	13.5
Very low	62	11.0
Low	147	26.2
Total	562	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Respondents believe that communication is widely used for dispute resolution in their community, as seen in Table 2 above. The perceptions of 24.9% of respondents and another 24.4% of them are used to illustrate this. The data demonstrate that significant attempts to mediate and find a long-term settlement between parties have been made as a result of the realisation of the value of communication.

Table 3: The Extent of Active Participation in Communal Conflict Mediation

Variable/Parameter	Frequency	Valid Percent
Very high	90	16.0
High	145	25.8
Can't tell	116	20.6
Very low	76	13.5
Low	135	24.0
Total	562	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

According to Table 3 statistics, a notably high percentage of respondents participated in government-created communal dispute mediation forums. To put it simply, they actively participated in the channels for peace that the government established. The idea that they heavily participated in mediation is based on the majority’s 25.5% opinion, which is further supported by 16.0% of respondents who think that engagement was extremely high.

Table 4: Crisis Communication of Government and Influence on Cohabitation Decision

Variable/Parameter	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly agree	114	20.3
Agree	286	50.9
Can't tell	33	5.9
Strongly disagree	44	7.8
Disagree	85	15.1
Total	562	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Based on their exposure to the crisis communication undertaken by the government towards conflict mediation, residents of the impacted groups agreed to cohabit, according to the data in Table 4. Accordingly, while 50.9% of respondents agreed with the idea, 20.3% strongly agreed, highlighting the role that communication plays in the government's efforts to promote peaceful cohabitation in areas devastated by conflict.

Table 5: Reduction of Tensions on Account of Crisis Communication

Variable/Parameter	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly Agree	99	17.6
Agree	231	41.1
Undecided	113	20.1
Strongly disagree	47	8.4
Disagree	72	12.8
Total	562	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

According to the majority of respondents, government communication in the geopolitical zone reduced tensions resulting from conflicts, as Table 5 illustrates. In an effort to reduce tensions in the impacted areas in North Central Nigeria, crisis communication became crucial, according to 41.1% of respondents who agreed with the idea and 17.6% who strongly agreed.

Table 6: Extent Crisis Communication Reduced Conflicts

Variable/Parameter	Frequency	Valid Percent
Very high	96	17.1
High	170	30.2
Undecided	149	26.5
Very low	41	7.3
Low	106	18.9
Total	562	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

According to data in Table 6, 30.2% of respondents believe that communication reduced conflict to a high degree, while 17.1% believe it was extremely high. Accordingly, the findings suggest that conflict may have decreased as a result of the government's communication strategies adopted for conflict resolution in the communities in North Central Nigerian states.

Table 7: Crisis Communication Enhancing Inter-ethnic Cooperation in North Central

Variable/Parameter	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly Agree	111	19.8
Agree	227	40.4
Undecided	106	18.9
Strongly disagree	44	7.8
Disagree	74	13.2
Total	562	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Data in Table 7 demonstrate that 40.4% of respondents agreed, while 19.8% tended to strongly agree with the idea that crisis communication initiated by government enhanced inter-ethnic cooperation among the different groups in the study areas. The consequence is that government-adopted communication tactics for conflict mediation improve interethnic cooperation among the ethnic groups in the North Central states of Benue, Nasarawa, and Plateau.

Table 8: Extent Crises Communication Enhanced Inter-ethnic Cooperation in North Central

Variable/Parameter	Frequency	Valid Percent
Very high	120	21.4
High	206	36.7
Undecided	80	14.2
Very low	48	8.5
Low	108	19.2
Total	562	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Interethnic cooperation among the various ethnic groups in the region was greatly strengthened by government communication efforts targeted at conflict mediation, as shown in Table 8 above based on the position of 36.7% who believe the extent is high and 21.4% who believe it is extremely. The implication is that communication has some level of influence.

Discussion

The study's findings show that communication is actively used in attempts to resolve disputes in the zone. As a result, the study reveals that a number of techniques were used, including media relations, community relations, public relations, conventional institution approach, and religious organisation approach. Previous research, like that of Aleshinloye and Orolade (2020), Igben and Timiyan (2023), and Ngwu et al. (2020), also demonstrated the application of comparable communication techniques in disparate but comparable conflicts in different regions of Nigeria. Additionally, data depicted as 24.4% (high) and 24.9% (very high) show that there was a significant degree of communication in the zone. In their study, Igbashangev and Ogunyemi (2022) also shown how the government has focused on using communication to resolve the numerous disputes that have long afflicted Nigeria's north. On the other hand, studies demonstrate that, in many regions of Nigeria, the use of public relations as a conflict mediation tool was negligible. This suggests that the government may not respond to conflicts consistently and equally. The reaction may work well in some circumstances but not in others. Furthermore, the results of this study demonstrate the significant impact of communication strategies. In order to anticipate sincere comments regarding the impact of such measures on them, respondents actively participated in government dispute mediation activities. Additionally, they show how the communication techniques affected their determination to live in harmony with neighbours. This is predicated on the idea that 50.9% of respondents agreed with it, and 20.3% strongly agreed. In a related study, Chimaroke (2002) also affirms that the use of a participatory approach to conflict resolution has previously led disputing groups to agree to a truce. In a study, Abiodun and Salama (2023) discovered that communities can choose to put aside their disagreements in order to live together on account of communication and dispute resolution.

Based on the opinions of 41.1% and 8.4% of respondents who strongly agreed with the idea, the results highlight that the adoption and use of communication strategies reduces conflicts in communities. Conflicts have generally decreased as a result of such actions. According to the study, the extent to which the aforementioned is attained is high. This suggests that the government used communication to address problems, such as the root causes of disputes, in order to lower tensions and find solutions. This was consistent with the conflict transformation theory's concept of closely examining the underlying causes of disputes. The results of this study further demonstrate that the use of communication

techniques for conflict resolution in Nigeria's North Central region improves interethnic cooperation. The study's results show that there is a substantial likelihood of such cooperation being improved through communication. The results of a study by Saleh (2022) support the idea that different religious organisations in Nigeria employed mediation techniques to promote harmonious cohabitation. Researchers like Dyikuk and Edeh (2022) and Ntem (2022) further demonstrate how diverse communication techniques are used to promote interethnic cooperation in various regions of Nigeria and Africa. As stated in the interest-based relational approach model's premise of making sure that priority is given to ensuring healthy connections between and among disputants, this shows that communication builds good relationships.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is ample evidence in both research and practice supporting the use of communication techniques as a way to settle disputes. The various governments in North Central Nigeria have leveraged a variety of strategies, from community interactions to the adoption and utilisation of traditional institutions and religious groups, all of which are thought to be successful in mediating disputes across the country. The different ethnic groups in the central region of Nigeria are able to coexist peacefully, despite the fragile peace, because of the use of communication in certain conflicts. The practical implication of this study is for government and stakeholders to continue to explore ways to improve communication through sound research. This provides the enabling environment to address various communal conflicts plaguing the North Central region in particular, and the Nigerian federation in general. Future studies should focus on the use of communication strategies in different conflicts in Nigeria's various regions.

Recommendations

In line with the findings and conclusion, the recommendations are:

- i. The need to understand and appreciate even in situations that appear challenging, such as those involving terrorism and other violent interactions, stakeholders should investigate more efficient ways to use communication to settle disputes. This will involve communication, media, and behavioural change studies to unravel the appropriate strategies to address conflicts.
- ii. In order to negotiate and find long-term solutions to problems arising from communal and other types of conflicts common in the African continent, and Nigeria in particular, community members and interested organisations must continue to utilise the power of communication, particularly the dialogue and community relations aspects.

References

- Abdulsalam, A. A., Olokooba, I. N., Okafor, I. P. & Adika, A. C. (2020). Role of traditional rulers in conflict resolution for sustainable democracy in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Social Studies*, 23(1), 51-62.
- Abimbola, A. E., Araga, A. S., Olalekan, O. C., & Abiodun, A. O. (2023). Poverty and inequality: A study of the socioeconomic cause of conflicts in the Northcentral states of Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Social Sciences and Strategic Management Techniques*, 10(1), 276-294. <https://doi.org/10.48028/iiprdsmt.v10.i1.18>
- Abiodun, F. K., & Salama, A. R. (2023). Reconciliation as an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in solving matrimonial conflict among Nigerian Muslim organisations in London. *Migration Letters*, 21(2), 833-844.

- Abiodun, S. (2021). Communication as a tool for effective dispute resolution and governance in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 2(7), 1463-1469. <https://www.ijrpr.com/uploads/V2ISSUE7/IJRPR752.pdf>.
- Adeleke, A. (2023). Conflicts and supply chains in Africa. *Business Day*. Retrieved from <https://businessday.ng/opinion/article/conflicts-and-supply-chain-in-africa>.
- Adeyanju, G. C., Schrage, P., Jalo, R. I., Abreu, L., & Schraub, M. (2025). Armed violent conflict and healthcare-seeking behaviour for maternal and child health in sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic review. *PLoS One*, 20(2), e0317094. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0317094>
- Adom, A., & Ugal, D. B. (2025). From conflict to consensus: Assessing the nexus between mediation and communal peace in Benue state, Nigeria. *African Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 15(1), 301-317.
- Africa Centre for Strategic Studies. (2024). Famine takes grip in Africa's prolonged conflict zone. Retrieved from <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Famine-Takes-Grip-in-Africas-Prolonged-Conflict-Zones.pdf>.
- Ajodo-Adebanjoko, A., & Nwofor, R. I. (2024). Herdsmen and farmers clashers in North Central Nigeria: National security implications. *Wukari International Studies Journal*, 8(4), 170-178.
- Aleshinloye, O. & Orolade, M. (2020). Government use of public relations to conflict resolution in Nigeria: Analysis of historical and contemporary scenarios. *Research Gate*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346442861>.
- Al-Rawashdeh, M. S., & Al-Majali, S. A. (2017). The phenomenon of international conflict in international relations. *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*, 4(5), 3488-3502. <https://doi.org/10.18535/ijsshi/v4i5.05>
- Amaria, S. A. (2018). Language and communication as tools for conflict resolution in the contemporary African society. *Ebonyi Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 1(1), 81-88.
- Anyadike, Z. (2023). Addressing factors for the threat of violent extremism in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja – An early warning perspective. *Open Journal of Political Science*, 13, 495-511. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojps.2023.134029>
- Azeez, B. S., Tajudeen, H. T., Asiru, A. A., Onche, E., & Abdulkareem, A. O. (2024). Empirical evaluation of famer-herders' conflict in Asa local government area of Kwara state. *Journal of Agricultural Science and Food Technology*, 10(1), 1-6. https://doi.org/10.36630/jasft_24010
- Babatope, J. K., & Olanipekun, B. (2017). Communication strategies for managing conflicts and insecurity in Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, 6(9), 181-185.
- Baleta, T. (2023). Central African republic conflict: Fast facts and how to help. *World Vision*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldvision.ca/stories/disaster-relief/central-african-republic-conflict-fast-facts>.
- Biekpe, N. (2024). Impact of conflicts on sustainable development in Africa. *Development Finance Agenda*, 9(5). Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-defa_v9_n5_a1.
- Botes, J. (2001). Conflict transformation: A debate over semantics or a crucial shift in the theory and practice of peace and conflict studies? *The International Journal of Peace Studies*, 8(2), 1-27.
- Chimaroke, O. I. (2002). Participatory communal conflict resolution (PCCR) – a tale of two Nigerian local communities. *PLA Notes*, 43, 61-63.
- Cuppen, E. (2018). The value of social conflicts. Critiquing invited participation in energy projects. *Energy Research and Social Sciences*, 38, 28-32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2018.01.016>
- Doss, K., Airth, M., & Pisano, G. (2023). Conflict: Definition, types and sources. *Study.com*. Retrieved from <https://study.com/learn/lesson/what-is-conflict-sources-types.html>.
- Dyikuk, J. J., & Edeh, J. E. (2022). Communication and non-violent conflict resolution in Nigeria: Evidence from theatre (pp. 656-677). Retrieved from <https://irepos.unijos.edu.ng>.
- European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. (2024). Burkina Faso. Retrieved from https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/africa/burkina-faso_en.

- Fadeyi, R. J. & Adamu, A. (2023). Causes and effects of farmers-herders' conflict in North Central Nigeria: A study of Benue and Plateau. *Journal of Political Discourse*, 1(3), 44-54.
- Familugba, J. O., & Adedayo, A. M. (2020). Indigenous conflict resolution strategy and sustainable development in Nigeria. *Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies*, 3(4), 55-66. <https://www.sgojahds.com/index.php/SGOJAHDS/article/view/File/136/140>.
- Guenard, M. (2024). What's happening in the central African. *Norwegian Refugee Council*. Retrieved from <https://www.nrc.no/perspectives/2024/whats-happening-in-the-central-african-republic>.
- Hassan, T. (2024). 2024: A year of reckoning. *Human Rights Watch*. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025>.
- Human Rights Watch. (2025). East Africa, horn: Civilian suffering in armed conflict. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/01/16/east-africa-horn-civilian-suffering-armed-conflict>.
- Igben, H. G. O. & Timiyan, G. (2023). Community relations strategy for curbing conflicts between multi-national oil companies and host communities in Delta State. *International Journal of Community and Cooperative Studies*, 11(1), 38-57.
- Lederach, J. P. (1995). *Preparing for peace: Conflict transformation across cultures*. Syracuse University Press.
- Matsinhe, D. (2022). Elusive peace: Extraction and violent conflict in Africa. In R. Sooryamoothy & N. E. Khalema (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of the sociology of Africa* (pp. 445-464. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197608494.013.25>
- Mmeje, A. (2023). Federal government agencies that resolve disputes in Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://annemmeje.com/2023/05/14/federal-government-agencies-that-resolve-disputes-in-nigeria>.
- Ngwoke, P. N., & Ituma, E. A. (2020). Ethno-religious conflict and sustainable development in Nigeria. *HTS Theological Studies*, 76(4), a6090. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v76i4.6090>
- Ngwu, U. I., Egbai, P. O., Nyiam, D. D., & Emeng, D. E. (2020). Community relations strategies and conflict management: A look at Shell B. P company's antecedents in Ogoni-Land, Nigeria amidst renewed calls for oil production. *International Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 1(2), 14-37.
- Nkabane, M. (2022). Impact of wars and conflict on Africa's socio-economic development. *Research Gate*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362792047>.
- Nnabuihe, O. E. (2024). Nigeria has seen a lot of conflict over the years: Resistance from minority groups is a strong driver. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/nigeria-has-seen-a-lot-of-conflict-over-the-years-resistance-from-minority-groups-is-a-strong-driver-230326>.
- Nshom, E. (2017). Conflict and perceived threat in Eastern Africa. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from <https://oxfordre.com/comunication/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.001/acrefore-9780190228613-e-386>.
- Ntem, G. S. (2022). Ethnicity and conflict resolution in Luke 10:29-37 from an African perspective. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 78(3), a7894. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i3.7894>
- Ogbu, S. U. (2017). African Union and conflict management in Africa: The role of communication in the effectiveness of future interventions. *International Journal of African Society, Culture and Tradition*, 5(1), 13-27.
- Ojewale, O. (2021). Violence is endemic in North Central Nigeria: What communities are doing to cope. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/violence-is-endemic-in-north-central-nigeria-what-communities-are-doing-to-cope-157349>.
- Okibe, H. B. (2022). Ethnicity, religion, and polarisation in Nigeria. *Wilson Centre*. Retrieved from <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/ethnicity-religion-and-polarisation-in-nigeria>.
- Okoli, A. C. & Ukwandu, D. (2021). Communal conflicts in Nasarawa state, North Central Nigeria: A socio-contextual rethink. *Africa Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 21(2), 81-100.

- Olademo, O., Omotye, R. W., Ikibe, S. O., Ibraheem, L. O., Tijani, Y. O., Abubakre, S. O., Adebisi, A. A., Aboyeji, A. J., Fahm, A. O. & Adimula, R. A. (2021). Internal mechanisms as tools for conflict resolution: A case study on Share-Tsaragi, Nigeria. *Heliyon*, 7(1), e05974. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e05974>
- Orhero, A. E. (2020). Conflicts and crises in Nigeria: Management and resolution for peace building. *International Journal of Legal Studies*, 7(1), 361-374.
- Saleh, M. (2022). Interfaith mediation centre in promoting peace in Bauchi State, Nigeria. *African Social Science and Humanities Journal*, 3(4), 182-192
- Tanko, A. (2021, July 19). Nigeria's security crises – five different threats. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <https://bbc.com/news/world-africa-57860993.amp>.
- Tuki, D. (2025). Violent conflict and expectation about the economy's performance: Evidence from Nigeria. *Economics Letters*, 241, 111808. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econlet.2024.111808>
- Usoro, A. A., Ekpenyong, O. E., & Effiong, C. (2014). Conflict management: The Nigerian government's strategies and the question of enduring peace. *Business and Management Research*, 3(2), 138-149. <https://doi.org/10.5430/bmr.v3n2p138>
- Yeboah, & Aikins, (2024). Burkina Faso: Progress and problems after two years of transition. *Institute for Security Studies*. Retrieved from <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/burkina-faso-progress-and-problems-after-two-years-of-transition>.
- Yemane M., & Borowy, I. (2023). Inter-state and intra-state wars and conflicts in the Horn of Africa. *EAS Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, 5(4), 210-219. <https://doi.org/10.36349/easjhcs.2023.v05i04.009>



JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Volume 1, Number 8 (December, 2025)

ISSN: 1595-9457 (online); 3043-4211 (print)

Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

Received: December 11, 2025 Accepted: December 26, 2025 Published: December 31, 2025

Citation: Dambo, Yusuf (2025). "A Study on the Factors Affecting the Prevention & Management - Seeking Behaviour of Childhood Disease in Nigeria." *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1 (8): 121-130.

Article

Open Access

A STUDY ON THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE PREVENTION & MANAGEMENT - SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF CHILDHOOD DISEASE IN NIGERIA

Yusuf Dambo

Department of Sociology, Kaduna State University, Nigeria

Email: ydambo94@gmail.com

Abstract

Childhood diseases remain a major public health concern globally, with Nigeria accounting for a significant proportion of under-five morbidity and mortality. Illnesses such as malaria, pneumonia, and measles continue to pose severe threats to a child survival, largely due to preventable causes. This study examines the factors influencing prevention and management-seeking behaviour related to childhood diseases in Nigeria. The study investigates how societal expectations and behavioural reactions influence carers' actions when children become ill, guided by Parsons' Sick Role Theory. The study only uses secondary data obtained from national survey reports, peer-reviewed journal articles, and publications from international health organisations. A content analysis approach was employed, and findings were presented thematically in alignment with the study's objectives. The study revealed that childhood diseases contributed to a range of adverse effects, including neurological complications, skin infections, hearing impairments, carer stress, disruption of social roles-particularly among mothers-and high mortality among children under the age of five. Preventive and management strategies identified include the use of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs), measles-containing vaccine (MCV), pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV), exclusive breastfeeding, anti-malaria medication, amoxicillin, and oral rehydration solution (ORS). Sociocultural norms, limited health-seeking behaviour among carers, low household income, and poor access to healthcare services all impede the uptake and efficacy of these interventions. The study concludes that a more robust, easily accessible, and culturally aware healthcare system is necessary to improve child health outcomes in Nigeria. It suggests targeted policy interventions that improve carers' ability to seek timely and appropriate medical care, ongoing public health education, community engagement to address cultural barriers, and free and sufficient provision of preventive and treatment services for children under five.

Copyright © 2025 By JPPSS. Publishers: Omega Books

This is an open access article which permits unrestricted use provided the work is properly cited.

Keywords: Under-five Children, Childhood Disease, Prevention, Management, Seeking Behavior.

Introduction

Childhood diseases prevention and management remain a health challenge worldwide, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. To improve child health and stop the rising rate of morbidity and mortality among children under five, strategies have been implemented. The diseases affect not only the victim of the disease but also the family and community at large. Nonetheless, compared to 1990, when 1 in 27 children died, in 2023, compared to 1 in 11 children in 1990, there has been a notable decrease in child mortality over the last few decades, and children now have better chances of surviving (UNICEF, 2025). This under-five mortality has been seen as the probability that a newborn child would die before reaching the fifth birthday. Roughly in 2023 alone, 13,100 under-five occurred every day, which was an intolerable number of largely preventable deaths. The most common cause of death for children under five is infectious diseases, such as pneumonia, diarrhoea, and malaria (David et al. 2025; UNICEF, 2025). The issue of child health is multifaceted, especially in developing countries, experiencing an alarming increase in under-five children morbidity and mortality. The survival of children varies across countries, with developing nations bearing a huge burden, diseases causing fatalities as a result of malnutrition, respiratory infections, diarrhoeal disease, measles, malaria, and neonatal complications (Dhage & Nagtode, 2024)

As a result, the negative impacts of these disorders in children encourage the implementation of suitable preventative measures, since the diseases are preventable in nature. The international organisations, development partners, and ministries/agencies have made significant investments in human and material resources for disease prevention, including mobilization, sensitization campaigns, environmental sanitation (ES), the distribution of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) to under-five children, and various immunization/oral vaccines aimed at controlling malaria transmission, measles, pneumonia, and diarrhoeal diseases. According to research done in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Nigeria, the majority of hospitals visited were for fever, cough, and diarrhoea. Children in the hospital were treated with antimalarial medicines, antibiotics, and ORS (Clarke-Deelder *et al.* 2025). Despite a series of interventions to avert and manage the scourges, many families' knowledge of the effects of these diseases in children and preventive interventions remains sketchy, and indeed factors such as socio-cultural beliefs, access to healthcare services for children, family income, and distance to healthcare facilities undermining health-seeking behaviour for the prevention and management of childhood diseases in Nigeria is still not well established which this study designed to fill in the gap. This research investigates the factors that influence the prevention and management of childhood illnesses in Nigeria.

Literature Review on Childhood Diseases and their Effects on Children

Previous research revealed the occurrence of a variety of childhood disorders, which might be acute or chronic in character. Malaria, measles, pneumonia, diarrhoeal illness, and meningitis are some of the diseases associated with children. The Sustainable Development Goals 3.2 aim to reduce avoidable deaths of newborns and children from childhood illnesses to at least 12 per 1,000 live births of neonatal deaths and as low as 25 per 1,000 live births of under-five children by 2030 (NBS and UNICEF, 2018). This suggests that Nigeria may struggle to fulfil the aim of SDG 3.2 by 2030. Measles is an acute childhood infectious disease caused

by a virus that is transmitted from person to person through social interaction with other humans, as the agent of measles transmission, and/or the disease is spread through coughing, sneezing, hand shaking, or body contact with an infected person. The 2019 was a sad milestone for measles, with 850,000 cases recorded worldwide, the largest number since 1996. The outbreak affected all areas, resulting in measles fatalities (WHO and UNICEF, 2020). Research done at Ahmadu Bello University Medical Centre, Zaria, Samaru Campus, indicated that measles and malaria were found in blood samples obtained from 26 of the 50 children who attended for illness care. The study found measles among children at 80%, and malaria at 40%. The signs and symptoms, such as fever, reddening of eyes, cough, headache, and body weakness, were significantly associated with measles infection, and the use of ITN was discovered in children, which might be the reason for the low malaria infection among children, compared to measles accounted for 80% of them. Also, fever, headache, and vomiting were found to be associated with malaria (Aminu *et al*, 2021).

Similarly, Okanko *et al.* (2019) observed poor immunisation coverage in Nigeria, where measles outbreaks continue to occur and kill more children than any other preventable disease. In addition to malaria and measles, additional childhood ailments include pneumonia and diarrhoea. Childhood sickness is unavoidable in Nigeria, with one kind of disease affecting every section of the nation and producing medical repercussions on children's well-being, such as skin rashes, stiff neck, and deafness. Socio-psychologically, sickness in children under the age of five interferes with mothers' ability to fulfil their anticipated social duties as mothers and consumes family economic resources throughout the management process. According to a study, children's illnesses affected family life, changing family roles and increasing psychological stress (Ekim & Kuru, 2025). The illnesses also cause children to miss school, stunted growth owing to starvation, and cognitive impairment as a consequence of cerebral malaria, retardation, and other complications. As a result, more efforts must be made to combat the scourge, particularly the widespread distribution of the recommended preventive tool to all populations, regardless of age, vaccine coverage, and sensitisation campaigns, because such diseases, above all, kill many children. All childhood diseases are preventable and managed using different strategies as could be seen below.

Childhood Disease Prevention and Management

Childhood disease prevention includes breast feeding, nutrition, vaccines such as Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV), Diphtheria Pertussis and Tetanus (DTP), Measles Containing Vaccines (MCV1&2), good hygiene, safe drinking water, sanitation, avoidance/reduction of air pollution, ITNs, indoor residual spraying, avoidance of open defecation, hand washing with soap, antibiotics, oral rehydration salt (ORS), ACT, zinc, and amoxicillin are among the strategies of childhood diseases prevention and management. Furthermore, malaria and measles are common causes of fever and severe killers in youngsters. A feverish youngster might be suffering from malaria, measles, or another serious illness. Malaria is classified as a contributor to world poverty. LLINs are recommended as the primary vector control strategy to protect all populations at risk of malaria; nonetheless, access to and usage of long-lasting insecticide nets (LLINs) remain one of the obstacles of defense against malaria (UNICEF 2019).

In a cross-sectional survey of 630 women in Igabi and Giwa LGAs, Kaduna state, it was discovered that women slept under LLITNs the night before the survey, and many of them admitted that the nets were given free by the government, and confirmed that the

nets could be used to prevent mosquito bites, and many of respondents used the nets, and other women did not due to a lack of funds to purchase one, or a lack of a voucher to collect free LLITNs, and a perception of heat and discomfort (Babalola *et al.* 2019; Dambo 2018). According to NBS and UNICEF (2018), a child is fully vaccinated if he or she has received BCG vaccine, at least three doses of polio vaccine, three doses of pentavalent vaccine (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, Hemophilus influenza type B, and hepatitis B), one measles-containing vaccine (MCV), inactivated polio vaccine (IPV), and yellow fever vaccine. A vaccination is a biological substance that might be used to safely produce an immune response that protects against infection and/or illness upon further exposure to pathogens (Pollard and Bijker, 2021).

According to the OECD and EU (2018), diseases such as measles, diphtheria, pertussis, and influenza are highly contagious and spread through human contact, whereas the hepatitis B virus is transferred by contact with an infected person's blood or bodily fluid via intercourse or mother to child. The injectable measles-containing vaccine (MCV) was one of six immunizations recommended for children aged 9 or 12-15 months. A mass vaccination campaign against measles was conducted, with the goal of reaching all children in a given group who had missed the usual immunisation (Orenstein *et al.* 2020). Measles vaccination is one of the best deals in public health since it prevented an estimated 23.2 million deaths between 2000 and 2018; 83 countries have been declared measles-free. It is thought that more than 18 million people who were disabled without obtaining the polio vaccine are presently walking. The COVID-19 ban affected vaccine uptake and prevented almost 94 million children from receiving a measles vaccination (WHO and UNICEF 2020). Even as MCV1 coverage rose between 2010 and 2019, regular MCV1 has stalled in numerous nations, most notably Nigeria and the Central African Republic. MCV1 coverage was lower in rural than in urban locations, although a large population of unvaccinated children often lived in urban locations, with 47.9% (Mosser, 2020). Measles vaccines are provided in hospitals, but it's unclear if the majority of youngsters have an MCV card, and the coverage is exceedingly low, which boosts the nation's transmission rate.

According to FMOH (2019), the strategic priorities for pneumonia control take a comprehensive approach, focusing on interventions that have the greatest potential to lower morbidity and mortality in Nigeria, such as vaccination, oral antibiotics, lowering household air pollution, and better nutrition. More so, Pneumonia might be transferred by airborne droplets from coughing or sneezing and contact with contaminated discharge from the nose or throat. On the other hand, diarrhoeal infections can spread from person to person as a result of poor personal hygiene or through contaminated food or drink. Nausea and vomiting, headache, fever, appetite loss, chronic diarrhoea, and stomach discomfort are the most typical symptoms in youngsters. People of all ages are therefore susceptible to both pneumonia and diarrhoea, but those with weakened immune systems - such as undernourished and HIV-positive children-are particularly vulnerable. Other risk factors include lack of exclusive breastfeeding, insufficient immunisation against measles, pneumonia, etc., poor waste disposal, and environmental factors such as indoor air pollution, overcrowded housing, and smoking, all place children at a higher risk of acquiring pneumonia. Even though childhood illnesses are treatable and preventable, they nonetheless spread among children. Families range in how they seek medical assistance for childhood illnesses, with some paying greater attention as soon as symptoms appear and others delaying for various reasons. As a result, some families adhere to and use the suggested methods for either managing the condition once it has been contracted or

preventing its contraction in accordance with the biomedical approach. However, other families because for one reason or another use other preventive and treatment approaches, such as the use of alternative and or traditional medicine, which Akter (2025) called ethno-medicine, where parents use herbs or spiritual means to treat disease as a result of either the belief system or low costs in the management process, especially children in rural areas. The study employed qualitative design research using secondary data which is explained in the subsequent heading.

Materials and Methods

Methodology: To achieve the study's objectives, a qualitative descriptive and explanatory design was used with secondary data to review the existing literature in order to gain more insight into the effects of childhood diseases and factors impeding their prevention and management among Nigerian households. This technique is advantageous because it allows for the investigation of many aspects, as shown by diverse results, causes, cultural and environmental influences, and policy frameworks that account for the consequences of these disorders in children, as well as factors that impede their prevention and management. Data were gathered from peer-reviewed journals, policy documents from the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNICEF, Federal Ministry of Health, Federal and State Primary Health Care Agencies, and research briefs and reports from government and development partners such as the National Demography and Health Survey (NDHS), National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and Save the Children. The search technique involved carefully identifying and considering relevant literature on the subject. Furthermore, the data obtained were presented thematically in accordance with the study goals and analysed using content analysis. The research employed theoretical suggestions to explain the problem at hand

Sick Role Theory

Sick Role Theory, a functionalist theoretical framework focusing on macrosocial structure championed by Talcott Parsons in 1951, seeks to explain health-seeking behaviour. Parsons considered disease (Cockerham 1978) as an unfavourable state for both the sick individual and society; it interrupts biological and social functioning, including mortality, and causes financial hardship for the family. In an effort to explain roles, performance, and expectations in trying to get well by a sick person, he outlined four (4) principles (Cockerham 1978; Amzat and Razum 2014), comprising both the rights and duties of a sick person, which include:

- i. Sick people are excluded from regular social obligations based on the type and severity of their disease, as determined by a physician. The primary purpose of the medical justification is to give social control over malingering.
- ii. A sick individual is not responsible for their situation and needs medical support to recover, which relies on social capital and healthcare institutions.
- iii. Accept that being unwell is a social disorder. As a result, he or she must seek medical attention to recover from the disease.
- iv. Sick individuals must seek medical assistance from a qualified professional and follow management protocols.

Thus, based on the foregoing, the theory is appropriate for explaining childhood diseases prevention and management since the illnesses are undesired and disruptive to the home and social system. Children are frequently victims of disease due to their weakened immune systems, which influences mothers' exemption from normal social responsibilities when a

child is sick (both formal and informal roles), such as office work and other domestic chores, to provide nursing care to the sick child. Children's illnesses have an impact not only on official employment and other domestic activities, but also on the household's finances since they consume resources throughout the management process.

The official or social exemption is granted as an excuse prevent malingering in the pretext of caring for a sick child. The disease is a disruption, and the sick child is not to blame for his state because illness can arise naturally as a result of infection, virus, simple interaction, or a child being exposed to a dirty environment. As a result, he or she should not be criticised; instead, parents should endeavour to get him out of this predicament. As a result, parents must realise that being unwell is detrimental to the home, and they have a responsibility to seek medical attention. Medical aid is sought by families in varying degrees, with some delaying therapy and others requesting it at the commencement of contraction. Many variables influence prompt versus delayed seeking, including accessibility, price, personal choice, and belief systems, among others. Furthermore, seeking technically competent medical practitioners to get him/her well is another obligation, as is providing the medical practitioner with complete cooperation in the management procedures, such as subjecting the child to oral vaccines, injectable immunisation, sleeping under ITN, physical examination, taking vital signs, purchasing the recommended drugs, administering the drugs as needed, adhering to the date of follow-up, and so on, to ensure the child's recovery. People considered disease as a kind of deviance, and medicine was employed to manage deviance and preserve social order (Cockerham 1978). The theory is subject to a criticism that, it does not consider the patient's right to refuse certain treatments on personal or religious grounds (Amzat and Razum 2014), and cultural beliefs serve as a basis for rejecting certain treatments because culture, more often than not, informs treatment selection. Similarly, variables impacting health-seeking behaviour for childhood illnesses are studied and discussed under the succeeding section, as may be seen below.

Results

Socio-cultural Beliefs: Naturally, people's cultural views influence how they see the illness and its causes, which in turn influences how best to avoid and treat it. In all cultures (Amzat and Razum, 2014), there are cultural classifications of disease aetiology or lay knowledge of sickness, which is mainly based on the traditions and belief systems. That is why many civilizations, notably in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular, ascribe sickness to either mystical or supernatural causation. Erinosh (1998:18 19) asserts that the practice of witchcraft or sorcery is likewise associated with an increased risk of illness. The ailment may be caused by witches who inflict injury on any area of the body, and the sorcerer reached patients by touching sufferers' personal possessions, such as fabric. In other situations, they created poisons that are used to injure the imagined adversaries physically. Therefore, in certain cultures, elderly individuals are mystically buried in their property with the notion that their spirits are close to protect family members from bad luck, including illness.

This view has an impact on Nigerians' usage of contemporary healthcare services for managing and preventing childhood illnesses. Eventually, many moms do not think that their child is convulsing or coughing because of malaria or pneumonia, but rather that it is the work of foes. African people have traditionally used traditional and spiritual remedies as a means of achieving health. According to Owuni *et al.* (2018), traditional medicine (TM) medication for the therapy of human sickness remains an essential choice in the health care system, and its utilization among people continues beyond the African continent, but also

the whole world. The shift in the attitude in TM has expanded the use of natural goods in the treatment of various diseases; it consequently played a vital part in increasing access to care in Nigeria. Social views, customs, and community knowledge are the primary causes of the disparity in treatment. In many rural communities, ethno-medicine frequently influences babies' treatment choices and behaviours while seeking medical attention. Due to its accessibility, affordability, cultural fit, and community trust, ethno-medicine continues to be the favoured option for families with babies (Akter, 2025). Therefore, parents' perceptions of the aetiological elements and cultural practices in Nigeria determine how households comprehend childhood sickness, its causes, and various medications for its care. Limited access to healthcare services is another factor undermining childhood disease prevention and management.

Limited Access to Healthcare Facilities and Services

The ability of a mother of a child under five to receive medical treatment to address childhood illnesses is known as access. It was believed that communities varied in urbanisation, demographic, environmental, economic, and social aspects, which correspond with the volume and types of health issues communities confront. For example, larger metropolitan nations tend to have more healthcare providers per capita; however, rural areas frequently live farther away from healthcare facilities to address ailments (NAS, 2018).

Most hospitals in Nigeria are not properly distributed, and hospitals in some locations are only buildings (structures) with little or no man-power and other essential equipment for the provision of health services delivery to people, especially children, who are the most vulnerable population. Because the government was unable to provide a functional pharmacy with a steady supply of medicines to be sold to patients by government-employed pharmacy staff as revolving funds. The healthcare workers in primary health centres, dispensaries, and clinics may be more concerned on ways to increase profits from the retailed medicines sold to the local populace. A health practitioner, particularly in rural areas, might prescribe overdose treatment to clients indiscriminately without considering the anticipated consequences or reactions of the drug given to them, thereby leading to complications because he/she is motivated by the anticipated profit he/she is going to make out of it.

The high prevalence of children's diseases in underdeveloped nations, particularly Nigeria, may be caused by inadequate access, a lack of information, and poor care-seeking behaviour for life-saving therapies (oral vaccines, immunisation, ITN, etc.). It has been revealed in Nigeria that substantial utilization of patent pharmaceutical vendors occurs in the therapy of paediatric illnesses. These professionals advocated exclusive breastfeeding, proper cleanliness, immunisation, and ITN usage. They also provided health services that included diagnosing and treating sick children, including referrals for severe cases. Artemisinin Combination-based Therapy (ACT), Amoxicillin, and Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) were provided as the therapy for malaria, pneumonia, and diarrhoeal illnesses accordingly. Due to their consistent service and extended operating hours, patent medication merchants were used (Margaret et al. 2022). The high patronization of the patent medicine vendors may not be unconnected with the dearth of knowledge about the hospital services, especially among people in rural areas, the trust people have in them, the installment payment for the service received, and/or services are given on credit or open option to buy complete or half treatment (drugs) is prioritised. In a similar vein, many parents choose not to treat their children when they are ill because they cannot access the services. This is because most of the healthcare centers do not have enough prevention and management

capabilities, especially when the condition comes with complications resulting in the death of a child.

Most families, especially in rural regions where restricted access to healthcare facilities is very obvious, and preventative measures for post-natal difficulties for the mother and newborn infant are not offered to them after delivery. This could be the reason why children in Nigeria are reported to the hospital with symptoms of childhood illnesses, such as pneumonia, malaria e.t.c. This perhaps happens due to the contaminated environment, and high body temperature indicating the presence of fever, especially in the country's northern region due to inadequate healthcare facilities, hospital services, and healthcare professionals, which frequently encourage many to seek alternative medical care in the event of a child disease episode. The National Bureau of Statistics indicated that 79.4% of mothers in the north west and 64.9% in the north east delivered at home, as compared to 8.2% in the south east and 18% in the south west, respectively. In a similar vein, 33.7% of children in public healthcare institutions in the northwest sought fever treatment, compared to 13.6% in the south-south area. Less than 3000 children in the south-south/east had fever, and 8.59% had a fever episode (NBS 2022). This shows significant differences in the country's geographical zones with regard to hospital service use, illness manifestation, and access to hospital services. However, hospital treatment prices and transportation expenditures may prohibit mothers from utilising the hospital, considering their financial status.

Low-Income to Settle Treatment Expenses

Economic condition in Nigeria potentially impacts preventive and management-seeking behaviour, especially if a child acquires one of the childhood ailments. A household's income allows its members to take advantage of many pleasures, such as medical treatment. In some patriarchal communities, parents—especially the father—are responsible for obtaining medical attention, notably for the treatment of feverish illnesses. When children are ill, they are frequently sent to the hospital for treatment. The parents' financial situation influences the type of care they receive. Compared to children whose parents are struggling to make ends meet, children whose parents are buoyant use the priciest medical facilities, which provide high-quality medical care. However, some children are more prone to sickness than others, because malaria, measles, pneumonia, diarrhoea, and the like may affect children of low-income earners than children of good social and economic status. Research conducted in the University of Benin teaching hospital, Edo State, utilising mixed methods and ill role model as a theoretical guide, found that most respondents, 82.3% earned less than ₦60,000.00 monthly, and 95.2% of the respondents were fairly happy with the services obtained. However, this restricted resource often influences the possibilities of healthcare utilization, especially at the higher level of treatment by many households (Omorogbe, 2018). Poor access to health care, especially in rural regions which causes children in rural areas to wait or receive insufficient care, and a shortage of healthcare professionals impacts the level of care, which elevates the risk of morbidity and death (David *et al.* 2025). However, adequate healthcare services with well-trained medical professionals are often available in private healthcare, which is difficult for low-income families to patronize. This makes them more vulnerable and afflicted so adversely by the ailments due to their financial incapacity to cover the treatment fees.

The poverty level most frequently appears to be more acute in the countryside, because they rely on agricultural output, with the low usage of mechanized farming and lack of industrial activity. This makes them reliant on public healthcare facilities, as many cannot afford private healthcare facilities, where enough services and staff are available. According

to research, just 8.3% of Nigerians in rural regions utilised private hospitals, compared to 30.2% in metropolitan areas (NBS, 2022). This underlines the need for increased political commitment to bridge the gaps, and for the development of the overall mother and child health across the country, irrespective of the geographical locations. Therefore, the low income at the parents' disposal invariably influences them not to utilise modern healthcare services for disease prevention and management because emphasis is also placed on the households' needs, such as food, and the use of alternative medicine in the management process, such as over-the-counter drugs, traditional medicine, among others.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Like children in other African nations, Nigerian children suffer from many diseases. The disease's effects include stiff necks, skin rashes, social roles for mothers, and, most importantly, the loss of children before they turn five, which has an impact on society's socioeconomic growth. The morbidity and death of children under five have decreased as a result of the employment of preventive and management techniques to stop the disease's spread. Factors such as socio-cultural views, restricted access to healthcare facilities and services, and poor income of the parents impact childhood illness prevention and management in Nigeria. The study recommends that:

- i. To dispel some mothers' misconceptions about depending on traditional, spiritual medicine based on their beliefs, which frequently causes them to put off getting the proper care in contemporary medical facilities, an educational campaign should be launched.
- ii. Parents should be sensitized in public locations such as markets, hospitals, places of worship, and indeed through print and electronic media on the need to take children to the hospital for proper investigation to discover the true source of the ailment.
- iii. To stop the high rate of morbidity and death among children under five in the nation owing to childhood illnesses, the government and relevant organisations must immediately make hospital services inexpensive and accessible to children.
- iv. Children under five should get free (free services) medications for the prevention and treatment of childhood diseases so that the issue of lack of money to take a sick child to hospital would no longer remain an issue in paediatric illness management in the country.

References

- Akter, H. (2025). Socio-cultural explanation of newborn child health and illness: An Anthropological study on the practices of ethno-medicine in the context of rural child. *South Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(5): pp163-177
- Aminu, M., Parason, Y. I., Abubakar, U., Tahir, M. I., Olaniyan, F. A., and Usman, M. A. (2021). Detection of measles IgM and malaria parasite among febrile children in Zaria, Nigeria. *Journal of Infectious Disease and Epidemiology*, 7:189, 7(1): Doi:10.23937/2474-3658/151019
- Amzat J. and Razum, O. (2014). *Medical Sociology in Africa*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Babalola, O. J., Sambo, M. N., Idris, S. H., Ajayi, Ike-o, Ajumobi, O., and Nguku, P. (2019). Factors associated with utilization of LLINs among women of childbearing age in Igabi, Kaduna State, Nigeria, *BMC Malaria Journal*, 18;412, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12936-019-3046>
- Clarke-Deelder, E., Amor Fernandez, P., Drouard, S, Kandpal, E.G. & Shapira, G. (2025). Knowledge gaps in the clinical management of childhood illness: evidence from three countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. *BMC Public Health*, 25, 3601, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-025-24852-0>
- Cockerham, W. C. (1978). *Medical sociology*. USA: Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J.

- Dhage V.D & Nagtode, N. (2024). Health problems among under-five age group children in developing countries: A narrative review. *Cureus*, 16(2): Doi:10.7759/cureus.55019
- Dambo, Y. (2018). Childhood malaria prevention and treatment option: A study in Giwa local government area, Kaduna State- Nigeria. *The Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 16(2): 129-144.
- David O., B., Ojima, W. Z., Nicholas, A., Aderonke A., Yusuff, A.A., Deborah, E.T., & Jonathan L. (2025). Factors contributing to under-five children mortality in Nigeria: A narrative review. *Medicine*, 104(1): Pe441142, Doi:101097/MD.0000000000041142
- Ekim, A.N. & Kuru, Akturk N.B. (2025). The impact of childhood chronic diseases on the child and the family. *Journal of Health Science Institute*, 10(1): 65-70
- Erinosho. O. A. (1998). *Health sociology*. Ogun: Bulwark Consult.
- FMoH (2019). National integrated pneumonia control strategy and implementation plan, Federal Ministry of Health, Abuja.
- Margaret, S.A., Jennifer, A. Abiodun, A., Aizobu, D. & Idogho, O. (2022). Common childhood illnesses: a cross-sectional study of commodity stocking patterns and management knowledge among patent and proprietary medicine vendors in Nigeria. *Archives Public Health*, 80, 88. Doi. 100.1186/s13690-022-00846-x
- Mosser, J. F. (2020). Mapping routine measles vaccination in low and middle-income countries, *Nature Research*, 589
- NAS (2018). Healthcare utilization as a proxy in disability determination. Washington, DC: National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24969>
- NBS & UNICEF (2018). Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 2016-2017) final report, Abuja: National Bureau of Statistics and United Nations Children's Fund
- NBS (2022). Multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS 2021-2022) final survey findings report, Abuja: National Bureau of Statistics.
- Obi, C., Molemodie, S. & Wonod, C. (n.d.). Rapid assessment on pneumonia and diarrhea control in Nigeria: A call for action, District Consulting and Logistics (DCL), Nigeria, and International Vaccine Access Center (IVAC), Nigeria office.
- OECD & EU (2018). Health at a glance. Europe 2018: State of health in the EU cycle, Paris: OECD Publishing, https://doi.org/10.1787/health_glance_eur-2018-en
- Okanko, I. O., Nkang, A. O., Udeze, A. O., Adedeji A. O., Ejembi, J., Onoja, B. A., Ogun, A. A. & Garba, K. N. (2019). Global eradication of measles: a highly contagious and vaccine-preventable disease-What went wrong in Africa? *Journal of Cell and Animal Biology*, 3(8): 119-140, <https://www.academicjournals.org/JCAB>
- Omorogbe, C. E. (2018). Socio-economic factors influencing in-patient satisfaction with healthcare at the University of Benin teaching hospital (UBTH), Benin City, Nigeria. *International Journal of Nursing, Midwifery and Health-related Cases*, (4)4: 63-80
- Owumi, B.E., Kolo, V.I., Obemeata, A.A., and Adesokan, B.M. (2018). Continuity and change in the practice of traditional medicine in Nigeria. *The Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, (16)2: 78-92
- Orenstein, W. A., Hinman, A., Nkowane, B., Olive, J.M., &Reingold, A. (2020). Measles/Rubella mid-term review report, Measles and Rubella Global Strategies Plan, 2012 – 2020. *Midterm Review*
- Pollard, A. J. & Bijker, E. M. (2021). A guide to vaccinology: from basic principles to new developments. *Nature Reviews/Immunology*, 21, 83-100, www.nature.com/nri
- UNICEF (2019). Level and trend in child mortality: Estimates developed by the UN inter-agency group for child mortality estimation.
- UNICEF (2019). Every child survives and thrives, Global Annual Result Report
- UNICEF (2025). Under-five mortality. UNICEF data. Available at <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-survival/underfive-mortality/>.
- WHO & UNICEF (2020). Emergency call to action for measles and polio outbreak.



JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Volume 1, Number 8 (December, 2025)

ISSN: 1595-9457 (online); 3043-4211 (print)

Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

Received: December 11, 2025 Accepted: December 26, 2025 Published: December 31, 2025

Citation: Ibitoye, Biola O.; Idowu, Samauel A., Ekundayo, John K., & Ajide, Adebola D. (2025). "Socio-Cultural Determinants of Girl-Child Marriage in Benue State, Nigeria." *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1 (8): 131-140.

Article

Open Access

SOCIO-CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF GIRL-CHILD MARRIAGE IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

**Biola Olatundun Ibitoye¹, Samauel Abidemi Idowu²,
John Kayode Ekundayo³ & Adebola David Ajide⁴**

Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ilorin, Nigeria^{1&2}

Institute of Part-Time Studies, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State³

Chief Confidential Secretary, University of Ilorin, Nigeria⁴

Corresponding Email: bibitoye@unilorin.edu.ng¹

Abstract

Child marriage in Nigeria has largely focused on national prevalence rates and general causal factors, thereby creating a gap in localized, in-depth understanding of the context-specific socio-cultural determinants operating within individual states such as Benue State, which is characterized by diverse ethnic and religious communities. The absence of such contextual analysis risks the implementation of interventions that are ineffective or culturally resisted. This study examined the socio-cultural factors that promote girl-child marriage and investigated the efforts of the government in addressing these factors in Benue State, Nigeria. The study was anchored on Feminist Theory and adopted a descriptive survey research design, employing a quantitative method of data collection. Using a simple random sampling technique, respondents were selected from thirteen local government areas of the state. A total of 390 questionnaires were administered, of which 348 were successfully retrieved and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings revealed that key socio-cultural drivers of girl-child marriage include the preservation of virginity and moral standing of the girl-child, deeply entrenched cultural emphasis on chastity, and a complex interplay of cultural and religious values. Government initiatives aimed at curbing girl-child marriage include the implementation of free education at the Universal Basic Education level, which emphasizes education as a tool for empowering girls, delaying early marriage, and promoting adult literacy programmes. The study concludes that despite the presence of these initiatives, girl-child marriage in Benue State persists due to deeply rooted socio-cultural practices and inadequate legal enforcement. It therefore recommends that relevant stakeholders intensify public awareness of national and

Copyright © 2025 By JPPSS. Publishers: Omega Books

This is an open access article which permits unrestricted use provided the work is properly cited.

international laws prohibiting child marriage and strengthen enforcement mechanisms at the local level to prevent illegal marriages.

Keywords: Girl-child Marriage, Benue State, Feminism, Culture.

Introduction

Child marriage is a phenomenon that affects both the developed and the developing world. In some countries like India, Niger and Mozambique its prevalence is extremely high across the whole population. In others, like Afghanistan, Cambodia and Ghana, its overall prevalence might be low but early marriage is still widely practiced in particular communities that are marginalised from mainstream society because of race or religion, and as a result the issue may be ignored by governments (UNICEF, 2005). According to Lakshmi (2017), the far-reaching effects of child marriage go beyond the individual, affecting the entire community, and even national and global development. This is so because a young woman that is deprived of education and other rights may not fully develop her potentials. She may not be able to bring up her children properly. She is at increased risk of sexual abuse and exploitation and other harmful practices that negatively affect her survival, development and ability to achieve to her fullest potential. All these would have negative effects on her development which would negatively affect the society at large. Child marriage and sexual violence in Nigeria have been associated with enormous problems especially relating to the developmental potential of young girls and women within the society. Africa has the highest rate of child marriages in the world (UNICEF, 2022). This is more prominent in sub-Saharan Africa with Niger having the highest child marriage rate in the world followed by Chad, Bangladesh and Guinea. According to The Population Council (2014), a third of more than 330 million girls and young women aged 10-19 who currently lives in developing countries were or will be married by their 18th birthday.

Nigeria is confronted with the issue of child marriage and seemingly with governments failing to clamp down on the practice (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Though it is technically unlawful in Nigeria, girls in some States of the Federation are sometimes married by the age of nine years due to tradition, religion and poverty reasons (Forward, 2015). Child marriage is deeply rooted in socio-cultural practices and religion beliefs. Religious and cultural attitudes towards marriage are deeply intertwined with attitudes towards gender roles, particularly those of women. The focus of different religious traditions by the family comes with the expectations of subordination of women in the family. That means a girl's wishes and views on her marriage are often ignored. Girl-child marriage has become a social norm in some communities of Benue State (Elujekwute, 2011). In these communities, tradition played major role in early marriage. Some parents are also too poor to sustain the welfare of the children while some parents just want to maintain good family names thereby giving out their daughters in marriage at young ages in order to maintain chastity by all means. Young girls were happy following men because of monetary gains (Agasa 2023). Some, out of ignorance had premature sex and contacted sexually transmitted diseases like Syphilis, Gonorea, HIV and AIDS many of whom died because of contracted sexually transmitted diseases. For example, AIDS when not treated adequately and timely, while other girls got infected with other health problems associated with early sexual experiences. Bride price given by the husband's family makes them glad as well as being an opportunity to limit promiscuity of the girl-child. Many of the girls that enrolled in the schools dropped out of schools and started playing the role of married women. Unfortunately on the short and long run, a lot of unpleasant developments began to show up in the lives of the girl-child.

Sexual violence occurred where the girl-child is not yet ready for sexual intimacy. The persistence of these marriages is compounded by strong influence of patriarchal systems, community elders, and kinship networks, which reinforce acceptance of the practice. Furthermore, weak law enforcement, low awareness of legal rights, and fear of social ostracism discourage victims or their families from challenging such unions. Existing research on child marriage in Nigeria has often focused on national prevalence and general causes, leaving a gap in localised, in-depth understanding of the unique socio-cultural determinants within states like Benue State with diverse ethnic and religious communities. Without examining and addressing these context-specific socio-cultural drivers, interventions risk being ineffective or culturally resisted, thereby allowing the cycle of girl-child marriage and its attendant consequences to persist across generations. The aim of this study is to examine socio-cultural factors that promote girl-child marriage and investigate efforts of the government in curbing socio-cultural factors that promote girl-child marriage in Benue State.

Review of Empirical Studies

A substantial body of research has examined the socio-cultural, economic, and educational factors that contribute to girl-child marriage and its consequences in various countries. In Nepal, Sekine and Hodgkin (2017) used data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2014 to show that early marriage is a leading cause of school dropout among girls aged 15–17. Their study found that the risk of leaving school rises sharply after the fifth or sixth grade, peaks in the seventh and eighth grades, and remains significant through the tenth grade. Married girls were reported to be ten times more likely to drop out of school than their unmarried peers. Similarly, Sah et al. (2014) found that low education and poverty are strongly associated with early marriage, and that child marriage often leads to unwanted pregnancies. Research from East Africa supports these findings. Yowela (2016) in Zambia reported a high prevalence of early marriage (39%) and identified low education, poverty, lack of awareness, and cultural traditions as major drivers. Ikutwa (2015) in Kenya found that married girls face numerous obstacles in exercising safe reproductive and sexual choices, underscoring their vulnerability and the negative impact on maternal health.

In Nigeria, studies in Uzo-Uwani, Enugu, and Ogun States (Eze, 2016; Adebambo, 2010) revealed that socio-cultural norms, community and family pressures, religious beliefs, and the desire to secure economic survival drive early marriage. These practices violate girls' rights, limit educational opportunities, and negatively affect broader community development. Evidence from Serbia among Roma communities (Hotchkiss *et al.*, 2016) showed that poverty, low education, and rural residence are key risk factors, indicating that these socio-economic and cultural influences on child marriage are common across diverse contexts. Despite the growing research, most studies have focused on regions outside Benue State. There is limited knowledge about the socio-cultural determinants of girl-child marriage in this context, particularly from the perspectives of female and male youths, community and religious leaders, and education officials. This gap highlights the need for localised research to understand the cultural, social, and economic factors that sustain early marriage in Benue State and to inform context-specific interventions aimed at reducing the practice and promoting girls' education and rights.

Theoretical Frame Work

This study is anchored on feminist theory. The feminist perspective was formalised in the 1960s–1970s by scholars such as Dorothy Smith (1974), Heidi Hartmann (1979), and others during the second wave feminist movement. This theory is associated with the rights of

women both in simplistic and reductionistic (Tong, 2014). Feminist theory focuses on analysing gender inequality. Themes often explore include discrimination, objectification, (especially sexual objectification) oppression, patriarchy, stereotyping, art history and contemporary art and aesthetics (Hooks, 2020). The major assumption of feminist theory is that gender may be a factor in how human beings represent reality. 'Men and women will construct different types of structures about self and, consequently, their thought processes may diverge in content and form. The four principles of feminist theory are: working to increase equality; expanding human choice; eliminating gender stratification; ending sexual violence and promoting sexual freedom (Macionis, 2018). The oppression of women is not simply related to some other social relationship such as a class system which girl-child marriage and sexual abuse were solid example of the class system that Feminist is considering. Flax (1999) stated that feminist theory sees women's oppression as a unique constellation of social problems and has to be understood in itself context. Oppression is seen as a part of the way the world is structured and is not due to situation in which one found himself/herself. Rather, oppression is within the field of the mind of the individual which are products of very socio-economic and political organisation of that society. The goals of feminist theory are based on understanding power differentials between men and women in their society and environment, power in relationship to the evolution of oppression as well as to bring about social change to end oppression. The commitments to change oppressive structures and to connect abstract ideas with concrete problems for political actions are the main purpose of feminist theory. While the feminist theories also mention issues which are not strictly related to women, it is argued that men and women view the world differently.

Feminist Theory is important since it helps to address and better understand unequal and oppressive gender relations. It promotes the goal of equality and justice while providing more opportunities for women. True feminism benefits men too and is not only applicable to women. It allows men to be who they want to be, without being tied down to their own gender roles and stereotypes. Through feminism, men are encouraged to be free to express themselves in a way which may be considered 'typically feminine' such as crying when they are upset. In this way, men's mental health can benefit from feminism since the shame associated with talking about their emotions can be lifted without feeling the expectation to 'man up' and keep their feeling buried. Feminist Theory provides a critical framework for understanding girl-child marriage as a manifestation of systemic gender inequality sustained by cultural, economic, and institutional structures. At its core, feminist thought asserts that societal norms, laws, and traditions are often shaped by patriarchal values that privilege male authority and subordinate women and girls (Beasley, 2013). Within the context of Benue State, these patriarchal systems are reinforced through cultural practices, religious interpretations, and economic arrangements such as the bride price, which commodifies girls and positions them as property to be transferred from the natal family to the husband's household.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey research design with the use of quantitative method of data collection. The population of the study is 6,141,300 (NBC, 2022), out which a multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the 390 respondents in thirteen randomly selected local government area of the State. A total of 21 community leaders, 115 female residents, 118 girl-child's parents, 91 Local Government officials, and 45 religious leaders

were purposively selected and administered copies questionnaire in the State. A total of 348 copies of questionnaire were retrieved back and analysis using SPSS

Data Presentation Analysis and Discussion of the Findings

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Information of Respondents, N = 348

Demographic items	Study Sample (N = 348)		
	Information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Female	245	70.4
	Male	103	29.6
Religion	Christianity	223	64.1
	Islam	89	25.6
	A.I.R.	36	10.3
Educational Level	No formal education	31	8.9
	Primary	40	11.5
	Secondary	86	24.7
	Post-secondary	191	54.9
Status	Indigene	273	78.4
	Non-indigene	75	21.6
Ethnicity	Idoma	101	29.02
	Igede	93	26.7
	Tiv	135	38.8
	Others	19	5.5

Source: Research Field Survey, 2018.

Sex Distribution: A significant majority of respondents were female 245 (70.4%), while males constituted 103 (29.6%) of the sample. This suggests that the study engaged more women, which may reflect the topic's relevance to female experiences.

Religious Affiliation: Most respondents were Christians 223 (64.1%), followed by Muslims 89 (25.6%) and adherents of African Indigenous Religions (A.I.R.) 36 (10.3%). This indicates a predominance of Christianity in the study population, with notable religious diversity.

Educational Level: The largest proportion of respondents had attained post-secondary education 191 (54.9%), followed by secondary education 86 (24.7%), primary education 40 (11.5%), and no formal education 31 (8.9%).

The findings reflect a relatively high educational attainment among participants, with more than half having advanced beyond secondary school. **Indigene/Non-Indigene Status:** The majority of respondents were indigenes 273 (78.4%), while non-indigenes made up 75 (21.6%). This suggests that most participants were native to the study area, potentially influencing their perspectives on local socio-cultural practices. **Ethnic Composition of Indigenes:** Among the 273 indigenes, the largest ethnic group was Tiv 135 (38.8%), followed by Idoma 101 (29.2%), Others 19 (5.5%), and Igede 93 (26.7%). This shows that Tiv ethnicity is the most represented group among the local population sampled.

The Socio-cultural Factors that Promote Girl-child's Marriages in Benue State

Table 2: Respondents' Perceptions on the Factors that Promote Girl-child Marriage in Benue State

Socio-cultural Factors	Mean Score	Rank
Preservation of virginity and moral standing	2.861	1 st
The practice of Islam /African Indigenous Religion encourages girl-child marriage.	2.860	2 nd
Community custom, norms and tradition is a contributory factor to early marriage of girls.	2.729	3 rd
High level of parental illiteracy often encourages girl-child marriage	2.609	4 th
Community and family expectations reinforce the practice viewing girls as destined for domestic role	2.579	5 th

Source: Researcher Field Survey, 2018

The most significant socio-cultural factor identified by respondents was preservation of virginity and moral standing which ranked 1st (2.861), showing that cultural emphasis on chastity strongly drives the practice of girl-child marriage in Benue State. This was closely followed by the practice of Islam/African Indigenous Religion ranked 2nd (2.860), indicating that certain religious and traditional beliefs are key promoters of early marriage. Community customs, norms, and traditions ranked 3rd (2.729), suggesting that entrenched cultural values play a substantial role in perpetuating the practice. High level of parental illiteracy ranked 4th (2.609), implying that low educational attainment among parents contributes to encouraging early marriage. The least ranked factor was community and family expectations viewing girls as destined for domestic roles ranked 5th (2.579), which still represents a notable cultural influence on girl-child marriage. The study highlights preservation of virginity and moral standing as the most significant socio-cultural factor driving girl-child marriage in Benue State. This emphasis on chastity aligns with findings in various cultural contexts where virginity before marriage is highly valued as a symbol of family honour and social respectability (Nour, 2006; UNICEF, 2014). In many African societies, including Nigeria, maintaining a girl's virginity is often linked to family dignity and is used as a justification for early marriage to prevent premarital sexual activity (Ahinkorah et al., 2020). This cultural imperative often out-weighs the rights and wellbeing of the girl herself, sustaining early marriage practices. Closely related is the influence of religious beliefs, particularly Islam and African Indigenous Religions, ranked second. Religious doctrines and interpretations often play a central role in legitimising early marriage, either explicitly or implicitly (Walker, 2012; Nour, 2009).

In some communities, religious leaders endorse child marriage as a means of protecting girls from immoral behaviour or as fulfilling religious obligations (UNICEF, 2018). This confirms the findings of this study that specific religious and traditional beliefs are powerful promoters of early marriage. Community customs, norms, and traditions, ranked third, further emphasize how entrenched cultural values sustain the practice. Early marriage is frequently embedded in long-standing social norms that dictate appropriate life transitions for girls (Delprato et al., 2017). These customs often prioritize marriage and motherhood as the primary roles for girls, reinforcing early unions despite changing legal frameworks and awareness campaigns (Chae & Ngo, 2017). The study also found that parental illiteracy significantly contributes to the persistence of child marriage. Low educational attainment limits parents' awareness of the negative consequences of early marriage and restricts their ability to access alternative economic opportunities (Raj et al.,

2010; Koski et al., 2017). Education has been widely recognized as a protective factor against child marriage, empowering parents and girls with knowledge about rights, health, and economic prospects (Wodon et al., 2017). Finally, the community and family expectations that girls are destined for domestic roles, though ranked lowest, still represents an important cultural influence. Gendered expectations that confine girls to household and caregiving duties perpetuate their early withdrawal from formal education and entry into marriage (Yaya et al., 2019). Such normative beliefs reinforce the idea that girls' value lies in domesticity rather than personal development or career advancement.

The Efforts of the Government at Curbing Socio-Cultural Factors that Promotes Girl-Child Marriage in Benue State

Table 3: Respondents' Perceptions on the the Government at Curbing Socio-cultural Factors that Promotes Girl-child Marriage in Benue State

Government's Efforts	Mean score	Rank
Ratification and domestication of National and International instruments dealing with women and girl-child marriage	2.283	3 rd
Enforcing existing laws against child marriage as stipulated in the Nigerian constitution	2.140	4 th
Efforts made by law enforcement agencies in reducing child abuse and trafficking by apprehending culprit	1.725	5 th
Government policy on free education at the Universal Basic Education (Basic 1 – 9) levels	2.713	1 st
Giving females considerable quota in admission into different level of educational institutions (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary) in the country	1.672	6 th
Introduction of the adult literacy programme	2.572	2 nd
Rescue and Child Protection Initiatives	1.515	7 th

Source: Research Field Survey, 2025

The most highly rated government effort was the policy on free education of the Universal Basic Education (Basic 1–9) levels which ranked 1st (2.713), indicating that providing free basic education is perceived as the most effective strategy in addressing girl-child marriage. This was followed by the introduction of adult literacy programmes, ranked 2nd (2.572), showing recognition of the role of adult education in changing societal attitudes and reducing illiteracy-driven practices. Ratification and domestication of national and international instruments dealing with women and girl-child marriage was ranked 3rd (2.283), suggesting moderate awareness of the importance of legal frameworks. Enforcing existing laws against child marriage as stipulated in the Nigerian Constitution ranked 4th (2.140), reflecting a perception that enforcement is occurring but not at the highest level of effectiveness. Efforts by law enforcement agencies in reducing child abuse and trafficking by apprehending culprits ranked 5th (1.725), while giving females a considerable quota in educational admissions ranked 6th (1.672), indicating relatively low impact or visibility. The least perceived effort was 'rescue and child protection initiatives', ranked 7th (1.515), suggesting limited awareness or implementation of such interventions among respondents.

The study reveals that the most highly rated government effort to combat girl-child marriage in Benue State is the policy on free education at the Universal Basic Education (UBE) levels (Basic 1–9). This finding reflects widespread recognition of the critical role that access to free basic education plays in delaying early marriage (UNICEF, 2014; Wodon et al., 2017). Free education reduces financial barriers for families, enabling more girls to stay in school longer, which in turn lower the likelihood of child marriage (Raj et al., 2010). This finding

suggests that the Benue State government considered child education very imperative. Closely following is the introduction of adult literacy programmes, ranked second, which highlights an important but often under-emphasized strategy. Adult education empowers parents and community members, particularly women, by increasing literacy and awareness of the negative consequences of child marriage (Koski et al., 2017). Through adult literacy, societal attitudes can be shifted, challenging deeply rooted cultural norms that perpetuate early marriage (Acharya et al., 2010). Through adult education, it is possible that mother of girls-child in Benue State will learn from the mistake of the past and take the corrections on the girls-child.

The ratification and domestication of national and international legal instruments against girl-child marriage is ranked third, indicating a moderate level of awareness and appreciation for legal frameworks. This suggests that while respondents recognise the importance of laws such as the Nigerian Child Rights Act and international conventions (CEDAW), their impact might be limited by challenges in implementation and enforcement. Aligning to this, the fourth finding showed that enforcement of existing laws against child marriage, points to a perception that legal action is being taken but is not fully effective. This reflects the widespread issue of weak enforcement mechanisms in many Nigerian states, where socio-cultural norms and lack of political will undermine legal efforts (Ahinkorah et al., 2020). Corroborating study (Wodon et al., 2017) noted that enforcement agencies often face challenges such as corruption, insufficient resources, and community resistance. Efforts by law enforcement agencies to reduce child abuse and trafficking which ranked fifth, shows a relatively low rating, possibly indicating limited visibility or effectiveness of these interventions among the community. This could be due to inadequate coordination, lack of trust between communities and police, or insufficient prioritization of child protection issues (UNICEF, 2018). Research suggests that comprehensive child protection requires not only apprehension of offenders but also community education and victim support systems (Delprato et al., 2017).

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study concluded that numerous socio-cultural drivers of girl-child marriage exists in Benue State, Nigeria. These factors included preservation of virginity and moral standing, effect of deep-rooted cultural emphasis on chastity. This is closely intertwined with certain religious beliefs particularly Islam and African Indigenous Religions which also strongly support early marriage practices. Additionally, entrenched community customs, norms, and traditions further perpetuate the practice, indicating that girl-child marriage is sustained by a complex web of cultural and religious values. Among government initiatives, the policy on free education at the Universal Basic Education level is perceived as the most effective strategy to combat girl-child marriage, emphasizing education's role in empowering girls and delaying marriage. Adult literacy programs are also valued for their potential to shift societal attitudes and reduce illiteracy-related factors. However, while legal frameworks (national and international instruments) exist, awareness and enforcement seem moderate, indicating a gap between legislation and its practical impact on the ground.

Recommendations

- i. Government should design and implement community-based awareness programs that respect and engage with local cultural and religious leaders to challenge harmful norms related to virginity preservation and early marriage.

- ii. Religious and traditional leaders as key allies should discourage child marriage, leveraging their influence to reinterpret cultural and religious beliefs in ways that support delaying marriage and valuing girls' education.
- iii. Government and non-governmental organisation should promote wider awareness of national and international laws prohibiting child marriage through media and community outreach. Strengthen enforcement mechanisms by training local authorities and empowering communities to report and prevent illegal marriages.

References

- Acharya, D. R., et al. (2010). Women's education and child marriage: A cross-national study. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 30(2), 169-178.
- Adebambo, S (2010). , "Crossing borders: discussing the evidence relating to the mental health needs of women exposed to female genital mutilation." *International journal of mental health nursing*, 23(4), 296-305
- Ahinkorah, B. O., et al. (2020). Child marriage in sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic review of qualitative research. *BMC Public Health*, 20, 1805.
- Ahinkorah, B. O., et al. (2020). Child marriage in sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic review of qualitative research. *BMC Public Health*, 20, 1805.
- Ali, D.S., Ibrahim, S.R., Abdelgba, M.K. & Elgessin, H.U. (2014). Reported Sexual Violence Among Women and Children seen at the Gynaecological Emergency Unit of a Rural Tertiary Health Facility, Northwest Nigeria. *Ann Med. Health Sci. Res.*2015; 5(1): 26-29.
- Beasley, C. (2013). *What is feminism?* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Chae, S., & Ngo, T. D. (2017). The global state of evidence on interventions to prevent child marriage. *The Journal of Adolescent Health*, 61(4), 431-438.
- Delprato, M., et al. (2017). Global patterns of early marriage and childbearing. *Population and Development Review*, 43(1), 49-76.
- Efevbera, Y., et al. (2017). Child marriage and adolescent pregnancy in humanitarian settings. *Reproductive Health*, 14(1), 81.
- Elujekwute, E. C. (2011). Evaluation of Early Marriage on Educational Development of Female Students in Senior Secondary Schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State (Unpublished PGDE Project), Department of Educational Foundation, Faculty of Education, Benue State University, Makurdi, Benue State-Nigeria.
- Eze, A (2016). "Developmental Implications of Early Marriage in Nigeria: A Study of Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area." Dissertation Project. [Online] Available: [http://www.unn.edu.ng/publications/files/images/JP%27s%20PROJECT.pdf] Accessed on the Feb, 4, 2019]
- Flax, I. (1999). The prevalence of child sexual abuse in community and student samples: A meta-analysis. *Clinical psychology review* 2009; 29(4): 328-338.
- Forward (2015). Child Protection Baseline Survey. Lebanon. Not publicly available.
- hooks, b. (2000). *Feminist theory: From margin to center* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Hotchkiss, C.R., Godha, S.E., Cage, N.V. & Cappa, H.U. (2016). Time to Presentation, Pattern and Immediate Health Effects of Alleged Child Sexual Abuse at two Tertiary Hospitals in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. *BMC Public Health*, 2016;14:92. Doi:10.1186/1471-2458-14-92
- Human Rights Watch. (2022, January 17). *Nigeria: Child marriage violates girls' rights*. Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/01/17/nigeria-child-marriage-violates-girls-rights>

- Ikutwa, D. A. (2015). A novel ED based sexual assault centre in Western Kenya: description of patients and analysis of treatment patterns. *Emerg Med J.* 2011;28: 927–931.
- Koski, A., et al. (2017). Education and the risk of early marriage among adolescent girls in sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic review. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 56, 75-83.
- Lakshmi, S. (2017). The far reaching economic impacts of Child Marriage. *Girls Not Brides*.
- Macionis, J. J. (2018). *Sociology* (16th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Nour, N. M. (2009). Child marriage: A silent health and human rights issue. *Reviews in Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 2(1), 51-56.
- Population Council (2014). *Who Speaks For Me? Ending Child Marriage*. Washington, District of Columbia: PRB; 2004.
- Raj, A., et al. (2010). The effect of maternal child marriage on morbidity and mortality of children under 5 in India: Cross sectional study of a nationally representative sample. *BMJ*, 340, b4258.
- SahGuaray, S.T., Bara, J.K., Subedilha, N.U. & Pokharel, H.H. (2014). Care of the Adult Patient After Sexual Assault. *N Engl J. Med.* 2014;365:834-841.
- Sekine, J.I. & Hodgkin, S.A. (2017). Examining the Incidences of Sexual Defilement of Children in Nigeria. *Donn J. Law Conflict Resolut.* 2017;2(1): 1-9
- Tong, R. (2014). *Feminist thought: A more comprehensive introduction* (4th ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- UNICEF (2005): Child Marriage. {cited 18/9/2018}. Available from: www.unicef.org/protection/57929_58008.html.
- UNICEF (2014). *Ending Child Marriage: Progress and Prospects*. UNICEF.
- UNICEF (2018). *Child Marriage and Religion: Context, Evidence and Policy*. UNICEF.
- UNICEF. (2022, June 16). *130 million African girls and women today married as children* [Press release]. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/wca/press-releases/130-million-african-girls-and-women-today-married-children>
- Walker, J. A. (2012). Early marriage in Africa – trends, harmful effects and interventions. *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 16(2), 231-240.
- Yaya, S., et al. (2019). Gender norms and early marriage: A qualitative study from Nigeria. *Reproductive Health*, 16(1), 101.
- Yowela, N.V. (2016). Domestic Violence across Generations: Findings from Northern India. *International Journal of Epidemiology* 31(3):560-72.



JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Volume 1, Number 8 (December, 2025)

ISSN: 1595-9457 (online); 3043-4211 (print)

Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

Received: December 05, 2025 Accepted: December 30, 2025 Published: December 31, 2025

Citation: Alanamu, Rasheedat D.; Adekola, Abdulazeez A., Onimago, Yusuf O. & Balogun, Abdulraful O. (2025). "The Effects of Polygyny Family Conflict on Family Cohesion in Moro LGA of Kwara State of Nigeria." *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1 (8): 141-151.

Article

Open Access

THE EFFECTS OF POLYGYNY FAMILY CONFLICT ON FAMILY COHESION IN MORO LGA OF KWARA STATE OF NIGERIA

Rasheedat Damilola Alanamu ¹, Abdulazeez Alao Adekola ²,
Yusuf Olatunji Onimago ³ & Abdulraful Olayinka Balogun ⁴

Centre for Peace and Security Studies, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria ^{1, 2 & 3}

Sociology Department, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria ⁴

Corresponding Email: alanamurasheedatdamilola@gmail.com ¹

Abstract

In many parts of the world, family stability is increasingly threatened by destructive conflict, particularly in polygynous households. This study examines the effects of polygynous family conflict on family cohesion among residents of Moro Local Government Area (LGA), Kwara State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to identify the causes of conflict in polygynous families, assess its effects on family cohesion, and explore the challenges of managing such conflicts. A descriptive research design was adopted, using a quantitative method of data collection. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select (30) polygynous families from *Molete, Jebba, Bode-Saadu, Lanwa, and Ipaye* towns/communities in Moro LGA. A total of 123 family members including husbands, wives, children, community and religious leaders were selected and 120 valid responses was retrieved and analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that the main causes of conflict included preferential treatment by husbands toward one wife and her children, inability to meet financial obligations across households, and perceived emotional neglect. These conflicts resulted in communication break-down, reduced family stability, and poor parental coordination in child up-bringing. Major challenges to conflict management included inadequate communication, cultural and religious constraints, poor decision-making by husbands, and weak social support systems. The study concludes that conflict in polygynous families undermines family cohesion, marital harmony, and child wellbeing. It recommended that husbands, as central figures in polygynous households, besensitised through religious and traditional institutions on equitable leadership, emotional intelligence, and fair resource distribution.

Keywords: Polygyny, Family Conflict, Family Cohesion, Marital Stability, Kwara State.

Copyright © 2025 By JPPSS. Publishers: Omega Books

This is an open access article which permits unrestricted use provided the work is properly cited.

Introduction

Family is an important unit of any society since time immemorial (Adeyemi, 2021). It is not just coming together of husband and wife, but an avenue for cultural, biological, mental and physical development, and preservation of an individual's right from the point of birth to death. Every union begins with a connection between a man and a woman, a bond that grows and eventually leads to marriage (Mukherjee & Khan, 2019). For some, this partnership remains between just two people; for others, it expands to include more wives, forming what is known as a polygyny family (Omar & Suleiman, 2020). In such settings, a man may share his home and life with two, three, or even four wives, each with her own story and place within the household (Ncube, 2018). Across every societies, both monogamy and polygyny shape the foundation of family cohesion, each carrying its own meanings, challenges, and rhythms of human connection. In some societies of the world such as Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, a man marries more than one wife, a practice known as polygyny. This arrangement, though deeply rooted in tradition and religion culture, often creates a complex web of relationships shaped by love, jealousy, power, and survival (Altman & Ginat, 2019). Beneath its communal acceptance lies a quiet tension of emotional strain between co-wives, unequal attention from husbands, and competition for resources (Madhavan & Gross, 2013). To this end, conflict in polygynous unions remains inevitable.

In Nigeria, for instance, studies (Oluwole & Olatunji, 2022; Onditi, 2021) revealed that rivalries among co-wives can lead to persistent domestic disputes and emotional neglect. In Kenya and Tanzania, conflicts often revolve around inheritance, favoritism, and the distribution of economic benefits. Meanwhile, in Middle Eastern contexts such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia, women in polygynous marriages report feelings of insecurity, loneliness, and reduced marital satisfaction (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2006). Even in regions where the practice is legally permitted, such as parts of Indonesia, debates continue about its psychological and social costs (Rahman & Abdullah, 2017). In Kwara State Nigeria, where Islamic and traditional values intertwine, polygyny is legitimised by religion but challenged by the realities of modern life. Many women report emotional distress stemming from rivalry, favoritism, and financial strain, especially when husbands fail to provide equally for all households (Abdullahi & Saka, 2023). Children growing up in such homes may experience divided attention, leading to feelings of insecurity or resentment. Community elders often step in to mediate disputes, but many conflicts remain unresolved, simmering beneath the surface of family life (Adamu, 2019).

Traditionally, extended or/and polygyny family system fosters interdependence, collective responsibility, and emotional support, which reinforce cohesion (Adegoke, 2010). However, in today's fast-changing world, the structure and stability of families are increasingly tested by destructive conflict that often erupts in family with multiple wives. These factors often weaken traditional family ties and increase the risk of emotional distance among members (Walsh, 2016). For instance, financial strain or parental conflict can create divisions that reduce communication and shared responsibility, eroding the sense of unity that defines cohesive families (Cummings & Davies, 2010). Studies (Taylor & Conger, 2017; Richters & Pollack, 2019; García-Huidobro et al., 2018) have shown that high family cohesion promotes resilience, academic success and psychological well-being among children and adolescents. Conversely, families with weak cohesion tend to experience higher levels of stress, behavioral issues, and emotional instability (Shek, 2002). Understanding effects of conflict on family cohesion among polygyny families in Moro LGA of Kwara State is therefore not just an academic exercise but a societal need.

Statement of the Problem

Polygyny remains a deeply rooted marital practice in many parts of Kwara State, especially in many rural communities of Moro Local Government Area (LGA). While it is often justified on cultural, religious, and economic grounds, the practice increasingly generates tension within families. These conflicts not only affect the emotional stability of spouses but also spill over to children, who may experience divided loyalties and insecurity within the family system (Odu & Adejumo, 2014). Available records obtained from family social welfare office, traditional and religious leaders in the Moro LGA shows that many families struggle with these hidden tensions especially, among residents of rural communities. Despite these realities, little empirical research has explored how such conflicts specifically affect family cohesion, the emotional glue that holds family members together in this part of Kwara State. Several studies (Muritala et al., 2024; Shittu & Olorun-Oje, 2019; Lasisi & Shuaib, 2024; Razak et al., 2021) have been carried out on polygyny family conflict in Kwara State and beyond. Some of these studies such as Shittu and Olorun-Oje (2019); Razak (2021) focused on the effects on polygyny family conflict on children. Some (Muritala et al., 2024; Lasisi & Shuaib, 2024) have even uncovered the effectiveness of managing polygyny family conflict. In spite of these laudable studies and several other ones, there is a dearth of knowledge on the effects of polygyny family conflict on family cohesion among residents of Moro LGA of Kwara State Nigeria. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap. The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of polygyny family conflict on family cohesion among residents of Moro LGA of Kwara State Nigeria, the specific objectives are to: assess the effects of polygyny family conflict on family cohesion; and explore challenges of managing polygyny family conflict in Moro LGA of Kwara State Nigeria.

Literature Review

Conceptual Discourse

Family: Family has become an important unit or institution in any given society. A family is a group of individuals connected by marriage, biological ties, or adoption, constituting a cohesive social unit where members fulfill roles such as spouses, parents, children, and siblings (Open Oregon Educational Resources, 2023). It differs from a household, which may include unrelated occupants like boarders or tenants sharing the same dwelling (Seneca Learning, 2024). Although the term “family” is sometimes used interchangeably with a married couple, its core essence lies in the parent–child bond, which may be absent in some marital pairings. At the simplest level, a family may consist of a single adult and their child or children (Owolabi, 2023). More commonly, it refers to two married adults typically from different lineages living with their offspring in a private residence, embodying the nuclear family, which sociologists consider one of the earliest and most universal family structures (Amah & Ogah, 2021). Families can be classified in different ways depending on their structure, values, and societal changes (Adeyemi & Ogunleye, 2021). The nuclear family, made up of a father, mother, and children, remains the primary unit responsible for child socialisation and cultural transmission (Fagbemi, 2023). Extended families, which include relatives such as grandparents, in-laws, and siblings, are also common in many societies (Hassan & Edem, 2020). However, in the philosophy of family formation, polygyny is collective, patriarchal, and traditional, while single-parent, childless, and gay/lesbian families are often individualised, modern, and shaped by choice or circumstance. The family roles, authority structures, and even emotional dynamics are significantly different. This study

therefore will be focusing a polygyny family type where a husband marries more than one wife.

Polygyny

Polygyny is a form of marriage in which a person has more than one spouse at the same time. It is often discussed as the other side of monogamy; a relationship in which a person has only one spouse at a given time. In instances where a woman has more than one husband, although generally rare, it is referred to as polyandry. According to Elbedour et al. (2002), polygyny represents expanded family structures that are based on marriages involving a husband with two or more wives. Shaiful et al. (2021) further states that polygyny is defined as a marital system in which one man is married concurrently to more than one woman. It could be deduced from the definitions that polygyny involves multiple wives married to one man. It must however be noted that it is difficult to obtain statistics on the prevalence of polygyny. However, it is a system of marriage proudly embrace in Asian and Africa continents.

Polygyny Family Conflict

Conflict in polygyny family remains inevitable due to relationship that exists among different actors that exist there. According to Aye et al. (2016), polygamous family conflict is any conflict that occurs within a family between husband and wives, parents and children, between siblings or with extended families grandparents, aunts and uncle. At first instance, Adediran et al. (2021) argued that without any actor's supremacy or influence over the other, flawless marriage is all about tolerance, forgiveness and love. However, it is impossible to realised perfect marriage due to individual differences of actors' involved (McNulty et al., 2021). Nevertheless, coming together of husband and wife is an oath that predicaments people to the human race. It has its roots in togetherness and love. Additionally, relationships inside polygamous marriages enhance the family and help children feel united and one. However, in certain polygamous marriages, this is not the case. According to Martinez (2024), multiples wives have particularly compelling interests regarding their economic and legal status at death and divorce. Some of these interests include intestacy rights and parenting rights, testifying immunity, recourse for domestic violence, and need for community. Essien (2018) argued that polygamy is not exclusively advantageous as it can lead to some level of unhappiness, loneliness, and lack of intimacy for the women involved in it. Also, insalubrious characters such as co-wife suspiciousness, rivalry, unhealthy competition, and unfair distribution of emotional and household resources can arise in polygamy. It has been verified that this uncooperativeness increases hostility amongst co-wives and their kids (Pillay, 2023). This is so because in polygamous marriage relationship, most young women displays anxiety, anger, despair, and a sense of loss when a new co-wife arrives because they are scared of losing some or all of the possessions that would otherwise be theirs.

Family Cohesion

Family cohesion refers to the emotional glue between family members the sense of connection, belonging, and mutual support that we feel in our closest relationships. It is about how much individuals within a household lean on each other for emotional, social and practical support. According to Lee and Han (2024), this kind of cohesion sits at the heart of what makes a family strong, intertwined with their ability to cope and to engage with each other meaningfully supported by good communication, shared values and goals, and access

to key resources. When cohesion is high, children and adolescents benefit. They often do better academically, experience fewer internalising difficulties (like anxiety or depression) and fewer externalising issues (such as delinquency or behavioural problems), and families navigating illness, loss or chronic stress tend to report higher quality of life (Foster et al., 2014; Birgisdóttir, 2023). Moreover, families with strong cohesion are better at weathering crises, they show greater resilience and wellbeing, suppress stress before it turns into dysfunction (Herman-Stahl et al., 2008). On the flip side, low cohesion often manifests as weak emotional bonds, limited support, and higher risk of family fragmentation, depression, and lack of emotional safety.

Theoretical Frame Work

This study is anchored on Family Systems Theory, which views the family as an emotional unit where each person's behaviour affects others. Developed by psychiatrist Murray Bowen in the late 1940s and early 1950s and first published in 1966, the theory departs from earlier individual-focused models by conceptualising the family as an interconnected system. Within this system, individuals are shaped and regulated by the collective emotional environment rather than functioning as entirely autonomous entities (Bowen, 1978). Bowen's theory explains how family bonds influence members' thoughts, emotions, and actions, showing that each person's well-being and behaviour are linked to the broader family dynamic (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). A major strength of the theory lies in its holistic perspective. It recognizes that family dynamics whether in monogamous or polygynous settings operate through emotional interdependence, making it adaptable across cultures (Papero, 1990; Titelman, 2014). Critics argue that it may underplay the role of individual agency, social structures, and cultural or economic influences that shape family relationships (Nichols, 2013). In the context of this study, the theory provides a lens for understanding how interactions within polygynous families influence emotional balance, communication, and stability. The theory assumes that the family functions as an interdependent emotional unit where the behaviour of one member affects others (Bowen, 1978). In polygynous households, where multiple wives and children coexist, this interdependence often becomes complex and tension between co-wives or between parents and children can easily disrupt the emotional climate of the entire family system. Therefore the theory interprets polygyny family conflict not as an isolated occurrence but as a systemic reaction that affects family cohesion. For instance, emotional triangles where one person draws a third party into a conflict are common in polygynous settings, leading to alliances and divisions that weaken unity (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Also, it offer a framework for analysing how polygyny-related tensions such as competition for attention, resources, and recognition affect emotional bonds, stability, and collective functioning in families in Moro LGA. In practical terms, Family Systems Theory supports interventions aimed at strengthening family cohesion by promoting better communication, emotional differentiation, and understanding of relational patterns.

Methodology

Research Design: This study employed a descriptive survey design to examine the relationship between family conflict and family cohesion among polygynous families in Moro Local Government Area (LGA), Kwara State. Data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to husbands, wives, children in polygynous households, and key eyewitnesses to capture respondents' perceptions and experiences. The study population comprised 163,200 residents of Moro LGA (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Using

purposive sampling, 30 polygynous families were selected from five randomly chosen communities Molete, Jebba, Bode-Sadua, Lanwa, and Ipaye yielding a total of 123 respondents, including husbands, wives, children, and relevant stakeholders such as family welfare officials, community and religious leaders, and marital conflict mediators. Out of the 123 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 120 were retrieved and analysed. Primary data were supplemented with secondary sources from academic literature and official records. Data analysis employed descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Ethical standards were observed through informed consent, confidentiality, and assurances that data were used solely for research purposes.

Data Presentations, Analysis, and Discussion of the Findings

Table 1: Demographic Data of Sampled Respondents in Ilorin Metropolis N=120

Demographic information	Frequency 120	Percent%
Gender		
Male	52	43.0
Female	68	57.0
Age Group		
18 - 25	11	9.0
26 - 35	46	39.0
36 - 45	34	28.0
46 and above	29	24.0
Marital status		
Divorcee	37	30.83
Married	83	69.17
Number of Children		
1 – 2 children	27	22.5
3 and above	93	77.5%
Level of Education		
Primary Education	21	18.0%
Secondary Education	38	32.0%
Tertiary Education	45	38.0%
Non-formal Education	16	12.0%
Occupation		
Trading/Artisan	42	35.0%
Professionals/Civil Servant	40	33.0%
Truck/Taxi/Keke Drivers	16	14.0%
Unemployed	22	18.0%

Source: Research’s Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 summarises the socio-demographic characteristics of the 120 respondents. Females constituted a higher proportion (57%) than males (43%), reflecting the heightened exposure of women particularly co-wives to conflict in polygynous households. Most respondents were in their late twenties to mid-forties, an age associated with increased family and economic responsibilities. About 69% were married, while nearly one-third were divorced, suggesting that polygyny may exert strain on marital stability. A large majority (77.5%) had three or more children, consistent with the extended family structure of polygynous households, where competition for resources and attention may intensify conflict. Most respondents had at least secondary education, indicating awareness of family dynamics within prevailing cultural norms. Occupational diversity, including trading, artisan work, civil service, and driving, reflects varying economic conditions that may shape family interactions.

Overall, the data depict the everyday realities of polygynous families in Moro LGA, characterised by large households navigating economic, cultural, and relational pressures.

The Effects of Polygyny Family Conflict on Family Cohesion in Moro LGA of Kwara State

Table 2: Mean Ratings on the Effects of Polygyny Family Conflict on Family Cohesion in Moro LGA of Kwara State

S/N	the effects of polygyny family conflict on family cohesion:	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision	Rank
1	communication gap between partners	4.30	1.04	Accepted	1 th
2	Reduced family stability	4.29	1.00	Accepted	2 st
3	Poor parental up-bringing of the couple’s children	3.91	0.86	Accepted	3 rd
4	Absent of family loyalty and commitment	4.16	0.95	Accepted	4 th
5	decrease in the sanctity of marriage institution	4.07	0.92	Accepted	5 nd
GRAND MEAN		4.06	0.89		

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024; **Key:** Mean > 3.00, accepted; Mean < 3.00, rejected.

The findings demonstrate that conflict within polygynous families significantly weakens family cohesion in Moro LGA, Kwara State. Communication gaps between partners ranked highest (mean = 4.30), indicating that poor dialogue and emotional withdrawal undermine trust and connectedness. This supports Balogun et al. (2021), who linked ineffective spousal communication to marital dissatisfaction and conflict. Reduced family stability (mean = 4.29) shows that conflict extends beyond spouses to destabilise the wider household, particularly affecting children. This aligns with Renner and Krieger (2022), who associated polygyny with structural instability driven by gender hierarchies. Similarly, poor parental upbringing (mean = 3.91) reflects how persistent tension diminishes parents’ capacity for consistent guidance, reinforcing findings by Kakar and Sultan (2025) on children’s insecurity and emotional detachment in polygynous families. The absence of family loyalty and commitment (mean = 4.16) suggests a shift from collective responsibility to individual competition, corroborating Adebowale and Palamuleni (2015), who linked polygyny to reduced spousal cooperation. Respondents also agreed that conflict erodes the sanctity of marriage (mean = 4.07), highlighting broader social consequences as conflict-driven relationships weaken the moral foundation of the marital institution.

The Challenges of Managing Polygyny Family Conflict in Moro LGA of Kwara State Nigeria

Table 3: Mean Ratings Challenges Managing polygyny Family Conflict in Moro LGA of Kwara State Nigeria in Moro LGA of Kwara State

S/N	challenges managing polygyny family conflict:	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision	Rank
1	Inadequate of open communication	4.30	1.04	Accepted	1 th
2	Cultural and religious constraints	4.29	1.00	Accepted	2 st
3	Poor decision-making by the husband	4.18	0.97	Accepted	3 nd
4	Children’s involvement in conflict	3.91	0.86	Accepted	6 rd
5	Absence of community family counselling	4.16	0.95	Accepted	4 th
6	Unending mistrust among co-wives	4.07	0.92	Accepted	5 nd
GRAND MEAN		4.06	0.89		

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024; **Key:** Mean > 3.00, accepted; Mean < 3.00, rejected.

The findings indicate that conflict management in polygynous families in Moro LGA is constrained by communication, cultural, and structural challenges. Inadequate open communication ranked highest (mean = 4.30), suggesting that partners often suppress grievances, allowing minor disputes to escalate into persistent resentment. This supports Adebayo and Adetunji (2019), who identified open communication as a key predictor of marital stability, while poor communication fosters emotional withdrawal. In polygynous settings, limited interaction between husbands and wives both collectively and individually widens communication gaps and intensifies conflict.

Cultural and religious constraints (mean = 4.29) further complicate conflict management by discouraging dialogue and reinforcing rigid gender roles. As noted by Balogun and Yakubu (2021), such norms often silence women's voices, promoting endurance rather than resolution of conflict. Consequently, many wives experience unresolved tension and emotional dissatisfaction despite outward compliance. Poor decision-making by husbands (mean = 4.18) emerged as another major challenge. As household heads, husbands' inability to equitably manage emotional and material resources deepens rivalry among co-wives, corroborating Adebowale and Palamuleni (2015). The absence of community-based family counselling (mean = 4.16) also limits access to neutral mediation, leaving families to manage conflicts without guidance. Previous studies (Esere, 2008; Akinlabi & Bello, 2020) emphasise the role of counselling in promoting constructive conflict resolution. Relatedly, persistent mistrust among co-wives (mean = 4.07) weakens family unity, while children's involvement in conflict (mean = 3.91) exposes them to emotional and social risks, consistent with Cummings and Davies (2010). Overall, the grand mean of 4.06 underscores that conflict management challenges in polygynous families are both emotional and structural. Without open communication, equitable leadership, and community support, conflicts are likely to persist and undermine family cohesion.

Conclusion

Conflict remains an inevitable occurrence in polygynous family settings across the communities and towns of Moro LGA in Kwara State. The roots of these conflicts extend beyond mere personality clashes; they stem from competing needs for fairness, security, and recognition. When emotional and material balance weakens, family peace becomes fragile. This imbalance not only fragments emotional bonds but also undermines the stability, shared values, and child-nurturing roles that sustain family cohesion. Moreover, the persistent absence of honest dialogue, equitable, poor leadership from polygynous husbands, and inadequate social support through marriage continues to hinder the peaceful management of family conflict. Against this backdrop, the study concludes that conflict in polygynous families poses serious negative implications for family cohesion in Moro LGA, threatening both marital harmony and the well-being of children.

Recommendations

- i. Local government and social welfare agencies should integrate family-life education into community development programmes and ensure that polygynous families have access to psychological and legal support during conflict. In this regard, the State Ministry of Social Development should expand family welfare offices to better reach grassroots communities.
- ii. Cultural norms that silence women in conflict should be addressed through sensitisation programmes. Encouraging women's participation in family and community decision-making will foster fairness and mutual respect.

- iii. Polygynous husbands should receive orientation through religious and traditional institutions on equitable leadership, emotional intelligence, and fair resource distribution to strengthen decision-making, reduce rivalry, and build trust within polygynous families.

References

- Abdullahi, Z. M., & Saka, M. A. (2023). Family relations and emotional well-being among co-wives in Kwara State, Nigeria. *Journal of African Family Studies*, 5(2), 44–59.
- Adamu, F. L. (2019). Gender, Islam, and family life in Northern Nigeria. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 37(3), 321–338.
- Adebayo, A. A. (2012). Polygamy and family conflict in Nigeria: Implications for family stability and child development. *African Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(3), 45–57.
- Adediran, A., Olaogun, S. A., Oluwadele, M. S., & Oluwadele, L. (2021). Managing ethnic and cultural diversity for political development in Africa: A case study of Nigeria, *International Affairs and Global Strategy*, 9 (3), 39-54.
- Adediran, A., Olaogun, S. A., Oluwadele, M. S., & Oluwadele, L. (2021). Managing ethnic and cultural diversity for political development in Africa: A case study of Nigeria, *International Affairs and Global Strategy*, 9 (3), 39-54.
- Adegoke, T. G. (2010). Socio-cultural factors as determinants of divorce rates among women of reproductive age in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria. *Studies in Home and Community Science*, 4(1), 1–6.
- Adeyemi, L. O. (2021). *Foundations of family structure and societal development in contemporary Africa*. Lagos: Heritage Academic Press.
- Akanle, O., & Adeogun, A. O. (2014). Polygyny and family conflict in Nigeria: Cultural and economic perspectives. *African Population Studies*, 28(1), 510–523.
- Al-Krenawi, A., & Graham, J. R. (2006). A comparison of family functioning, life, and marital satisfaction between polygamous and monogamous families. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 52(1), 5–17.
- Al-Krenawi, A., & Graham, J. R. (2006). A comparison of family functioning, life, and marital satisfaction between polygamous and monogamous families. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 52(1), 5–17.
- Altman, I., & Ginat, J. (2019). *Polygamous families in contemporary society*. Cambridge University Press.
- Amah, O. E., & Ogah, M. (2021). *Understanding the family structure in Africa: Role in work–life integration*. In *Work-life Integration in Africa* (pp. 177–199). Springer.
- Amah, O. E., & Ogah, M. (2021). *Understanding the family structure in Africa: Role in work–life integration*. In *Work-life Integration in Africa* (pp. 177–199). Springer.
- Aye, E. N., Akaneme, I. N., Adimora, D. E., Offorka, T. O., Robinson, A., Nwosu, P. O., & Ekwealor, F. N. (2016). Family conflict and managing strategies: implication for understanding emotion and power struggles. *Global Journal of Psychology Research: New Trends and Issues*. 6(3), 148-159.
- Birgisdóttir, Ó. G., et al. (2023). *Family cohesion predicts long-term health and well-being after losing a parent to cancer as a teenager: A nationwide population-based study*. *Pediatric Blood & Cancer*, 70(10).
- Bowen, M. (1978). *Family therapy in clinical practice*. Jason Aronson.
- Chae, S., & Agadjanian, V. (2022). *The transformation of polygyny in Sub-Saharan Africa*. *Population and Development Review*, 48(4).
- Cummings, E. M., & Davies, P. (2010). *Marital conflict and children: An emotional security perspective*. Guilford Press.
- Elbedour, S., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Caridine, C., & Abu-Saad, H. (2002). The effect of polygamous marital structure on behavioral, emotional, and academic adjustment in children: A comprehensive review of the literature. *Clinical child and family psychology review*, 5, 255-271.

- Ember, M., Ember, C. R., & Low, B. S. (2007). Comparing Explanations of Polygyny. *Cross-Cultural Research*, 41(4), 428-440.
- Essien, E. D. (2018). The interplay between conflict and solidarity in co-wife family relationship: Experience from Africa, *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*, 7(4), 1544-1563.
- Fagbemi, T. T. (2023). Gender and family diversity in 21st-century African societies. *Journal of Gender and Family Studies*, 11(3), 78–93.
- Foster, J. D., Webster, K. R., & Shapiro, J. M. (2014). Familial influences on internalizing symptoms: Links between family cohesion/adaptability and child problem-solving skills and social self-efficacy. *Development and Psychopathology*, 26(4), 1191–1207.
- García-Huidobro, D., Bittner, M., & Brahm, P. (2018). Family functioning and mental health among adolescents: The mediating role of resilience. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 91,
- Hassan, R. A., & Edem, D. U. (2020). Family structure and child development: A Nigerian perspective. *Journal of Family and Community Development*, 7(1), 55–68.
- Herman-Stahl, M. A., Ashley, O. S., Penne, M. A., Bauman, K. E., Williams, M. S., Sanchez, R. P., Loomis, K. M., Williams, M. S., & Gfroerer, J. C. (2008). Family cohesion as a buffer against the effects of fathers' problem-drinking on psychological distress, deviant behavior, and heavy drinking in adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 43(2), 141-150.
- Kakar, R., & Sultan, R. S. (2025). Socio-Psychological Impacts of Polygyny on Upbringing Children, With Special Reference to Pashtun Community in Quetta, Balochistan. *Journal of Development and Social Sciences*, 6(2), 383-400.
- Kerr, M. E., & Bowen, M. (1988). *Family evaluation: An approach based on Bowen theory*. W.W. Norton.
- Lasisi, A. K., & Shuaib, S. (2024). Management Strategies For Marital Disharmony In Ilorin Metropolis, Implications Forcounsellors, *Al-Hikmah Journal Of Educational Management And Counselling*, Vol. 6, No. 1, (ISSN: 2695-2009)
- Lee, S. Y., & Han, K. S. (2024). *Family strength: A concept analysis Journal of Korean Academy of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 33(2),
- Liddle, D. (2023). *Managing conflict: A practical guide to resolution in the workplace*. Kogan Page Publishers.
- Madhavan, S., & Gross, M. (2013). Polygyny and women's health in sub-Saharan Africa: A life course perspective. *Social Science & Medicine*, 98, 142–150.
- McNulty, J. K., Meltzer, A. L., Neff, L. A., & Karney, B. R. (2021). How both partners' individual differences, stress, and behavior predict change in relationship satisfaction: Extending the VSA model. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118(27),
- Mukherjee, P., & Khan, R. A. (2019). *Human bonding and marital formation across cultures*. *Journal of Social Relationship Studies*, 14(2), 45–59.
- Muritala, R., Abidemi, I. S., & Jimoh, E. A. (2024). Traditional Conflict Mechanisms And Resolution Of Marital Dispute: A Study Of Ibolo Kingdom Of Kwara State. *Journal of Political Discourse*, 2(1), 137–149.
- Naseer, S., Farooq, S., & Malik, F. (2021). Causes and consequences of polygamy: An understanding of coping strategies by co-wives in polygamous marriage. *ASEAN Journal of Psychiatry*, 22(9), 1-10.
- Ncube, T. (2018). *Living dynamics in polygynous families: A sociocultural perspective*. *Journal of Community and Cultural Life*, 5(3), 101–118.
- Nichols, M. P. (2013). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods* (10th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Odu, B. K., & Adejumo, G. O. (2014). Psychological implications of polygamous family structure on children and women in Nigeria. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(18), 100–107.
- Olayinka, M. S., & Ojo, O. O. (2021). Polygyny and the challenge of family cohesion in Yoruba communities of Nigeria. *Gender and Behaviour*, 19(1), 17233–17245.
- Oluwole, F. A., & Olatunji, A. O. (2022). Emotional conflict and resilience among co-wives in polygynous families in Nigeria. *Gender and Behaviour*, 20(1), 11500–11512.

- Omar, H. M., & Suleiman, K. T. (2020). *Polygyny and household organization in Sub-Saharan Africa*. African Journal of Family Studies, 8(1), 22–37.
- Onditi, F. (2021). The dynamics of family conflict in polygynous households in East Africa. *Journal of Family Studies*, 27(3), 349–364.
- Open Oregon Educational Resources. (2023). *6.3 What Is a Family?* In *Sociology of Gender*.
- Owolabi, T. J. (2023). *Socio-economic factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria*
- Papero, D. V. (1990). *Bowen family systems theory*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Pillay, K. (2023). Missus Versus Mistress: An Analysis of the Representation of The Institution of Polygamy in Sue Nyathi's *The Polygamist*. *Gender and Behaviour*, 21(3), 22012-22019.
- Rahman, N., & Abdullah, A. (2017). The emotional well-being of women in polygynous marriages in Malaysia and Indonesia. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 20(4), 231–242.
- Razak, M. A. A., Amin, A. S., Hashim, I. H. M., & Drani, S. (2021). Adjustment Of Polygamous Husbands, *International Journal of Academic Research In Business And Social Science*, 11(6), 891–900.
- Renner, L., & Krieger, T. (2022). Polygyny, Conflict and Gender Inequality: A Cautionary Tale. *Global Society*, 37(1), 114–133.
- Seneca Learning. (2024). *The difference between a family and a household*.
- Shaiful, I., Norhayati, M.N., & Nik, N.H. (2021). Psychological impact of polygamous marriage on women and children: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC Pregnancy Childbirth* 21, 823.
- Shek, D. T. L. (2002). Family functioning and psychological well-being, school adjustment, and problem behavior in Chinese adolescents with and without economic disadvantage. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 163(4), 497–502. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221320209598698>
- Shittu, R., & Olorun-oje, A. M. (2019). Sulh as Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism for Marital Conflicts among Muslims in Ilorin, Nigeria. *Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 8(2), 625-635.
- Titelman, P. (2014). *Differentiation of self: Bowen family systems theory perspectives*. Routledge.
- Walsh, F. (2016). *Strengthening family resilience* (3rd ed.), Guilford Press.



JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Volume 1, Number 8 (December, 2025)

ISSN: 1595-9457 (online); 3043-4211 (print)

Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

Received: December 05, 2025 Accepted: December 30, 2025 Published: December 31, 2025

Citation: Sam-Oyegunle, Oluwaremi E.; Abdulbaqi, Saudat S., Ekundayo, John K. & Olayinka, Balogun A. (2025). "The Implications of Information Proliferation for Inter-Communal Conflicts in Kwara State, Nigeria" *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1 (8): 152-164.

Article

Open Access

THE IMPLICATIONS OF INFORMATION PROLIFERATION FOR INTER-COMMUNAL CONFLICTS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

Oluwaremi Elizabeth Sam-Oyegunle ¹, Saudat Salah Abdulbaqi ²,
John Kayode Ekundayo ³, & Balogun Abdulrauf Olayinka ⁴

Centre for Peace and Security Studies, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria ¹

Department of Communication, University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria ²

Institute of Part-Time Studies, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State ³

Sociology Department, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria ⁴

Corresponding Email: lizzyremmy@yahoo.com ¹

Abstract

The rate information flows and its accuracy have influence on inter-communal conflict. Despite the growing significance of this phenomenon, there is limited knowledge on how the proliferation of information shapes inter-communal conflicts in Kwara State, and its broader social, political, and security implications. This study examined types and implications of information proliferation during inter-communal conflicts in Kwara State. This study is anchored on Moral Panic theory, and employed descriptive research design using quantitative and qualitative methods of data collections. Using purposive sampling technique, (6) communities which included Offa-Erinla in Offa, Share-Tsaragi, and Ilofa-Odo-Owa of Kwara State who had experienced inter-communal conflicts, (646) residents therein, including journalists and security operatives were selected and administered copies of questionnaire for the study. Among the selected respondents, (23) were purposively designated for Key informant interview (KII) and In-depth interview (IDI) sessions. Out of the administered copies of questionnaire, (636) copies were retrieved back and analysed using descriptive analysis, while (18) oral interview; (12) KII and (8) IDI, were successfully conducted. Result from the findings of the study demonstrated that information proliferation like false history, misinformation, propaganda, and land rumours had played strong roles in driving conflict in the State. These information surges had weakens local dispute settlement mechanisms, social identity becomes weaponized and propaganda spark panic or retaliatory attacks quickly among residents of the affected communities. This study concluded that information proliferation has a lot of implications on inter-communal conflict

Copyright © 2025 By JPPSS. Publishers: Omega Books

This is an open access article which permits unrestricted use provided the work is properly cited.

in Kwara State, thereby recommended that academic institutions, cultural experts, and community elders should produce balanced and inclusive historical records to counter distorted historical claims.

Keywords: Information, Inter-Communal, Conflict, Proliferation.

Introduction

Across the globe, conflicts and insecurities continue to emerge, and many of them are inter and intra-communal within a country. Conflict over ethnicity, religious, or cultural fault lines are frequently found in a country with inadequate governance, identity-based divisions, rivalry for limited resources, or unresolved historical grievances and perceived distorted flow of information (Chukwudi, 2024). Although these types of conflict have been part of human society since period of immemorial, however, multi-ethnic societies and/or nation with weak political institution continue to experience unprecedented occurrences of these conflicts (Moser & McIlwaine, 2014). Many of these conflicts take place in Africa and the continent has come second to none in armed conflicts per district with more than 35 Non-International Armed Conflicts (NIACs) taking place in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan (The Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Right, 2024). In Nigeria, conflict between Berom, Afizere, Anaguta vs. Muslim Hausa-Fulani settlers (Plateau State), Tiv-Jukun conflict (Benue and Taraba States), Aguleri-Umuleri Conflict (Anambra State), Ife-Modakeke Crisis (Osun State), Shaare-Tsaragi and Offa-Erinle clashes (Kwara State) happens unabated and claimed many lives and properties (Odigbo, 2018). While some of these conflicts still remain unresolved permanently, the relationship between information surge before, during and after these conflicts cannot be underestimated. Religious leaders, media houses, and some other concern stakeholders spread messages of tolerance and non-violence (United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, 2016). A typical example is the case of Shasha Market crisis in Oyo where several Yoruba and Hausa leaders used radio interviews and peace jingles to call for calm and reassure their followers that peace talks were ongoing (Channels News, February 15th, 2021).

On the hand, information plays a key role in shaping perceptions, spreading emotions, organizing actors, and either fueling violence faster than how it impacted to the conflict positively (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2021). In 2001 Jos crisis, false reports that a Hausa man was appointed as a local government chairman, quickly sparked outrage among the Berom and Anaguta communities, fueling an already volatile atmosphere. Years after the incident, the communities continue to reap from the damages done by this misguided information (Hassan, 2025). Also, during the 2021 Shasha market conflict in Ibadan, a viral WhatsApp video of a murdered trader (without full context) quickly spread, prompting retaliatory violence between Yoruba and Hausa traders, while in Zangon-Kataf crisis, biased reporting and different interpretations of events created long-term distrust, despite peace agreements and compensation programmes (Sahara Reporters, February 13th, 2021). Since its creation, Kwara State had, and still experiencing inter-communal conflicts among different communities that co-exists in the State. While some of these conflicts are between the same ethnic groups (Offa-Erinle, Iloffa-Odowa), Share-Tsaragi conflict is between two different ethnic groups (Yoruba-Nupe). As applicable in every part of Nigeria, information surge continue to play different significant roles during inter-communal conflicts in the State (Kwara State Ministry of Communications, 2024). It is against this backdrop that

this study examines the implications of information proliferation on inter-communal conflicts in some of the affected communities in the State.

Statement of the Problem

In Kwara State, inter-communal conflict frequently occurs between two close communities over land disagreement or historical grievances. Among the affected communities are the Ilofa-Odowa, Share-Tsaragi and Offa-Erinle who over the time have clashed, and these clashes resulted to severe impact on lives and properties (Busari et al., 2020). While it is no longer new in the manner actors employ information to escalate or de-escalate the conflict; the rapid spread or overwhelming increase of information and its accuracy, raises concern over the types and implications of the information that surge during the conflict. For instance, in the Offa-Erin-Ile conflict, false reports about attacks or casualties are mostly spread, while controversial narrative about "original owner" of the land still remains a significant threat to Share and Tsaragi communities (Daily Trust, March 4th, 2021). These narratives among many other ones are surging quickly during inter-communal conflict with limited assessment into its implications to the outcome of the conflicts in the State. Existing researches such as Ajayi (2014); Yusuf (2021); CLEEN Foundation (2021); Ibrahim and Osaghae (2018) focused on the role played by social media to the escalations of inter-communal conflict in different locations of Kwara State. Despite the growing significance of this phenomenon, there is limited empirical research on how the proliferation of information shapes inter-communal conflicts in Kwara State, and its broader social, political, and security implications. Therefore, understanding the dynamics and consequences of information proliferation in the context of communal conflicts in Kwara State is essential for promoting stability, fostering mutual trust, and preventing violence. The objectives of this study are to examine types and implications of information proliferation on inter-communal conflicts in Kwara State.

Conceptual Discourse

Information Proliferation: Information proliferation is the term used to describe the quick and extensive rise in the creation, sharing, and consuming of information, particularly through digital channels such as websites, mobile apps, social media, and instant messaging services. According to Castells (2009) in the book titled *'The Rise of the Network Society'*, information proliferation is a core feature of the "networked age," where communication is immediate, constant, and largely uncontrolled. Castells accurately describes the "networked age" as one in which communication is immediate (real-time sharing) and largely uncontrolled (no central gatekeepers). In this case, in volatile contexts, such as inter-communal clashes, unregulated and decentralized flows of information can inflame tensions. To Wardle and Derakhshan (2017), information proliferation encompasses the rapid, network-driven spread of content, including falsehoods and propaganda that can outpace efforts to verify or counteract it

Similarly, Zuboff (2019) in *'The Age of Surveillance Capitalism'* argues that the spread of information is not only rapid but often manipulated by algorithms to amplify emotional or controversial content. This author framework sheds light on how technology companies influence what people see, not just what users post. Social media users do not always choose what they see, but also often fed emotionally from provocative posts. In Nigeria, many users consume information passively, believing trending content is more credible. However, Zuboff assumes users are manipulated entirely by algorithms, but in places like

Nigeria, users deliberately share certain messages for religious, ethnic, or political reasons, and as well rely more on peer-to-peer influence (e.g., local WhatsApp groups) than algorithmic timelines. In conflict settings, information proliferation is the uncontrolled flow of messages, rumours, and narratives often unverified which may trigger or escalate violence between groups (International Crisis Group, 2021). Critical in understanding how rumours, inflammatory narratives, or false alarms lead to real-world especially relevant in Kwara, where misinformation has preceded physical clashes in places like Offa-Erin-Ile and Share-Tsaragi.

Inter-communal Conflict

Conflict occurs at inter and intra personal relationship in any given society. According to Mukherjee (2017), conflict is an activity that takes place when individuals or groups wish to carry out mutually inconsistent acts concerning their wants, needs or obligations. Mukherjee (2017) argued further that conflict is a fight or dispute between people with contrasting requirements, thoughts, values, ideals, or objectives. Conflict in this context is an activity which takes place when conscious beings (individuals or groups) wish to carry out opposing actions against issues that threatens their wants, needs or obligation. However, the scholar noted that conflict or dispute is inevitable occurrence. In another perspective, Folarin (2018) define conflict in the political context, as when two or more groups engage in a struggle over values and claims to status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralise, injure or eliminate the rivals. To Martin et al. (2018), conflict is the fate of life that occurs where the interactions of people are marked with differences in goals, perceptions, attitudes, views, beliefs, values or needs. It can be deduced from the several definitions stated above that conflicts are inseparable in human affairs and are inherent in social existence and social progress. Also, conflict as can be described as struggle and rivalry for objects to which individuals and groups attach importance. These objects can be material or non-material. Martin et al. (2018) saw communal conflict as participants or parties to the conflict are community-based identity groups.

Communal conflict is usually functioning of communal identity. Communal identity is defined as subjective group identification based on common history, culture or core values (Martin et al., 2018). Ethnic conflict, on the other hand, is defined as a conflict between non-state groups that are organized along with or with a shared communal identity. This definition deserves some further clarification (Brosché, 2022). Brosché (2022) contextualized his definition of communal conflict as conflicts between non-state groups organised along a shared communal identity, in Darfur Sudan for the past three decades. Corroborating this definition, Williams (2015) asserted that ethnic conflict is frequently analysed through the lens of communal identity, which is a subjective group identification based on common history, culture, or core values. However, the scholar narrows down his submission on ethnic conflict to be conflict where at least one group defines its goals exclusively in ethnic terms and in which the fault-line of confrontation is one of ethnic variation. In this study, inter-communal conflicts are characterised as disputes between distinct communities, whether within or between communities, that are predominantly motivated by land/boundary resource conflicts, as seen in Share-Saragi, Offa-Erinle, and Ilofa-Odo-wa.

Review of Empirical Studies

The Implications of Information Proliferation on Inter-communal Conflict in Nigeria: Several empirical studies have examined the relationship between information and

communal conflict in Nigeria. Raji and Abdulkadir-Imam (2018) explored the use of radio as a conflict-management tool by assessing the mediating role of Radio Nigeria, Idofian, in the Share–Tsaragi communal conflict in Kwara State. Using secondary data, the study found that radio mediation programmes contributed significantly to conflict de-escalation between the communities. The study is important for highlighting the non-violent role of radio in conflict resolution. However, its reliance solely on secondary data limits its depth, as it does not capture real-time perceptions and lived experiences of key stakeholders such as community members and media practitioners. Anoke (2023) examined the application of Public Relations Strategies (PRS) in managing inter-communal conflicts in Nigeria, drawing on Frank Jefkins’ PR Transfer Process and the Two-Way Symmetric Model as theoretical frameworks. The study recommended the adoption of PR strategies by traditional institutions and community stakeholders for conflict management. Its major strength lies in applying PR models traditionally used in corporate settings to communal conflict resolution, an area that remains underexplored. However, the study’s broad national focus, without a specific regional or case-based analysis, limits its contextual depth and practical applicability to localized conflicts.

In a related study, Raji and Abdulkadir-Imam (2018) investigated the causes of the Share–Tsaragi and Zango-Kataf communal crises, the role of the media, and government intervention efforts in managing the conflicts. The study adopted both primary data (interviews) and secondary sources, including official reports and academic materials. Findings revealed that offensive media content, hate speech, and poor communication contributed to the conflicts, while the media played both constructive and destructive roles. The mixed-methods approach strengthens the study’s empirical foundation and allows for comparative insights across different conflict contexts. Nevertheless, the absence of quantitative data, such as surveys measuring public perceptions of media influence, limits the generalizability of the findings. Olateju and Bamidele (2023) focused on small arms proliferation and ethno-communal conflict in Nigeria, highlighting its consequences for human security and socio-economic development. Using both primary and secondary data, the study sampled 1,152 respondents across three local government areas and found a significant relationship between arms proliferation, ethno-communal conflict, and underdevelopment. While the large sample size strengthens the study, it does not examine the role of information flow such as rumors, media narratives, or communication networks in facilitating conflict escalation or mobilization. Similarly, Okoro (2022) examined arms proliferation and Nigeria’s internal security challenges since the return to civil rule in 1999, relying on qualitative analysis of secondary sources. The study linked the ease of accessing arms to insurgency, terrorism, banditry, electoral violence, and other security threats. Although the study implicitly opens space for examining the interaction between information systems and security threats, it does not consider how information-based interventions such as media literacy, counter-narratives, or civic communication—could help mitigate arms-driven violence.

Theoretical Frame work

Theory of Moral Panic: This study is anchored on Moral Panic Theory to explain the implications of information proliferation in inter-communal conflicts in Kwara State. The theory originated from Stanley Cohen’s seminal work *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (1972), which examined public reactions to the rivalry between the “Mods” and “Rockers” youth subcultures in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s (Cohen, 2011). Cohen conceptualized

moral panic as a situation in which “a condition, episode, person or group of persons is defined as a threat to societal values and interests” (Cohen, 1972, pp. 1–2). The central argument of the theory is that moral panics often emerge through exaggerated and distorted media representations that amplify fear, reinforce stereotypes, and intensify existing social divisions based on ethnicity, race, or class (Mia Belle, 2023). In this sense, unchecked media reporting and information circulation can heighten public anxiety and provoke civil unrest. Cohen (2011) further explains that moral panic becomes intensified when media portray certain behaviours as deviant, prompting moral entrepreneurs, political leaders, and the media itself to frame such situations as signs of a breakdown in societal values.

Ashley (2019) extends the theory by arguing that moral panic can be strategically used by political actors as a “divide-and-rule” mechanism, enabling greater control over populations and reinforcing existing power structures. Despite its relevance, Moral Panic Theory has faced criticism. Best (2016) argues that contemporary societies are better understood as “risk societies,” where modern threats do not necessarily fit the traditional criteria of moral panic, thereby questioning the continued applicability of the concept. Additionally, fear and panic are not generated solely through mass media; traditional communication channels and informal information networks can also contribute to panic escalation. Notwithstanding these criticisms, Moral Panic Theory remains relevant to this study, as information proliferation whether through mass media, social media, or traditional communication systems can escalate tensions and generate panic during inter-communal conflicts. Therefore, understanding how different forms of information flow shape public perception are crucial for effective conflict mitigation. Consequently, stakeholders must pay closer attention to information management if meaningful and sustainable conflict resolution is to be achieved.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design and employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. The study population comprised an estimated 971,300 residents of Oke-Ero, Offa, Oyun, Edu, and Ifelodun Local Government Areas of Kwara State, where conflict-affected communities are located (NBC, 2023). The population also included security operatives working within these communities and journalists with knowledge and experience in reporting inter-communal conflicts in Kwara State. A purposive sampling technique was used to select conflict-prone communities, namely Offa–Erinla (Offa and Oyun LGAs), Share–Tsaragi (Ifelodun and Edu LGAs), and Ilofa/Odo-Owa (Oke-Ero LGA). From these locations and selected media organisations, a total of 646 respondents were purposively selected based on their experiences, knowledge, and perceptions of inter-communal conflict and information flow. In addition, a cluster sampling technique was employed to administer 106 questionnaires per community, targeting a cross-section of stakeholders. The questionnaire respondents included 100 adult residents (male and female), comprising community members and traditional council representatives, as well as six security personnel drawn from the Department of State Services (DSS), Nigeria Police Force (NPF), and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). Furthermore, 10 journalists from the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Kwara State Chapter, were purposively selected to provide media-related insights.

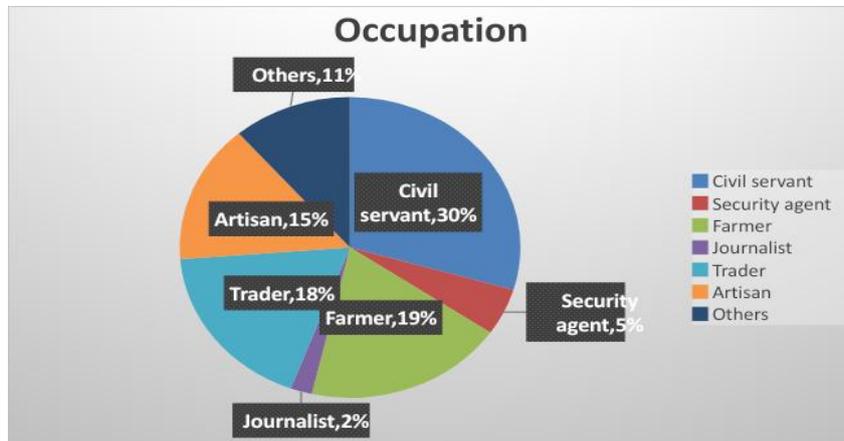
For the qualitative component, selected respondents were purposively designated for Key Informant Interviews (KII) and In-Depth Interviews (IDI). These included security

personnel, traditional and religious leaders, women and youth leaders, and journalists. Out of the 646 questionnaires distributed, 636 copies were retrieved and analysed using descriptive statistical techniques. In addition, 18 oral interviews were conducted, comprising 12 KIIs (security personnel, traditional leaders, and journalists) and 6 IDIs (religious leaders, women leaders, and youth leaders). The interview data were transcribed, interpreted, and analysed using content analysis. To complement the primary data, secondary data were sourced from journals, government reports, news publications, and other relevant academic materials. These sources helped to strengthen and triangulate the findings from the primary data.

Result and Discussion of the Findings

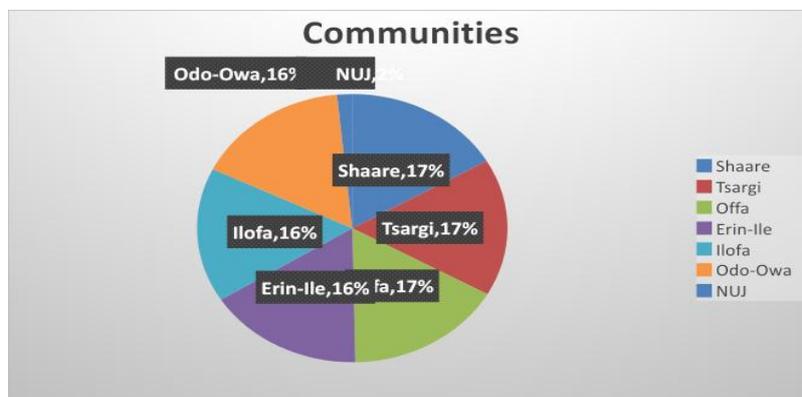
Demographic Information: This section covers demographic data using frequency counts and percentages.

Table 1: The distributions of demographic variables:



Source: Researcher’s field study 2025.

Civil servants constituted the largest group with 188 respondents (30%), followed by farmers at 121 (19%). Traders accounted for 115 (18%), while artisans made up 95 (15%). Security agents represented 32 (5%), and journalists had the least representation with 13 (2%). The remaining 75 respondents (11%) fell under “Others.” Overall, the distribution reflects participation from both formal and informal sectors. The higher proportion of civil servants and farmers may be due to their population size or accessibility, while the low number of journalists suggests limited media presence in the study area.



Source: Researcher’s field study 2025.

Figure 2: Pie Chart Distribution of Communities involve in the Study

Figure 2 presents the community distribution of respondents. Shaare recorded the highest participation with 106 respondents (17%), closely followed by Offa with 105 (17%). Erin-Ile, Ilofa, Odo-Owa, and Tsaragi each accounted for 105 respondents (16%), indicating fairly balanced representation across these communities. The **NUJ** recorded the lowest participation with 10 respondents (2%). Overall, the distribution shows a relatively even spread of respondents across the study communities, ensuring broad geographic representation. The slightly higher participation in Shaare and Offa may be attributed to population size or accessibility.

Types of Information Proliferation during Inter-Communal Conflict in Kwara State

Table 1: Presents respondents’ opinion on the types of information proliferation during inter-communal conflict in Kwara State;

Types of information	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Total
Spreading of propaganda	38 (6%)	115 (18%)	38 (6%)	180 (28%)	265 (42%)	3.82	636 (100%)
Expansion tendency misinformation	32 (5%)	6 (1%)	70 (11%)	45 (7%)	483 (76%)	4.51	636 (100%)
Perceived eroded historical narratives	6 (1%)	1 (0.2%)	89 (14%)	485 (76%)	55 (9%)	3.92	636 (100%)
Face-to-face rumour about land acquisition	102 (16%)	32 (5%)	51 (8%)	240 (38%)	211 (33%)	3.67	636 (100%)

Source: Researcher’s field study 2025.

Table 1 shows key types of information that often fuel inter-communal conflict in Kwara State based on respondents’ views. The most serious issue identified Expansion tendency misinformation, with 76% agreement and the highest mean score of 4.51. This means that many believed that twisting or misusing historical stories increases division among communities. Oral evidence collected is not different from this finding as majority of the informants asserted that at different occasions, misguided individuals employed the use of untrue historical facts particularly, as regarded argument about first to settle at the disputed location, to reawaken residents of conflict-affected communities to challenge opposition. A security operative (Police) who had spent 25 years working in Share town has this to say:

Both communities fight over land ownership, but since the fight started, their elders use to counter each other patterning history of both communities. That alone had resulted to cold war whereby both engaged in media war (KII/M/Police/51yrs old/2025).

According to a traditional leader in Offa community:

One of the problem we having since the beginning of this conflict is the way members both communities unfold history. Somebody can just wake up and cook provocative historical background and begin to spread to the people. Of course, youths who hear that will conceive the information and perceive it to be genuine. Even member of traditional council are guilty of this (KII/Offa/Male/69yrs/2025).

Supporting this finding is the work Raji and Abdulkadir-Imam (2018) that the media made both positive and negative contributions to the communal crises in Share-Tsaragi and Zango-

Kataf. However, beyond the contribution of media, this new finding shows that some few individuals employed historical narrative to reawaken residents' emotion to the need for them to fight for their rights. This suggests that this type of information fueled inter-communal conflicts in Kwara State. Expansion tendency misinformation showed 83% agreeing and a mean score of 4.42. This suggests that exaggerated or false claims, especially during conflict, are widely seen as harmful and quick to spread. Oral interview result equally affirmed similar submission. A youth leader in Ilofa said something related to misinformation about expansion tendency:

This is a type of information where we both alleged each other of trespassing into farmland, whereas that may not be true. But before we realize that it is a fake news, a lot of damages might have been done (IDI/Male/youth leader/34yrs old/2025).

According to a traditional leader in Erinle community:

Our major problem with Offa community is the level of expansion. So, at any time information regarding acquisition of land is out, both us are always in suspicious of each other. This type of information had caused unnecessary clashes in past (KII/traditional leader/Male/69yrs/20245).

This finding aligned with the study of Ogbette (2020) unverified reports of killings, land grabbing, and cultural desecration often go viral, igniting reprisal attacks between the Tiv and Jukun/Fulani and Berom communities of middle belt of Nigeria. While this type of information was found between two different ethnic groups in other States, surprisingly, finding of this study show that communities with the same ethnic and cultural affiliations in Kwara State are experiencing similar misinformation over expansion tendency. This further implies spreading of unverified community expansion is potential information issue causing inter-communal conflict in Kwara State. Spreading of propaganda was also noted, with 70% agreement and a mean of 3.90, showing that everyone sees it as equally harmful. Qualitative data obtained showed that social media propaganda, most especially, concerning weapon accumulation quickly spread in different platforms. A security operative (NSCDC) working in Tsaragi community shared his experience during interview session:

Social media propaganda has not been helping. Residents of both communities are found of spreading propaganda patterning accumulation of weapons of war. This alone has not help peacebuilding and mutual trust between them (KII/M/Police/51yrs old/2024).

Similar statement was asserted by a woman in Share, who briefly narrated a story:

During the tenure of formal governor who happened to be the so indigene of this town, a lot of unfounded stories were orchestrated against him that he has acquired and stockpiled a lot guns and weapons for his kinsmen (IDI/Share/Female/61yrs/2025).

This finding is closely related to the argument of Okoro (2022) who established connection between arms proliferation with diverse security threats. However, away from Okoro (2022)'s argument, this finding demonstrated that proliferation of propaganda, particularly, on social media has a significant connection with the security threats among communities involved in communal conflict in Kwara State. Based on the "Face-to-face rumours about

land acquisition", 71% respondents agreed and scored a mean of 3.88, meaning that personal rumours about land ownership are seen as serious. The oral interview obtained is not from this result as informants claimed that house to house or social gathering gossip information spreading contributed to the inter-conflict in Kwara State. A security operative (DSS) asserted:

You see many of the residents gossiped and spread baseless rumour either at social gathering or house to house visits not because of peace to reign but escalate already tensed situation. This type of information is the most dangerous because nobody cares to verify how true is the information (KII/Female/39yrs old/2025).

According to a traditional leader in Erinle community:

At times face to face information flows indiscriminately. And as you know, this is rural community with many uneducated residents, such information in most case appear to be really to them particularly when it comes to the land acquisition (KII/Offa/Male/69yrs/2024).

This finding is corroborated with moral panic theory as explained by Cohen (1972) that episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests. This implies that face to face information carrier enhances information proliferation in the context of inter-communal conflicts in Kwara State. Such type of information flows, particularly, when it bothers on distorted fact about land acquisition, is capable generating security threats in the conflict affected-communities.

The Implications of Information Proliferation during Inter-communal Conflicts in Kwara State

Table 2: Presents Respondents' Opinion on the Implications of Information Proliferation during Inter-communal Conflicts in Kwara State

Implications of information proliferation	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Total
Propaganda spark panic or retaliatory attacks quickly	115 (18%)	38 (6%)	38 (6%)	180 (28%)	265 (42%)	3.81	636 (100%)
Actors continue to exploit information channels to incite historical grievances	230 (36%)	64 (10%)	57 (9%)	140 (22%)	145 (23%)	3.06	636 (100%)
Easily weakens local dispute settlement mechanisms	32 (5%)	6 (1%)	32 (5%)	45 (7%)	483 (76%)	4.42	636 (100%)
Social identity becomes weaponized to increase mutual suspicion.	6 (1%)	1 (0.2%)	89 (14%)	485 (76%)	55 (9%)	4.44	636 (100%)

Source: Researcher's field study 2025.

Table 2 gives clear insight into the implications of information proliferation on inter-communal conflicts in Kwara State. The strongest agreement (85%) came from the item "Social identity becomes weaponized to increase mutual suspicion," with a high mean of

4.44. This shows most people believed that identity is often misused to deepen distrust between groups. Oral data revealed similar result. A security operative working in Odo-owa for more than a decade confirmed this statement:

Even though both communities are the same ethnic nationality, anytime conflict broke out between them, information proliferation easily created division between them and both residents begins to take side just because of misconceived information (KII/M/Police/51yrs old/2024).

According to a traditional leader in Tsaragi:

Not until this conflict started, you can hardly differentiate both communities from each other. Series of unfound stories about how communities came to being have actually activated social identity faultline between us (KII/M/55yrs old/2024).

Information proliferation is the uncontrolled flow of messages, rumours, and narratives often unverified which may trigger or escalate violence between groups (International Crisis Group, 2021). Invariably, Information proliferation among communities in Kwara State triggered social identity faultline. Easily weakens of local dispute settlement mechanisms also had a high agreement of 83% and a mean of 4.42. This suggests many feel that too much uncontrolled information makes it hard for traditional ways of resolving conflict to work. This is another interesting implication as demonstrated in the qualitative data collected. A security operative (Police) who had spent 25 years working in Share has this to say:

We are still experiencing a fragile peace, not because of anything, but there is trust in the peace accord signed. Just last week a group of individual raised false alarmed over the death of person inside in the farm. Surprisingly, people begins to insinuating to be an attack from Share community whereas, it was a herder-farmer clash (KII/Male/69yrs/2024).

According to a youth leader in Offa communit:

At several occasions when we gathered for peace meeting, we are always remind ourselves on the need to verify information before disseminating (KII/Offa/Male/49yrs/2024).

No wonder, Zuboff (2019) argued that contemporary information is making it more difficult for grassroots conflict resolution methods to thrive in an environment flooded with polarizing or misleading content. It is therefore safe to submit that information proliferation has made it difficult to achieve meaningful resolution of inter-communal conflict in Kwara State. Propaganda spark panic or retaliatory attacks quickly was recognized by 70% of respondents as a real issue, backed by a mean of 3.90. Lastly, Actors continue to exploit information channels to incite historical grievances received a 45% agreement, with the lowest mean of 3.06. This shows people are split on how serious this issue is, and some may not see it as a major conflict driver compared to others. It confirms that fast-spreading false information can directly lead to conflict. A security operative (DSS) working in Oke-Ero has this to say:

The last violent conflict that took place here was as result of propaganda over kingship superiority. This clash wouldn't have escalated to the violent if

not propaganda that a king has been attacked in the market (KII/M/42yrs old/2025).

A woman leader who is conversant with communal clashes with Offa-Erinle lends credence.

I can say that grievance over historical background of the two communities is serious issues making the peace in this environment remain fragile. Offa continue to spread unfounded stories of being the oldest community, while to Erinle, it is an understatement (KII/Offa/Male/69yrs/2024)

Conclusion

Overall, this study concluded that there are a lot of implications to the information proliferation on inter-communal conflict in Kwara State. These conflicts in different locations in the State though has its root cause on land related matters, however, several types of information proliferation has contributed to its escalation at different times. These types of information included false history, misinformation, propaganda, and land rumors that had played strong roles in driving conflict in the State through various channels like online, spoken, and historical. The major implications are it easily activated identity-based fault line, while misinformation-driven issues are remain most powerful conflict implications of information proliferation, followed by propaganda and historical grievances.

Recommendations

In line with findings and conclusion of this study, the following are hereby suggested.

- i. Stakeholders should establish local information verification committees comprising community leaders, religious figures, and youth representatives to fact-check and counter false narratives in the conflict affected-communities.
- ii. Academic institutions, cultural experts, and community elders should produce balanced, inclusive historical records to counter distorted historical claims.
- iii. inter-communal cultural and historical exchange programs should be organized to foster mutual understanding and dismantle false identity narratives.
- iv. Implement fair and timely land dispute resolutions, and document outcomes publicly to reduce speculation and rumors

References

- Ajayi, A. I. (2014). *Social Media and Inter-Communal Conflict in Nigeria: A Study of Kwara State*.
- Anoke, B. (2023). Curbing the Prevalence of Inter-communal Conflicts in Nigeria: The Public Relations Perspective. *Bluesland Journal of Arts and Social Science*, 1(1), 46-60.
- Brosché, J. (2022). *Communal conflict in Darfur: Local violence and regional politics*. Routledge.
- Busari, I. Z., Oladipo, F. O., Daudu, A. K., & Selesi, O. S. (2020). Farmers' perception on the influence of inter-communal conflicts on agricultural production in Shaare/Tsaragi communities, Kwara State, Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural and Marine Sciences*, 25(2), 39–45.
- Castells, M. (2009). *The rise of the network society* (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Channels News. (2021, February 15). *Leaders call for calm in Shasha market* [News report]. Channels Television. <https://www.channelstv.com/2021/02/15/monday-update-leaders-call-for-calm-in-shasha-market/>

- Chukwudi, J. F. (2024). Inter-Ethnic Violence in Nigeria and the Proposed Solution to Address Them, *Soc. sci. humanities journal* 8(4), 34795–34806.
- CLEEN Foundation. (2021). Village Monitoring System on Early Warning Early Response. Retrieved from <https://cleen.org/village-monitoring-system-on-early-warning-early-response/>
- Daily Trust. (2021, March 4). Calls for truce mount as Offa, Erinle still in tension. Daily Trust. Retrieved from <https://dailytrust.com/calls-for-truce-mount-as-offa-erinle-still-in-tension/>
- Folarin, S. (2018). *Political conflicts in Africa: Theories and case studies*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights. (2025, February). *IHL in Focus: Annual Report – Assessing Compliance in Contemporary Armed Conflicts (July 2023–June 2024)*. Geneva Academy.
- Hassan, B.S. (2025). The role of social media in fueling resource-based conflict: A case study of inter-clan conflicts in Somalia. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 12(4), 198–218.
- Ibrahim, J., & Osaghae, E. (2018). Understanding the Dynamics of Inter-Communal Conflicts in Nigeria.
- International Committee of the Red Cross. (2021). How harmful information on social media impacts people affected by armed conflict: *A typology of harms*. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 102(913), 667–694.
- International Crisis Group. (2021). Preventing electoral violence in Nigeria. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/preventing-electoral-violence-nigeria>
- Jegede, O. P. (2019). Implications of religious conflicts on peace, national security and development in Nigeria, *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies*, 9(1), 53-70.
- Kwara State Ministry of Communications. (2024, June 11). Share/Tsaragi land disputes: KWSG sues for peace. Retrieved from <https://www.kwaramoc.com.ng/2024/06/sharetsaragi-land-disputes-kwsg-sues.html>
- Martin, P., Meyer, J., & Ojukwu, E. (2018). Understanding communal violence: Perspectives from social psychology. *Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 25(2), 45-62. <https://doi.org/10.>
- Moser, Caroline O. N., & Mcllwaine, Cathy. (2014). New frontiers in twenty-first century urban conflict and violence. *Environment and Urbanization*, 26(2), 331–344.
- Mukherjee, R. (2017). *Conflict resolution and peacebuilding: Theories and practices*. Sage Publications.
- Odigbo, J. (2018). Two neighbours, too many crises: Re-thinking measures to ending the tide of Jukun/Tiv violent conflict in Wukari – Taraba State, Nigeria. *Nnamdi Azikiwe Journal of Political Science*, 5(2), 26–40.
- Okoro, A. O. D. (2022). Banditry and national security in Nigeria: a conceptual discourse. *Benue Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 1(1), 62-81.
- Olateju, I. J., & Bamidele, M. A. (2023). Environment Peculiarity And Implication For Crime Incident In Oke-Ogun Area Of Oyostate, Nigeria. *Fuoye Planning Journal*, 1(1).
- Raji, S., & Abdulkadir-Imam, N. A. (2018). Managing Communal Conflicts in Africa through Electronic Media: A Case Study of Radio Nigeria in Share-Tsaragi Crisis. *Acta Universitatis Danubius. Communicatio*, 12(1).
- Sahara Reporters. (2021, February 13). Hausa/Yoruba clash: Four feared killed as residents allege soldiers only protect Hausa in Ibadan. Sahara Reporters. <https://sahara>

- reporters.com/2021/02/13/hausayoruba-clash-four-feared-killed-residents-allege-soldiers-only-protect-hausa-ibadan
- UNESCO. (2018). *World trends in freedom of expression and media development: Global report 2017/2018*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261065>
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2016). *Preventing Violent Extremism through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance and Respect for Diversity: A Development Response to Addressing Radicalization and Violent Extremism*. New York: UNDP.
- United Nations Development Programme. (2020). *Digital conflict drivers and peacebuilding pathways: Navigating the web of digital conflict*. UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/publications/digital-conflict-drivers-and-peacebuilding-pathways>
- Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2017). Information disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making. Council of Europe. <https://rm.coe.int/information-disorder-report-november-2017/168076277c>
- Williams, P. (2015). Ethnic identity and violent conflict: Comparative case studies. *International Security*, 40(3), 78-102.
- Yusuf, A. O. (2021). Youth Empowerment as a Strategic Approach to Reducing Urban Violence: A Case Study of Kwara State, Nigeria. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/391630342_Youth_Empowerment_As_A_Strategic_Approach_To_Reducing_Urban_Violence_A_Case_Study_Of_Kwara_State_Nigeria
- Zuboff, S. (2019). The age of surveillance capitalism: The fight for a human future at the new frontier of power. Public Affairs.



JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Volume 1, Number 8 (December, 2025)

ISSN: 1595-9457 (online); 3043-4211 (print)

Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

Received: December 05, 2025 Accepted: December 30, 2025 Published: December 31, 2025

Citation: Udoh, Michael S.; Madu, Adolphus O. & Udo, Ime A. (2025). "Personalised and Group-Based Mastery Learning Strategies and Students' Academic Achievement in Chemistry in Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria." *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1 (8): 166-176.

Article

Open Access

PERSONALISED AND GROUP-BASED MASTERY LEARNING STRATEGIES AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN CHEMISTRY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

Michael Saviour Udoh¹, Adolphus Onuabuchi Madu² & Ime Akpan Udo³

Department of Science Education, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Nigeria^{1&2}

Department of Physics, College of Science & Technology, Nnung Ukim, Akwa Ibom, Nigeria³

Corresponding Email: udomysave2016@gmail.com¹

Abstract

The study determined the effects of personalised and group-based mastery learning strategies on students' academic achievement in Chemistry in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Three specific purposes, two research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The study used the quasi-experimental, pre-test, post-test research design. The population of the study comprised 16,786 senior secondary class two (SSII) students from 253 public secondary schools in the state. A sample of 146 students made up of 84 boys and 62 girls was selected from three intact classes using multi-stage procedure and purposive sampling technique. Two instruments were used in the study namely Mastery Learning Instructional Packages (MLIP) and Chemistry Achievement Test (CAT). The instruments were face validated by three lecturers from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State. The reliability of the Chemistry Achievement Test obtained through test-retest method was 0.84. The three intact classes were randomly assigned to the two experimental groups and a control group. The mastery learning instructional packages constituted the treatment that was given to the experimental groups 1 and 2 while the control group was taught with the conventional lesson plans. The experiment lasted for six weeks covering six lessons. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. It was found that students taught chemistry using personalized Mastery Learning strategy performed better than those taught with group-based Mastery Learning strategy and lecture method. There was a significant difference between the mean post-test scores of students in Chemistry when taught with personalized and group-based Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method. There was no significant difference in the mean

Copyright © 2025 By JPPSS. Publishers: Omega Books

This is an open access article which permits unrestricted use provided the work is properly cited.

achievement scores of male and female students in Chemistry when exposed to Mastery Learning Strategies. Moreover, there was a significant interaction effect of teaching strategy and gender on students' academic achievement in Chemistry. It is recommended, among others, that Chemistry teachers in Akwa Ibom state secondary schools should henceforth adopt the mastery learning strategies (personalized and group-based) in teaching important topics in Chemistry while the conventional teaching methods should be de-emphasized.

Keywords: Mastery Learning Strategies (Personalized and Group-based), Academic Achievement, Chemistry, Gender.

Introduction

Chemistry is obviously one of the most significant science subjects taught in Nigerian secondary schools. Amos and Mkpa (2023) defined Chemistry as that branch of science which is concerned with the study of matter as it relates to energy as well as the study of laws that determine the structure of the universe with reference to the matter and energy in the universe. The study of chemistry enables us to understand the composition and interactions of atoms and molecules thus helping us to explain natural phenomena and their composition. Indeed, chemistry is a very vital subject due to its wide application to our daily life directly and indirectly. Its domain encompasses every aspect of our daily lives from food, healthcare, agriculture, energy, cleaning, cooking as well as environmental issues. According to Amos and Mkpa (2023), the importance of Chemistry in Nigeria is buttressed by the fact that it serves as a pre-requisite to the study of all science - based professional courses in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Thus, a credit pass in Chemistry is required at the senior secondary school certificate examination for admission into science, and technology-related professional courses in Nigerian tertiary institutions such as medicine and surgery, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, forestry, fisheries, agricultural sciences and all branches of engineering. In view of its abstract nature, there is need for the use of appropriate teaching strategies in the teaching of Chemistry in order to facilitate a very good understanding of the subject which is very critical for effective scientific advancement. One of the teaching strategies that is of interest to this study is mastery learning.

Mastery learning is an instructional approach where students need to demonstrate a deep level of understanding of a topic or unit before progressing into another topic or unit. Salihu and Francis (2018) described Mastery Learning Strategy (MLS) as an instructional approach where students are allowed unlimited opportunities to demonstrate mastery of content taught. The strategy allows students to repeatedly study material until they master it. Mastery of each unit is shown when the student acquires competencies evident by the set pass mark of a diagnostic test. The authors added that mastery learning strategy helps the students to acquire prerequisite skills before moving to the next unit. The teacher also is required to do task analysis and state the objectives clearly and explicitly before designating the activities. Oginni, Akinola, Fadiji and Amole (2021) stated that mastery learning strategy consists of several steps which include distribution of lesson content into smaller parts, formulation of objectives related to each subdivision, organization of teaching for realizing objectives of each subdivision, administering formative test to evaluate the mastery level and diagnosing the knotty areas, giving remedial instructions to remove the ambiguities and finally, attainment of mastery level by every student. Toheed & Ali (2019) explained that in using Mastery Learning strategy, the teacher first defines the acceptable mastery level for a particular task and then organizes a variety of individual or group-based instructional techniques to fulfil the requirements of all students. Formative assessment with regular

feedback are used to diagnose the weak areas and to improve the instructional process rather than to measure achievement. Corrective assignments are also used to ensure the achievement of learning objectives. Finally, at the end of each unit, criterion referenced tests are used for the evaluation of students' performance.

Two major models of mastery learning strategies have been developed namely individualized or personalized model (also known as Keller's model) and group-based model (otherwise known as Bloom's model). Both models adopt the same procedure except that while the individualized model seeks to promote mastery learning of a pre-specified set of objectives for each learner in a subject or course, the Group-Based model seeks to promote mastery learning of a unit of instruction for all members of a class or group in a subject or course. Also, in the individualized model, students are attended to individually and each student works through a series of self-paced modules and learns independently. This approach uses the system of reading and studying prepared study guides. Proctors are provided to give immediate feedback to the students and to assist them in their areas of difficulty. The study guide may take different forms from print-based, to computer-based and internet-based instruction. This study used both the personalised and group based models of mastery learning for the experimental groups 1 and 2 respectively and lecture method for the control group in order to compare the effectiveness of the three methods on the students' academic achievement in Chemistry. Academic achievement refers to students' performance in a school subject as designated by a score obtained in an achievement test (Adika and Adika, 2015). It can also be seen as the learning outcomes of students which include the knowledge, skills and ideas acquired and retained through a course of study within and outside the classroom situation (Hassan, *et al* 2021). Academic achievement is an indication of how well an individual student has done his cognitive tasks. It is an indication of the general ability of students concerning their offered subjects compared to a specified standard called "Pass Marks" which is relative and can be arbitrarily defined as 40% or 50%. Eze, *et al* (2016a) pointed out that academic achievement could be high, average or low/poor. They described a high academic achievement as one where the score is above the pass mark while a poor academic achievement is any performance score that falls below a desired standard or pass mark.

Despite the importance of Chemistry in national development and everyday life, numerous research reports such as Ojukwu (2016); and Chikendu (2022) showed declining students' performance in the subject. Majority of the studies attributed the possible causes of candidates' persistent poor performances in Chemistry to the use of poor instructional strategies by teachers. Ojukwu (2016) specifically pointed out that eighty percent of the scientific information that students receive from their teachers in Nigerian secondary schools come through the lecture method. It is worthy to note that students' academic achievement in science subjects may vary according to gender. Gender is the socially constructed differences between males and females. Studies abound on gender differences and students' achievement in science subjects but their findings are conflicting. While some studies such as Ogini, *et al* (2021) and Nkok (2022) reported that there is no significant difference in achievement between male and female students in science subjects, others like Iserameiyaa and Ibeneme (2018) and Catherine (2023) found that there was significant difference between boys and girls in their academic achievement. In view of these controversial findings, there is need for more investigation with respect to mastery learning strategies and students' academic achievement in chemistry. Several studies have been conducted to examine the effects of mastery learning strategies on students' academic

achievement in many science subjects such as Physics, Mathematics, and Basic Technology. However, not much work has been done on the effect of mastery learning strategy on students' academic achievement in Chemistry in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. It therefore becomes imperative to explore the efficacy or otherwise of mastery learning strategies on students' academic achievement in Chemistry in this study area.

Statement of the Problem

Chemistry students are expected to perform creditably in both internal and external examinations. It is however disheartening to observe that students' academic achievement in Chemistry in the senior secondary school certificate examinations are below expectation as indicated by chief examiners reports from examination bodies like the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO). This has been an issue of great concern to science educators considering the relevance of Chemistry education to the nations' development. Despite much efforts by teachers to improve students learning outcomes, many students still struggle to understand and retain chemistry concepts. Research by Egolum, Samuel and Okonkwo (2021) and Chikendu (2022) have attributed the poor students' achievement in Chemistry to the use of poor instructional strategies by most chemistry teachers. It is observed that the teaching method commonly used by chemistry teachers in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State is the lecture method. The lecture method is a teacher-centred method which does not emphasize mastery of previous lessons before a new one, hence, it may not be effective in facilitating deep learning and understanding among students. The continuous use of the lecture method in teaching Chemistry which is widely perceived as a conceptually tough and abstract subject might partly account for the apathy and poor interest shown by many students towards Chemistry which culminate in their poor achievement in the subject. On this basis, there is need to explore new strategies such as mastery learning instructional strategies. Several studies have shown that the use of mastery learning strategies (personalized and group-based) considerably improve students' academic achievement, in many subjects such as Mathematics, Physics, Biology and Basic Science and Technology. However, there is dearth of empirical evidences on its effectiveness in Chemistry in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The absence of research studies that address these issues therefore solicits a study to answer the question: What are the effects of mastery learning strategies on students' academic achievement in Chemistry in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State? This is the problem to which this study is addressed.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the effects of mastery learning instructional strategies on Secondary Schools students' achievement in Chemistry in Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives of the study are:-

- i. To find out the difference in the mean achievement scores of students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies (personalized and group-based) and lecture method.
- ii. To ascertain the difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students in Chemistry when exposed to personalized and group-based Mastery Learning Strategies .
- iii. To determine the interaction effects of teaching strategies and gender on the mean achievement scores of students in Chemistry.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:-

- i. What is the difference in the mean achievement scores of students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies (personalized and group-based) and lecture method?
- ii. What is the difference between the mean achievement scores of male and female students in Chemistry when taught with personalized and group-based Mastery Learning Strategies?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses formulated to guide the study were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

HO 1: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies (personalized and group-based) and lecture method

HO 2: There is no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of male and female students in Chemistry when taught with personalized and group-based Mastery Learning Strategies.

HO 3: There is no significant interaction effect of teaching strategies and gender on the mean achievement scores of students in Chemistry.

Research Methodology

The quasi-experimental research design, specifically, non-equivalent pre-test - post-test control group design was adopted in the study. This implies that intact classes were used for the study. The area of study of this research was Akwa Ibom State which is one of the 36 states in Nigeria. The State has 1,146 public primary schools, 254 public secondary schools, 298 private secondary schools and 791 privately owned nursery/primary schools. The population of the study consisted of 16,786 senior secondary class two (SSII) students from all the 253 public secondary schools in the state. One hundred and forty six senior secondary class two (SS II) students made up of 84 boys and 62 girls constituted the sample for this study. This number represents the students in three intact classes. Multi-stage procedure and purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. Finally, balloting was used to assign each of the selected three intact classes to the two experimental groups and a control group. Experimental group 1 (personalized), had 48 students (22 males and 26 females). Experimental group 2 had 49 students (23 males and 26 females) while the control group had 49 students (39 males and 10 females).

Two instruments were used in the study. They were: Mastery Learning Instructional Packages (MLIP) and Chemistry Achievement Test (CAT). The Chemistry Achievement Test was designed by the researcher for assessing students' achievement in chemistry. It comprised 50 multiple choice items on the relevant topics taught to the students with four options lettered A- D with only one correct answer. The test was first used as pre-test to determine the baseline knowledge of the students in the three groups before the experiment. Each question was scored 2 points and the total score was 100 marks. The Chemistry Achievement Test was also used as post-test after being reshuffled after each administration. The instruments used in the study were subjected to face and content validation. The face validation was done by three experts which include two lecturers in Chemistry Education and one in Measurement and Evaluation in Michael Okpara University

of Agriculture, Umudike. The reliability coefficient of the Chemistry Achievement Test (CAT), was 0.84 obtained using test-retest method.

The experiment was conducted in three phases as follows: Pre-treatment phase, Treatment phase and Post treatment phase. The students in the selected intact classes were then randomly assigned by the researcher to the three study groups as follows: Group I (Personalized mastery learning Strategy); Group II (Group based mastery learning and Group III (Control, Lecture method). Six lessons were covered in the six weeks as follows Physical properties of Chlorine (week 1), Chemical properties of Chlorine (week 2), Laboratory preparation of Chlorine (week 3), Industrial preparation of Chlorine (week 4), Compounds of chlorine 1- Hydrogen Chloride (week 5), and Compounds of chlorine 11- Hydrochloric acid (week 6). Data collected from the students were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions raised whereas the hypotheses formulated were tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. Post hoc pairwise comparison was employed, where necessary, to locate the differential effectiveness of the three groups.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the difference between the mean achievement scores of students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies (personalized and group-based) and lecture method?

Table 1: Mean Pre-test and Post-test Scores of Students in Chemistry when taught using Mastery Learning Strategies and Lecture Method

S/n	Group	N	Pre Test		Post Test		Mean Difference/ % gain
			\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	
1	Personalised Mastery Learning	48	45.29	5.01	62.08	3.64	16.79 (16.79%)
2.	Group-based Mastery Learning	49	46.45	5.72	60.37	1.84	13.92 (13.92%)
3.	Lecture Method	49	45.51	3.48	53.53	3.31	8.02 (8.02%)

The result presented in Table 1 shows the mean pre-test and post-test scores of students in the three groups with their standard deviations. Students in experimental group one who were taught using personalized mastery learning had mean pre-test and post-test scores of 45.29 and 62.08 respectively with standard deviations of 5.01 and 3.64 making a mean difference of 16.79 representing a gain of 16.79%. It could be observed that students who were taught using personalized mastery learning strategy obtained the highest mean difference of 16.79 representing a gain of 16.79% as against 13.92 (13.92%) and 8.02 (8.02%) obtained by those who were taught using group-based mastery learning strategy and lecture method respectively. This result suggests that teaching chemistry using personalized mastery learning strategy enhances students' achievement in the subject than using the group-based mastery learning strategy and lecture method.

Research Question 2: What is the difference between the mean achievement scores of male and female students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies.

Table 2: Mean Pre-test and Post-test scores of Male and Female Students in Chemistry when taught using Mastery Learning Strategies

Group	Gender	N	Pre Test		Post Test		Mean Difference/ % gain
			\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	
Personalized	Male	22	43.18	2.87	62.64	4.29	19.46%
	Female	26	47.07	5.74	61.64	2.99	14.57%
Group based	Male	25	45.30	5.31	64.35	9.08	19.05%
	Female	24	47.46	5.97	56.84	1.22	9.39%

The result in Table 2 shows the mean pre-test and post-test scores of male and female students in the two experimental groups (personalized and group-based mastery learning). Male students in experimental group one who were taught with personalized mastery learning strategy scored 43.18 and 62.64 respectively in the pre-test and post-test with standard deviations of 2.87 and 4.29. It could be observed that male students in experimental group 1 obtained a higher mean difference of 19.46 representing mean gain of 19.46% as against 14.57% obtained by their female colleagues. Also, male students in experimental group 2 obtained a higher mean difference of 19.05 (or gain of 19.05%) as against 9.39% obtained by their female colleagues. This result suggests that teaching chemistry using mastery learning strategies enhances male students' achievement in the subject more than the female students.

Hypothesis 1 (HO 1): There is no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method

Table 3: Analysis of Covariance Test for Significant Difference in the Mean Post-test Scores of Students in Chemistry when Taught with Mastery Learning Strategies and Lecture Method

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Corrected Model	1998.37 ^a	3	666.12	13.93	0.00	
Intercept	5131.91	1	5131.91	107.30	0.00	
PRE_TEST	3.87	1	3.87	0.08	0.78	
GROUP	1991.06	2	995.53	20.82	0.00	S
Error	6791.39	142	47.83			
Total	510781.00	146				
Corrected Total	8789.76	145				

*S = Significant at 0.05 level of significance

The data in Table 3 shows that the f-value for group or teaching method is 20.82 with p-value (probability value) being 0.00. Since the obtained p-value is less than the stipulated probability level of 0.05, it implies that the value of f is significant at 0.05 level of significance. On this basis, the null hypothesis is rejected implying that there is significant difference between the mean test scores of students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method. Turkey's post hoc test was conducted to determine where the significant difference comes from as presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of Turkey's Post-hoc Pairwise Comparison of the Mean Post Test Scores of the Three Groups

Dependent Variable: Post-Test Score

Groups	Mean Difference*	Standard Error	Sig	Remarks
1 Vs 2	1.7160	1.3999	0.44	NS
1 Vs 3	8.5527**	1.3999	0.00	S
2 Vs 1	-1.7160	1.3999	0.44	NS
2 Vs 3	6.8367**	1.3926	0.00	S
3 Vs 1	-8.5527**	1.3999	0.00	S
3 Vs 2	-6.8367**	1.3926	0.00	S

*Based on observed means (raw scores). The error term is Mean Square(Error) = 47.519.

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

The result in Table 4 shows that the mean difference between groups 1 (personalized) and 2 (group-based) was not significant at 0.05 level of significance. Likewise, the mean difference between groups 2 and 1 was not significant at 0.05 level of significance. However, the mean difference between groups 1 (personalized) and 3 (lecture method) was found to be significant. Significant difference was also found in the mean difference between groups 2 and 3, 3 and 1 as well as between groups 3 and 2. This result implies that the mean post test scores of students in two experimental groups 1 (personalized) and 2 (group based) was significantly better than those in the control group. The significant difference is in favour of experimental group 1 students who obtained a higher post-test score than those in the other two groups as seen in Table 1.

HO 2: There is no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of male and female students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies (personalized and group-based).

HO 3: There is no significant interaction effect of teaching method and gender on the mean achievement scores of students in Chemistry.

Data relating to hypothesis 2 and 3 are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Analysis of Covariance Test for Significant Difference in the Mean Post-test Scores of Male and Female Students in Chemistry when Taught with Mastery Learning Strategies and Lecture Method

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Corrected Model	770.61 ^a	3	256.87	4.29	0.07	
Intercept	363228.63	1	363228.63	6064.85	0.00	
GROUP	56.37	1	56.37	0.94	0.33	
GENDER	437.94	1	437.94	7.31	0.08	NS
GROUP * GENDER	253.23	1	253.23	4.23	0.04	S
Error	5569.85	93	59.89			
Total	369844.00	97				
Corrected Total	6340.45	96				

*S = Significant at 0.05 level of significance

The data in Table 5 shows that the f-value for gender is 7.31 with p-value (probability value) being 0.08. Since the obtained p-value is greater than the stipulated probability level of 0.05, it implies that the value of f is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. On this basis, the

null hypothesis is accepted or upheld implying that there is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students in Chemistry when exposed to Mastery Learning Strategies. Table 5 also revealed that the F-value for interaction effect of teaching method and gender on the mean interest scores of students in Chemistry is 4.23 with p-value being 0.04. Since the obtained p-value is less than the stipulated probability level of 0.05, it implies that the value of f is significant at 0.05 level of significance. On this basis, the null hypothesis is rejected implying that there is significant interaction effect of teaching method and gender on the mean interest of students in Chemistry when exposed to Mastery Learning Strategies.

Findings of the Study

It was found that students taught chemistry using personalized Mastery Learning strategy performed better than those taught with group-based Mastery Learning strategy and lecture method. There was a significant difference between the mean test scores of students in Chemistry when taught with personalized and group-based Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method. There was no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students in Chemistry when exposed to Mastery Learning Strategies. Moreover, there is a significant interaction effect of teaching strategy and gender on students' academic achievement in Chemistry when taught using Mastery Learning strategies ((personalized and group-based).

Discussion of Findings

In the study, it was found that students taught chemistry using personalized Mastery Learning strategy performed better than those taught with group-based Mastery Learning strategy and lecture method. Testing of the corresponding hypothesis confirmed that there was significant difference between the mean test scores of students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies (personalized and group-based) and lecture method. The difference was in favour of those in experimental group 1 who were taught with personalised mastery learning strategy. This result could be attributed to the fact that personalised mastery learning strategy enables students to understand a unit of instruction very well before proceeding to the next unit. This finding agrees with that of Ogini, *et al* (2021) and Amos and Mkpa (2023) who in their separate studies found that mastery learning strategy enhance students' academic achievement in more than the lecture method.

It was also found in the study that there is no significant difference in students' mean achievement scores in Chemistry when taught using personalised Mastery Learning strategy and group-based and Mastery Learning strategy. This difference was in favour of the male students. This finding support that of Amos and Mkpa (2023) who reported that male students performed better than their female counterparts in Chemistry when taught with the mastery learning strategy. This finding however contradicts that of Ogini, *et al* (2021) who found that there is no significant difference in students' achievement in Mathematics when taught using Mastery Learning and lecture method based on their gender. It was further found in the study that there is significant interaction effect of teaching strategy and gender on students' academic achievement in Chemistry. This implies that the combination of both teaching strategy and gender have significant influence on students' achievement in Chemistry. This finding supports that of Iserameiya and Ibeneme (2018) who found that there was significant interaction effect of gender and teaching methods on students' achievement in Basic technology.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that teaching Chemistry using personalized and group-based mastery learning strategies enhances students' academic achievement than using the lecture method. Also, the personalized Mastery Learning strategy favours male students more than the females. Moreover, the combined effect of teaching strategy and students' gender have significant influence on students' achievement in chemistry when taught using Mastery Learning strategies.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

- i. Chemistry teachers in Akwa Ibom state secondary schools should henceforth adopt the personalised mastery learning strategy in teaching important topics in Chemistry
- ii. Chemistry teachers should de-emphasize the use of the traditional methods of teaching.
- iii. Curriculum developers in Chemistry should include personalized and group-based Mastery learning strategies among the recommended teaching strategies in order to improve students' achievement in the subject.

References

- Adika, L. O. and Adika, C. A. (2015). Comparative analysis of social studies academic achievement of private and public junior secondary schools' students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Capital Development in Behavioural Sciences*, 3 (1 & 2), 1-15
- Amos, U. S. and Mkpa, M. a. (2023). Effects of mastery learning strategy on secondary school students' achievement in chemistry in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District. *International Journal of Latest research in Humanities and Social Science*, 1(11), 237-243
- Catherine, K. N.;. (2023). Effect of cooperative mastery learning approach on secondary school students' achievement based on gender in Kirinyaga County, Kenya. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 7(10), 168-178
- Chikendu, R. E. (2022). Factors affecting chemistry students' academic performance in Senior secondary schools in Anambra state, Nigeria. *International Journal of Research in Education and Sustainable Development*, 2(2), 67-76
- Egolum, E. O.; Samuel, N. N. and Okonkwo, I. G. A. (2021). Enhancing students' interest in Chemistry through inculcation of problem solving skills. *South Eastern Journal of Research and Sustainable Development*, 4(2), 116-128
- Eze, T. I., Ezenwafor, J. I. and Obidile, I. J. (2016a). Effects of problem-based teaching method on students' academic performance and retention in Financial Accounting in Technical colleges in Anambra State. *Scholars Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* 4 (6A), 634 – 639. Retrieved on 12/12/24 from <http://saspjournals.com/sjahss>
- Hassan, A. M.; Mannir, M. S.; Akinduro, I. R. and Sanni, T. A. (2021). Effect of mastery learning method on students' achievement and interest in furniture craft in technical colleges in Niger State. *Annals of Technology Education Practitioners Association*, 4(4), 144-149
- Iserameiyaa, F. E. and Ibeneme, O. T. (2018). Effect of mastery learning strategy on junior secondary school students' academic achievement in Basic Technology in Edo state, Nigeria. *International Journal of New Technology and Research*, 4(3), 95-101

- Nkok, E. A. E. (2022). Interaction effect of gender and teaching method on students' interest, achievement and retention in sexual reproduction in plants. *International Journal of Innovative Social Science Education Research*, 10(4), 56-65
- Ogini, O. I.; Akinola, A. S.; Fadiji, A. E. & Amole, P. A. (2021). Effects of mastery learning strategy on secondary school students' performance in Mathematics. *European Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, 2(5), 59-63
- Ojukwu, M. O. (2016). Perception of students on causes of poor performance in Chemistry in external examinations in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State. *International Journal of Education & Literary Studies*, 4(1), 67-73
- Salihu, M. M. & Francis, T. T. (2018). Mastery learning strategy: A panacea for effective curriculum implementation in lower basic schools in Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Education Development* 2(2), 1-11
- Toheed, L. & Ali, A. (2019). Effects of mastery learning model on academic achievement of secondary school students in Mathematics. *Global Social Sciences Review*, IV (IV), 232-238